

**Realizing the Pedagogy
of White Privilege**

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Abstract

The objective of this project is to explore the educational history on the Kainai Reserve in order to comprehend the role of patriarchy and colonialism as forms of racism in pedagogical practice. Three individuals integral to this research are Canon Middleton, Buffalo Child Long Lance and the author. The personal process of the learner outlines the transformation from the expectations that she would become an accepted member of the Kainai community to the realization that she will always be an outsider to the culture of the reserve because of her race.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
I. Introduction.....	1
Background-Kainaiawa.....	2
White contact and the Kainaiwa.....	2
Naapiaakii.....	4
II. Colonialism/Patriarchy.....	7
“Othering”.....	9
Cross Cultural Teacher.....	11
III. Residential Schools as a representation of	
Colonial Influence on the Kainai Reserve....	16
An Historical Overview.....	16
Canon Middleton.....	21
Middleton’s Mission and the Kainai	
Chieftainship.....	22
Middleton the Mentor.....	24
Educating the Kainaiwa.....	26
Buffalo Child Long Lance.....	28

Middleton and Buffalo Child.....	32
Middleton’s Final Years.....	33
Middleton’s Legacy.....	35
IV. The Journey of a Learner.....	38
Family History.....	38
Becoming a Special Educator.....	40
Teaching on the Kainai Reserve.....	41
The Journey of a Learner.....	42
V. Conclusion.....	46
References.....	50

I. Introduction

When a non-native teacher comes to teach within another culture, such as on a reserve, they arrive with a set of expectations regarding their job and the community. Many enter into a quasi relationship with native people believing that their lives on the reserve will resemble what they experienced in their lives off the reserve (Taylor, 1995, p. 226). This thinking is derived from the missionaries and their colonialist ideas. Likewise, the residents of the reserve have their own expectations and beliefs about the teacher, perhaps drawn from their negative experiences at residential schools. Thus, we encounter each other, armed with these expectations and beliefs, rarely willing to confront them, to talk about them or to go beyond them.

The purpose of this paper is to explore issues related to being a white person and a teacher on the Kainai reserve. It has been my experience that issues of racial and cultural differences are not addressed openly. These differences are encompassed in both personal and cultural history and include imposing power-keeping paradigms such as colonialism and patriarchy.

It is within an historical context, including the effects of colonialism and patriarchy, that I will discuss the influences of three people who have interacted with the Indian people on the Blood Reserve in southern Alberta, Canada. The first is Canon Middleton, an Anglican priest who served as headmaster at St. Paul's Residential School on the Blood Reserve from 1909 to 1949. He was a champion of the British school system and actively promoted it as a way to help the Kainaiwa become citizens of mainstream society.

Long Lance Buffalo Child, an American of Cherokee, African American and white ancestry was an integral part of Middleton's story. Long Lance found his way into the

life of the Kainaiwa in order to avoid the harsh reality of being black in the United States.

Finally, I will address my own history as a pedagogue on the reserve and reflect on my experiences of being a white woman there. These reflections will include the elements of my personal history which would compel me to work within another culture.

Background - Kainaiwa

The Kainaiwa are a Blackfoot speaking tribe located on the Blood Reserve in the southwestern corner of Alberta, Canada. The reserve has been called the Blood Reserve because of a mistake made in translating the Blackfoot word for “weasel--when it is white in the winter.” It was mis-translated as “Blood People.” They also refer to themselves as Kainaiwa, meaning Many Chiefs, as many of them would present themselves as a chief when visiting other tribes.

When talking about themselves, the Kainaiwa call themselves “Indians,” rarely using the labels of “First Nations” or “Aboriginal.” I discussed which label would be most appropriate to use in this paper with Leo Fox, a Kainaiwa and a noted historian and language expert on the reserve. I was concerned about the implied racism that the word “Indian” carried. He stated that the word “Indian” was appropriate as it is how they refer to themselves. When writing about the Kainaiwa in this paper, I will refer to them as Indians, native and as Kainaiwa. I do not wish to perpetuate racism by using terms that further marginalize the Kainaiwa but there are times the word Indian will be used in an historical context.

White contact and the Kainaiwa

The changes that have occurred among the Kainaiwa since contact with the dominant white culture have greatly impacted them. They lost their independent way of life when the buffalo were eliminated. They changed from a free nomadic people to a

people whose mobility was restricted and who were dominated by the white culture.

This cultural domination came in the form of the colonial system of their conquerors the Canadian government. The Indian Act of 1884 not only defined what it meant to be an Indian but it established a specific set of laws by which the Indian was to live. The Indian Agent, a white man, was assigned by the government to oversee the affairs of the reserve. The Indian Act and the federal government accorded him a great deal of power over the Indian's life and affairs. Although this man might consult with certain elders on the reserve, he ultimately had control over them, much like a father would. He was referred to by the people as "Kinnoona," meaning "our father." It was with his permission that a person was allowed to set up a ranch or realize monetary gain from business activity on the reserve. It was also with his permission that one could leave the reserve with a permit to shop off the reserve in nearby towns such as Lethbridge or visit a relative on another reserve. All activities had to be approved by the agent. An Indian who dared to be independent risked going to jail.

The power to govern themselves was eroded starting with the legislation of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 preceded the British North American Act of 1867 which legalized the government's power. The various Indian Acts, beginning in 1876, were further amendments taking more and more power away from the Canadian aboriginals. Missionary schools began to crop up in the 1880s as they were compliant with the goals of these Acts: the complete assimilation of the Indians.

Historically, white people, believing that natives were 'savage' and lacking civility, have come to the reserve to enculturate native people and make them more like themselves. Around the turn of the century, missionaries like Middleton, believed that they knew how to change natives from 'savages' into 'civilized' people. They believed

natives to be inferior and less intelligent, and consequently, trained them as domestic workers and farm laborers (Titley, 1986, p. 133).

It is within this history and this setting that we will see how white people, especially educators, have interacted with the Kainaiwa. Canon Middleton participated fully in British colonialism and his pedagogy reflected that. Long Lance worked with children on the reserve but came to the reserve with his own agenda, to create a place for himself among them. My own story includes elements of both Middleton and Long Lance's journey in their interactions with the Kainaiwa.

Naapiaakii (Blackfoot word for "white woman")

I am a forty-four year old white woman. I live in Fort Macleod, located in the southwestern corner of Alberta, twenty-five km. from the Blood Reserve. I have worked as a Special Education teacher for the last seven years at Lavern Elementary School on the Blood Reserve. After purchasing my house in Fort Macleod, I learned that it was the house that Canon Middleton and his family lived in for many years. I have been sharing my home with a Kainaiwa man and his niece.

Fort Macleod is an historical community in southern Alberta as it was the first community created by the incoming settlers from the east. The North West Mounted Police built a fort, in 1874, at the site where the town now rests. The town has settled into an uneasy relationship with the native people in the area. The Peigan reserve is also approximately twenty-five km. to the west of town.

I learned I was white during my tenure as a teacher with the Kainaiwa. Of course, I was aware that I belonged to the racial group defined as white and knew that belonging meant that I was part of a group that held control but I did not know how "others" viewed me as a white person. I did not know how privileged I was belonging to this

group. I have slowly gained awareness of the magnitude of this privilege.

There is a correct line on the matter of white racism which is, in fact, quite correct, to the effect that as a white person one must never claim not to be racist, but only to be anti-racist. The reasoning is that racism is so systematic and white privilege so impossible to escape, that one is, simply trapped. (Frye, 1984, p. 126)

Awareness came slowly because at the beginning I was found to be a down-to-earth person by the Kainaiwa. This, I understand, is the ultimate compliment for a white person. It meant that I did not assume the airs of superiority that a white person usually carried. It meant I was considered to be more like them than other white people. The Kainaiwa consider themselves to be down-to-earth, and in fact, they call themselves “real people.” I was told I am like that. I was striving to be real with them and therefore, did not question this flattering perception of myself. I believed my search for acceptance as a person of value was over, I had found a place where I was understood.

Upon reflection, not only have I deceived them, but I have deceived myself. The deception was created in the mix of my personal history, my motivations for being on the reserve and the inherent racism that is within me.

As with many non-native teachers who work on the reserve, I arrived at the Blood reserve with an internalized agenda which had been set in motion by my family and cultural history. I was not aware that this agenda existed. In preparing this paper, I have begun to scrape the surface of this agenda and to attach greater meaning to my role as a worker in other cultures.

I now know that I came to be working on the reserve because I felt like an outsider within the dominant society. I identified with the Native people whom I saw as outsiders

like myself. I had hoped to find acceptance and understanding on the reserve. I believed I could find a place to express myself freely, unfettered by the bounds of any kind of oppression. I thought this freedom could be found there among the Kainaiwa. My beliefs, in hindsight, were formed by preconceived notions that because of the struggle for power the Kainaiwa had experienced, they would see me for what I was, their counterpart in a struggle against oppression. Like my predecessor Middleton, I came to the Blood reserve with a deeply entrenched notion of who the inhabitants were and how they would behave. Like Middleton, my notions grew out of my own experience and the society in which I was raised, lived, and educated.

II. Colonialism/Patriarchy

A parallel exists between non-native women and children and their struggle to gain autonomy within a patriarchal society and the Canadian native people and their history with colonialism and its inherent patriarchy. Power is used in society to dominate and control. Being white and male in our culture is an automatic entitlement to this power. Consequently women, children, and native people have been marginalized, unable to experience power within our society. Women in a patriarchal society have experienced domination for centuries. They fought for the right to vote, to have an education, to get a divorce, and to be free from abuse. Native peoples too have suffered under the domination of white people in a colonialist, patriarchal society.

Those people who lived on the reserve experienced the effect of patriarchy, imposed by members of the dominant society. The dominant society made decisions for aboriginal people regarding education, health care and virtually every other aspect of their lives. They believed they knew what was best for the Native peoples much like a father knows best for his children.

As a Special Education teacher on the Blood Reserve in southern Alberta, I have had the opportunity to observe and participate in Kainaiwa culture for the last seven years. Working on the reserve has allowed me to observe the growth in the education system as it changed from a government administered agency to a tribally administered school system wherein Indians govern themselves. Watching this growth process has been a factor in my participation, as a non-native teacher in a colonialist system defined here:

Colonialism, the conquest and direct control of other people's land, is a particular phase in the history of imperialism, which is now best understood as the globalisation of the capitalist mode of production, its penetration of previously

non-capitalist regions of the world, and destruction of pre- or non-capitalist forms of social organisation. (Williams & Chrisman, 1994, p. 4)

The conquest of Kainaiwa land and destruction of their social organization was furthered by the education legislated by the Canadian government. In order for colonialism to be successful, the conquered had to be transformed from the an outsider in the dominant system to an unquestioning participant. The most successful way to indoctrinate the Kainaiwa was to educate them in the dominant culture and to try to erase their own. This system of education was established with the assistance of Canon Middleton, and is still in existence today.

White male culture has also used the same process to control women. Defining women's lives, indoctrinating them in the dominant culture and controlling the participants in the desired social organization perpetuates male dominance.

Patriarchy and colonialism--as hierarchical forms of oppression used to subjugate inferior groups--became accepted as legitimate social arrangements.

...this hierarchical social structure is rooted in a dualistic ideology, 'transcendent dualism,' which stresses separation, polarization, and detachment between sexes, classes, and human and non human beings. In these binary opposition, man/upper-class, white/human beings and nonhuman beings are considered superior to woman/lower-class/people of color/nature. The subjugation of the inferior groups is thus accepted as a legitimate social arrangement. (Huey-li Li, 1993, p. 273)

I have learned through my encounters with native peoples that our attempts to understand each other's experience is very strongly related to our own experience. It is truly difficult to encompass what the other is really feeling or even trying to express.

Whether expressed as common consciousness or as mutual understanding, the ideal is one of the transparency of subjects to one another. In this ideal each understands the others and recognizes the others in the same way that they understand themselves, and all recognize that the others understand them as they understand themselves. (Young, 1990, p. 231)

My representation of the Kainaiwa is written from my experience, from my point of view. I am using the parallel connections of the oppression of women and children and natives as they are expressed in patriarchy and colonialism, to illustrate my experience of being “other.” As well it is a frame of reference for my relationship with the Kainaiwa. Finally it is hoped that this parallel will demonstrate a connection between the individual and the cultural experience of patriarchy.

“Othering”

While working among the Kainaiwa, I found myself challenged by the moral implications of being a white teacher in a culture which had been oppressed by white people. I wasn't aware of the reality of the Kainaiwa, that is, how they view themselves within their world. I had created an image of these people as the understanding, down-to-earth underdogs, who desired acceptance in the larger society. The understanding, down-to-earth underdog is also a description which I attached to myself. It would seem that I was projecting my need for acceptance on them, rather than being open to what their reality actually was. I was seeing them through my strong need for acceptance. But more importantly, I viewed the Bloods in a narrow, racist way. That is, I lumped them together as a whole and expected them to react to me in a singular, uniform way.

We, the culturally dominant, have the privilege of choosing our *others*. Through constructing such a difference we make our identity possible. We can only

perceive ourselves as 'normal,' meaning white, middle class, educated, or heterosexual because there are others whom we can define as different. (MacKinnon, 1993).

In my search for acceptance, I had taken the concept of "Otherness" to a whole new level. I wore it like a badge, and used it to justify my insecurities, labelling others according to my view of Otherness. I had to dig deeper and work harder at overcoming my need for acceptance in order to see my relationships with the Kainaiwa differently. I need to work on replacing my wants with an openness to learn about others.

In my search to find my place, it was important that I look even deeper into the issues of Otherness and what part it played in my life on the reserve. bell hooks talks of 'Otherness' in relation to race and specifically, whiteness.

Race is always an issue of Otherness that is not white; it is black, brown, yellow, red, purple even. Yet only a persistent, rigorous and informed critique of whiteness could really determine what forces of denial, fear, and competition are responsible for creating fundamental gaps between professed political commitment to eradicating racism and the participation in the construction of a discourse on race that perpetuates racial domination. (hooks, 1990, p. 54)

hooks further discusses how white women assume that they belong to the group of Other because of their experiences with patriarchy. She contends that this assumption by white women is another form of racism because within this discussion is the denial of the experience of the real Other.

The privilege of being white is an important issue that is rarely discussed by the white teachers within the context of working on the Kainai reserve. White people are part of an exclusive group which at this time has the most power and has control of most of

the resources and money in the world. White culture defines what culture is in this world. Any other race or culture is considered Other.

I found this to be true in my experience with the Kainaiwa. I assumed that because I had experienced oppression in the form of patriarchy, I intuitively understood the reality of the community I taught in. I took for granted and did not understand my role as a white person and the privilege that being white afforded. I inferred that other people's reality was the same as mine. These assumptions caused a strong shift in my thinking when I realized that "We don't think of ourselves as white" (Frye, 1984, p. 117). Of course, I knew I was white but was comfortably unaware of how the reality of my being white would touch the Kainaiwa community.

Cross-Cultural Teacher

When I came to the reserve, I had an image of the Kainaiwa as the underdog, and expectations of what would transpire in our relationship. Drawing from my own discussions with white people who have worked on the reserve, most of them have come to the reserve with expectations about teaching there and visions of how they would participate in the culture there. The teacher, in this case, becomes a cross-cultural worker, which is a different role than experienced when teaching in one's own culture. In order to address the possibility of perpetuating racism through teaching in the classroom, it is important for teachers to be aware of their motivations for teaching on the reserve. This awareness includes a process of looking at oneself in terms of personal history and the cultural history of both the teacher and the student. Looking at the past can help to understand the present and influence how we work in the future. This process enables the teacher to combat the unconscious transmittal of racism by making the teacher aware of the place they hold in relation to their students and their life on the reserve.

The central concern for me, as a pedagogue is: inadvertently and insidiously, what am I teaching the children? I teach the curriculum, but in my actions and the way I use my words, I can teach a whole spectrum of lessons, such as, what I think of these children, their culture and their community. I have to be constantly aware of myself in this way. Am I being effective in editing my unconscious thoughts regarding the Kainaiwa? Should anyone who must consciously edit their thoughts and remarks be working with the Kainaiwa? If one chooses to work among other cultural groups one should be knowledgeable about their own history in relation to the history of the people they are working with. As a pedagogue, I seriously contemplate my role in perpetuating racial domination.

A common stereotypic view of natives has them depicted as braves, savages, drunks, and uneducated, unclean recipients of welfare. They are most often viewed as a burden and sometimes a menace to society. As a cultural worker one has to become aware of those pedagogical practices that reinforce strategies of inclusion or exclusion. As suggested by Giroux (1993) these representations always exist within cultural limits and theoretical boundaries. Therefore, there are particular economies of truth, value and power. If we teach our students to resist stereo-typing of cultural definition and self representation we give them the opportunity to ask whose interests are being served by a particular representation.

A cultural worker should be a teacher who provides the students with a variety of critical methodologies. For example, a variety of approaches would be presented to promote understanding the issues regarding audience and reception. The student would come to understand how these were used by the dominant culture to produce specific subject positions and secure authority. A teacher would use a “Pedagogical practice which

addresses the issue of how forms of cultural identity are learned in relation to the ordering and structuring of dominant practices of representation” (Giroux, 1993, p. 117).

The teacher perpetuates the dominant culture’s pedagogy through a variety of means, such as, the texts that are used in the classroom, the material that is chosen to represent history, the view the teacher has of that history and the view the teacher has of the community and culture. If the teacher is not aware or careful, racist information can be passed on to the student through these means. The representation of native peoples in school text books and in the media is often from the point of view of the dominant, white culture.

A teacher must be aware of the intent of the material being presented in the modern classroom. “Identifications grounded in the racial superiority of whites, the fixing of Anglo-European culture as synonymous with civilization itself, and the civilizing mission of patriarchal, Eurocentric discourse are no longer easily maintained within mainstream ideologies and regimes of representation” (Giroux, 1993, p. 100).

An example of how history can be written from the view of an overseer, with a superior, detached voice appearing to report the truth is a monograph written in 1939. Goldfrank, an anthropologist at Columbia University, depicted the Kainaiwa as socially primitive people whose society was based on competition and status. She obtained her information from texts written on other anthropological studies as well as interviews of residents of the Blood reserve. She may have visited the reserve, but the culture of the Bloods is seen through her experience and the dominant intellectual discourse of the time. In the following passage, she discusses the effect that the residential school had on the social habits of the Kainaiwa.

Ironically enough, in this increasingly individualistic society, it is these boarding

schools that offer the most extended experience in joint living and cooperation. Among other things, they have encouraged the girls to take taka (a term of endearment usually used for a close relative). But their general emphasis is so contrary and their strict authoritarianism so foreign to the normal patterns of Blood life that their socializing influence is negligible. To a few children they have been havens from abuse or family discord, but even those who have benefited most from prolonged schooling (because they were poor or orphaned) suit their behavior in later life, not to their teachers' precepts, but to their social station. (Goldfrank, 1938, p. 58)

Although a student attending school on the Blood reserve may not have the opportunity to read this type of text, the tone of the passage is one of a superior observing an inferior culture. This superior tone can often be found in historical texts. Teaching students how to read material about their culture in a critical and informed way opens a strategy of enlightenment rather than experiencing the oppression inherent in the text.

I wonder what it means to be a pedagogue among the Kainaiwa? Teaching, in this instance, becomes more than adhering to a checklist of good teaching practices or even knowing the history of Kainaiwa oppression. No matter how entrenched colonial, patriarchal ideas are, white teachers are constantly contending with the overt anger which began with the relationships between the Kainaiwa and the early educators.

When Leo Fox, my school principal, suggested that the Kainaiwa currently have an undifferentiated anger towards white people, he was perhaps expressing their need to retrieve the betrayed stories of history. The Kainaiwa are currently undergoing a process of maintaining their language and infusing their culture into an educational system created

by their oppressors. White people have been seen as the cause of the loss of language, the loss of culture.

I entered this context--the product of the white culture of patriarchal dominance-- seeking to prove myself and gain acceptance in the world. Out of this I emerge, a seasoned teacher, challenged to look at my role in the cross-cultural experience and questioning my effectiveness as an educator.

III. Residential Schools as a Representation of Colonial Influence on the Kainai Reserve

An Historical Overview

The Kainaiwa's first experience with colonialism was in the mid 1880s when citizens of the British Empire began to move west. The European fur traders came to this land to make money. Initially animal pelts provided the focus for this commerce. One of the most valued pelts was that of the buffalo. The buffalo was the staple of the Blackfoot people providing them with food, clothing, material for teepees and tools (Fardy, 1984, p. 30).

The first prolonged contact between white people and the Kainaiwa began with the fur traders also known as whiskey traders who came north from the United States. These traders bartered alcohol in exchange for fur pelts that the Indians collected. The traders and Indians presented a barrier to the advancement of colonialism in the Canadian west. The Canadian government wanted settlers to move west where there were vast tracts of fertile prairie land which begged to be farmed. However, they were unable to send settlers west due to the raucous traders and the frequently drunk Indians (Fardy, 1984, p. 35).

As a result, the North West Mounted Police force was established by the newly formed Canadian government to impose law and order and to provide a presence in the Canadian west in 1874 . Upon their arrival in the west the NWMP built a fort, known today as Fort Macleod, situated 25 km. north of the Blood reserve and 25 km. east of the Peigan reserve. It became the sight for many historical interactions between the natives and the Europeans. In addition, Fort Macleod became the first settlement of white people in southern Alberta. As the NWMP enforced law and order, ranchers and other people migrated to this area. Large tracts of land were made available to the settlers by the

Canadian government.

To interrupt continuing conflict between the Blackfoot Confederacy and the settlers in this area, the newly formed government allotted the Blackfoot Confederacy three tracts of land which became the Blood, Peigan and Blackfoot reserves. The designation of these lands as reserves was legalized during the signing of Treaty 7 in September, 1877. The translation from English to Blackfoot in the signing of Treaty 7 was suspect. It is believed, based on historical records, that the government translators failed to interpret remarks made by both sides in their entirety (Fardy, 1984, p. 111). Therefore the Blackfoot chiefs' understanding of the impact of their agreement was questionable.

Settlers moving into southern Alberta impacted the basic survival of the Kainaiwa in two important ways. First, as the increasing numbers of settlers took over the land, the buffalo were killed off to near extinction, leaving the Kainaiwa without a food source. Second, the signing of the treaty forced them to give up their nomadic life style. As a consequence, they lived in extreme poverty on the reserves not knowing what to do in the absence of the buffalo hunt (Fardy, 1984, p. 113).

Into this atmosphere of desperate poverty came the European education system designed to assimilate the Kainaiwa into Canadian society. Christian missionaries were sent by governments and churches to further the colonialist ideals and to successfully assimilate the Indians (Titley, 1986, p. 135). It was thought that assimilation would eradicate the "Indian problem;" that when the Indians complied with the requirements needed to fit into the dominant culture they would be able to access employment and fend for themselves (Titley, 1986, p. 135). However naive the notion, it was wholeheartedly believed to be correct by the colonial powers of the day.

One of these missionaries was John Maclean who arrived in Fort Macleod in the late 1800s believing that he could aid in Christianizing the Kainaiwa. Maclean, a Methodist minister, lived among the Kainaiwa and talked of his meetings with them as enjoyable exchanges with people he called friends. In his description of a first encounter between a few settlers and Blackfoot people he knew, he chided the new-comers as “Simple tenderfeet!”:

With childish sentimentality they treated the red men as savages, and unable to pierce the shadow of their customs, they laughed at the queer ways of the people of the lodges, concluding that wisdom was the heritage of the white race.

(Maclean, 1896, p. 307)

Maclean was one of the first missionaries to open a day school program on the Blood reserve. At approximately the same time, three different groups opened schools on the reserve: the Methodists, the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans. The Methodists did not attract sufficient numbers of students to keep their school open so they transferred the students they had recruited to the Anglican mission. None of these schools were well attended, nor were they regularly attended. The attendance was voluntary and it was incumbent on the individual missionary to ensure that his school was filled with Indian students. Thus, day schools proved to be very inefficient. There was no guarantee that students would arrive at school each day (Titley, 1992, p. 99).

Residential schools were considered a viable alternative to the sporadic attendance of the day schools. The missionaries would have more control over students living in residence. To this end, in 1909 the Catholics opened St. Mary’s Residential School and the Anglicans opened St. Paul’s Residential School both, on the Blood Reserve. The educators now had more control over attendance and therefore could ensure that their

colonialist curriculum was being taught. In this all encompassing control they went so far as to stop the use of native languages. This had negative consequences for Kainaiwa culture in the long term.

The focus of the residential school program was to teach the Indian how to survive in the encroaching white world (Tittley, 1992, p. 95). In accordance with popular belief at the time, the missionaries from both residential schools believed that agriculture and domestic work were the most suitable occupations for Indians. These occupations were in demand off the reserve and would allow the male Kainaiwa to become self-sufficient ranchers on the reserve. Maclean (1896) reveals the sentiment of the time in the following quotation:

With the watchful care of the Government and the churches during his progress from savagery to civilization, the transfer and guidance of his energies toward cattle raising and agriculture, the enlightening and strengthening of his intellect by means of schools and missionaries, and confidence in our motives and measures, we may not in our day see the native fully civilized, but we shall enjoy the consciousness of having done our duty, and some progress toward his ultimate salvation will have been gained. (Maclean, 1896, p. 552)

The missionaries believed that much time and effort were needed to change the “savage” so that he/she would fit into the now dominant Euro-Canadian society. The residential school had the complete support of the government of the day. They even went so far as to include mandatory attendance as part of The Indian Act (1884).

Father Yvon Levaque, OMI, a Catholic missionary at St. Mary’s Residential School, also supported the philosophy inherent in the residential schools. The people on the Blood reserve were very poor, and he believed that they had no hope for the future or

for their children. The government was indifferent to Indians, and the schools were caught in the middle. In his defence of residential schools, the Catholic Church and their involvement in residential schools he justifies how the Indians were taught.

If the natives, at that moment of history, had been totally dependent on their own resources and devices to cope with the changes and adjustments which were forced upon them, there would be very few Indians left in Canada today. The same applies to the near impossibility of their survival should they have been left alone to cope with life, with only the medicine chest, the shot gun shells and the teachers promised to them by the government under the treaties. (Levaque, 1990, p. 183)

The rationalizations used by the missionaries to keep the Kainaiwa sheltered at residential schools were three-fold: to civilize the savage, to combat poverty by training them for menial jobs and to assimilate the Indians into dominant culture.

The people on the reserve acquiesced to the domination intended by the residential schools and became a part of the welfare state. "Welfare capitalist society creates specifically new forms of domination. Increasingly the activities of everyday work and life come under rationalized bureaucratic control, subjugating people to the discipline of authorities and experts in many areas of life" (Young, 1990, p. 76). The government had control of how Kainaiwa parents cared for their children for many years of a child's life. During the time of government controlled schools, Indian Affairs also employed staff, managed finances and directed the path education would take.

By 1972 both St. Paul's and St. Mary's Residential Schools were closed. Although Indian Affairs still had control of native education, the focus was to integrate the students into the provincial schools in the surrounding towns. St. Mary's operated as

a high school and the building eventually housed Red Crow Community College. In 1988, the Kainaiwa took control of their educational system from Indian Affairs.

Currently, the reserve school board consists of elected community members who hire staff and are responsible for all aspects of education. The community members believe that they have power within the school system. However, native parents are often reluctant to deal with the school. It has been explained to me that some Kainaiwa have been so scarred by their experiences of racism at the hands of white teachers that they still avoid interaction with the school.

Canon Middleton

Cannon Middleton came to the plains of southern Alberta, the land of the Bloods, because he dreamt of living with the “redman,” regaled in war paint and feathers. Having been offered a position to work on a ranch in Brocket, he arrived in Alberta just as it was becoming a province on 1905. He was present at the ceremonies commemorating this event at Fort Macleod. The Blackfoot, in splendid traditional dress, participated in a celebratory dance. Middleton was “enchanted with this barbaric splendour” (Forsberg, 1964, p. 3). His dream to live with the ‘noble savage’ was coming to fruition.

In 1909, he followed his calling becoming headmaster of St. Paul’s Residential School on the Blood reserve. Later he became ordained as an Anglican minister. From the beginning, he experienced resistance from the native people he was to teach. He worked hard to overcome this resistance. He learned Blackfoot, got to know members of the community, provided food and clothing for the needy and in general became a friend to the Bloods. Former students praise him frequently in Kitomahkitapiiminnooniksi: Stories from Our Elders, a set of books compiled to collect Kainaiwa elders’ stories. They remember him as being kind, for his concern for their education and later, his input into

their lives as they left the school to enter the world.

Middleton's Mission and the Kainai Chieftainship

Middleton's mission was to make the life of the Indian less nomadic, less pagan, and less quarrelsome while transforming the Indian into a more civilized being who could be assimilated into the lower-class of white people. He saw this transformation taking time to occur. He believed that an even longer time was necessary to develop the strategies needed to assimilate Indians into the higher classes of white society. It was clear to Middleton that the world was changing and the Indians had to change with it. He told his autobiographer that "The Bloods were restless, aggressive and predatory" (Forsberg, 1964, p. 14). Middleton believed that they needed to become loyal, steady and self-disciplined, like the people raised in the British tradition. The Kainaiwa needed these qualities in order to deal with the overwhelming demands of the white culture which was overtaking theirs.

His philosophy of education was deeply entrenched in colonialism as Middleton believed he could decide what was best for the Kainaiwa. He believed he knew what was needed for them to succeed in the world. He was, in fact, deeply entrenched in patriarchal thought. As we will see from Canon Middleton's experience, he came to live in and change his new environment. Although the purpose of his immigration was to make a life for himself in the 'new world,' he brought with him the authority, as a member of white male privilege, to change the world he found to be more to his liking.

In order for his mission to be accomplished, Middleton believed that the Kainaiwa should be introduced to people who exemplified the most desirable qualities of white culture. He invited men of stature to the reserve, and was eventually instrumental in starting the Kainai Chieftainship. The goal of the Chieftainship was to have role models

for his students. The Kainai Chieftainship, consists of a group of forty men, who much like the Rotary Club or Masons (Middleton was a member of both) perform charitable deeds on the reserve. The selected mentors arranged for scholarships and provided guidance for sports and cultural activities. These activities were meant to help improve relations between the Kainaiwa and white people (Dempsey, 1997, p. 5). The Bloods did not participate in the selection of the members of the Chieftainship. They were generally observers of the ceremony. Usually, Middleton conducted the ceremonies at St. Paul's Residential School. Middleton himself became an honorary chief in 1940.

During his tenure, Middleton dominated the formal induction ceremony to the Chieftainship, which, in his mind, provided the Blood Reserve with a mentorship of influential individuals. Middleton selected the inductees to the Chieftainship and controlled the schedule of the events. Individuals selected during Middleton's tenure included The Prince of Wales, Lord Tweedsmere and many dignitaries of the Anglican church.

The selected members participated in a brotherhood ceremony conducted by Mountain Horse, a favored medicine man. The ritual was a combination of Indian and British elements: the Indian naming ceremony and British tea party (Dempsey, 1997, p. 59). The participants would be given a Blackfoot name by the medicine man and they would then celebrate by sitting down to tea, served, of course, by the female students of St. Paul's Residential School.

The high profile and prestige of the Kainai Chieftainship served several purposes for Canon Middleton. One, he was able to use St. Paul's Residential School, and therefore himself, as an example of how these schools should be run. Two, he was able to further the pedagogy of the Anglican Church and the ideals and values of the British as an

alternative to what existed on the reserve. Third, he was able to entertain the influential people of his day, furthering his cause and the cause of the church. Finally, it was a way for him to solicit funds for the reserve, lifting the profile of the school and creating interest in the graduates of the school (Dempsey, 1997, p. 59). Civilized students cast a positive reflection on Middleton and consequently, the Anglican Church.

Middleton the Mentor

Middleton was so convinced that his students would benefit from the type of schooling he offered that he started several initiatives to further colonial pedagogy. He established a group of army cadet corps who won the prize in 1920 as the best cadet corps in the province. The group was highly disciplined and regimented. The boys involved in the cadets were trained to behave and dress as any student attending a British school would (Dempsey, 1997, p. 29).

The school held yearly reunions that kept the graduates involved and loyal to the school. In this way, the former students would ensure that their family members would continue to be enrolled in St. Paul's' Residential School. The school benefited from a high profile on the reserve. I was told by a former student that the reunion celebration involved a formal banquet where the students were required to wear suits and gowns, and a dance where everyone moved not to the beat of an Indian drum, but to the popular music of the time.

Middleton used his summer home at Waterton to house the students who were able to accompany his family there during the holidays. The students helped the Middleton family with light housekeeping duties while they continued to be schooled on an informal basis.

Canon Middleton played a big part in his students' lives, even after they left the

school. When female students graduated, he found them jobs as domestic workers with his friends living in various places in Canada. The male workers were encouraged to become farmers, farm helpers and ranchers. Many graduates of St. Paul's became farmers and ranchers on their own land on the reserve.

If a student showed that they possessed a particular talent, Middleton would mentor them. The Canon became interested in a promising artist, Gerald Tail Feathers. In the years Gerald attended St. Paul's, Middleton helped him show his work to the government for grant money and submitted Gerald's work on his behalf, enabling him to get an artist's job at the Hudson's Bay Company in Calgary.

Gerald wanted to become a serious artist selling his work in Calgary and Banff. The Canon, however, thought that Gerald would do far better if he anglicized his name in order to avoid the racism that he felt Gerald would encounter. Thus, his name became Gerald T. Fethers and later Gerald T. Feathers finally becoming Gerald Feathers. In the end, Gerald found that it was more advantageous to use his Blackfoot name as he received more attention when it became known that his art was of native origin (Dempsey, 1970, p. 9).

Middleton cared deeply for his students much as a father might for the children in his care. As a participant in the pedagogy of colonialism, Middleton was an oppressor of the Kainaiwa. Young explains how this oppression is a part of Middleton's every day life:

Oppression refers to the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions, media and cultural stereotypes, and structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms-in short, the normal

processes of everyday life. We cannot eliminate this structural oppression by getting rid of the rulers or making some new laws, because oppressions are systematically reproduced in major economic, political and cultural institutions. (Young, 1990, p. 41)

Middleton upheld the system of colonialism on the reserve in his “care” of the Kainaiwa.

Educating the Kainaiwa

Middleton had very strong convictions about Indian education which were influenced by his British background. He considered himself to be a leader of the Kainaiwa. In so doing, it was his duty to guide these unsophisticated and primitive people into the complexities of white culture. Intrinsic to the way Middleton behaved and thought was the assumption that he knew what was best for the Kainaiwa, individually and as a group. It became his moral responsibility to be their spiritual and pedagogical guide. The following is a discussion of the Canon’s beliefs as outlined in his biography.

The Canon did not believe that an Indian could live as an Indian in both worlds; eventually, he would have to forsake one for the other. “In the white world the Indian must learn to put off the things that are Indian” (Forsberg, 1964, p. 62). Middleton believed that this process would take a generation or more to reach fruition, making the Kainaiwa comfortable in the white world.

The Canon believed the Indian in this tribal state had had an education well suited to his needs. He was taught how to protect himself and how to provide for his physical requirements. The chief aim of his education was to help him get his living just as a major aim of modern education was self-support. But Indian education did not neglect cultural factors. The student learned tribal ceremonies, tribal lore, courage; thus, he gained personal standing in his tribe. He sought knowledge of tribal ceremonies for the sake of

his individual salvation and of influence over others (Forsberg, 1964, p. 81).

The Canon viewed tribal ceremonies as a way to mix European and Kainaiwa cultures. Since Middleton believed that the Kainaiwa needed to learn white ways, he diligently strived to replace Kainaiwa ceremonies with his own version of how these events should transpire (such as in the Kainai Chieftainship induction ceremonies mentioned above).

Although the Canon felt compelled to modify ceremonies on the reserve, he did allow that the Kainaiwa learned differently than he did. The Canon postulated that knowledge came from the five senses for the Indian and a fundamental trades curriculum should be taught. Rather than focusing on the traditional academic education for the Kainaiwa, Middleton thought: “A new trinity had replaced the three r’s - the hand, the eye, the voice. Pupils were being taught to observe and from their impressions to sift particular ideas” (Forsberg, 1964, p. 96). The males would be taught to be carpenters, farmers, or outside workers and the females would be taught to be domestic workers. Middleton didn’t foresee Indians becoming wealthy as they would only be able to obtain a modest income based on the work they were suited to. The education he offered would rid them of their messiness, their disorganization. “Out of such an educational background the efficient red citizen could emerge” (Forsberg, 1964, p. 82).

Survival skills such as self-preservation and being able to secure what was needed to survive were an important part of the educational curriculum at St. Paul’s. Family life, proper social and political relations, and proper leisure activities were a substantial component of the Canon’s curriculum. The Canon believed the Christian approach to education was unequalled because it was the way to see the ‘truth.’

As a religious and moral Briton, the Canon taught school believing that he was an

instrument in the evolution of his students rather than the dominator of his students (Forsberg, 1964, p. 83). Middleton's evolving belief was that community and care for others was important. He believed that if he and his colleagues were to make mistakes as they were educating, the mistakes only added to the character of the teacher and the students. A strong sense of duty on the part of the teacher as well as the student was integral to the Kainaiwa's education. Service to others was a concept the Canon believed needed to be introduced to his students. He assumed that his students didn't have the concept and practice of service in their own culture (Forsberg, 1964, p. 95).

Buffalo Child Long Lance

Long Lance was recruited by Middleton as a role model for his students. Long Lance, a reporter for a Calgary newspaper became very close friends with Middleton. Long Lance led Middleton to believe that he was an Eastern Cherokee who became a Canadian war hero. "He himself an Indian from the States, where he had attended Carlisle Indian School. The Carlisle authorities had prefixed an inappropriate "Sylvester" to his own name, "Long Lance" (Smith, 1982, p. 19).

Long Lance is a very interesting anomaly. He fled from the United States to Canada to escape the life of a black man and found some measure of success as an Indian. Long Lance exemplified all of the qualities that Middleton believed the Indians of the Blood reserve needed in order to experience success in the dominant culture. Long Lance dressed well, was educated and carried himself as a cultured man.

Long Lance, as the unfolding of history reveals, was not what he appeared to be. Sylvester Long, of mixed African American, Cherokee and white blood was looking for a way to escape the restricted life of a person considered to be black in North Carolina. Even though African Americans were no longer slaves, their existence had not evolved

much beyond their former days as slaves. Taking advantage of his indistinct looks, he took the opportunity to attend Carlisle Indian Residential School. He began developing a different identity, that of a native person (Smith, 1982, p. 14). Ironically, he was developing the character of a native person at an Indian school while the school was trying to strip away the native culture and make him more like a white person.

Upon leaving the residential school, Long Lance applied, as an Indian, to attend West Point Academy. Before they could find out what his background was (African American), he purposely failed his exams and joined the Canadian Army (Smith, 1982, p. 38). The Canadians were preparing to leave for Europe to fight World War I. He became a war hero by surviving Vimy Ridge, despite being hit with shrapnel in both legs. When he returned to Canada after the war, he trained as a journalist and headed west to Calgary.

As time passed, he created more of a native identity for himself. As a reporter for the Calgary Herald, he wrote about their plight in the Canadian west and became familiar with the native people around Calgary and the people involved with them, including Canon Middleton. Middleton and Long Lance became life-long friends and Long Lance regularly confided in Middleton.

Middleton was confused about Long Lance. Long Lance was different than the Kainaiwa. He considered Long Lance extraordinary, but also, undeniably non-Native. His ease with strangers, his command of the English language, his firm handshake, and the smartly tailored suit were not attributes perceived as native at that time. He reconciled this with the fact that, as a Cherokee, his culture had been “civilized” for more than a century and was easily a couple of generations ahead of the Canadian Plains Indians (Smith, 1982, p. 73). It was for these reasons that the Canon thought that Long Lance would be an excellent role model for his students. Long Lance was asked to speak to the

students at St. Paul's Residential School, in order to inspire them to become like him, a successful "Indian" person who had crossed the barrier of race and worked successfully in white culture.

Long Lance had an agenda of his own, however. He used his friendship with Middleton to be introduced to influential Blood members such as, Michael Eagle Speaker, and to be inducted into the Kainai Chieftainship. This would further verify the change Long Lance was plotting, to remove any question of his racial background and firmly entrench himself as Kainaiwa. In 1922, Mountain Horse performed the induction ceremony and Long Lance became known as Buffalo Child Long Lance.

In 1927, Long Lance travelled to New York and wrote a book about his life entitled Long Lance. An Autobiography of a Blackfoot Indian Chief. He used material and stories obtained from listening to Mike Mountain Horse tell of his life on the Blood reserve. The book's forward was written by Canon Middleton and after being examined by elders on the Blood reserve was found to contain many inaccuracies. Despite this, Long Lance was given much critical acclaim in the east, and his book became a best seller that year. The publishers did not investigate the authenticity of this book which exposed the life of the noble savage. The image of the Kainaiwa created by Long Lance was accepted as the truth (Smith, 1982, p. 148).

A year after it was published, questions about the authenticity of the book and Long Lance's racial background were raised by scholars in the United States. To retreat from the limelight he went to northern Manitoba to act as the lead character in the first all-Indian silent film, The Silent Enemy. The natives from Manitoba employed on the set of the film raised concerns about Long Lance's cultural and spiritual practices. Their

questions were serious enough to cause a delayed release of the film, while Long Lance's authenticity was checked by experts (Smith, 1982, p. 178).

After an extensive investigation in the United States by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (October, 1928), and finally exposed as an impostor, Long Lance seemed to give up on life. He became a drinker, retired from public life and relied on his good looks to solicit the generosity of wealthy women. It is believed that Long Lance committed suicide in California. The Canon told his biographer that despite not knowing Long Lance's origins, "I knew the Indian, the man, which he truly was groping for higher things through a very complex transition, hindered withal by many apparent contradictions, yet holding fast to an indefinable something" (Forsberg, 1964, p. 66). Middleton and Long Lance were friends until Long Lance's death, and in fact, Middleton was the executor of Long Lance's will. "In the missionary's words, 'the two became fast friends and blood brothers'" (Forsberg, 1964, p. 58). Middleton saw that Long Lance acted as a white man but underlying this was the primitive Indian, a part that the Canon thought Long Lance was unable to shed.

The Indian in the white man's world had to be steady enough to meet social extremes. He must not allow himself to be cast down by the 'second class citizen' stigma; he must not lose his sense of proportion when he was romantically dramatized. (Forsberg, 1964, p. 64)

Canon's praise of Long Lance as an Indian exemplifies a paradox: a created ideal of the dominant culture imposed on what was considered to be an inferior culture. It is ironic that Long Lance, in seeking refuge from racism, became an instrument in furthering dominance of another kind: colonialism. He was the Canon's example of how an Indian should be. Long Lance, by writing his book and appearing in the movie about Indians,

added fuel to the already popular image that white people had of the Indian, the noble savage.

Long Lance offers us an intriguing picture into the hierarchy of racism. He chose to leave the life of an African American, searching for the freedom he perceived the native culture possessed. In order to do this, he had to remove the evidence of the culture in which he was raised and assume the essence of the culture in which he wished to participate. Being African American is denoted not only by skin color but in mannerisms and demeanour. Living in what was seen by others as an African American's body must have been totally demoralizing for him to want to completely change his identity.

When the dominant culture defines some groups as different, as the Other, the members of those groups are imprisoned in their bodies. Dominant discourse defines them in terms of bodily characteristics, and constructs those bodies as ugly, dirty, defiled, impure, contaminated, or sick. (Young, 1990, p. 123)

Although Aboriginal people would be described as Other, their skin color would be less an extreme difference from white skin. Therefore, Long Lance may have sought refuge from racism in portraying himself as Aboriginal. He did not assume the mannerisms, speech, dress of the typical native person of the time, he chose to be more like his oppressor, the dashing, white male.

Canon Middleton and Buffalo Child Long Lance

Long Lance was Middleton's ideal of what a civilized Kainaiwa would be like. He exemplified a native person still knowledgeable of his own culture but firmly entrenched in white culture and able to mix freely in both worlds. Long Lance achieved this balance by being an outsider and separate from native culture. This distance from native culture was what civilized Long Lance and what Middleton strived to teach his students.

Middleton and Long Lance were able to help each other. Middleton needed Long Lance as an example for his students and Long Lance needed Middleton to legitimize his identity as an Indian. When Long Lance was investigated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1928, Middleton was contacted as a character reference. Although Middleton knew of the questions being raised about Long Lance's origin he did not address them in his biography, which include long passages of direct quotes from Middleton about Long Lance.

Possessing this knowledge and not disclosing it in his biography as a part of his involvement with Long Lance changed the way I thought of Middleton's tenure. His omission of Long Lance's true story was dishonest. I realized that Middleton did not want to expose his perfect example of the civilized Indian as a fake. Perhaps it posed a threat to Middleton's mission as a teacher because he did not have a successful example of an Indian who removed themselves from their culture as it appeared Long Lance had. The lines of racial identity were ambiguous in this example.

Essentializing difference expresses a fear of specificity, and a fear of making permeable the categorical border between oneself and the others. The fear may increase, moreover, as a clear essentialism of difference wanes, as belief in a specifically female, Black, or homosexual nature becomes less tenable. (Young, 1990, p. 170)

Middleton's Final Years

Middleton believed that Kainaiwa needed to have a good leader. As that leader, Middleton reasoned, he had to examine their lives closely. The leader had to be 'attuned' to his own outlook, where he came from and how it affected where he was, his spirituality and family life. The Canon argued that the church was not making sure that

the leaders it sent out to live with the Indians were of such sterling quality. He petitioned them to provide the reserves with better leaders (Forsberg, 1964, p. 99).

During the later years in his life, Middleton was asked by a newspaper to comment on Indian concerns and education. He stated that the government and the church were not helping the Indians at all. The government was looking for ways to cut back on the money being spent and the church was waiting for the government to make revisions to the Indian Act. Middleton worried that Indian issues were a low priority. Politicians raised enfranchisement as an alternative to the reserve system, being far cheaper than supporting Indians on reserves. Middleton thought that enfranchisement was an alternative, only if the Indians proved themselves worthy of it. He thought that if all Indians were allowed to be enfranchised it would prove to be disastrous. He argued that Indians weren't ready for enfranchisement as they still had to learn how to live in white culture and had to gain "moral fibre." St. Paul's Residential School would readily provide the education needed to increase their moral fibre (Forsberg, 1964, p. 100).

The Canon must have felt successful in changing the moral fibre of Indians because in 1949, the year he retired as head-master of St. Paul's, the Canon's goal changed "to developing better Indian Canadians rather than better Canadian Indians" (Forsberg, 1964, p. 99). Therefore, he no longer believed that native students should be educated separately from their white counterparts. In fact he was instrumental in getting four Kainaiwa students enrolled in the Cardston High School system that year.

The Canon believed he had succeeded in his mission with the Kainaiwa. "As he left the reserve, he looked with pride at the people he considered his. One of his cherished dreams had been to lift them out of their economic slough of despond" (Forsberg, 1964, p. 104). He saw that their economic resources had increased and that their needs were being

met. He believed that they were well on their way to becoming what he considered full citizens of Canada.

The Canon's vision of the Kainaiwa was steeped in patriarchy. He believed he was a leader and father of these people. His goal had been to civilize them, to have their "savagery" subjugated or eradicated by white culture.

Middleton's Legacy

History affords us the luxury of looking back and passing judgment on the thoughts and actions of those who came before us. We can attempt to compare what was known then with our current knowledge to see if any progress has been made.

In his effort to change their culture, Middleton failed to consider that the knowledge the Kainaiwa already possessed about the world, nature, and themselves was valid. He paid lip service to participating in their culture, despite being fluent in the Blackfoot language. His mission kept him closed to what survival skills and spiritual life the Kainaiwa did possess. Being open to what he could learn from the people and the culture of Kainaiwa was overshadowed by his search for their deficits, and his vision of himself as their educational and spiritual guide. He assumed that power was for him to take, manifesting a traditional white male role in a colonial dominion.

What was the "real" effect of Canon Middleton's pedagogy? The Kainaiwa did not assimilate, they still maintain separate lives on the reserve. Many who obtained jobs off the reserve, with the Canon's help, returned to the reserve to raise their families and still live there.

In 1999, fifty years after Middleton retired there is high unemployment on the reserve, poverty and housing are a constant concern for the Kainaiwa. Ranching is largely

an activity of a few rich families. Most land owners rent their land to outside farmers who reap the benefits of the fertile soil.

Trained for menial jobs, many Kainaiwa continue to be subservient to whites off reserve, and most whites, possessing the negative stereotype of the Indian, will not hire them. Middleton thought assimilation would work but couldn't protect the Kainaiwa from the deep prejudices that would keep them from realizing economic gains off the reserve.

My impression of the Canon is that he had an unquestioning and unwavering belief in his own moral superiority. The complexity of the problems he encountered during his tenure at St. Paul's required deep thought and questioning. However, it appears that he followed his own pedagogy unwaveringly with an almost complete absence of deep thought or questioning. Answers to how the Kainaiwa could pull themselves from their impoverished state weren't easy to come by.

I read glowing reports about Middleton in the elder's stories and was confused. Why would people who had remained on the reserve while not following Middleton's assimilation agenda find him exemplary? Did they not realize he believed he was superior to them? Leo Fox, who helped collect the elder's stories, believes that the people with a positive impression of Middleton were white oriented to begin with. Many were descendants of fur traders who mixed with the Kainaiwa during the late 1800s.

When reading the stories and talking to a few of the elders I also found that these people equated success in their lives in terms of white culture's goals. They became the upwardly mobile, owners of property on the reserve. Mr. Fox used the Gladstone family, whose patriarch became a Canadian senator, as an example of the type of family Middleton supported and who in turn, supported Middleton.

Middleton's biography, Chief Mountain: The Story of Canon Middleton by

Roberta Forsberg makes no mention of the Kainaiwa as bright or intellectual. Middleton never mentioned any knowledge of wisdom that was imparted to him by the Kainaiwa. He firmly believed in his own moral superiority.

What is Canon Middleton's legacy? Clearly, things didn't work out the way he had envisioned. The Kainaiwa are as segregated today as they were in Middleton's time. Education is a major issue on the reserve.

Even though the Bloods now have band administered schools they are still governed according to the colonial pedagogy which, of course, is all they (the Bloods) know, having been raised themselves in residential schools. Consequently, after over one hundred years of attempted assimilation we still have segregation of two peoples who fear and distrust one another.

IV. The Journey of a Learner

Initially, employment was my solitary goal for working on the Blood reserve. I was not looking for other underlying factors which would have compelled me to work with the Kainaiwa. After much reflection and many discussions with women who have also worked with native people; I have concluded that I am here for many reasons. My relationships with my family, my culture, and my world have all influenced the direction that my life would take. These relationships ultimately had a profound bearing on my choice to work with and among native people.

Family History

I grew up in a small Saskatchewan farm community, the oldest of eight children. My parents are first generation Canadians of German decent. Their parents had emigrated from Russia at the turn of the century. My grandparents belonged to a group of Germans kept separate from Russian society as farmers cloistered in colonies, much like the Hutterites we see in Canada today.

The Hutterites have the same history as my family. They were moved from their land on the border of France and Germany when Napoleon gave their land to his conquering generals and friends. This group of people consisted of many religions and cultures but they were similar in that they all spoke German and were from the same area in Germany.

Even though my family was one generation removed from the closed German culture they descended from, the history and certain aspects of that culture remained present. Our family, and especially my father, was part of the patriarchal system which had controlled our private and public life for large parts of our family history. My father participated in the hegemony of social control through patriarchy. Our troubled

relationship is no different than the relationships many other people have with their fathers. Our primary relationships originate in a far larger context than the family.

As a result of my relationship with my father, his dominance and control in the family, I began to read feminist literature and question how power was exploited both in our family and in the world. Power was distributed hierarchically and primarily delegated to white men. My father's dominance was socially constructed and institutionalized as patriarchy.

Women's oppression consists not merely in an inequality of status, power, and wealth resulting from men's excluding them from privileged activities. The freedom, power, status, and self-realization of men is possible precisely because women work for them. Gender exploitation has two aspects, transfer of the fruits of material labor to men and transfer of nurturing and sexual energies to women. (Young, 1990, p. 50)

My father's entrenched role as the patriarch of our family prevented me from becoming myself or at the very least, caused me to have to battle harder and to risk his scorn and rejection in order to be myself, that is, an outspoken, independent, woman who chose to have a career. I, then, changed how I looked at the world, and began my journey to discover my personal power as separate and distinct from my father and other white males in positions of power. As a result of this questioning, I became aware that I had to learn to take control of my "voice" and learn to use my own power.

The shame from being scarred with a cleft palate and lip has inhibited the development of my voice. I was able to speak with a slight lisp on the 's' as the deformity did not cause any physical pain or discomfort. However, in my family and at school, I was seen as different. Yvonne Johnson describes how she felt as a person with

the same condition in her book, Stolen Life: The Journey of a Cree Woman.

Walk away with my head down and shoulders sagging, alone. It was like being deaf but still hearing, speaking but speechless-it was there, heaping up inside me. I could not ask questions, just puzzle everything around inside my head, dreaming it, bouncing it back and forth, without any guidance to help me understand. So I learned by instinct, by watching to see and recognize what others don't, to judge myself by taking chances. To depend only on myself. There was no one else.

(Wiebe & Johnson, 1998, p. 30)

I identified so strongly with the deformity that my use of language reflected this. I referred to myself as a "cleft palate" or "hare lip." I was twenty-one when I realized that I used those words instead of the word "person." I am not a hare lip, I am a person.

Becoming a "Special Educator"

In my search to belong and find my own voice, I explored the 'margins' of my world seemingly unable to fit into the mainstream. I found women who shared my independence and developed friendships with people of different cultures and races, always unconsciously looking for other people who were not part of the mainstream. Perhaps it was my search for acceptance among the marginalized of society that brought me to work in the field of Special Education.

In the area of Special Education the children are often marginalized in the school. The other children treat them badly and reject them because they are different physically and/or mentally. "Marginals are people the system of labor cannot or will not use" (Young, 1990, p. 53). My own experiences with marginalization, as a person with a cleft palate, compelled me to slip easily into role of advocate. When I first began teaching, in 1988, at a mixed native and white community in the north, I found that these students

were marginalized in their own community because of their afflictions and marginalized in the larger community because they were often native. It was easy to see myself as their protector, wishing I had had a protector for myself when I was young.

I found working in Special Education--whether it was in a racially mixed or in predominantly white or native communities--challenged my ideas regarding how the world should be. I began as an idealist with the utopian view that everyone had the right to participate as fully as possible in what society had to offer. I learned that to be marginalized wasn't necessarily the fault of the individual. People were marginalized because they didn't have the necessary qualifications to fit the narrowly defined terms for entitlement to the dominant group. These terms have been historically defined by the white colonialist patriarch. "Dependency in our society thus implies, as it has in all liberal societies, a sufficient warrant to suspend basic rights to privacy, respect, and individual choice" (Young, 1990, p. 54).

The juxtaposition of my utopian ideals and the hard lessons of reality created a place for me to learn that those insiders were usually white and male. They defined the stereo-types that marginalize people like--women, children, natives, and the handicapped--in order to maintain control.

Teaching on the Kainai Reserve

After three years of teaching in the north and a year of teaching in a middle-class school in a small community close to Calgary, I accepted a position, in 1991, on the Blood Reserve in southern Alberta, even though I did not know their specific history, or language. I had never met a Blackfoot person. In my ignorance, I believed that I would become immersed in their culture and language while I was teaching there. I expected to find an openness and a curiosity about me as a person. I expected to be judged for who I

was rather than what I was, a white woman. I believed, in my naivete, that the Kainaiwa would be accepting because they had experienced the same domination and rejection of the white culture as had I.

I assumed that I would no longer be an outsider and reasoned: How could outsiders find me to be an outsider? I wanted to belong, as much as was possible for a non-Blackfoot person. In my uneducated vision of working on the Blood reserve, I viewed myself as a separate person maintaining my own individuality, yet able to mingle with the people there unencumbered by being different, being white. I did not see any intrinsic racism in how I taught, or how I interacted with the people.

When I first came to teach on the Blood reserve, I was constantly reminded that I was white and told that white people possessed many negative traits including a preoccupation with money and a non-caring attitude toward others. Whatever I did to dispel these views, I was never able change the immediate impression that I possessed these traits because I was white. I accepted this view of my race as the price I had to pay for being white and for working with them.

I was thirty-eight years old when I realized that I had the privilege of being white. Previous to this, I assumed that everyone experienced reality the way I did. Reality for me meant being able to go where I wanted to go, have what I wanted and associate with whomever I wished to. "White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (McIntosh, 1998, p. 148).

The Journey of a Learner

Over the next seven years, I discovered that I was an outsider on the reserve and I did not have a role within the life there, other than by being a white teacher at the school

in Lavern and a friend to a few people. Most see me as a white person first. This view of non-natives is so pervasive that I have only met a few Kainaiwa who first take me as an individual, as a person, as Denise. Occasionally, I am seen as an individual person apart from my whiteness and I have developed intimate relationships with my partner and a few close friends.

As a result of this difference in my expectations and what I actually experienced, I am even more aware of myself as an outsider. Even though I have been invited to participate fully in the cultural life of the reserve: sweats, Sundances, powwows, and I live with a native man and mother an adopted native child, I find that I still encounter misunderstanding.

I discussed these ideas with our school principal, Leo Fox. He understood my point regarding the Kainaiwa and their attitudes toward white people and agreed that this was the case for most Kainaiwa. He explained that at this time and place in history, the Kainaiwa are experiencing a non-specific anger aimed at non-Natives. At this point in their process of developing their own voice, they are more cognizant of the oppression they have experienced at the hands of white people than ever before. Within their own boundaries, that is the reserve, they are free to express that anger. Because I happen to be a white person and teaching on the reserve during this time, I have felt the brunt of this anger.

On the other hand, because I have expressed an interest in the ceremonies and customs, I have been considered to be a white person with whom it was easy to relate. I have felt as much a part of the community as I believed a white person could.

However, the acceptance I have experienced has lulled me into a false sense of security. I have developed thought patterns and behaviours that helped me rationalize

why I was accepted into this community while others were not. At work, I tended to maintain a morally superior attitude toward the other white teachers because, in my hunger to belong, I chose to participate as fully as I could in reserve events and activities. I felt accepted as a part of a family group on the reserve and travelled with my friend from the reserve to functions and ceremonies. I believed that my peers were not as open as I to befriending native people and were, therefore, racist. I believed that I was able to cross the cultural and racial boundaries that the teachers I worked with were unwilling to or could not cross.

It has been through the process of writing this paper that I have come to realize that I was projecting my own needs onto the Kainaiwa. Until recently, I hadn't realized the privilege of being white. By being "nice" and "down-to-earth," I could give the Kainai the same unearned position that I have assumed as a white person in the world. Frye discusses white privilege as being outright racist or being:

one who "graciously" lets the possibly deviant/dark person pass as normal/white, is often considered a nice person and not a bigot. People of both types seem to me to be equally arrogant: both are arrogating definitional power to themselves and thereby asserting that defining is exclusively their prerogative.

(Frye, 1984, p. 117)

The racism I exhibit is more insidious than overt racism and therefore more dangerous because it is hidden. I realize that I am racist much like the teachers I had previously accused of racism.

The process of discovering white privilege is fresh and at this point, it is difficult to see beyond myself as a racist. My next challenge will be to rid myself of this simplistic view and the guilt it holds. The journey is more complex than I have described because I

realize that I live in two worlds. I am an insider and privileged as a white person as well as an outsider and marginalized as a woman. Working in another culture adds further confusion to the complex mix that encompasses my journey as a learner.

V. Conclusion

I participated in a conversation with my white peers a few days after I began teaching on the Blood reserve and realized that being white and teaching on the reserve was more complicated than I had anticipated. The teachers were talking about a native colleague, changing their tone, speaking in terms of “us and them,” and repeatedly looking around to see if a native person was approaching. Not verbally participating made me feel guilty but I felt compelled to stay until I was able to break away without being rude. I did not know of white privilege at that time, but I knew that I had to explore the uncomfortable feeling I had during that initial discussion. I avoided these discussions after this encounter.

I used to believe that my discomfort with this conversation meant that I was not a racist. Armed with the belief that I was different from my white peers, I began my research into the history of white teachers on the reserve. I was told of the negative experiences my native friends had at the residential schools on the reserve. Stories of the Catholic nuns at St. Mary’s revealed that these educators had little regard for their students. I concluded that the obvious racism at St. Mary’s Residential School was not an example of the history I was interested in and looked for a more positive example of teaching on the reserve. Canon Middleton, who had been the head master at St. Paul’s Residential School, had a reputation for being a kind teacher who participated in Kainaiwa culture. It appeared that he was able to cross cultural boundaries and I believed I could learn from his example.

Yet, I found that Middleton, too, was a pedagogue of white privilege and unable to cross cultural boundaries. He established his own ideals as correct for the Kainaiwa. Some Kainaiwa believed that Middleton was acting in their best interests, not realizing

Middleton was an instrument in their domination by white culture. They did not see the Kainaiwa culture and tradition as being valuable, which was an ideal Middleton actively taught.

Middleton taught the beliefs of his time as a colonialist and a patriarch. In the beginning of my research, I believed that time had erased these old ways of thinking. I did not think that I participated in the domination of the Kainaiwa. Ways of dominating have not changed over time as we still educate children in the same way, using the same pedagogy of white privilege.

As pedagogues, Middleton and I came to the reserve believing we understood what was needed for the Kainaiwa to become educated. Our goals and expectations differed, however. Middleton believed that assimilation of his students was the best way for the Indian to survive in the outside world. I believed that if I gave my students the same privilege I had assumed, they would be able to function in the world as I do and still maintain their own culture. Both Middleton and I had racist ideas but the outcome of our goals looked very different.

In the vista from Highway 2, one sees the brick building that was St. Paul's Residential School which stands starkly against the plains and the majestic Rockies loom in the background. Closer inspection reveals an old run down building which lacks the impressive presence seen from the highway. The once manicured lawns, distinctly shaped hedges, and flower beds are now unkempt and overgrown. All has changed with the passage of time and function.

Recently, I visited the grounds of the old school for a sweat lodge. The hedges have been replaced by groups of tall bushes, the uncut grass was heavily trampled by cars

and people. A group of us found several purple irises growing in the middle of this chaos. Many reported seeing the irises as we gathered to enter the sweat lodge. The implications of the straggling irises was not lost on us. These hardy, sturdy flowers have survived many generations. They must have been planted by the missionaries at a time when the building and the grounds served the purpose of the white culture and its desire to tame the environment and the inhabitants of that environment. White people tried to plant and cultivate their own order, their own culture, in a harsh land and climate, and to impose this upon a resistant people. Some of what was cultivated at the school still remains, among the residents of the reserve but remnants are like the irises; random survivors in a culture looking back to its own roots and spirituality.

St. Paul's Residential School was and is an important representation of the educational history of the Kainai people. This monument to the dreams of the missionaries who ran the school, was refurbished in 1996 as an apartment building for adult students attending Red Crow, the reserve run college. The dreams of the past missionaries have been abandoned and rebuilt as well. Instead of the colonialial, patriarchy of the past dictating what education should look like, the Kainaiwa have taken control of their own education and are putting their own ideas into place. They have survived the pedagogy of Canon Middleton and they will survive me.

Knowledge of colonialism and patriarchy in my life did not transfer to the Kainaiwa therefore I cannot assume to know their experience. I realize that this previous assumption is a deceptive form of racism because I believed that I was not racist. The experience of being a white person is inherently racist and is something I am unable to change. I can only keep myself aware of my white privilege and my use of it.

Through this journey of research and self-discovery I have become humbled. As

history shows us Canon Middleton's pedagogy was not effective even given his goals. Today I question, how much better my practice is than Middleton. I am perhaps more aware of my own impotence. History can teach valuable lessons when we decide to be open to our process as a learner.

Finally, as teacher and learner, I would like to provide my students with a safe place for them to be able to experience joy. In our journey together, perhaps we can address racism in a free exchange of experiences and ideas. What they become, how they live out their hopes and dreams is their own adventure. Hopefully, there will be moments when we transcend the confines of race, culture and history.

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