

UNIT 12: MÉTIS LITERATURE

OVERVIEW

This unit on Métis literature is presented in six parts: Introduction, Novel Study I, Novel Study II, Poetry, Drama, and Humour.

The introduction will give students and teachers a sense of Métis history and culture from the historic fur trading days to contemporary times as well as raise broader questions about nationhood and personal identity. Teachers may wish to use part or all of this section.

The extensive novel study introduces students to Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*, a groundbreaking work not only for the Métis, but also in terms of raising awareness of issues for all Canadian Aboriginal peoples. Questions of identity in the novel link to history and family, and in more contemporary times to extended social community.

The third part looks at selections from *In Search of April Raintree* by Beatrice Culleton Masionier, and examines how Métis people establish identity when their ties to history, family, and community have been cut by foster care and alienation. This part also examines the tragedies that occur when identity is lost.

The poetry study looks at how Métis poets tackle the question of identity in many different ways. Poems that have similar stylistic or formal characteristics have been paired for study. Poets Emma LaRocque, Joanne Arnott, Joan Crate, Marilyn Dumont, and Gregory Scofield are featured. The question of two-spiritedness is examined with regard to Scofield's work.

The drama study features selections from *Age of Iron*. Playwright Marie Clements has been described as using cutting-edge and unusual theatrical techniques in her plays. This avant-garde play crosses time and history to link Aboriginal people to world themes without losing sight of their particular struggles.

This final section examines humour in Ian Ross's *Joe from Winnipeg* series that allows for a gentle and personal criticism of social conditions.

LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:

Part I: Introduction – Métis History and Culture

Who are the Métis?
What is a Nation? Group Research Assignments
Research Time (may be extended to two classes)
Research Presentations and Summary (may be extended to two classes) Introduction
Reflection (80 marks)
Cultural Day or Guest Speaker

Handouts and Assessment Tools:

Research Evaluation
Métis Contributions to Canada
The Métis People of Canada
Time Line – Métis History, Early Years

Part II: Novel Study: *Halfbreed* by Maria Campbell

A Living, Personal Sense of Métis History

A Living, Personal Sense of Métis History: Chapter Questions
Summary of Novel Study and Section Assignment

Handouts and Assessment Tools:

Ancestral Chart

**Part III: Novel Study: Selections, In Search of April Raintree by Beatrice Culleton
Masionier**

Concepts of Métis Identity, Lost Identity, and History
Themes in the Novel
Presentation of Oral Assignments

Part IV: Poetry Study: Métis Poets

Emma LaRocque and Joanne Arnott
Joan Crate and Marilyn Dumont
Gregory Scofield

Handouts and Assessment Tools:

Poetry Poster Assignment—“Can You Hear Me?” and “Leather and Naughahyde”
Two-Spiritedness

Part V: Drama Study: *Age of Iron* by Marie Clements

Aboriginal Connections, Avant-garde
Presentation of Theatre Assignments

Handouts and Assessment Tools:

Humour: Performance Piece

Part VI: Humour: *Joe from Winnipeg* by Ian Ross

Student Presentations

Handouts and Assessment Tools:

Cold and Sorries by Ian Ross
Global Warming by Ian Ross

Bibliography and Further Resources

Special thanks to Aboriginal Education, School District 68 Nanaimo Ladysmith and the Mid Island Métis Nation for permitting the use of materials developed by Donna Elwood Flett when she served as Métis Liaison 1999-2001.

PART I: INTRODUCTION—MÉTIS HISTORY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW

The Métis have often been called *The Forgotten People* because they have been marginalized in history through exclusion from the governmental financial structures that feature in First Nations communities, and from broad treaty-land claims processes. Often there is a lot of confusion about who the Métis were and are.

The purpose of the introductory lessons is to give students a historical understanding of the Métis people so that they will have sufficient background knowledge to appreciate the literature in these terms. Many Métis writers refer to events in Métis history and to Métis historic figures. Teachers may choose to shorten this section in whatever way suits their purpose depending on their time, needs, and the prior knowledge of their students.

Teachers may wish to review ahead of time the “Timeline,” “Métis Contributions to Canada,” and “The Métis People of Canada” documents in the Resources folder/file.

The Importance of Identity

The Métis are a people who have long wrestled with the concept of identity. This has occurred in part because of government-required definitions with regard to rights of Métis citizens as they become enshrined in government charters and as part of government funding arrangements and potential land claims settlements. In addition, many people in the general Canadian population are confused as to whether children of more contemporary marriages between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are Métis simply because they are mixed-blood. The situation is made more complex because of the American definition of Métis as people of mixed blood who are French, not Aboriginal. Some Métis social and community agencies will accept people as Métis who simply self-identify as such and join in. The situation of identity confusion was further complicated before Bill C-31 Indians regained their status, and had identified as Métis in the meantime (http://www.Métis.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=8).

One definition of Métis was made in 2003 by the Supreme Court of Canada: “The Supreme Court of Canada upheld in the Powley case this constitutional definition by saying that: ‘Métis community is a group of Métis with a distinctive collective identity, living together in the same geographical area and sharing a common way of life.’”
(faculty.law.ubc.ca/mccue/files/320D/submissions/The%20Métis%20National%20Council%20Submission.doc)

The Métis National Council accepts the following definition for citizenship: Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation” (<http://www.Métisnation.ca/who/definition.html>).

This is the definition currently accepted by most Métis communities and peoples. The Métis Nation of B.C. definition is very close to that of the national governing body: “Métis/Michif/Apeetha’kosian” means a person who self identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of Historic Métis Nation ancestry and, is accepted by the Métis Nation British Columbia” (http://mpcbc.ca/pdf/citizenship_rg.pdf).

On a more personal level, Métis people often struggle with questions of identity in terms of what it means to them in their lifetime, what Métis means to their concept of themselves as human beings, and to their feelings. This is a theme that recurs, and recurs strongly, in Métis literature. Let us borrow for a moment a quote from David Ipinia, a Yurok Indian Artist: “Being Indian is mainly in your heart. It's a way of walking with the earth instead of upon it.” For Métis, this

means finding out in your heart what it means to be Métis. The question is a complex and personal one, but it begins with history.

Who are the Métis?

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A4, A5; A9, A11, B5, B8, B9, C1, C2, C6, C8, C9, C11

Suggested Activity Sequence

Supplies: flip chart, roll of newsprint, felts, scissors, tape or glue. Prepare the **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** sheets of newsprint ahead of time (see below) and post them around room, or have them ready for posting.

1. Introduce the fact that this is a special unit in English 12 First Peoples, which has to do with Métis people. Say that the class will begin with a “What I Know” activity, since one of the nicknames for the Métis is *The Forgotten People* and you would like them to remember everything they might know about the Métis instead. Say the lesson will rely on discussion and group-work. Display the “Participation in Group Discussions and Activities” rubric on an overhead or hand out copies and explain that there will be a teacher evaluation and a self-evaluation at the end of the lesson (found on page Unit 1 of the Teacher Resource Guide).
2. Ask for a volunteer class recorder, or several who can take turns recording. Ask what students know about the Métis. Have the recorders write each idea down in a box with a space between ideas so that the ideas can be cut apart later.
3. When students have exhausted their ideas/suggestions of *everything and anything* they know about the Métis (which may include just names of Métis people, such as Louis Riel) inform the students that they will now review the list of statements/suggestions and divide them into **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** lists based on how probable/improbable or true/false the class as a whole believes each statement to be with regard to the Métis.

Assign your class to do this task in whichever way works best for you and your students. One method is very active: You might assign some students to cut up the idea lists in preparation for the whole-class activity while the rest of the students discuss the idea lists with their neighbours, or let the students themselves cut apart the ideas as they decide which list to put them on. Whichever method you use to separate the idea statements, student should take one statement at a time and go tape it onto the **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** list where he or she believes it belongs until all the ideas are used up. You may wish to set a time limit on this portion of the activity. Have all students return to their seats and have the entire class review each of the **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** lists, re-allocating statements when the class as a whole thinks the statement belongs on a different list. This will encourage collaboration and discussions amongst students and it will get students out of their desks, physically participating. It also ensures that students who are shy or retiring will be able to participate without feeling they are in a spotlight. In addition, this strategy stimulates more sharing of knowledge and elevates the group knowledge pool. Another method is to have the teacher read out each idea statement and, after a class discussion about where it belongs, tape it on one of the sort lists.

4. Once the **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** lists are complete and have been reviewed, discuss the results and proceed to activity step #5.

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5. Have the class as a whole make up a “What We Need to Know About the Métis” chart through class discussion or Q-A (whatever works best for your class). Leave that chart up in a corner of your classroom for reference throughout the unit whenever the occasion presents itself. Take down the original **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** lists and let students know that they will be used again near the end of the unit.
6. Leave time for student self-evaluation and journal assignment.

Assessment/Evaluation

1. **Teacher checklist for student participation (5 marks):** This is simply a class list with space or boxes beside each student’s name for checks when the student participates by questions, suggestions, discussion, comments, enthusiasm in making up lists, etc. However, it is based on the rubric. One extra point will be given for overall performance.
2. **Student self evaluation (5 marks):** Students should submit self evaluation sheets (or, a copy of the rubric) on which they have given themselves a mark out of 4 for their participation. They should write down at least two good, short reasons (that are not simply copied from the rubric) that explain why they believe they deserve this mark. One extra point will be given by the teacher for the reasons if they show accurate and serious reflection.
3. **Students should do a quick journal entry on the class activity (10 marks).** Journal entries will be marked and used frequently as a reflection strategy. Students might ask themselves if they agreed with all of the statement sorts and give reasons why they thought a statement might belong somewhere else. They might reflect on the success or failure of the activity process (physical participation, individualism within group work). They might disclose in their journal some thoughts they had about the Métis but did not wish to share in class. Students should submit their entries for marking prior to leaving the class.

TOTAL: 20 marks

What is a Nation? Group Research Assignments

Learning Outcomes: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A12, B2, B8, B9, B11, C1, C2, C8, C9

Supplies: flip chart or roll of newsprint, felts, “Timeline,” “Métis Contributions to Canada,” and “The Métis People of Canada” documents in the Resources section at the end of Part I of this unit.

Introduction

A sense of history and historical events feature strongly in Métis identity and literature.

In this lesson, students will explore what makes up a community’s sense of identity or nationhood, and how that contributes to an individual’s sense of identity.

Teachers will then break their students up into groups for a small research project that will be a class jigsaw in order to facilitate speedy acquisition of a number of key Métis historical facts and stories.

Suggested Activity Sequence

1. Introduce the lesson as one that will deal with the idea of nationhood and identity. Say the lesson will rely on discussion and group work. Display the “Participation in Group Discussions and Activities” rubric on an overhead or hand out copies, and explain there will be a teacher evaluation and a self-evaluation at the end of the lesson.
2. Ask students to think of all the things that make a people feel like a community and nation. What do people need to become a nation? Think of what countries and peoples *use* or *do* in order to identify as a community or a people. Record all responses on a flip chart, or have students do this. This activity can also be done by first breaking the class into smaller groups to brainstorm and then asking each group to report out later to the entire class when it reconvenes. If this latter strategy is used the teacher can circulate amongst the small groups to help facilitate discussion, to draw in quiet students, and to mark for participation. This approach might be less threatening to students who are shy.
3. After the groups report out, or at the end of the whole class discussion, the list will most likely include some if not all of these items:
 - a land base
 - a language
 - a flag
 - arts and culture
 - a government and laws
 - heroes and heroines
 - a shared history that extends from the past to the present
4. Once the class has devised its list and has filled in any blank spots through discussion, distribute the resource documents and give the students time to read them. Go over the documents with the class. Discuss any comments from students; facilitate discussion. Ask if they think there is enough information from the documents to qualify the Métis as a nation of people. Discuss. Why or why not?

NOTE: Some students might express the opinion that the Métis are not a nation, others may adamantly assert that they are a nation with full rights to make their own laws, etc. Some students might wish to see the Métis as a nation but without any rights. Some students might even suggest that the Métis are not an Aboriginal people. All ideas should be accepted, respected, and explored. However, students should be prepared to defend their decisions with sound reasoning and debate in a non-personal, non-confrontational style. Teachers may wish to host a horseshoe debate on this issue if there is enough diverse opinion in the class and enough time; this debate would require moderation.

5. Following this discussion, students should write a journal entry about what makes a nation; they should examine their own opinions about the Métis as a nation and as an Aboriginal people. See below for evaluation. Collect in journals for marking.
6. Break the class into groups (in the method which suits you best) to prepare for and assign small-group research projects. This will be a jigsaw, information-sharing project. Each group will pick (or be assigned) a topic on one aspect of nationhood to research and report on. This will accelerate the class’s acquisition of a deeper understanding of Métis history and culture. Teachers should ensure that student groups don’t all gravitate to one theme or subject (e.g., culture), so that there is a good balance of research. Students can

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do their presentations in any way they see fit; for example, someone presenting on Arts and Culture might want to give the class a mini Red River Jig lesson. Students researching Michif might want to present an online introductory lesson for a few minutes using a computer and Internet hookup, if available. Students in groups may wish to divide their task up so that each group constitutes a jigsaw in itself; this is easily done for the Métis personages or for historical events where each student can research and/or present one. Students may also wish to present as a group. Whichever method is chosen, each student should be prepared to be part of the actual group presentation to the class (i.e. to speak or demonstrate, etc.). Research groups might break down according to topic groupings such as:

- Major personalities from the past: Riel, Dumont, Grant, Potts
 - Modern day personalities: Cardinal, Brady and Norris, Bethune, Campbell
 - Language, flags
 - Music, dance, beadwork, Métis sash, moose hair tufting, silk embroidery
 - Buffalo laws and governance in historic Métis communities; Lists of Métis Rights during historic struggles at Red River and in the Northwest
 - Modern Métis rights, modern court cases, rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms 1982
 - Key historic events in Métis history prior to 1900 (e.g., Battle of Seven Oaks, Selkirk Settlement, Red River Resistance, Northwest Insurgence)
 - Modern Métis land settlements, The Road Allowance People, Métis Veterans, Richard Cardinal and the change in family law in Alberta
7. Establish the criteria for the research assignment and discuss. It might be a good idea to give students copies of the evaluation sheet (at the end of the lesson) to help guide their work. Students will be marked independently, and all will have a chance to present to the class. A cohesive group presentation is required. Research may take one or two classes; presentations may take one or two classes. Many good online resources exist. Assuming a group of four, each *group* presentation will probably be approximately 15 minutes, or as the teacher determines.

Evaluation time for this lesson's in-class activity: Teachers might do their evaluation while circulating through the class listening to the groups discuss how they will do their projects, or how they will break down individual topics and still keep a unified thematic presentation.

Assessment/Evaluation

1. For the in-class activity, using the "Participation in Group Discussions and Activities" rubric: **5 marks** from the teacher; **5 marks** for student self-evaluation; same procedure as outlined for Lesson One so that the mark becomes out of 5 instead of out of four in each case.
10 marks
2. Journal entry assignment. See step #5 in the Suggested Activity Sequence.
10 marks

TOTAL: 20 marks

Online resource suggestions

- See The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture for audio, video, photo, and text information on a huge variety of topics: <http://www.Métis museum.ca/>
- See the Métis Nation of B.C. web site for links to all sorts of material: <http://www.mpcbc.bc.ca/>
- For Michif audio and lessons see the web site above and link from the bottom right of the home page: <http://www.learnmichif.com/>.
- For culture, see the Michif page above, which has a culture link (<http://www.learnmichif.com/Métis-culture>) that has many more Métis links at the bottom of its page. From the Michif home page you can click on the video files and find a young Métis fiddle player speaking about Métis music, hear some storytelling and an autobiography, get a lesson in making bannock, listen to a contemporary musician/video artist, etc.
- The Métis Nation of Ontario also has a good Culture and History page—make sure to check the top toolbar, not just the left quicklinks: <http://www.Métisnation.org/>
- The Métis Culture & Heritage Resource Centre Inc. is a treasure trove of information with its rich menu on the left: <http://www.Métisresourcecentre.mb.ca/>
- Wikipedia is a good starting point for many topics pertaining to the Métis.
- Jigging videos can be found on Google Videos with the search “Métis Jigging,” but teachers should screen them beforehand as some are not appropriate or instructive and the posted videos can change. The jigging videos that come from competition celebrations are generally better quality and more instructive. Teachers can also find an excellent Métis fiddle video called “Kelly Atcheynum-Fiddle Medley” on YouTube.
- <http://www.ualberta.ca/~wald/ab2intro.html> has some excellent information on the Métis lands settlements issues in Alberta, with references. See also: http://www.albertasource.ca/metis/eng/people_and_communities/issues_betterment.htm .

RESEARCH EVALUATION

OVERALL VALUE: 50 marks

NAME:

GROUP TOPIC:

INDIVIDUAL TOPIC:

You will be marked on your individual contribution to the group topic but also evaluated according to group cooperation. This last mark will be peer awarded by others in your group.

Oral Speaking Skills	Visual Aids	Interactive Presentation Skills	Value of Information Presented to foster class understanding	Creativity	Evidence of Strong Research & Preparation	Cooperation with group in overall presentation (peer evaluation included)
10	5	5	10	5	10	5

Research Time

Learning Outcomes: A2, A6, B2, B3, B4

Introduction

This class will be in a computer lab and/or library. Depending on how complicated student projects get, research may be extended to two classes. Remind students about the overall group presentation time.

Assessment/Evaluation

Remind students of the evaluation sheet and the criteria you established as they do their research. No marks for this class unless the teacher is recording cooperation, attentiveness to task, etc.

Research Presentations and Summary

Learning Outcomes: A6, A7, A13

Introduction

Teachers should remind students of the criteria for evaluation and the evaluation sheet, and that there will be a peer mark out of five (which can be averaged later) for each presenter that is part of the group. Peer evaluations should have the evaluator's name on them in addition to the student being evaluated. Peer evaluations should be done immediately following a group's presentation or they may be quietly and unobtrusively done by a group student who is not presenting, and handed in immediately.

Suggested Activity Sequence

Schedule the presentations as you see fit and find convenient. The presentations may go longer than one class.

Summary/Concluding Activity

The class as a whole might have a short discussion on the presentations and refer to their "What We Need to Know About the Métis" list from Lesson One. Did they get all their questions answered or are there still a few holes? If there are pieces missing, some volunteer students could acquire extra marks by bringing the answers to the next class.

Important questions to pose as a retrospective of the introductory activities so far:

- Are the Métis People of Canada a nation? An Aboriginal people?
- How strongly do you think Métis history and culture influences the identity of Métis individuals today?
- What key events do you think might feature strongly in a sense of a Métis individual's identity? Why? How do you think this history might make a Métis individual feel?

It is important to emphasize that while the Métis are proud of their early history and the strong sense of culture that arose out of that time, there is a deep sense of betrayal and hurt in the events of the latter part of the 1800s and the early to mid-1900s when Métis suffered from traumas of racism, government land policies, residential schools, addictions, and community violence.

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Students might consider how this would affect a Métis individual's sense of identity in today's world as part of their journal response.

Presentations are never a sure fit into schedules. If possible, a small part of the last presentation day might be spent on deciding if the class wishes to have a Métis Cultural Day or guest speakers. If the class wishes to have speakers, a few students might be designated to contact a local Métis organization to arrange details. This visit may not directly follow these introductory lessons, depending on time commitments of individuals.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

1. Presentation Assignment

See rubric provided for this assignment in the lesson “What is a Nation?” As students present, their group peers should quickly make a comment and give a mark out of 5 on a small piece of paper that the teacher can collect at the end of each group's presentation. Remind evaluators that they should have their name and the name of the student they are evaluating on their peer assessment.

50 marks

2. Take Home Assignment—Two page essay in journal

Students should reflect about the introductory activities and summary discussion, and answer the questions that were posed in their own way. Those questions, again, were:

- Are the Métis People of Canada a nation?
- An Aboriginal people?
- How strongly do you think Métis history and culture influences the identity of Métis individuals today?
- What key events do you think might feature strongly in a sense of a Métis individual's identity? Why? How do you think this history might make a Métis individual feel?

This essay will be in the form of personal journal reflection, but all the rules of grammar and good writing will apply. Students should have clear topic sentences for each part of the essay that begins to discuss the questions. Opinions should be backed by sound argument.

30 marks

Total: 80 marks

Cultural Day or Guest Speaker

As mentioned in an earlier lesson, this can be a day when guest speakers come in or when the class decides to have a mini cultural day of its own. To find local Métis people who may be available for presentations, contact your local Métis association, or the provincial office. Provincial local associations are listed at: <http://www.mnbc.ca/contact/locals.html>.

MÉTIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANADA

Not all of the events listed here were positive for the Métis; however, they did contribute to the development of the country we now know as Canada.

Person, Invention, or Event	Significance
Red River Cart	Allowed long distance travel over prairie with heavy loads, can convert to barge for river crossing.
York Boat (adapted)	Allowed for even heavier loads to be transported via water routes as distances between forts/settlements increased.
Pemmican	Canada's first 'survival' food. Allowed winter and long-distance travel without the need to restock supplies along the way. Contained all the essential nutrients. Whether you regard this as a culinary delight depends on your personal taste.
Bannock	Culinary delight.
Saskatoon Berry Jam	Culinary delight.
Flower beadwork	Art/beauty that endures to this day.
Silk embroidery in Métis style	Art/beauty that endures to this day.
Moose Hair tufting	Art/beauty that endures to this day.
Michif language	Cultural richness and diversity.
Multi-lingual talents	Broadened the language of the fur trade, thus the areas of trade. Métis became translators, guides, and negotiators.
Talent for adaptation in careers	Allowed for settlement west. Métis were guides, translators, outfitters, and negotiators between Europeans, others moving west, and First Nations peoples.
Music, especially fiddle music	Cultural richness and diversity.
Stories	Cultural richness and diversity.
Dance, especially the Red River Jig	Cultural richness and diversity.
Interlocking corners on log cabins	Saved time in construction; stronger structure. (Prior to this innovation, corners were constructed using a corner post joint with slots into which notched planks were dropped to build up a wall; this involved time-consuming, accurate woodwork.)
Modern road and highway routes	Many of our modern highways and roads travel over the Red River cart trails from earlier days.
Mapping	Exploration, travel.
Settlements of the prairies	Occupied land, opened the way for Canada to claim it as part of the new, growing country.
Farming of the prairies	Broke the land, attracted more settlement.

Person, Invention, or Event	Significance
Securing of the West Coast for Canada	Many Métis were sent by the Hudson’s Bay as traders to establish forts and settlements and prevent the United States and others from claiming lands on what is now Canada’s West Coast. In the late 1800s Métis were in the current-day U.S. states of Washington and Oregon.
Cowboys	Métis became expert ranch hands and accurate sharpshooters.
Tourism	As early as the mid-1800s, Europeans collected Métis beadwork embroidery, weaving, clothing, etc. to take back with them to Europe. Tourism of the cowboy west/guest ranch and stampede events owes something to Métis contributions.
CPR	In a rather backhanded way, the Métis uprising in the Northwest hastened the building of the trans-Canada railway. The work was completed with the aim of quickly transporting Canadian troops to fight the Métis in what is now Saskatchewan and to make the region “safe” by making communication and travel faster between the west and the rest of Canada in the east.
Hudson’s Bay Company	Many of the Chief Factors, wintering partners, and working men of the HBC were Métis. They were especially well positioned for their jobs, having kindred connections with First Nations peoples, being knowledgeable about the land, and being hardy and able to adapt to new situations as they found them on the trail.
World War I and II, Korea	Métis were known as sharpshooters and were often employed as snipers in the world wars. Henry Nor’West is a famous example.
Cuthbert Grant	Renowned hunter, horseman, and warrior respected for his quick actions; leader of the Métis at Seven Oaks; founder of Grantown (now Saint Francois-Xavier) in Manitoba; Warden of the Plains for the Hudson’s Bay Company after it merged with the Northwest Company. Contentious relations with Métis community later.
Jerry Potts	Guide, interpreter, scout, often for the Northwest Mounted Police; frontier personality; accepted by his First Nations relatives as First Nations.

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Person, Invention, or Event	Significance
Louis Riel	Leader of the Métis struggles for land and citizenship rights in what is now Manitoba and Saskatchewan. This list of Métis rights was adopted almost without change by the Canadian government as the Manitoba Act, May 1870, but not until the Métis had been defeated and driven off many of their lands in Manitoba. Métis defended the prairie lands against Fenian raids from the U.S. during the mid and late 1800s. Responsible for ensuring French was entrenched as an official accepted language of Canada (in what became Manitoba Act).
Gabriel Dumont	Military leader of the Métis, especially in Saskatchewan settlements. Sharpshooter and expert horseman; worked for a period in Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West show. Established a ferry crossing of the South Saskatchewan River, called Gabriel’s Crossing, now the site of the Dumont Bridge. Spoke six languages and was an accomplished guide, interpreter, and hunter.
John Norquay	Premier of Manitoba, 1878 to 1887; first Métis to serve as a premier of a Canadian province.
Amelia Douglas	Wife of B.C.’s first governor, James Douglas. Their children married into, and were a part of, the dynamic community of settlers of Victoria and B.C. Cecilia married pioneer physician J.S. Helmcken; James Douglas Jr. married the daughter of S.C. Elliot, premier of B.C. 1876-1878; Jane married Alexander Grant Dallas, Chief Factor of the west-of-the-Rockies portion of the Hudson’s Bay Company and the Governor of Rupert’s Land.
Josette Work	Wife of Hudson’s Bay Company Chief Factor John Work; their daughter Jane married physician/fur trader William Fraser Tolmie.
Jim Brady and Malcolm Norris	Métis political activists in the prairie provinces and north in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s who fought for Métis rights.
Norman Bethune	Famous doctor who worked internationally; well known in China.
Peter Lougheed	Former premier of Alberta.
Richard Cardinal	This young boy, by his unfortunate suicide in the mid 1980s while in foster care and the resulting publicity prompted significant change of the Child and Family Act of Alberta for the better. Other provinces followed suit.

Person, Invention, or Event	Significance
Douglas Cardinal	World famous Métis architect, designed the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa and pioneered the use of computers in architectural design. See: http://www.djcarchitect.com/ and also the video “The Warrior From Within.”
Brian Trottier	Hockey legend.
Maria Campbell	Métis writer, broadcaster, film producer; brought the story of the Métis to Canada with her 1973 book <i>Halfbreed</i> ; kept alive the sense of history of the Métis from the later 1800s into modern day through her memories of her family; political and community activist.

THE MÉTIS PEOPLE OF CANADA

The Métis are one of Canada's three Aboriginal peoples, and a relatively new people in the world. The Métis were born from the fur trade and the early exploration days of what is now modern-day Canada. European men venturing to explore the land and to work the fur trade took First Nations women as their wives. The children of those first mixed marriages were the first Métis people.

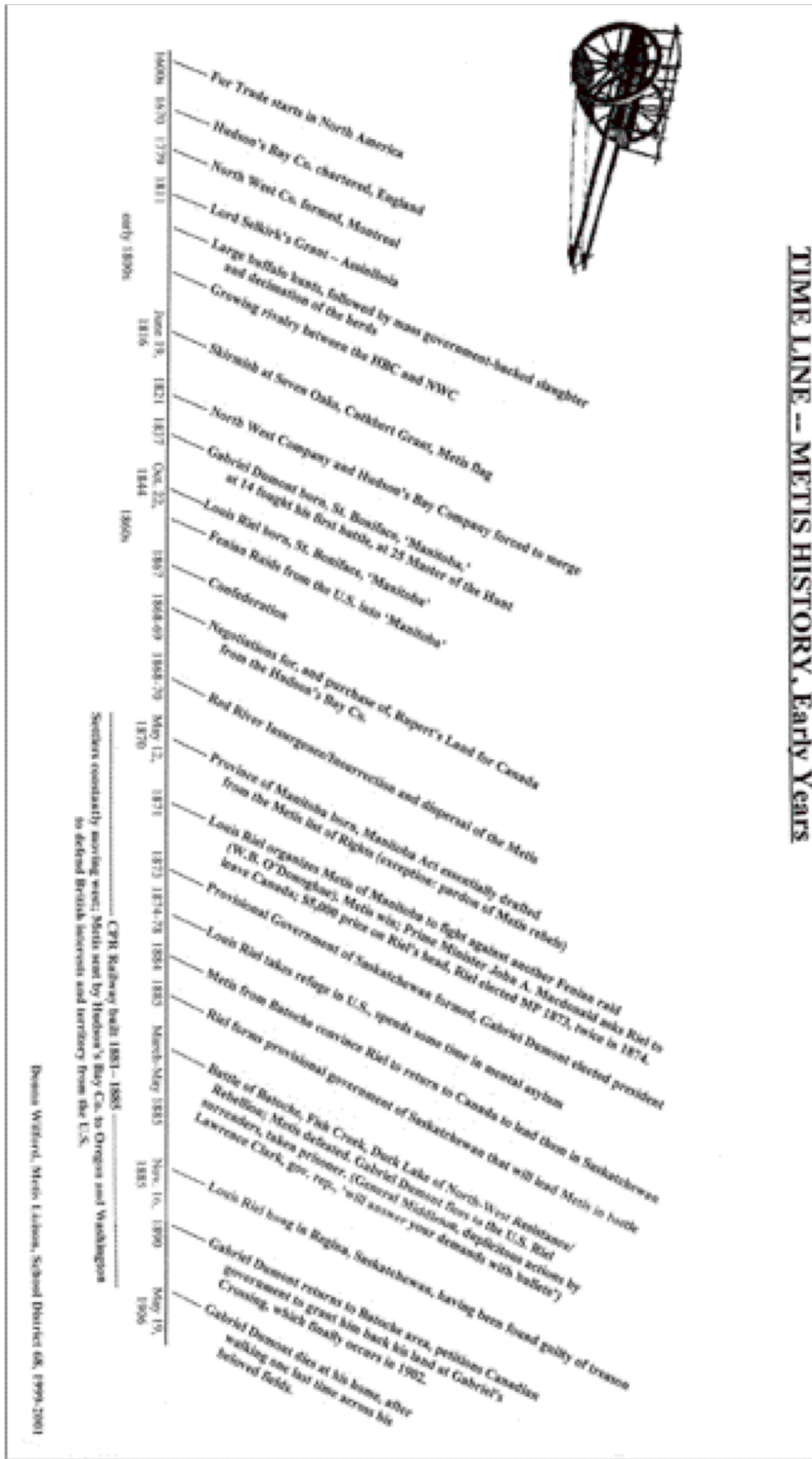
The Métis as a people remained distinct from both their European and First Nations roots, borrowing a little from one culture and a little from the other to create their own unique culture and to establish a unique race. The Métis have their own language, flag, art, music and songs, national anthem, heroes, claim for a homeland, and, most importantly, a strong sense of identity and history.

Métis were once known as Métis Indians. They have also been called *Bois Brulé*, *Half-Burnt Woodmen*, *Canadiens*, *Flower-Beadwork People*, *Black Scots*, *Half Breeds*, *Breeds*, and *Country Born*. Some of the names have a distinctly racist connotation. The Métis were also called *Otipemisiwak* by their First Nations cousins; the name means “the people who have their own mind.” The Métis people have always been independent-minded, and remain so today.

The Métis language—Michif—is a blend of predominantly Cree, French, and English. Even so, words from the contributing languages are pronounced differently in Michif. There are now only a few thousand fluent native speakers across Canada, but you may still hear Michif if you visit Métis communities in such places as the St. Paul area of Alberta, the Qu'Appelle valley of Saskatchewan, or the Red River settlement of Manitoba.

Many people will know of Métis leaders Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, who helped lead the Métis in their battles with the government of Canada for rights of citizenship and land titles. Today you will find the Métis everywhere. Some modern and well-known Métis include Norman Bethune, former premier of Alberta Peter Lougheed, hockey legend Brian Trottier, and world-famous architect Douglas Cardinal.

Donna Wilford, Métis Liaison 1999-2001
School District 68, Nanaimo-Ladysmith Mid Island Métis Nation



PART II: NOVEL STUDY: *HALFBREED* BY MARIA CAMPBELL

A Living, Personal Sense of Métis History

Learning Outcomes: A1-5, A9-12, B2, B5, B8-11, C1, C2, C9-11

Resources

Campbell, Maria. *Halfbreed*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973. [There are later editions; this is the first edition.]

Teacher Information

Maria Campbell's 1973 novel *Halfbreed* is a short autobiographical novel (157 pages in 25 segments—an introduction and 24 chapters) that can easily be read in class. Readings can be in literature circles, with each student taking a turn reading out loud to his/her co-students. Alternately, you might purchase enough books for a class set or read to the students. *Halfbreed* is important in Métis literary history and in the history of Canadian Aboriginal literature as well.

In his article "Métis Writers," Darren R. Préfontaine acknowledges Maria Campbell as being the first Métis woman to face and write about the more difficult issues in Métis life and specifically in Métis women's lives. He credits her with being a pioneer in doing so:

Métis women themselves, through their writing, began in the 1970s to challenge their marginalization as Métis and as Métis women. The first author to address the hard issues surrounding the life and times of Métis women was Maria Campbell in her book *Halfbreed*. After its release in 1973, Campbell paved the way for a new generation of Métis women writers.
(from http://www.Métis_museum.ca/resource.php/00733, the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture)

Campbell's novel is steeped in history, and family and personal testimony.

Background on Maria Campbell

Here are some Internet links for short, authoritative articles about Maria Campbell:

"Maria Campbell" from a University of British Columbia education site:
http://research2.csci.educ.ubc.ca/indigenation/Indian_ReACTions/Indian_ReACTions/MariaCampbell.htm

"Western Women's Autobiographies Database" on Professor Catherine Lavender's web site, College of Staten Island, City University of New York; see Maria Campbell's biography, third from the top on the left-hand list:
<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/389/>

National Aboriginal Achievement Awards; "Maria Campbell, Arts and Culture":
http://www.naaf.ca/html/m_campbell_e.html

University of Regina Campus News, "Maria Campbell receives Distinguished Canadian Award":
[http://www.uregina.ca/news/releases/2006/may/16\(b\).shtml](http://www.uregina.ca/news/releases/2006/may/16(b).shtml)

Pre-reading discussion

Preparation was done already in the introductory activities and journal entries about Métis history and identity. Students might wish to share their entries as a segue into this novel study and further discussion.

Teachers may also wish to begin this novel study with a discussion about the various names attributed to the Métis that were listed in “The Métis People of Canada” document. Two good questions for discussion are:

- What names have negative and racist connotations and why?
- Why would Maria Campbell choose a racist slur about her people as the title of her book?

Teachers may wish to break the class into small groups to brainstorm what the various names for the Métis people mean and to decide whether they are racist or not, positive or negative. The class could then reconvene, share their information, and discuss their different interpretations before their journal entry assignment.

Students should also know what an *autobiography* is and be clear about its purpose. Teachers might want to break down the word into “auto,” “bio” and “graphy” to give students an sense of word formation and connections to other words (autonomous, biology, photography, etc.) “Auto” means self or one’s own; “bio” means of life or living things; “graphy” refers to a thing written or drawn in a specific way.

It would be helpful and instructive for the class to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of reading an autobiography. For example, a benefit is that the author can or might reveal more personal events and feelings about his/her life than if the book were written by a researcher (a biographer). On the other hand, a person writing his/her autobiography can just as easily “mythologize” his/her life by omissions and by altering events and experiences. Teachers may wish their students to make notes of this discussion for reference during the chapter readings and questions, or may make notes on a flip chart for the class to refer to from time to time.

The second lesson contains chapter-by-chapter questions for discussion or journal entries. The third lesson will outline an assignment at the end of the novel study that offers students choices in presenting their summary response to the work.

Assessment/Evaluation

Students should write a journal entry about the various names given to the Métis people and specifically answer the questions below. Entries should be written in an essay style with topic sentences and correct punctuation and grammar.

- Why would Maria Campbell choose a racist slur about her people as the title of her book?
- Would you choose to give a book about your life a self-deprecatory racist title? Why or why not?
- What do you think this said about the attitudes of people at the time Maria Campbell wrote her book?
- How strongly do you think Métis history will feature in the formation of Maria Campbell’s personal identity?

50 marks

A Living, Personal Sense of Métis History—Chapter Questions

Learning Outcomes: Depending on how many ways the teacher organizes reading, responding, and recording, the following can be met: A1-13, B1, B2, B4-13, C1, C2, C8-12, C14. B3 and C4, C13 may also be met in the final assignment for this novel study depending on the form of the assignment.

Teacher Information

Humour plays a huge role in Campbell's *Halfbreed*. Several of the chapter questions have to do with Campbell's use of humour. Here is an internet link to a complete, but short, scholarly article entitled "Anecdotal Humour in Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* (1973)," by A.E. Jannetta, which appeared in the *Journal of Canadian Studies* (Summer 1996):

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3683/is_199607/ai_n8755080. This essay offers some good ideas for a class discussion about humour and its many faces, and humour and its role as mediator in tragedy and despair.

Many of the chapter questions have to do with social justice, and self-awareness and discovery. These can be facilitated class or small group discussions or horseshoe debates. For the more sensitive issues, teachers should moderate and facilitate class discussion before any individual or small group work is done.

These topics will form the body of suggested essay topics in Lesson Three.

Assessment/Evaluation

Teachers are free to use the following chapter questions as guides for discussion, journal entries, debates, horseshoe debates/discussions, research assignments, etc. Students might be encouraged to choose one of the chapter questions before reading to use as a method of focussing their reading, and later as the topic for their journal entry to demonstrate comprehension and in order to make personal connections.

Teachers might also use the questions as a class jigsaw where each reading group of students (perhaps four to a group) gets one of the chapter questions before reading to focus their reading and facilitate small group discussion, about which they will later report to the class.

Suggested mark for each journal entry for the 25 segments (introduction and 24 chapters) is **10 marks**.

TOTAL: 250 marks

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the tone or atmosphere of the short introduction? What words and images give you those impressions? You might wish to sort these words into adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs and try to determine which produce the most powerful emotional effect in Campbell's writing and why. You might wish to sort the words into groups that support the kind of tone or atmosphere you felt the introduction evoked.

Answer: The tone is wistful, sad, a sense of a time that will never come again, a sense of time that once was happier than the present, that might disappear forever. Words and images: tumbled down, overgrown, dried, withered, good-bye, left home, graveyard, tangle, thistle, crosses, falling down, sunken graves, needs repainting, poverty, long since, torn down, old,

forgotten, once stood, old, lonely, merely exists, dead, gone, were never there, gone, squatted, welfare hand-outs, booze, escape, old, died, rough, dirt, broken, old, never find, had changed, gone, sorrows, oppressing poverty, frustration.

2. What do you think Campbell means when she says: "...if I was to know peace I would have to search within myself"?

Answer: Student answers will vary, but should show a sense of understanding that each individual must come to terms with his/her past before he/she can move forward in life.

3. Why do you think Campbell says: "...so perhaps some day, when I too am a grannie, I will write more"?

Answer: Student answers will vary but should show an understanding that Campbell feels she has seen a lot of history go by in spite of her relatively young age, and also that she still has a lot to experience.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Why do you think Campbell devotes her whole first chapter to these historical details?

Answer: Student answers will vary, but should show some understanding of the relatively recent nature of the events in Métis memory (late 1800s), the importance to Campbell personally (or she would not have bothered writing about them), and a personal interpretation (not everyone agrees that the First Nations participants were willing collaborators or that the Métis and settlers were as unified a group to start (in fact the story is much more complex than would appear in Campbell's explanation).

2. Not everything Campbell wrote about in the history is accurate. For example, Big Bear did not want to fight; he was arrested because he was the leader of his band, a small renegade group of which broke away and did fight. Why do you think Campbell might not be telling the truth in her historical account?

Answer: Student answers will vary but should show some understanding of selected memory being passed down, the creation of historical myths (of which there are many in the histories of all nations and peoples). Answers should also show that Campbell felt an intimate bond with these Métis who had stood up for their rights and had been beaten down.

3. Why do you think Campbell says "The history books say that the Halfbreeds were defeated at Batoche in 1884" and then includes the list of statistics and accurate historical information at the end?

Answer: Students may note that Campbell obviously does not believe the "Halfbreeds" were defeated in spite of the terrible cost in lives, jail sentences, and money. The effect of mentioning the statistics is that they *should* indicate a defeat, but because Campbell is implying the Métis were not defeated, she shows the great odds that her people overcame just in order to survive.

CHAPTER TWO

Students may wish to draw up a family genealogy for Campbell, so they can easily keep track of who is who during the rest of the novel. An Adobe version of an ancestor tree is included in this

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section; this tree is available free directly from <http://www.ancestry.com/trees/charts/ancchart.aspx>.

1. How does the description of the settlements and land occupation that forced the Métis to become Road Allowance People make you feel? How do you think Campbell felt? Find some evidence in the text to support your statement about Campbell's feelings. Do you think the manner of handling the land settlement reflected a racist policy by the Canadian government of the time?

Answer: Student answers will be personal. However, they should note that Campbell feels a deep sense of wounded pride: "Fearless men who could brave sub-zero weather and all the dangers associated with living in the bush gave up, frustrated and discouraged." Campbell is also hurting because she knew some of the pioneer Métis who had once had everything and were reduced to nothing: "I hurt because in my childhood I saw glimpses of a proud and happy people. I heard their laughter, saw them dance, and felt their love."

2. Campbell breaks her narrative voice by bringing in the voice of her friend and discussing her thoughts about writing her book: "A close friend of mine said....I only want to say...But I am ahead of myself...." Up until that point Campbell had been narrating the past with a consistent voice; the break brings the reader into a more recent time and a change in perspective as Campbell speaks about her thoughts about writing instead of simply writing about the past. What effect does this jarring break in voice and time have on the reader?

Answer: Answers will vary but students should note that such a question might have been in their minds at this point, and in a sense Campbell is anticipating the question and explaining herself. Such a direct response to the question also relieves some anxiety readers may have about the difficult issues in the story because Campbell is candid with her readers here. It also explains Campbell's motive in clear terms so her readers cannot misinterpret her.

3. What do you think of Campbell's candid disclosure of her family's history of violence and poverty? What things does Campbell talk about that provide a counterpoint to the violence and poverty?

Answer: Students will have different answers to the first question, but should touch on the fact that Campbell wanted to tell the truth: "I only want to say: this is what it was like; this is what it is still like." Campbell recounts many good things about her family to counterpoint the violence and poverty including: the independence and bravery of her great grandmother Cheechum (reporting on the anti-Métis activities at her husband's meetings, stealing ammunition and supplies for the Métis, fending off the RCMP from her home); the hope Cheechum displays (in her belief that things will get better for the Métis); the kindness and gentleness of Cheechum's son, Campbell's grandfather; Grannie Campbell's independence and self-reliance (she wouldn't let her son, Campbell's father, take care of her but instead continued to work to support herself); the story about Campbell's father and mother courting by dancing; her mother's industriousness and beauty; the fun Campbell and her siblings had re-enacting historic stories, etc.

4. Campbell demonstrates a keen sense of ironic humour in this chapter as well as a gentle sense of humour of the everyday. Find some examples and explain which humour the examples demonstrate and explain the irony in those examples.

Answer: Answers will vary, but include the following:

Irony	Gentle Humour
<p>The viciousness and meanness of her great grandfather contrasted with the comical image invoked by his Métis nickname Chee-pie-hoos, meaning “Evil-spirit-jumping-up-and-down.” --seriousness contrasted with comic</p>	<p>The story of Campbell’s father nearly falling off his wagon when he first saw his wife-to-be because she was so pretty.</p>
<p>Great-grandmother Cheechum Campbell being forced by her husband “Evil-spirit” to attend the anti-Métis meetings during the Northwest Insurrection, where she steals ammunition and supplies for the Métis. --GG Campbell taking his wife to the meetings to keep an eye on her, where she still manages to steal right under his nose. --GG Campbell supporting the meetings and plotting against the Métis; Cheechum taking all that information back to the Métis to help them.</p>	<p>Campbell’s father dancing as hard as he could to impress his wife-to-be .</p>
<p>Cheechum stopping the RCMP when they try to make her leave her home in the park by shooting over their heads. --a little woman fending off the big, powerful policemen.</p>	<p>Maria being born on the trap line, which disappointed her mother’s father after he had already been disappointed that his daughter had married Maria’s father. (This could also be a mild example of irony.)</p>
<p>Cheechum refusing to become a Christian because she said she’d married one and if there was a Hell, she’d already lived in it in her marriage so nothing after death could be worse. --marriage and Christian people are supposed to be good things; Cheechum equated them with Hell and by implication the Devil.</p>	
<p>Maria and her brothers acting out historic stories from ancient Rome, etc. where Maria had to be Caesar because she was so dark coloured. --Aboriginal people pretending to be Westerners/Europeans (a reverse of the cowboys/Indians game children used to play).</p>	

CHAPTER THREE

1. Why do you think Campbell describes her home and the family activities in such detail? In what kind of Métis community did Campbell grow up?

Answer: Campbell does this to ensure the history is recorded and not forgotten. Student answers will vary concerning the kind of community, but they should note cooperation, love for the children, self-reliance, knowledge about the land, cleanliness, passing down of knowledge from one generation to the next by teaching through participation.

2. What do you make of Campbell’s stories about her great grandmother Cheechum’s spiritual beliefs concerning little people and second sight? What do you think most people today might say about such things and why?

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Answer: Student answers will vary. This is a question about Aboriginal beliefs in the spirit world and will test students' ability to accept the beliefs of another people or person without passing severe judgement about the quality of that person based on spiritual beliefs that may differ from their own.

3. Campbell says, "I grew up with some really funny, wonderful, fantastic people ... How I love them and miss them." Examine the character portraits Campbell paints of her aunt Qua Chich, the two war brides, Old Cadieux, Chi-Georges, and Grannie Dubuque's brother. What makes these people funny, wonderful, and fantastic? What literary devices does Campbell use to paint them "larger than life" to make them stick in your mind? Give specific examples.

Answer: The people Campbell describes appear as "characters" that we can easily remember. Campbell uses techniques of selected details and events (to detail everything about the people would make them dull whereas selected strong details grow in significance); she uses irony in her descriptions; she embellishes stories with pithy details and commentary; she embeds in each story a sort of mini-lesson or moral; she adds dialogue; she makes us laugh. Students should select examples from the text to illustrate these techniques.

ALERT

The following question may be one to put to the entire class for a guided and facilitated discussion, as it may touch on issues that are of a very sensitive nature to the student population.

4. What do you make of Campbell's description of the relations between the First Nations neighbours and the Métis community? Why do you think this relationship existed? Do you know of any examples of such "lateral violence" between groups or communities of Aboriginal peoples today? Why do you think such situations might exist? Do you agree with Campbell's distinction between the personality styles of the two peoples (First Nations reserved and quiet; Métis noisy and disorderly)?

Answer: Students will have many different suggestions and thoughts about this subject. In the text, students should be able to identify the love-hate relationship, the jealousy, the one-upmanship, and the complications that arise from drinking in such situations.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. What kind of feelings did Campbell's father have when the immigrants dropped off the Christmas box of donations and food at their house? Think of as many reasons as you can that *might* explain his feelings and reaction.

Answer: Campbell's father was angry; his pride was hurt; his dignity was insulted. Campbell's father may have felt like this because he could not provide enough for his own family. He may have resented the settlers holding onto land that the Métis had lost. He also might have felt that the immigrants looked down on the Métis as people to be pitied. It appears from Campbell's descriptions, that the immigrants had more money and livestock than the Métis to start their farming. The immigrants probably took over farmland that had already been partly cleared and worked by Métis homesteaders who had failed to keep the land because of government development regulations, so the immigrant's job of clearing would be much easier and faster because the Métis had already done a lot of the basic and hard work; the immigrants would therefore more easily fulfill government regulations regarding homesteading.

2. Campbell again comments on Christians and religion in this chapter. What impression do you get from the image of Christians and old clothes? Do the stories that Campbell tells about religious people and churches support or discredit Cheechum's opinion about Christians?

Answer: The image of the Christians and old clothes together is comical in spite of Campbell's strong anti-Christian feelings. It shows that humour can be used to lighten one's load or to make things easier to live with when life is hard. The stories about the religious people support Cheechum's opinion and do so humorously, which makes the stories stronger.

ALERT

The following question may be one to put to the entire class for a guided and facilitated discussion, as it may touch on issues that are of a very sensitive nature to the student population.

3. After Campbell has criticized religion so much, why do you think that the Métis were nonetheless Christians (Roman Catholics), especially when they had negative experiences with their own priests and churches? Do you see any correlation to contemporary situations for Aboriginal people who choose to be Christian?

Answer: Students will have different answers as to why the Métis were Roman Catholic when their experiences with other Christians tended to be negative, and even their experiences with their own chosen church were negative. Students should make connections between residential schools and the churches that ran them and the fact that many Aboriginal people remain loyal to those churches in spite of traumatic residential school experiences.

4. Campbell uses humour again throughout this chapter in discussing religious beliefs and experiences. How does Campbell use humour in the story of the Evangelist minister and Old Ha-shoo? In the story of the Father, the Sundance Pole, and the strawberry patch? These are serious actions; what does the humour do?

Answer: Old Ha-shoo was only responding, so he thought, to the invitation by the minister to come and make music; the minister did not mean Aboriginal drumming. The Father stole from the Sundance Pole and ate the strawberries he would not allow the Métis to eat; he did not see anything wrong with his actions. The children tripped him, and by doing so, declared in an indirect way that they had witnessed his hypocrisy. Campbell's parents, quite aware of this, had a mixed reaction to the children's trick. The humour lets us see the human side of bad, unfair, or unjust behaviour and allows us to forgive transgressions. As Campbell said earlier in the book: the Métis were quick to get angry and quick to forgive.

5. What is so funny about Campbell's attitude towards the Church of England, Henry VIII, the nun's comments, and her disappointment that King Henry VIII "belonged to the Indians instead of the Halfbreeds"? What literary device is Campbell using here?

Answer: This is another good example of Campbell's use of irony. As a young girl, Campbell was excited to learn that the Church of England was apparently founded on sin, and that Henry VIII created it so he could divorce some wives and marry new ones. This appeals to her sense of drama, even though the church and God are supposed to be pure, holy, and serious subjects. It is even more ironic that she sees the "ownership" of the church as a competition between the 'Indian and Halfbreed' people.

6. How do you think Campbell's treatment at the hands of her father changed her character?

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Answer: Students will have different answers but should be able to reason them through. Campbell probably became a tougher person as a result of the physical punishment and her father's edict that "Campbells never cry," but also an honest one because she would not want to risk physical punishment again.

ALERT

The following question may be one to put to the entire class for a guided and facilitated discussion, as it may touch on issues that are of a very sensitive nature to the student population.

7. Why do you think the men behaved the way they did in town after the berry and root camping trips? Why do you think they attacked their own women when it was the white men who had insulted them? What does this do to an individual's sense of identity?

Answer: Students will have their own answers; the purpose of the question is to look at identity, shame, and misdirected and misplaced violence.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Look over the vivid details of Campbell's road trip as an 8-year-old in the Model T convertible to the Trapper's Convention. Do you ever recall a similar event in your childhood filled with such vivid memories (a trip of discovery and fun)?

Answer: Personal student answer; the purpose is to have the student attempt to recall vivid details through reminiscing.

2. What do you think about the method of holding a convention, having families attend, and the methods of dispute settlement?

Answer: Personal student answer; the purpose is to have the student do evaluative thinking.

3. Campbell has already mentioned little people and monsters in her autobiography. What are your thoughts about Campbell's stories of the bad medicine at Montreal Lake? Do you believe in such powers? Why or why not? If you do not believe in such things, can you accept that another person might without ridiculing their beliefs?

Answer: Personal answer.

4. Compare the two kinds of punishment Campbell received at the hands of her father (being switched) and at the hands of the residential school staff (being locked in a dark, small closet for hours. What kinds of punishment are they? Which do you think is worst and why?

Answer: Students should be able to distinguish between physical punishment that is over quickly and psychological punishment that may last forever. The rest of answer will vary with each student.

CHAPTER SIX

ALERT

This chapter contains one incident of swearing with regard to a food recipe; please preview and put into context for students.

1. What do you think of Alex Vandal’s performance on the opening day of school and the Métis reaction? What do you think was the lasting impression on the non-Métis children and parents? Is this a humorous incident? Why or why not?

Answer: Student answers will vary. Some might say Alex did his people further harm; others might argue that Alex was insulting the white people through his performance, participating in reverse racism. Some students might think the incident is actually funny. Students should be able to defend their opinion with a good argument.

2. What are your thoughts about Cheechum’s method of teaching Campbell to stand up for herself and her people?

Answer: Student answers will vary, but should address the issue of physical violence.

3. Why do you think Campbell and her brothers picked on the two Seventh-Day Adventist children?

Answer: Student answers will vary; the purpose of the question is to help students understand displaced and misplaced violence, bullying, “big fish eat little fish” syndrome, etc.

4. What do you think of Campbell’s story about the dance and fight, and her statement that “We never had a dance without a good fight and we enjoyed and looked forward to it as much as the dancing”?

Answer: Student answers will vary; perhaps some might also include the school children’s fights and conclude that fighting and physical violence was an everyday part of Métis life in Campbell’s community. Other students will have different answers. The object of the question is to have students think about why violence appears (possible alcohol connections) in what otherwise seems to be a happy, healthy group of people.

5. What are the key characteristics of Campbell’s descriptions of Métis community life?

Answer: Student answers will vary but should include: laughter; sharing; periods of poverty/want next to periods of comparative luxury; importance of family and communication; music; dance; “old-fashioned,” country aspects (such as horse riding, sleighs, etc.); community events (weddings, Christmas); church, etc. Students should be able to generalize and comment on the active presence of culture and a cohesive sense of sharing and community.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Why did Campbell’s father laugh when she revealed the illegal meat stash in exchange for a chocolate bar?

Answer: Students will give different answers, but should indicate some awareness of the humour of the situation. Campbell’s father understood how Campbell had fallen for the temptation of something she would not be able to acquire otherwise.

2. Interpret Campbell’s statements that “The important thing is that a man broke a law. He has a choice, and shouldn’t break that law again. Instead, he can go on relief and become a living shell, to be scorned and ridiculed even more.” What literary device is Campbell using?

Answer: Students should realize that Campbell does not believe what she says here. She is showing the inhumanity of the law by using sarcasm. Students should be able to relate sarcasm

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to satire and make a connection to Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, if they have studied it in other English classes. Here is a link to Swift's text: <http://art-bin.com/art/omodest.html>.

3. Campbell's uncle and father go through quite a bit of trouble to play their pranks in the graveyard with regard to the story of Wolverine. Why do you think they do that? What do you think happens to this story afterwards?

Answer: Student answers will vary, but students should be able to understand that oral traditions are living traditions in which Aboriginal people participate. The story about Campbell, her uncle and father will probably become a Campbell family story appended to the original Wolverine stories.

4. The reactions Campbell's parents have to her various adventures show what a complex loving relationship they have with her. How is this demonstrated in the story about Campbell running away?

Answer: Student answers will vary but should detail parent reactions that show they were worried, upset, anxious, angry, amused, relieved, loving, scolding, forgiving.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Campbell details the political activism of her Métis community. What qualities of Métis identity and history support this activism?

Answer: Students should note Métis pride in their political history (Riel, Red River, the Northwest), Métis passion and enthusiasm, Métis enjoyment in discussions and talking, Métis independence.

2. Explain the significance of Campbell's visit to the political meeting, her meeting with Jim Brady, and her reaction.

Answer: Students should note that even at her young age, Campbell was aware that there was a possibility of doing something to better her people's condition. Students should also note the pride Campbell feels in her people's political actions.

3. Why do you think the Métis political activism of Jim Brady and Malcolm Norris failed, broke men like Campbell's father, and divided the Métis community?

Answer: Students will have different answers, but should mention emotional and financial investment in political activities that is unrewarded; fear and retaliation by Métis who do not want change or will not fight for it; the destruction of a community through divisiveness of opinion and bitterness; isolation by those involved in the unsuccessful political activity (shunning). Some students might make connections to modern day Aboriginal political or social disputes or "lateral violence." Students should also realize the huge personal investment an individual makes when he/she decides to fight for a cause he/she believes in, even if the outcome is positive (see *Spirit Dance at Meziadin: Chief Joseph Gosnell and the Nisga'a Treaty* by Alex Rose).

4. In this chapter Campbell ends with the sad story of her mother's death. Why do you think Campbell does not use humour here in recounting the foibles of religion and religious people as she has in the past? What literary device is used to heighten the effect of this religious story compared to the others? What is the overall effect?

Answer: The device used is juxtaposition; even though the religious stories are separated by others, the subject matter joins them. The serious and cruel treatment detailed with regard to the death of Campbell's mother is heightened when readers recall the foolish and comic behaviour of the religious people in earlier stories. In the earlier stories readers forgive the people involved for their foolishness and pettiness; in this story readers cannot forgive the prejudice and cruelty.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Campbell's comment that "Everything seemed to go wrong after Momma left us" is actually just the straw that broke the camel's back. There were many other signs beforehand that things were changing for the worse not only for the Campbell family, but also for the Métis community. List some of these changes.

Answer: Students should note some of the following and may have other observations of their own: Campbell's father's drinking and depression, the growing and desperate poverty of the family and community; the inability and lack of desire for community members to help each other any more; the failure of the fur industry; the encroaching settlers (though this is never mentioned outright, there are growing numbers of references as time passes); the failure of the Métis political actions; Campbell herself growing up and having to take life more seriously.

2. Many people think, as Campbell did in her introduction, that by revisiting old places that once were happy a person can recapture that happiness. Why can this never work?

Answer: Students will have different answers, but note that people and times change forever through experience. Some students may go on to point out that people can only become happy again (if they are saddened) through their own actions and choices. This is called a "narrative" perspective of life. (In contemporary psychological terms, individuals explore and identify their 'essential selves' as they change in life, over time, by using either in a 'narrative' or 'essentialist' method of self-description. A narrative self says, 'I am not the same person as I once was because I have changed due to my experiences and the choices I have made in having those experiences.' An individual with a narrative self is both forward and backward looking, accepting ownership of past behaviour while investing a sense of self as active in the future. An essentialist says, 'Deep down I am the same person, just doing things differently. I used to be aggressive and fight, now I am aggressive in studies and am successful.' From a presentation by Dr. Chris Lalonde, Caneuel series, University of Victoria, 28 Nov. 2007)

CHAPTER TEN

1. At first glance, it appears life will be better for the Campbell family at the Grey farm. What makes it hard for the family to succeed?

Answer: Student answers will vary but may include: the attitude of the teacher, the fear of the "relief man" coming to take the children that prevents the family from asking for help, the unrelenting harshness of constant work, the lack of extended family and community support, loneliness. (This question is meant, by contrast, to make students think about what a person needs to succeed and feel good in life.)

2. What qualities and characteristics does Grannie Dubuque bring to the family when she arrives?

Answer: Students might note any of the following: Grannie Dubuque brings a motherly love to the family, a sense of humour and fun, her storytelling abilities, and a connectedness with the family's past and the history of the Métis people.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Why do you think Campbell includes the very private story about her imagined pregnancy and periods?

Answer: Student answers will vary. The story helps young readers identify with Campbell. Readers know that in an autobiography about a young person growing up the important maturation process will have to occur; students/readers may feel that to omit details about these important identity-forming events would be a major oversight.

2. Cheechum plays a key role in Campbell's life story. Her advice to Campbell at the end of the chapter seems like good advice. What do you think Cheechum meant when she said, "Now I know that you belong to me"? Did Cheechum follow her own advice in her lifetime? Why or why not?

Answer: Student answers will vary but may include information about the change in the historic times that makes Campbell's task harder, and the limitations on Cheechum because of her education. However, students should also recall that Cheechum was the woman who refused to belong to the church when everyone else was a believer, who went to the anti-Métis meetings of her former husband "Evil-spirit" and stole ammunition and supplies for the Métis fighters, who drove the RCMP away by firing a gun over their heads when they tried to remove her from her home in the park. Cheechum says Campbell belongs to her because she shows the same independent, fighting spirit.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. Campbell's stories of events have a sense of humour about them again. Why do you think humour has re-entered the stories, even though the family is still poor and life is hard?

Answer: Students might point out that life is hard, but is bearable and stable; there do not appear to be any threats to the family security. Humour is a way of making a hard life bearable and looking forward to tomorrow. Humour in a truly tragic situation, such as existed at the time of Campbell's mother's death, would be inappropriate and unfeeling.

2. Share some of your thoughts about the way Campbell treated Sophie in the dance story, and what Sophie said years later to Campbell as she was near death.

Answer: Student's personal answer. The nuances of the interaction are complex and this prompt challenges the student's ability to use language to describe those nuances. Students might note that Campbell's reaction belies her feelings, that she has conflicting feelings, that she feels she betrayed Cheechum by behaving badly, etc.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. Why was it impossible for Campbell's father to accept the help of neighbours so that Campbell could stay in school? How does this relate to his comment: "We are poor but there is no way they are going to make my children poorer."

Answer: Student's personal answer. Some students may note that too much pride is destructive and/or counterproductive and relate this to the incidents described earlier in which the family deceived everyone about how poor they were.

2. The movie Campbell describes about the Northwest Rebellion painted the Métis as clowns and fools. Think of how Aboriginal people have been represented in recent movies. Have things changed? How? What do you think happened that resulted in the changes? How recently do you think these significant changes occurred?

Answer: Answers will vary but should show significant attempts by students to give serious thought to the issues raised. This question is designed to make students think about representations of Aboriginal people in the popular film media and the causes of changes in media representation.

3. Discuss the fight between Campbell and her father over the dance and Smoky. Was either of them in the right? Why or why not? While it is impossible to change how Campbell and her father actually behaved, can you think of another way they *could* have behaved that might have solved their argument so that they did not “drift apart”?

Answer: Student answers will vary. Suggested solutions might include taking a time-out to calm down, admitting mistakes, agreeing to change behaviours that are harmful to the family (such as Campbell’s father going to the dances, drinking, and fighting), agreeing to continue to work out the problems until both parties are satisfied. This question is designed to give students the opportunity to discuss non-confrontational dispute resolution.

4. Why do you think Campbell cannot think of her people without thinking of them as fighting and drinking? She writes: “I hated all of it as much as I loved it.” What do you think she means? How do you think people can keep the healthy part of their culture and change the unhealthy part?

Answer: This question is meant to stimulate discussion and make students think about the bigger picture.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. What is your sense of justice regarding the relief man saying that widows could receive help, but that a single father could not? What is your sense of justice when you learn that Sarah leaves and Campbell must quit school because Campbell’s father would not marry Sarah, saying that Campbell’s mother was the only woman he’d loved? What would you feel and do in the second situation (as a male, as a female)?

Answer: Student answers will vary, but should discuss the discrimination involved in relief supporting a woman but not a man as a single head of the family. Student answers to the second question will involve differing senses of moral right, but should nonetheless reveal that Campbell’s father used Sarah, at least in part.

2. Discuss your thoughts and feelings about Campbell’s marriage to Darrel and the events around that marriage. Who do you think is taking responsibility for all the smaller children in the Campbell family? Justify any statements or opinions you make.

Answer: This question is designed to get students to identify the complexities in such a situation and to justify their choices and opinions, but answers will vary. Some observations might be: Campbell would not have done this if her father had protected the family by marrying Sarah; Campbell was (in part/all right or wrong) in refusing to marry in a church; Campbell was (in part/all right or wrong) in making up her own mind about marriage; the family was (in part/all right or wrong) in trying to get Campbell to marry in a church; Cheechum and Campbell’s father were (in part/all right or wrong) in choosing Smoky for

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Campbell; Campbell/her father/the new husband Darrel/the aunties and other members of Campbell's extended family were/were not taking responsibility for the family.

3. What are your thoughts about Campbell saying, "I had no choice but to go home with the baby to Darrel." Why do you think Campbell felt she had no choice? Could she have done something different?

Answer: Student answers will vary but could note that Smoky had told her she could come back to him; Campbell could have returned to her father; Campbell could have asked for help from her extended family. It was clear Darrel did not want Campbell, and had told her to leave. Further, Campbell was in a dangerous physically and emotionally abusive relationship that was not a good model for the younger Campbell children she said she wanted to protect.

4. The issue of shame lies heavily on the Campbell family members' inability to make choices that are better for them in the long term. Do you agree with this statement or disagree? Why or why not?

Answer: Student answers will vary, but should include justifications for opinions.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. Why do you think Campbell can confess her feelings and situation to the Chinese people running the café, and accept their help, but is unable to do the same with her own people?

Answer: Student answers will vary; this question is designed to help students examine Campbell's feelings, empathize, and make emotional connections to their own understanding of feelings.

2. What is it in Campbell that makes her refuse to see or go out with Bob any more, but allows her to return to Darrel?

Answer: This question is to get students to discuss motives behind choices and to allow them to "map out" what makes a good choice as opposed to a bad or destructive one in relationships.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. Explain what is so telling about Campbell's comment: "The store windows were full of beautiful displays, lots of food, clothes and all the things a person could possibly need to be happy." Discuss whether Campbell's priorities have changed over time. Why might she be so interested in material wealth? What does it represent?

Answer: Student responses will vary, but should note the following: Campbell's sense of what a person needs to be happy has shifted from community and family, as it was at the start of the book, to material goods. This reflects her desire to have what she never could have as a child because of poverty; it also reflects her concept of "success" at the same time as the hidden fear of "not having" that resulted in the relief people taking away her younger brothers and sisters. Campbell now stresses and values what is on the outside of a person as opposed to what is on the inside.

2. Why do you think Darrel brought Campbell and Lisa to Vancouver?

Answer: Student's personal answers. The question is designed to get students to think about motivation for people's behaviours, and to realize that what one person wants is not necessarily

good for any other person involved in the relationship. Further, students may recognize that the person involved in such an unhealthy relationship must make choices for him/herself.

3. Where do you think Campbell's dreams went "wrong"? Explain why you think she says, "I feel an overwhelming compassion and understanding for another human being caught in a situation where the way out is so obvious to others but not to him."

Answer: Student answers will vary, but the discussion is aimed at getting students to note choices and turning points in the "narrative" of a life. ("Narrative" was mentioned earlier in the Chapter questions.) Campbell's comment is one made in hindsight; she is implying that she can now, later in her life, see how she could have avoided becoming a prostitute, but at the time could not see any escape for herself. She is asking for our (the reader's) compassion and understanding. Students should also recall how young Campbell was at this point in her life, and how difficult it is to make informed decisions at a young age because emotions tend to rule.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1. Record your thoughts about Campbell's comment on powerful, rich people: "When I think back to that time and those people, I realize now that poor people, both white and Native, who are trapped within a certain kind of life, can never look to the business and political leaders of this country for help. Regardless of what they promise, they'll never change things, because they are involved in and perpetuate in private the very things that they condemn in public."

Answer: This question is designed to stimulate student discussion about power and politics, democracy and representation, justice and injustice. A horseshoe debate may be revealing and enlightening. Some students may be able to make connections to contemporary historical events. Details about many Canadian government scandals can be found at the following web sites below. Students should be asked to note and think about the veracity of the sources of the material as part of their critical thinking skills:

The Canadian Encyclopedia Web site, "Corruption:"

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0001941>

Wikipedia, "List of Canadian political scandals:"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_political_scandals

World Socialist Web Site, "Canada: Martin and Chrétien testify in corruption scandal:"

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/feb2005/cana-fl9.shtml>

2. What do you think about Ray, the help he gave Campbell to get off drugs and regain her baby Lisa, and the job he asked her to perform?

Answer: Student's personal answer, but students should note that Ray was involved in illegal and violent activities that destroyed people in spite of his help to Campbell.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. What are your thoughts about Campbell blaming the "drunken Indian men" for all the ills she suffered and the other "girls" suffered?

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Answer: Student’s personal answer; should show depth of thought and understanding of anger, frustration, futility, loss of hope, desire for change in spite of everything (because she can still feel).

2. Campbell invites Ray back into her life with her request for help. Again, he helps her out without any demands, but also provides her with money illegally gained. What are your thoughts and feelings about the “rightness” of Campbell accepting his help?

Answer: This question, combined with the earlier one about Ray, might be a good one for a class discussion on “moral and immoral” behaviour, ends versus means, etc.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1. Evaluate Campbell’s behaviour at the ranch. Did she make healthy choices for herself and her baby? What finally resulted in her being fired? Was that just?

Answer: Students might note that Campbell drank, gambled, drove quickly, spent her time in the company of young men, and that her behaviour encouraged gossip. However, students should also note she worked hard and changed some of her behaviour when she realized it was giving her a bad reputation. Students should justify their decision as to whether or not Campbell made healthy choices. It would appear that Campbell’s firing was an unjust act by the boss, that it was “guilt by association,” and retaliation because Campbell had befriended Shawn.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1. Can you answer Campbell’s question to herself: “I remember sitting there with her and thinking, ‘Here we are, the two of us, and we weren’t any different from any other women. What happened anyway? Why do we have to fight so damn hard for so little?’”

Answer: Student answers will vary and will depend on the depth and breadth of their discussions or thoughts about earlier questions on the same theme.

2. Why is Campbell so appalled at the idea of selling Native culture at the Stampede when she was not, at that point, opposed to selling her body (and spirit) on the streets?

Answer: Student’s personal answer, but it should be supported by sound reasoning. Students may make connections between the activities as different forms of ‘prostitution.’

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1. Can you think of any contemporary equivalents in Aboriginal history that might qualify in supporting Cheechum’s comment: “...when the government gives you something, they take all that you have in return—your pride, your dignity, all the things that make you a living soul. When they are sure they have everything, they give you a blanket to cover your shame”?

Answer: Student answers will vary but might include such historical examples as the forced location of First Nations people onto reserves, the refusal by the government to recognize land claims, the legal repression of Aboriginal culture and theft of cultural artefacts, and the residential school experiences. There may also be more contentious debate or discussion about the misuse and abuse of government funding to Aboriginal organizations and groups. These topics should most certainly be explored, but the discussion should be moderated and students should be willing and able to supply specific examples as evidence to support their views.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1. Campbell seems to have left a trail of men behind her. What do you think made her believe each time that a man could straighten out her life for her?

Answer: This question is meant to stimulate critical thinking in students with regard to the novel's themes of personal identity and strength; it should also extend into more general observations and refer back to the 'narrative' style of describing life that allows people to rethink their behaviour choices and to change.

2. What are your thoughts about Campbell's descriptions of the insane hospital wards? What philosophy (belief about people, guiding principle) would allow for mentally ill patients to be treated in such a way? Do you believe that such circumstances might still exist?

Answer: Students might recognize that in order to treat people so badly, those in power have to believe that the people are less than human. Similar contemporary circumstances exist in any contemporary situation where there is prejudice, hatred as a result of religious beliefs, attempts by one culture, people, or nation to dominate and repress another, etc.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

ALERT

Teachers should preview the use of the expressions "fucked up" and "kick his ass" in this chapter and prepare students by contextualizing the comments.

1. Campbell comments that Stan Daniels "...was bitter about what the white system had done to our men..." Do you think there are victims who truly cannot do anything about their situation and who have no choices? If so, who might they be and why are they true victims?

Answer: Students might or might not agree with the concept of victimhood, but they should be able to argue their case. The situation of captive peoples (First Nations on reserves, children in residential schools, prisoners of war, those so poor that they are desperate for money, for food, etc.) as victims should be discussed. Students may also wish to discuss the concept of a "captive" people, what that means, and how the situation for those people can be changed.

2. When Campbell describes the scene in town with the drunks, the abandoned children, the fights, etc., how is it different from the same scene when she was younger and a participant?

Answer: Students should be able to note that the scene has not changed, but Campbell has. She now knows where such behaviour leads and realizes that she does not want to be part of it.

3. Why is it that Campbell can tell her hurtful life story to Cheechum, but not her father? Why can she do this now, when earlier in the novel she would not return home because of her shame about what she was doing and her fear about what Cheechum would think?

Answer: Student responses will vary but may note that Campbell has changed through her breakdown, hospitalization, and AA meetings. Campbell also needed at least one close family member to know all about her and yet still accept and love her, and that person was Cheechum.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1. Comment on Campbell’s observation that “Listening to her [Marie Smallface] talk, it seemed to me that here was a whole new breed of Native people who would make changes and give leadership.” How had this come about?

Answer: Student responses will differ. Students might note, however, that there were enough angry young Aboriginal people who wanted to make positive changes for their people, and who funnelled that anger into positive, constructive behaviours instead of destructive ones. Larger political organizations were formed by and for Aboriginal people, and issues began to be made public on a broad scale. Aboriginal media, such as newspapers and radio stations, were founded.

2. How do you think things have changed for Aboriginal people since Campbell’s book first came out in 1973? Make sure to back up your statements of opinion.

Answer: Student answers will vary depending on their prior knowledge and thought, but might include the proliferation of Aboriginal media, the newer interest by non-Aboriginal people about Aboriginal culture (some may see this as negative), increased control by Aboriginal peoples over conditions that affect Aboriginal people, an increase in the level of education and opportunities for Aboriginal people, redressing of past wrongs by the government and church (some students may disagree with part or all of this statement), proliferation of scholarships, internships and other programs to help Aboriginal people with education, jobs and businesses, etc.

3. Study of this novel began with a look at how Métis history and culture gave Campbell a sense of self. She lost her identity, but by the end of her autobiography had regained a new sense of self. How is Campbell’s identity connected to her Métis people both at the beginning and end of the novel? How are the connections different? What kind of “family” does Campbell identify with at the beginning and at the end of her book?

Answer: Students should note that at the beginning of the novel, Campbell’s sense of self is strongly rooted in her biological family and its direct connection to Métis history and cultural tradition. At the end of the novel, Campbell’s self-identity is still based in her biological family, but has extended to a group of friends and political colleagues who are now her “family,” including the prisoners she has inspired. Campbell herself has moved through history, from the “olden days” of Métis history that were connected to Riel, Dumont, and the 1800s rebellions to the more modern political movements of the Métis.

Summary of Novel Study and Section Assignment

Learning Outcomes: C1-C14, with the possible exception of C3 and C4 depending on students’ choice of form of expression.

Introduction

The teacher may wish the class to have a group discussion about the overarching themes and issues raised in Campbell’s *Halfbreed*. This will act as a ‘stimulating prior knowledge’ activity in preparation for the student assignment.

Some of the recurrent themes and/or features of *Halfbreed* are

- identity

- healthy/unhealthy choices, motives that drive people to make those choices, steps to making healthy, positive choices
- the relationship between (Aboriginal/Métis) men and women
- the role of Elders in traditional Métis communities and how that has changed
- the relationship between First Nations and Métis peoples, both historically and in contemporary times
- humour, types of humour, and its ability to “mediate” experience
- government corruption, abandonment of those in need
- church inability and unwillingness to help those in need and how this may/may not have changed over time
- social justice: the treatment of people who are in positions of less power and need help; human rights movements, their structure, objectives and effectiveness.

See Unit 8 in this Teacher Resource Guide with regard to research essays.

Assessment/Evaluation

Students should write an essay, make a presentation (video, audio, digital slideshow, poster) or perform a creative piece to demonstrate their knowledge and response to a topic that arises from the novel study. Areas for essay projects and some topic suggestions are included above in the Teacher Information section. Essays must be complete and demonstrate good style, grammar, and reference citations. For MLA style guide, comments on plagiarism, etc. see: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html>. Students should also turn in draft outlines, writers’ webs, or notes with their assignment as examples of their writing/representation strategies. If students choose to do a creative piece, they should submit a small one-page written essay detailing how the creative piece specifically addresses and informs the student’s chosen topic.

50 marks

Assessment rubric on the following page.

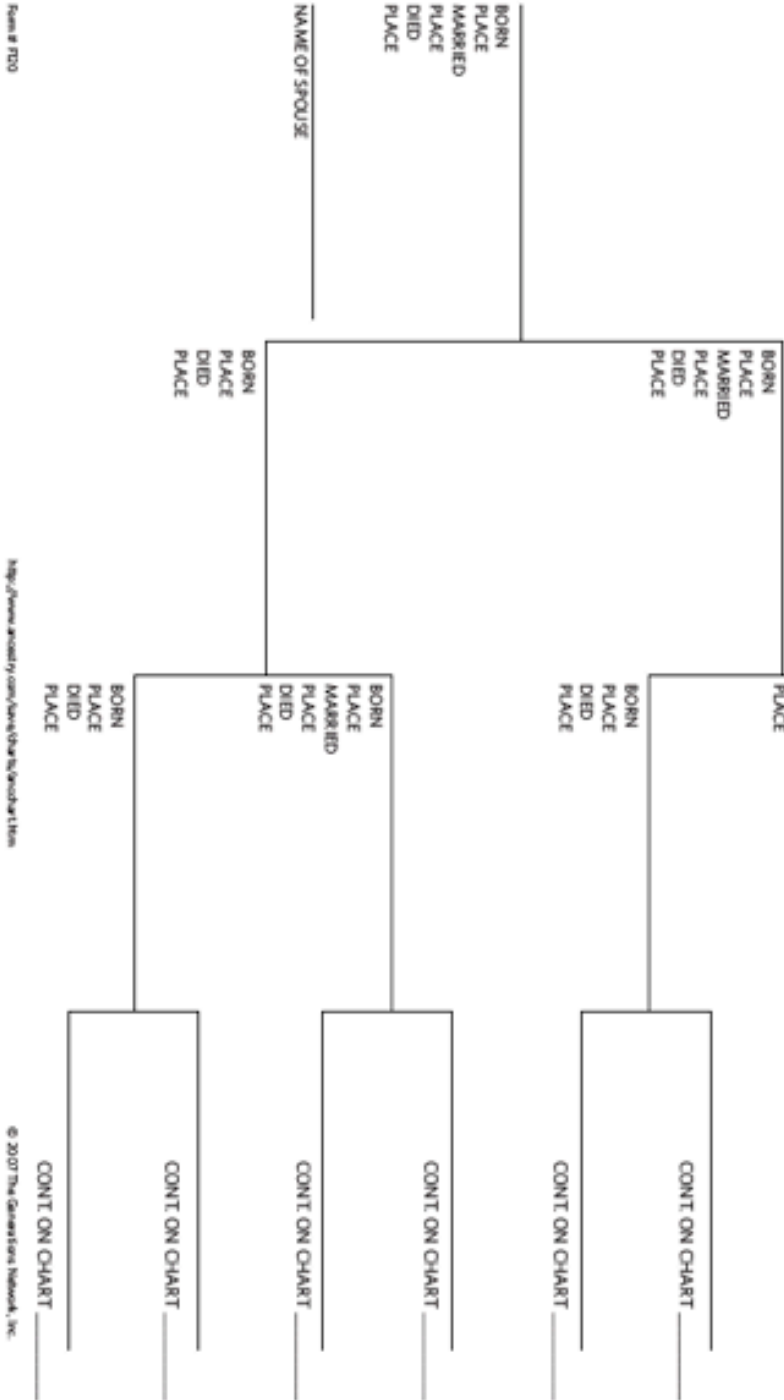
NAME: PROJECT: TOPIC:		
MARK	CRITERIA	PROJECT EVALUATION AND COMMENT
50 marks	Student project shows depth of understanding, a strong use of evidence to support student findings and opinion. Creative or written skills are superior, almost no errors or incidents of sloppiness. Topic is compelling and strong. Presentation is strong and compelling. Student has chosen a challenging subject to address. Pre-writing work is outstanding and thorough.	
40 marks	Student project shows a good grasp of the topic and a sincere attempt to deal with any opposing evidence or views. Arguments are good, and show only a few errors of logic/argument or omissions. Production skills are good, showing some errors that may be unusual. Presentation is consistent. Student has chosen an interesting, though not challenging topic. Pre-writing work is complete but not outstanding.	
30 marks	Student project shows a moderate grasp of the topic and an average attempt to deal with the issues raised. There may be a few omissions of argument or evidence. Production skills are average, showing errors that are typical but not common. Work is clean. Student has chosen an average topic that inspires some debate. Pre-writing work is submitted, but may be slightly incomplete.	
20 marks	Student project shows some grasp of topic with partial preparatory work. Major arguments are addressed, but depth of argument and comprehensive coverage of issues is missing. Production skills are below expectations, showing common errors. Presentation shows signs of sloppiness. Student topic is somewhat shallow and not well defined. Pre-writing work is present, but shows several areas incomplete.	
10 marks	Student project shows under-developed grasp of topic with an inadequate amount of preparatory work. Only one or two arguments are presented and dealt with. Production skills are riddled with inaccuracies, errors, sloppiness. Topic is ill-defined. Pre-writing work is minimal.	
0 marks	Student has failed to turn in a project.	

Ancestral Chart



Chart No. _____

No. 1 on this chart is
the same person as No. _____
On Chart No. _____



Form # F200

<http://www.ancestry.com/html/chart/f200chart.htm>

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**PART III: NOVEL STUDY: SELECTIONS FROM *IN SEARCH OF APRIL RAINTREE*
BY BEATRICE MOSIONIER**

Concepts of Métis Identity, Lost Identity, and History

Learning Outcomes: A1-5, possibly A6 & 7 in activity 2, A9-13, possibly B3, B5, B8, B9, B11, C1, C2, possibly C4, C8, C10, C11

Resources

Préfontaine, Darren R. “Métis Writers.” The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research.
<http://www.Métismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00733.pdf>

Teacher Information

Selections from *In Search of April Raintree* are found on pages 280-291 of *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3rd Edition.

Here is what Darren R. Préfontaine wrote in his article entitled “Métis Writers” about Mosionier and *In Search of April Raintree*:

Beatrice Culleton

*White Man, when you first came, most of our tribes began with peace and trust in dealing with you, strange white intruders. We showed you how to survive in our homelands. We were willing to share with you are our vast wealth. Instead of repaying us with gratitude, you, White Man, turned on us, your friends. You turned on us with your advanced weapons and your cunning trickery.
As Long As the Sun Shall Rise...*

Beatrice Culleton, a Manitoba Métis author, playwright and novelist, was born on 27 August 1949 in St. Boniface Manitoba, to Louis and Mary Clara Mosionier. Beatrice was the youngest of four children in a dysfunctional and broken home. At age three she was taken away from her parents and raised in a series of foster homes, and away from her family and Métis heritage. Taunted and increasingly abused, she began denying her Aboriginal heritage after she was ten and wholeheartedly embraced Euro-Canadian values. This odyssey wrecked havoc on her personal identity and she went from foster home to foster home and it eventually destroyed two of her sisters: they committed suicide. She eventually settled in Toronto, where she currently resides. As a trained accountant, Ms. Culleton never envisioned that she would become a writer. However, the suicide of her sister in 1980 spurred her to write about her and her family's inner torment.

Ms. Culleton[’s] first novel *In Search of April Raintree*, which was published in 1983, was given the new title *April Raintree* in 1984. The novel, which is highly psychological, was largely auto-biographical and dealt with the painful experiences which many young Aboriginal people face trying to discover who they really are. The theme of the book articulated the necessity of community and self-healing, and as such it was given wide acclaim by both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population.

April Raintree is set in Winnipeg and it tells the story of two sisters who have alcoholic parents who are oblivious to the destruction of their family, and this led to tragic consequences when the family's baby dies and the two sisters are sent to a number of foster homes. The two sisters grow apart and become gradually estranged from the other: the one sister grows up hating and denying her Métis heritage and the other sister embraces it. Later the two sisters meet when they are adults and the older sister, who looks white, tells the younger sister, who looks more visibly Aboriginal:

I am ashamed... I can't accept being Métis. That's the hardest thing that I've ever said to you, Cheryl. And I'm glad you don't feel the same way I do. I'm so proud of what you are trying to do. But to me, being Métis means that I'm one of the have-nots. And I want so much. I'm selfish. I know it, but that's the way I am. I want what white society can give me.

The two sisters go their separate ways and the Métis-hating sister, April, moves to Toronto and becomes successful and married, while the pro-Métis sister, Cheryl, becomes radical, sullen, inward-looking, and withdrawn from society. Eventually, the lives of the two sisters turn for the worst: April's marriage falls apart and she moves back to Winnipeg and she is brutally assaulted. Cheryl commits suicide, as her mother had. These tragic circumstances force April to come to terms with her Métis heritage. Written in a lamentable but emotional prose, the story is a poignant reminder of the inner pain and struggle, and self hate, which many Métis face when analyzing their heritage. It has become widely read in Europe and elsewhere as "Native" and not "Canadian" literature, and like Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* is a scathing indictment of an uncaring society which allows its children to suffer and of the colonization of its Aboriginal peoples.

Suggested Activity Sequence

Pre-Reading Activities

1. Introduce the new work to be studied and read the selection from Préfontaine's essay.
2. The class can discuss some of the statements Préfontaine makes in light of the search for identity that students examined and explored in *Halfbreed*. Campbell had a very direct connection to her history, people, and culture, whereas the Raintree sisters did not. This raises several questions about how important history and culture are in identity formation. How does Cheryl Raintree rediscover her history, and was it enough for her? If not, why not? If modern Métis individuals are now separated by time and space from their traditional culture and history, how are their identities as Métis formed? It is often interesting to form a physical "opinion line or graph" concerning such questions that gets students on their feet and gives a quick visual image of class opinions. An opinion line is simply a line of students where those with one opinion stand at one end and those with the opposite stand at the other end and those with opinions that vary or depend on different influences situate themselves in between. A physical opinion "graph" is similar except that the poles are on opposite sides of the classroom and allow for accurate visual representation where students hold stronger and more diametrically opposed opinions because those students bunch at opposite sides of the room. Students with opinions that depend on influences and circumstances will locate themselves somewhere between the two sides of the room. Both activities require students to physically move and to talk to each other.

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3. Préfontaine says *In Search of April Raintree* "...is a poignant reminder of the inner pain and struggle, and self hate, which many Métis face when analyzing their heritage." Students should discuss this statement. "Self hate" is a very powerful and condemning description. If any Métis students are in the class, they might have strong opinions about this statement. Is it accurate or too broad a generalization? Why or why not?

Assessment/Evaluation

Journal

Students should write a journal entry to demonstrate their understanding of the complexities and difficulties an individual faces in trying to form an identity when there is no direct connection to culture and history. Students can be asked to make connections to other Aboriginal situations and circumstances in which formation of an identity would be similarly difficult. Students might think about

- residential school children
- children put in foster care in non-Aboriginal families that do not allow cultural education
- the Aboriginal individuals jailed at the beginning of the 1900s for continuing to practise their culture after laws had been passed making that illegal (Potlatch Laws)
- Aboriginal children whose parents or grandparents pretended they were not Aboriginal or who refused to pass on the culture, etc.

Students might also wish to tackle Préfontaine's opinion that Métis feels self-hate when analyzing their history; students might ask why Préfontaine might wish to make such a statement and speak for all modern Métis.

10 marks

Home Assignment

Ask students to write or create a poster or to use another method of expression that shows how their identity has been influenced by family, family history, and culture. It is important to note that many students may not identify their biological family members as the strongest influences involved in identity-formation, and may identify individuals to whom they are not biologically related as family members. Students may identify negatively with some or all family members and/or their family history, and others may be in the process of struggling with identity issues for any number of reasons. Teachers will need to exercise professional judgment with regard to how to handle any or all of these scenarios. Some students may wish to show these or perform at next class if their work is performance. Students who do a creative piece should be able to explain orally or in writing how their work demonstrates their identity formation.

10 marks

TOTAL: 20 marks

Themes in In Search of April Raintree

Learning Outcomes: A1-13, B1, B3-5, B7-9, B11, B12, C1-4, C8-12, C13

Resources

Moses, Daniel David and Terry Goldie, eds. *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3rd Edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Mosionier, Beatrice Culleton. *In Search of April Raintree*. Critical Edition ed. Cheryl Suzack. Winnipeg: Portage & Main P, 1999.

Teacher Information

Selections from *In Search of April Raintree* are found on pages 280-291 of *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*.

It is helpful to use some of the essay ideas from the Critical Edition of *In Search of April Raintree* for hints about the overall themes and motifs in the novel, and to help students focus on topics for their discussions and section assignment.

In her introductory essay, editor Cheryl Suzack documents what an important impact the novel has had for and on its readers: “The novel owes its success as much to its ability to emotionally engage readers as to its consideration of familiar themes, values, and ideas...It is a novel that crosses disciplinary boundaries to engage with issues of racism and the socialization of Native children, ‘truth-telling’ and the representation of social discourse, and First Nations literary history and the quest for identity.” (2)

Suzack details the publication history of the book, which when the critical edition was published in 1999, had seen continuous and consistent sales, and circulation in three languages.

THEMES AND OVERARCHING IDEAS

Missing Identity, Missing Culture, Missing History

Margery Fee’s essay “Deploying Identity in the Face of Racism” claims that *In Search of April Raintree* “rejects whiteness or Nativeness as simple, clearcut identities.” (2-3)

Janice Acoose’s essay “The Problem of ‘Searching’ for April Raintree” “demonstrates how the novel thematizes the absence of positive narratives of Métis culture and history in her exploration of the Raintree sisters’ quests to recover a sense of self and community.” (3) Acoose says the novel resists readers’ attempts to find within the novel the presence and definition of Métis culture and history and so opens up the possibility for discussion about what constitutes history and culture.

Social Justice Issues

Jeanne Perreault’s “In Search of Cheryl Raintree, and Her Mother” considers social and physical realities facing many people of Native heritage: illness, infant mortality, foster care, alcoholism, rape, domestic violence against women, prostitution, and suicide. (4)

Cultural Dislocation and Affirmation of Aboriginal Identity

Jo-Ann Thom in “The Effect of Readers’ Responses on the Development of Aboriginal Literature in Canada: A Study of Maria Campbell’s *Halfbreed*, Beatrice Culleton’s *In Search of April Raintree*, and Richard Wagamese’s *Keeper’n Me*” claims that contemporary writers (Richard Wagamese for example) reimagine truths of systematic racism and cultural dislocation as narratives of cultural healing. Thom argues that contemporary authors recognize and extend the

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work of previous Aboriginal authors, and transform racist discourse into narratives that affirm Aboriginal culture and identity. (6)

Sisterhood, Feminism, and Solidarity

Heather Zwicker's "The Limits of Sisterhood" examines sisterhood in order to conceptualize community among women. She poses the following question: How do we celebrate difference without giving up on possibility of solidarity? She argues that disintegration between sisters demonstrates the disintegration of a feminism that fails to respond to a community founded on mutual responsibility and recognition of difference. (6)

[There is an interesting, short essay comparing *April Raintree* and *The Color Purple* for students who are interested in this topic: <http://www.reneemattila.com/A%20Comparison.htm>.]

There is a huge collection of young people's responses to *In Search of April Raintree* as part of an English course, which teachers may find helpful and informative at:

http://pwmartin.blog.uvm.edu/182/archives/discussion_topic_for_in_search_of_april_raintree.php

Teachers can find a wider selection from the book on Google books, should they wish students to do further reading of the text.

Suggested Activity Sequence

1. If students have presentations from the first lesson, it is a good idea to have them at the start of this class before new material is introduced.
 2. Teachers can share the information from the critical edition essays and use the themes identified as focus for student readings. It would be a good idea to allow class discussion or questions related to each theme idea as it is introduced. Students can then read independently, thinking of the theme that appeals most to them, and which can guide their own response to the reading. The selection is short.
 3. Teachers can use the questions and answers below in whichever way best suits their purpose: for comprehension, discussion, journals entries, or projects, etc.
1. Mosionier uses humour in a terrifying situation when the Mother Superior greeted April and Cheryl at the orphanage, much like Campbell used humour in *Halfbreed*. Why do you think Mosionier did this?

Answer: Students might have different suggestions. The belief the nuns were "boogeywoman" strongly reminds readers that the children were very young, as does Cheryl's nickname of "Apple" for April.

2. In the second selection, April is obviously older. Compare Mosionier's statements about what the Métis were and how April was going to be different with the way Campbell portrayed the Métis later in *Halfbreed* and her personal goals.

Answer: Both described the Métis as drunks, weak, dirty and poor; both want to be rich and *not* like the Métis.

3. In the third selection, Cheryl has already committed suicide. Describe how April comes to her Métis self awareness and identity in comparison to Maria's awakening in *Halfbreed*.

Answer: April has an epiphany of sorts and comes to her awareness in the midst of feelings of rage, responsibility, and despair when she seizes the whiskey bottle in Cheryl's room and smashes it. She suddenly cries out her hatred of alcohol, all it represents, and all it has done to not only her family but also to the Métis: "I hate you for what you've done to my sister! I hate you for what you've done to my parents! I hate you for what you've done to my people! Our people!" Maria had a nervous breakdown, having repressed all her feelings; her healing came through the detox program at the hospital, and through the help of friends and the AA.

4. In her journal entry, Cheryl identifies the street Métis as empty, but she also identifies the "white" life she thinks April is living as empty. What is it that gives fulfillment to people in life? Why does Cheryl appear to have such difficulty finding that? Why is it that she has "made" her father into something he cannot be and which she cannot accept?

Answer: Students will have different answers. Some might say riches bring fulfillment; students must back up their opinion and examine what it is that Cheryl sees as empty in a rich person's life. Cheryl, in spite of her philosophy, had wanted her father to be someone other than who he was, though she does not even tell readers if her father was happy in the life he was leading between Josie Pohequitas's house and the bush because she never bothers to find out for herself. It would appear that Cheryl had tied her Métis identity, and the likelihood of living a different life, to her father's identity and life. She had mythologized her past and discovered that it did not exist. See the comment by April later in this section: "That meeting with Dad, maybe it destroyed her self-image....I wondered what sort of image she had built up about our parents?"

5. Does it appear that Cheryl understands that her parents were hurt after losing their children to foster care? Why do you think she appears to blame them for the hurt she and April suffered in foster homes?

Answer: Students should recognize that this is a displaced anger, blame, and guilt for what went wrong. It is what happens when people place responsibility on someone else instead accepting responsibility themselves and trying to change things.

6. What kind of choices does Cheryl make that cause her to end up in skid row, living like the Métis people she criticized and hated? What do you think made her do this? In the novel, Cheryl had been to university and was active in the Native community.

Answer: Students will have to hypothesize here, because they do not know the entire story, but they might rely on their study of *Halfbreed* and Cheryl's reaction to her father's lifestyle. Students might raise issues of despair, constant striving without rest, exhaustion, isolation, a failure to build a strong sense of inner self and worth (self-esteem), etc.

7. Campbell as well as Cheryl and April have trouble talking about their problems and feelings. Do you think it is important to be able to talk about feelings and problems? Why or why not? What do you think can help people get past that barrier?

Answer: Students will have different answers; it is the process of self-examination that is important here in terms of self-identity.

8. At the end of this selection, April seems to have found some sense of identity as a Métis person. What do you think forms that identity?

Answer: Student answers will vary but may include family (her nephew as well as all her lost family members); a sense that there is a community of people to which she belongs.

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9. Novels that are constructed using letters and diary entries are called *epistolary* novels. The word “epistolary” comes from “epistle” meaning a letter, often a long one on a serious subject. Not all of *In Search of April Raintree* is epistolary, but key parts from Cheryl’s diary and letters are included. What do you think these epistolary entries tell us that we could not otherwise learn through April’s narrative? What are the benefits and drawbacks of epistolary selections in novels?

Answer: Students should note that Cheryl’s diary entries and letters let us see her true thoughts and feelings, and not just the ones she expressed publicly. They show a hidden, perhaps more real, side of a person. The benefit of such a stylistic device is that it allows us inside a character and shows the more complex personality, the feelings and thoughts that motivate the character. The drawbacks are that letters are often written for effect and when we read them we must try to figure out if there is an ulterior motive the writer had in writing the letter. Diary entries tend to be “true” displays of a person’s inner self; however, a diary left behind for others to find might lead us to ask why it was not destroyed, since it was personal and private.

Assessment/Evaluation

In the critical edition of the novel, Mosionier’s own essay “The Special Time” explores the personal events that have shaped her continuing exploration of issues of racism and suicide. Many of the themes and events in the novel mirror those in Mosionier’s life. In her essay, Mosionier said: “Of the two sisters, Cheryl Raintree was the character whom I most wanted readers to love” (4). Write a one-page essay or a creative piece (poem, monologue, rap poem, song, dance, etc.) that explores the reasons why you think Mosionier said that. Be prepared to orally share your work in the next class.

OR

Write a one-page essay or a creative piece (poem, monologue, rap poem, song, dance, etc.) that explores one of the novel’s themes. Be prepared to orally share your work in the next class.

25 marks

Presentation of Oral Assignments

Learning Outcomes: A6, A7, A13

Teachers may wish to address any outstanding issues or questions with regard to *April Raintree* before proceeding to the assignment presentations. Presentations may take more than one lesson.

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OR

Write a one-page essay or a creative piece (poem, monologue, rap poem, song, dance, etc.) that explores one of the novel’s themes.

25 marks

PART IV: POETRY STUDY: MÉTIS POETS

Emma LaRocque’s “The Beggar” & Joanne Arnott’s “The Shard”

Learning Outcomes: A1-13, B1, B3, B6-13, C2, C4, C11-14

Resources

Armstrong, Jeannette C. and Lally Grauer, eds. *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview P, 2001.

Teacher Information

In her introduction in the anthology Emma LaRocque says that the influence of her Métis/Cree heritage in her poetry is subtle and is to be found in nuances. The anthology introduction for Joanne Arnott says her poetry is like the featured poem “The Shard”—vulnerable and tough, fragile and enduring. Arnott often uses “choruses” in her poems.

Métis poetry, like Métis prose, is often concerned with issues of identity.

Featured Poems

“The Beggar,” page 151 and “The Shard,” pages 285-6

Suggested Activity Sequence

1. Introduce the poetry section for study, and identify the Métis poets found in the anthology: Joanne Arnott, Joan Crate, Marilyn Dumont, Emma LaRocque, and Gregory Scofield.
2. It is assumed students have already covered the types of poems, and poetic devices and literary techniques outlined on pages 106-109 of the Teacher Resource Guide, and that students have already done some work with Aboriginal writers’ poems.
3. If enough groundwork has been done, have the students begin working with the poems selected for this lesson without further introduction. Let students know their group activity for today will be marked. Have the class form groups (whichever method suits the teacher) and give out photocopies of the two featured poems. Half of the groups should get one poem and half of the groups should get the second poem. All students should have a copy of a poem. Ask each group of students to read their featured poem, decide voice emphasis in order to prepare to present the poem orally (as poetry originally was presented), decide what type of poem it is, look for poetic devices and literary techniques and write them down, and note anything else that particularly impresses them about the poem. Students can mark up and make notes on their poems. Encourage students to be as creative as possible in their poem presentations while still covering all the information. Let students know that while you do not expect a “polished” group performance, students should all try their best and support others in their group. Let students know they can “play” with the oral presentation, repeating lines, using vocalizations other than words, using drumming on knees, etc. to enhance their presentation, but that they should be able to explain why they made particular creative interpretations in delivery style. Students may choose simply to read the poem with different word stresses. Let students know the criteria for marking (see rubric below) so they can be sure their presentations will be complete.

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4. Give students approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete their assignment, and tell students that at the end of the preparation time each group will: 1) orally present the poem in the manner the group decided upon 2) identify type of poem, identify rhyme (or lack thereof), and rhythm 3) identify key poetic devices and 4) speak about the point of view, the voice of narrator(s). All students in each group should participate in the presentation, and the groups should decide how they will divide up the presentation tasks amongst their members.
5. “Whip-around” presentations in whichever group/poem order works best for the class and teacher.

Below are some characteristics about the poems, most of which the students should be able to recognize:

“The Beggar”

- free verse
- first person singular narrator
- no rhyme
- rhythm dependent upon word stress in reading except that the last two lines are isolated, and therefore insist on a pause of breath before reading
- both stereotyped and realistic portrait of “boozed-up, begging Indian”
- “proverbial mainstreet” ties reference closer to stereotyped image
- short lines chop up speech when reading aloud, like dialogue, like telling a story to someone else, like a confession
- “mainstreet” as one word makes Main Street a universal
- lack of punctuation and vagueness of time make it hard to decide which lines belong to which regarding “ten years ago” and “today” in relation to neighbouring lines. Do the lines “when i had no money/i would have fed him” refer to the incident 10 years ago? Or, does the line “i would have fed him” belong with “today” and the lines that follow (“i slinked off/in my unfaded blue jeans/harry rosen plaids/and turquoise rings”) refer back to the incident 10 years ago, when the writer claimed to have no money?
- irony of “no money” statement compared to the rich clothing and jewellery the person wears, especially if the poem is read as describing the money-less person in the incident 10 years ago as being the well-dressed one
- irony even if the well-dressed person is the contemporary one because that well-heeled person then slinks away and steals (the poem)
- pause before last two lines, created by line space, turns the last two lines into a confession of guilt, of a crime. The crime is stealing a poem. Could this also be stealing a story, which in Aboriginal literary protocol is not supposed to be done?
- note the complications surrounding the absence of specific identification of poet/narrator as Aboriginal/Métis. What does that say about the feelings this contemporary Métis in the poem (narrator/poet) has surrounding issues of identification with the Métis-First Nations bloodlines as embodied in the “boozed-up, begging Indian” of the poem? Or, is the narrator given an Aboriginal identification at all? Does this (should this) matter with regard to the impact or meaning of the poem? Is there a connection to reactions Maria Campbell had in *Halfbreed* or Cheryl had in *In Search of April Raintree*?

“The Shard”

- free verse
- first person singular narrator

- narrator is not identified as Aboriginal
- no rhyme
- rhythm dependent upon word stress in reading except for the repeated “chorus” of three lines
- contrast of images: the bright, glittering brilliance of the glass shard, the memories of the slashed wrists of friends in unsuccessful suicide attempts that the glass shard evokes, the grey sidewalk
- consonance in the repeated “d” of “dull, pedestrian” sounds plodding
- repeated use of sharp consonant sounds to describe glass: glittered, bright, brilliance, fragment, shard
- repetition: use of three lines as a “chorus”
- contrasting images in the three lines of the chorus: “sharply glowing” implying a fascination with; “magic triangle” implying charm and seduction, possibly dangerous; “hopeless one” referring back to the images of despair of those who tried to take their lives
- alliteration: “sturdy stare”
- word length contrast: short words referring to the glass leaping from the sidewalk: “leapt out” and longer, plodding ones describing the pavement around the glass: “sidewalk surrounded...pedestrian”
- repetition of chorus creates echoes that hint of many stories behind the simple shard of glass

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Teachers can evaluate each group and individual students as each group performs using the following criteria:

- oral presentation of poem
- identify type of poem, identify rhyme (or lack thereof), and rhythm
- identify key poetic devices
- speak about the point of view, the voice of narrator(s)
- overall creativity and enthusiasm.

Presentations will be marked out of 25 (five points for each criterion), with individual students getting marks that more or less mirror that of the group mark, depending on their individual contributions.

Closing Discussion

Ask students what, in general, the poems have in common, and what is different. Any of the following might be suggested:

- both poems have to do with “found” things on the street—in one poem it is a person, in the second a piece of glass that reminds the writer of people
- both poems use first person singular narrator
- neither poem identifies the poet/narrator as an Aboriginal person
- neither poem addresses Métis identity directly (this is the “open space” LaRocque mentioned in her anthology introduction that allows discussion of this topic)
- both poems use contrast to build strong images: poverty/wealth in “The Beggar” and glittering glass/shattered lives in “The Shard”
- both poems link tragedy to life on the streets; in “The Beggar” the connection is direct but in “The Shard” it is implied

Joan Crate’s “Can you hear me?” and Marilyn Dumont’s “Leather and Naughahyde”

Learning Outcomes: A2-5, A8, A10-12, B1, B2, B4, B5-13, C2, C4, C9-C14

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Resources

Armstrong, Jeannette C. and Lally Grauer, eds. *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview P, 2001.

Supplies

Newsprint rolls, tape, felt pens of many colours (but any printing using colours should be able to be easily read, so no yellow pens for example), white card poster paper (small/large)

Teacher Information

As in the first lesson, these poems deal with Aboriginal/Métis identity, but in a more direct manner. Both poems struggle with images of exteriority versus interiority and opposition to another person's concepts/reaction. This other person can be seen as the "Other," a trope that students will encounter in literary criticism and analysis if they continue to study English in college and university.

Joan Crate says, in the introduction to her poetry in the anthology, "I'm middle class now, but still can't figure out a lot of middle class assumptions."

Featured Poems

"Can you hear me?" page 229 and "Leather and Naughahyde," page 262-3

Suggested Activity Sequence

1. Introduce these poems as discussing the question of identity through opposition—there is another person—the Other—in the poems. Have a quick class discussion on what it might mean to have your identity defined by someone else. Students should be able to extend their observations to the definitions of "Indians" in the Indian Act and various other government documents, where it is the government that finally defines who is First Nations, who is Métis and who is Inuit. Students might also see this mirrored in various Métis associations, political and social, that have done the same thing in terms of defining who their constituents are. Some students may reflect back to the two poems in the first lesson and feel that the Other in those poems consisted of the Aboriginal people on the street (in "The Beggar" it was the drunk and in "The Shard" it was the missing street girls) and argue that there too, identity was formed in opposition.
2. Teachers might like to try a silent class cooperative critical reading activity. In this, the poems are printed in black, large letters on newsprint sheets taped up at the front and side of the class. It might take several sheets of newsprint per poem where a stanza can go on one sheet. Make sure the title is clear and bold. It might be a good idea visually and for practical purposes to have one poem at the front of the class and one poem at the side. The teacher may wish to have a separate sheet of newsprint for each poem entitled "Issues and questions raised by the poem" that will help students sort their responses into categories of form/content and themes. The teacher, or students with good oral skills, should first read through the poems without commentary or annotation and ask if there are any questions regarding comprehension/vocabulary (only those questions; no comments or observations from students). The teacher should then outline the task for the students and give them approximately 20 minutes to complete it. Teachers should let the

students know that their contributions will be part of this section's marks as outlined below.

3. The whole class works at the same time on the task. There is absolutely no talking or discussion. All students should come up to the area where the poems are posted and, when they have a comment, observation, identify a literary device, etc., should pick up a felt pen and make a "note" on the poem. Students should add their names or initials to their comments. Students should post only one comment/observation at a time and then allow others their turn. Students can post comments/observations that are different from other comments/observations, but cannot scratch-out or criticize other student postings. The comments should be clearly printed and allow space for other students' comments that may be posted later. Students can underline words in the poem, print near the words, etc. but the overall poem should still be legible after all the work is done. Student comments do not have to be read from the back of the room. Students can move from one poem to the other and may have more to add after reading another student's posting. A good organizing strategy would be to have bins of coloured pens located on desks far enough away from the poem posters that students have to pick up and return them; this allows for a turnover of students in the "commentary space" near the poems and encouraged students who have added comments and returned their felts to become part of the observing audience for a while.
4. When the allotted time is over, collect up the pens and give students approximately 10 minutes to read all the postings on both poems before they return to their seats. Students should be encouraged to discuss the postings amongst themselves in a respectful and productive manner during this time.

Below are some characteristics about the poems, most of which the students should be able to recognize:

"Can you hear me?"

- free verse
- line length determines rhythm, rhythm is conversational
- first person singular narrative voice
- narrator identified as Aboriginal
- fictionalized narrator is almost certainly E. Pauline Johnson ("Miss Johnson" and Crate's abiding interest in the Mohawk poetess)
- narrator identified as Aboriginal by reference to history and experience, not by direct declaration (supports observation that narrator is Johnson)
- irony concerning the setting and two women in four senses:
 - the discomfort of a 'tea' speech/presentation that is veiled in middle-class conventions and avoidance of controversy/important issues set against the poet's participation in the tea presentation and her dress (furs)
 - identification of the uncomfortable 'tea' and fur collar as middle class set against Crate's comment: "I'm middle class now, but still can't figure out a lot of middle class assumptions."
 - tragic irony of the relationship between the two women in the poem: a woman who has come to hear the poet speak about Aboriginal issues, who is possibly even the hostess or facilitator of the event ("you rise"), and the speaker who is never really asked about the speech material or her experiences, but instead is simply given a superficial compliment and then dismissed by being asked if she will take tea: "Lovely Miss Johnson. And will you have tea now? One lump or two?"

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- Johnson herself used to often perform in split-identity costumes, appearing in the first half of her presentation in “Indian” costume and in the second half in the typical Victorian dress for women at the time.
- consonance: plosive “p” in “powdered” and “plucked” to describe the woman in the front row. Plosive consonants tend to be found in strong, angry, aggressive, or powerful words. Students should examine what effect this has on their first impression of that woman. Is this impression a fair and just one? Why do you think her eyebrows are “creased with concern”?
- description of Aboriginal speaker encompasses all history, is universal, makes her a trope for all Aboriginal people (lines 3-8, 11-17) and the suffering of all Aboriginal people
- consonance: plosive “b” in blood, beats, barred
- symbolism: “jigsaw of flesh/torn from dumb tongues” referring to the decimation of Aboriginal people over history as well as to the death and repression (residential schools) of so many Aboriginal languages (“tongues”)
- visceral imagery produced by visually-graphic words: scarred, seeping, smothered
- imagery powerful through use of active verbs (pieced, torn, beats, barred) and adjectives formed from verbs (scarred, seeping)
- imagery: DO NOT ENTER in capitals helps reader to visualize an actual sign (a sort of mini-concrete poem)
- irony and juxtaposition of questions posed in the poem: “Do you hear me?” and “...will you have tea now? One lump or two?”
- tragic irony and juxtaposition of unanswered question “Do you hear me?” set against the tea questions when compared to the speaker’s final silence as she merely “sip[s] tea from fine bone china.”
- identity question concerning what the speaker has become: she is speaking out about Aboriginal rights, but is dressed in middle-class, western garb and is participating in middle-class activities.
- question about social justice issues: Is what the speaker in this poem doing productive? What are the alternatives in presenting to the public and educating? How can Aboriginal people reach a broad audience without alienating that audience?
- imagery: “hands twitter” evokes birds, elderly or nervous behaviours, perhaps anxiety at the speech content
- imagery using details for impact: “dust biscuit from the corner/of your mouth”
- symbolism: space separating the two women: speaker is “onstage” as an entertainer or performer, the non-Aboriginal women appears to be forever her audience, never a “sister in the struggle”
- symbolism and juxtaposition: “pelts hanging from my shoulder,/and sip from fine bone china” exterior images of attempting to blend, fit in when interiority of person is different: Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal worlds, emphasized by use of the word “pelts” instead of “furs”
- juxtaposition: speaker declares she “will not return to silence./Do you hear me?” only to return to silence at the end of the poem.

Is there any possibility within the poem for a move towards understanding if more work is done? What is the concept of “identity” here given the opposition of the two women

“Leather and Naughahyde”

- free verse
- no line length whatsoever—written in prose form. Is this poetry?
- rhythm: sentences are run-on (if seen from perspective of prose-form analysis), gives the impression at the beginning of intense and enthusiastic dialogue between two people, they are flirting with each other in the “underground” way

- narrative voice: stylistic device, conversational, informal, invites reader in; narrator is talking directly to reader, it is *her* story
- juxtaposition: both individuals in story have the same perspective about the “mooniyaw” in the city, both appear in harmony with regard to disposition and status until the “treaty guy from up north” asks about the ‘status’ of the narrator. Once she declares she’s Métis, she becomes someone in opposition to him and he to her. She is the Other, and an outsider. Why? How does this relate to the relations between First Nations and Métis that Maria Campbell described in *Halfbreed*? Recall the term “lateral violence.”
- symbolism in speech: she says “Métis” like it is an apology or confession (of wrongness), he says “‘mmh’ like he forgives me.” These set up the opposition more strongly and “sanctify” the separation of the two; this is not merely a personal opposition, it is a historical one.
- symbolism: “big heart” is symbol of man’s Aboriginal authenticity, generosity; “diluted blood” is symbol of the diseased or flawed Aboriginal status of the Métis woman. This opposition is from the man’s perspective, but the woman reads it through the non-verbal signs.
- imagery, symbolism: imagery/symbolism is non-verbal, images of heart and blood extended to the man’s voice: it goes from being “well-fed” (“big heart”) to being “thin” (“diluted” or contaminated by association with the Métis woman)
- oral tradition in relation to non-oral (symbolic) tradition: orality uses symbols much as non-oral communication does: depth of understanding depends on an individual’s ability to ‘read’ the symbols
- symbolism: non-oral: the man’s voice changes, he gets “this look”
- symbolism: leather versus naughahyde (fake leather) symbolic of the authentic Aboriginal (status, man) versus the non-authentic, pretend Aboriginal (Métis, woman). Some students might make connections to the issues around Bill C-31.
- humour and tone of voice: through the humour in the tone of voice of the narrator we know she does not accept the man’s evaluation of her as an Aboriginal person
- narrative voice as usurper; instead of woman being the inauthentic pretender/fool in the poem, the man becomes the fool through the use of humour to point out his snobbishness

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Teacher can use the annotated class poem posters as an evaluation of student contribution to the class activity. This evaluation will be worth 5 marks.

5 marks

The class homework assignment is a collage poster that visually shows two positions of opposition revealed in one of the two poems studied this class. Students can choose which poem they wish to use. Students should also show a “middle ground” where there might be the possibility for a resolution of differences or an understanding of differences. Encourage students to be creative in what they use to put on their poster: magazine cut outs, 3-D materials, materials with texture, paint, pop-outs, etc. It would be helpful for the students to have the rubric to take home with them and to turn in with their assignment for marking. Teachers may wish to have students present their work in a “gallery walk” at next class; this helps students wishing to produce better work to see work of their peers and to situate themselves in overall performance.

20 marks

TOTAL MARKS: 25

Poetry Poster Assignment – “Can you hear me?” and “Leather and Naughahyde”		
Name: _____		
Value	Criteria	Student mark
20	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • states the name of the poem chosen • clearly shows two oppositions, middle ground • is well-illustrated with good visuals (magazine images, personal art, 3D objects) • is exceptionally well-executed (neat) • is very visually appealing and attractive; creative use of any white space • shows excellent grasp of the issues involved in opposition and understanding (middle ground) • is very creative 	
16	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • states the name of the poem chosen • shows two oppositions, middle ground • is completely illustrated • is neat • is visually appealing and attractive • shows good understanding of the issues involved • is moderately creative, good effort has been made 	
12	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • states the name of the poem chosen • shows two oppositions, middle ground • may not have all fields well illustrated, but illustrations chosen are appropriate • is moderately neat • visually complete, though not all interesting • student has basic grasp of issues of opposition • some creativity 	
8	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • states the name of the poem chosen • shows two oppositions, may lack some of illustration of middle ground • is illustrated, but not all illustrations are appropriate and there may be “holes” in the illustrations • lacks neatness • may not have all areas illustrated • some understanding of issues • not much creativity or effort into creative expression 	
1 or less	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student has failed to submit a poster or the poster is of poor and incomplete quality 	

Closing Discussion

Students may have found the humour in a silent introductory activity where they must be quiet, but the poems are about being heard: one of the poems is entitled “Can you hear me?” and both are about having a voice.

The teacher may guide students through a discussion about the broader thematic questions noted on the “theme” newsprint sheets that were posted next to the poem posters for the class activity, or in the poem breakdowns above. This would help students solidify their ideas for their poster assignments. Teachers may decide if students will be allowed to partner up for this activity; if so, teachers should clearly state team expectations for a joint mark (students might be required to produce a larger poster, for example).

Gregory Scofield’s “Unhinged”

Learning Outcomes: A4, A5, A10-12, B1-3, B4-13, C1-3, C5-14

ALERT

This lesson includes a discussion about two-spirited Aboriginal individuals and the role this plays in Scofield’s poetry. (In western terminology, “two-spirited” usually means gay, lesbian, or homosexual, but see the article listed in the resources and included at the end of this lesson for a deeper interpretation.)

Not all teachers will be comfortable with this topic and these teachers have the right to present other poems by Scofield. Two of Scofield’s poems which address identity, family, and community in addition to the other issues surrounding identity that have been examined thus far in the Métis Literature unit are: “Not All Halfbreed Mothers” (page 343-4) and “I’ve Been Told” (page 346-7). See the Bibliography and Resource Section for another book of Scofield’s that deals more with his search for his identity as a Métis.

Teachers who wish to present the two-spirited theme, but not deal with specific sexual images are encouraged to examine “Pawâcakinâsîs-pîsim December—The Frost Exploding Moon” (pages 338-9) for possible use.

Teachers who present the two-spirited theme should instruct students on respect for differences and possibly alert school councillors in the event a student chooses to disclose personal gender identity and needs support. Teachers should also consult their school district with regard to the use of the selected poem and material containing explicit sexual images. Teachers may wish to give students the option to work on another of Scofield’s poems if students are uncomfortable; with this in mind, teachers may wish to send a note home to parents about the subject of the poem and give parents the option of having their child work on a different poem.

Resources

Armstrong, Jeannette C. and Lally Grauer, eds. *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview P, 2001.

Deschamps, Gilbert, and Sheila Wahsquonaikeshik. *Two-spiritedness*.
educ.queensu.ca/equity_and_exceptionality/Aboriginal/2spirit%20def.doc

Unit 12: Métis Literature

Moses, Daniel David and Terry Goldie, eds. *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3rd Edition Don Mills: Oxford U P, 2005.

Featured Poem

“Unhinged,” pages 337-8

Suggested Activity Sequence

1. Teachers may wish, at the start of their class to have students display their posters done for the take-home assignment in the second lesson, and to do a “gallery walk.” Teachers may wish to have peer evaluation be part of this process with comment sheets next to each student’s poster. Students should be coached on supportive, respectful criticism and evaluation. Teachers may wish to have this work, or selections from the class (needs student permission), displayed in a school display area.
2. Give some background information about Gregory Scofield as the poet whose work will be featured in this lesson. Enough information is found in the introduction in the poetry anthology (page 333) and in *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (page 523), though teachers may wish to expand. Teachers may also wish students to read these two introductory pieces on their own.
3. Present the issues dealt with in the article about two-spiritedness listed in the Resources section of this lesson. Have a class discussion about two-spiritedness, based on the article. Students should also discuss how two-spiritedness might feature in the formation of a Métis/Aboriginal person’s identity. Depending on the students in the class, a teacher might have a horseshoe discussion (not debate) about contemporary young peoples’ attitudes towards two-spiritedness. Teachers might wish to use a “pop-up” strategy in order to address this topic. In a “pop-up” activity students stay in their seats and address their comment/observation to the teacher. An individual student who wishes to make a contribution simply stands and makes a short statement, then sits down. Nobody comments on it or expresses their opinion on another student statement. All respectful and productive statements are accepted, but students should be aware of the difference between opinion and a statement that contributes towards the topic. Teachers may wish to record the contributions on a flip chart along with the name of the student who contributed.
4. Have the students read the poem independently. Since students are by now familiar with poetic and literary devices, they should be able to list all the features and characteristics of the poem. Let students know they should keep their notes to turn in as part of their assignment for this lesson. The notes should be clear and well-expressed, but do not have to be in complete sentences. The notes will be worth 5 marks of the 25 total. Students who are working on a different Scofield poem can still work in the class.
5. Explain the lesson assignment and rubric and allow students to begin planning their project. This will be a take-home assignment.

Below are some characteristics about “Unhinged,” most of which the students should be able to recognize:

“Unhinged”

- free verse
- line length determines rhythm, rhythm is one that mimics short, random thoughts and memories
- first person singular narrative voice
- narrator not identified as Aboriginal except that readers know Scofield as a Métis writer and that the poem is personal
- imagery: “unkempt soldier” literally meaning untidy, neglected soldier. Is the soldier the lover in the battle of love, the battle to keep a relationship from falling apart?
- metaphorical imagery: “pulling up all your heated secrets/coming unglued” refers to masturbation
- imagery and humour: (not all will agree with this) “like the dovetail joints/of my antique dresser” refers to the shaking it would take to dislodge dovetail joints, the frenzy of love-making and orgasm
- imagery: “pure milkweed,/opalescent” evokes a pale, shining whiteness (of skin), making Scofield’s lover Caucasian
- trope: the “Other” as lover is the other side of a person
- evocation and symbolism: the white “other” here whispers of Scofield’s mixed blood heritage: part First Nations, part Caucasian
- trope: by using sexual imagery, could Scofield also be describing the turmoil of self-discovery both of his Métis heritage, his mixed bloodlines, and his two-spiritedness?
- repetition and double-entendre: “Sure” claims the lover as Scofield’s own based on the meaning of sure as “for certain” not “sure” as a simple conversational expression (as in, “Yep, sure”)
- alluded metaphor: “sing me” meaning ‘make love to me’
- alluded metaphor: “anoint me,” “navel dew” refers to ejaculation and semen
- second to last stanza: Scofield imagines not only the sexual part of a lover relationship, but also the companionship
- imagery and allusion: “travelling somewhere so solitary/the landscape has no memory” referring perhaps to the racism that may be intruding into their relationship and Scofield’s wish that that did not exist; it appears to be a racism that is socially based (i.e. in the public arena) since the wish is to go somewhere ‘solitary where there is no memory’ of racism (implied)
- sustained metaphor: “unkempt soldier” is in throes of sexual ecstasy and ejaculation with Scofield as partner, where “my death” is “le petit mort” of sexual orgasm, “fading pulse” the recovery, ‘cool down’ period following orgasm
- simile: “seed exploding like a bullet”
- double entendre: the last stanza could also mean that the lover’s rejection has so affected Scofield, that a part of him has died

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Assign students to write a poem about something for which they have cared very deeply, or about someone for whom they have cared deeply. This need not be a romantic love poem. Ask students to include poetic devices learned through their study in this Poetry section. Scofield’s poem is filled with particularly complex imagery, devices, and allusions. Ask students to keep a copy of their draft poem for submission as part of their mark, as well as the notes made about “Unhinged.” Poems should be approximately one page in length. Ask students to submit a clean copy. Provide rubric for poetry assignment.

25 marks

Poetry Assignment – Lesson Three		Total Mark: 25
Name: _____		
Poem studied: _____		
Value	Criteria	Student mark
5	Notes from class on Scofield’s poem: complete, extensive and showing a depth of understanding of poetic devices and themes	
5	Draft poem and any notes from home assignment; show pre-thinking (e.g. webs, mind-maps, draft outline, whatever device the student used to help organize his/her thoughts) and depth of preparation	
15	Final, clean copy of poem shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• appropriate treatment of appropriate subject matter• an ability to clearly express feelings• an ability to clearly express ideas• use of powerful and strong imagery• correct spelling• good vocabulary• use of poetic devices such as double-entendre, metaphor, simile, mood, tone, juxtaposition, rhythm, rhyme, irony, allusion, etc.• awareness of the ‘form’ and visual layout of a poem	

Closing Discussion

Students should discuss some of the general themes around identity and two-spiritedness, being Aboriginal and two-spirited, and the double-prejudice that might be present in such circumstances. How does Scofield struggle and negotiate his Aboriginality and two-spiritedness? How do artists like Scofield contribute to Aboriginal identity and Aboriginal gender identity?

From: educ.queensu.ca/equity_and_exceptionality/Aboriginal/2spirit%20def.doc

TWO-SPIRITEDNESS✍

The term, “two-spirited,” has a number of meanings within several different contexts. For instance, in contemporary times, with the advent of lesbian and gay liberation, “two-spirited” means Aboriginal people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian. The terms, “gay” and “lesbian,” are European in origin. Therefore, “two-spirited” is preferred because it is more culturally relevant to Aboriginal lesbians and gay men.

When the Europeans came to Turtle Island they brought with them their religions, their values and their way of looking at the world, which adversely affected Aboriginal communities including our sexual expression. We have come to believe that two-spirited First Nations people are disgusting and perverse. We learned that before colonization that to be “two-spirited” was a gift, which had promise and potential. Two-spirited people were respected and honoured, and were visionaries and healers in our communities. We have rediscovered that we continue to have a spiritual place in our world.

Aboriginal culture is recognized for its emphasis on balance and harmony in all of creation. No one element, force, or impulse dominates the others. The term "Two-Spirited" originates from the First Nations recognition of the traditions and sacredness of people who maintain a balance by housing both the male and female spirit.

Some of our Elders teach us that two-spirited people have special place in our communities. We believe that two-spirited people have specific duties and responsibilities to perform. These include counselling, healing, being pipe carriers, visionaries (seers), and conducting oneself in accordance to our belief, which states to respect all life.

A white man wrote of the Crow Indians in 1859, “... males assume the dress and perform the duties of females, while women turn men and mate with their own sex.”¹ Most and likely every Aboriginal nation on Turtle Island exhibited same-sex behaviour. Sue-Ellen Jacobs (University of Washington) studied written records from the last few centuries for references to gays and lesbians in American Indian tribes. Based on historical evidence that comes from recorded material; out of ninety-nine tribes, there were references to Gay culture in eighty-eight of them, of which twenty made specific references to Lesbianism. “Eleven tribes denied any homosexuality to the anthropologists and other writers. All the denials of gay presence came from East Coast tribes located in the areas of heaviest and longest contact with those segments of white Christian culture that severely punish people who admit to Gayness.”²

Jacobs found twenty-one tribes that mention exact offices held by gay persons. In twelve of the twenty-one, gay transvestites were the medicine people or shamans of the tribe. Among the Illinois, Cheyenne, Crow and Dakota, they were essential for high spiritual ceremonies, in three they served a special function at funerals, and among the Winnebago, they were oracles. Among the Crow two-spirited men were responsible for cutting down the tree which is used for the Sun Dance ceremony. This is a respected and vital position to hold in the ceremony. Jonathon Katz, author of *Gay American History*, has collected the names Aboriginal people have used to designate their gay members. Each tribe had or continues to have special names for gay

✍ Written by Deschamps, Gilbert, & Sheila Wahsquonaikhezih, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations

¹ Denig, Edwin T., “Biography of Woman Chief,” in *Gay American History*, ed. Jonathon Katz (New York: Crowell, 1976), p. 308.

² Grahn, Judy, ed.; *Another Mother Tongue*; (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); p. 54.

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men and lesbians, that refer to cross-dressing and special tribal offices rather than to casual homosexual relations. The Navajo call their gay priesthood Nadle, the Winnebago say Siange, the Oglala Sioux call gay magic men Winkte, the Omaha and Ponca both say Mingu-ga, the Zuni say Ko'thlama, the Ojibwe use A-go-kwa, The Inuit say Choupan, the Kodiaks call theirs Ke'yev, the Absaroke of Montana use Bo-te, which means “not-man, not-woman.” These are just a few of the scores of names for two-spirited people among various Aboriginal nations.

Coming together in the urban setting has allowed us to look at our sexuality from political perspectives, which allows for the empowerment of two-spirited people. Organizations such as *2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations* have been founded and give validity to the vital role, which two-spirited people have within Aboriginal communities. Through the decolonization process, we as two-spirited people are striving to reclaim our traditional positions within our Nations and are taking our rightful place. . . .

TWO-SPIRITED IN TWO WORLDS✍

“Berdache was never used in any Native communities!” says Wesley Thomas (Diné), a graduate student in anthropology at the University of Washington. “I get irate when I hear Native Americans use the B-world to describe themselves. The *berdache* concept is not of Native cultures. It gives no meaning to our histories.” In fact *Berdache* derives from an Arabic word, *berdadj*, which was used to describe male slaves who served as (anally receptive) prostitutes. Anthropologists popularized the term to represent a transvestite Native American man who functioned in a feminine role.

These roles varied within each Nation, for example, We'wha (1849-1896) lived his life as a female member of the Zuni Nation and was accepted by his peoples as a *lhamana*. It is not clear whether We'wha was sexually active or merely took on the social roles (and look) of a woman. Thomas describes himself as *n'dleeh*-like, which is Diné (a.k.a. Navajo) for “being in a constant state of change.” When he is in the greater Native American circle, Thomas identifies himself as Two-Spirit[ed], while in Western society, he calls himself gay—but momentarily—in order to be understood.

The original meaning of these words has been lost to our Nations. Homophobia was taught to us as a component of Western education and religion. We were presented with an entirely new set of taboos, which did not correspond to our own models, and which focused on sexual behaviour rather than the intricate roles Two-Spirit[ed] people played. As a result of this misrepresentation, our Nations no longer accepted us as they once had. Many Native Americans had to come to terms with their sexuality in urban settings separate from our cultures. We had to “come out” in the Western world. But the journey into the mainstream left many of us lonesome for our homes.

In 1988, contemporary Natives coined the term *Two-Spirit*. It refers to “a Native American who is of two spirits, both male and female.” The term doesn't necessarily have a sexual meaning; some transgendered heterosexuals identify themselves as Two-Spirit but not as gay. Naming ourselves distanced us from colonial words like *berdache*. Based on histories from anthropologists and elders, we were able to gather stories of our roles in the indigenous cultures as healers, teachers, and leaders. . . .

Excerpts from Deschamps, G. (1998). *We Are Part of a Tradition: A Guide on Two-Spirited People for First Nations Communities*. Toronto: 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, pp. 10-11, 20-21.

✍ C. Thomas Edwards (Cree)

PART IV: MÉTIS DRAMA STUDY: *AGE OF IRON* BY MARIE CLEMENTS

OVERVIEW

Age of Iron is experimental or avant-garde theatre. Act One of the *Age of Iron* blends Aboriginal connections to the earth with the story of Troy, and alludes to the current street life of many Aboriginal people while it makes cross-over references to fairy tales, aboriginal astronomy and legends, and juxtaposes Shakespearean-style language with street vulgarities and colloquialisms. Act Two focuses more on the social services scoop of Aboriginal Children, residential schools, sexual crimes by religious personnel, and in spite of all those horrors, a continued hope for Aboriginal people to transcend the past. See the four selections from the *Age of Iron* at the end of the lesson.

One of Clements's plays has recently been made into a film. On Google videos, teachers can link to a short clip from the 2006 film *Unnatural and Accidental*, a movie version of Clements' 1997 play *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*. The clip shows a stalker and some violence. The play and the movie are about Aboriginal women missing from skid row streets. The screenplay was written by Clements. The film is directed by Carl Bessani, and stars Carmen Moore, Callum Keith Rennie, and Tantoo Cardinal.

<http://video.google.ca/videoplay?docid=-4030812068919775493&q=Marie+Clements&total=3&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=0>

Clements won the Canada Council's 2004 Canada-Japan Literary Award for her 2003 play, *Burning Vision*. The play traces the destruction caused on both sides of the Pacific as a result of the atomic bombs the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima during World War II; the uranium used to make the bombs came from mines on Dene land in the Northwest Territories.

Age of Iron may be difficult material for some students. Because the play is avant-garde, it may not immediately make sense. Students must reach for understanding and be willing to take risks in their interpretations. The reading activities, therefore, are not assessed but instead are structured to help students comprehend and explore. There are extensive notes on the text in the Suggested Activity Sequence section.

Aboriginal Connections to the Avant-garde

Learning Outcomes: A2-5, A8-11, B1, B3 (possible), B5-12

Resources

Four selections included at end of this lesson from *Age of Iron*

Clements, Marie, Greg Daniels, and Margo Kane. *DraMétis: Three Métis Plays*. Penticton, B.C.: Theytus, 2001.

Suggested Activity Sequence

1. Teachers can give marks for participation in discussions based on the willingness of students to take risks with interpretations and understanding. The participation mark is out of 5. Teachers should let students know they will be using this method of evaluation for the lesson.
2. As a pre-reading activity, it might be helpful to have a class discussion about how Aboriginal communities and people can extend their boundaries to join the community of Canada and the world, or if that is even necessary or desired. Students will ask themselves if Aboriginal peoples share any qualities, characteristics, histories, and/or stories with other world peoples, and what the benefits might be by making connections.
3. Have students break into groups and read through the play selections, taking different parts. A narrator can read stage directions. Ask students to think about how they might stage or envision the songs and choreography of the play—How might they get the wall to breathe and then come to life? What might the songs sound like? How can they create the illusion on stage of the children playing on top of a mountain? Suggest that some students might like to actually perform the song when they report back to class. Determine a time limit to this activity, possibly 20 minutes.
4. Reconvene the class, and ask each group to report out to the class. Student groups will report on features they examined in step 3 or perform song-speeches from the play. Teachers may request students in the audience to make constructive comments and give constructive feedback.
5. Ask students to read the play selections again to discover literary characteristics, allusions, imagery, etc. Students might wish to do this in their groups or with a partner. Since the material is difficult it would be preferable to have all students working in groups of some sort to help facilitate discussion and stimulate connections.
6. Reconvene the class and have the student groups share the discoveries they made through their closer reading. Rather than having groups report out one-at-a-time, teachers might wish to do a “script walk-through” as per step 7, soliciting student input from various groups, and adding comments and making observations that students have not made.
7. In order to facilitate understanding of avant-garde theatre and this particular play, teachers may wish to work through the text with the students using the observations below.

Students may have observed and noted the following:

First selected section (opening of the play, street warriors), pages 194-202:

- Mars the planet; Mars the god of war.
- Troy (ancient Greece) is compared to Aboriginal history; the playwright is making connections across time and peoples to appeal to the bigger stories of humankind’s history, and to also assert that the street life of Aboriginal people is a life of war, a battle.
- Role usurpation: As Wiseguy steps forward to take his place as Warrior (god of war), Mars fades.

- Historical allusion: Wiseguy summons the four elements of the medicine wheel, which were also the four elements that the medieval world thought were scientific elementals: earth, air, fire, and water.
- Age of Iron, allusions to iron-hearted, iron-fisted.
- The wall (of contemporary Aboriginal urban street people) is confused about its origins. Wiseguy also acknowledges confusion about his sources, roots. Perhaps the question might refer back to that posed by Maria Campbell in *Halfbreed* about Aboriginal women ending up poor and/or on the streets: ‘How did we get here?’
- Wiseguy notes that confusion about roots, origins, is associated with fighting and war. It appears that his comments cross cultures and time to apply to all history of humankind.
- Wiseguy says people have to wake up to become knowledgeable and then chides and teases by saying, “Just kidding.” He is more or less tossing aside the rather “heavy,” symbolic beginning of the play and suddenly becomes much more human by lying down and looking at the sky. He isn’t the warrior, he’s just an ordinary guy, he’s the Trickster, too. Puts a human face to soldiers.
- The moon and stars are personified (grandmother and sisters).
- The seven sisters can refer to a number of different things: the Seven Dancing Princesses (though sometimes there are 12), the seven directions (the seven points of prayer—north, south, east, west, grandfather sky above, grandmother earth below, self-heart-soul in the middle), the seven deadly sins (fatal to spiritual progress) indicating the opposite side of humankind’s good side, the seven days of the week (measuring our time on earth).
- The six sisters (there is one missing throughout the play; seven stars form the constellation) form the constellation Pleiades. So the missing sister is Cassandra, who is the “lost” one—lost to the residential school, lost to the insane asylum, lost to the street, lost to herself—but who at the end is restored or reclaimed. She says, “As long as there have been stars. As long as I could hear them. As long as I have breathed I have known. The sky will be falling to take me back up.” The Pleiades have been known to Aboriginal peoples around the world since antiquity. Hindu mythology sees the six stars as the six mothers of the war god Skanda; this can connect the constellation to the themes of war, Earth Mother, and the universality of human experience.
- Allusion and irony: Wiseguy says maybe the seventh sister has found him handsome and come down to find him. Instead, he helps her (the seventh sister, Cassandra) to find herself.
- Humour in Wiseguy’s soliloquy to the moon and stars.
- Wiseguy and Cassandra (as the voice from the wall) are suddenly speaking in what resembles Shakespearean dialogue. Juxtaposition for humour, as only a while ago, Wiseguy was speaking colloquially, and at the start of the play symbolically.
- Humour: Wiseguy calls an end to the Shakespearean-like chat by saying he needs a dictionary to understand, and pulls Cassandra from the wall. The speech goes back to being colloquial.
- Wiseguy asks how Cassandra has “got him”; she says “it” has always been inside him and is passionately returned by “her.” Allusion to Mother Earth, though the “her” could be Cassandra speaking of herself in third person.
- Juxtaposition of symbolism: Wiseguy immediately runs over to where Mother Earth is struggling to free herself and is “christened” by her as she smears him with dirt. The Christian symbolic act is reframed in Aboriginal terms.
- Extended humour; irony, running joke and return to Shakespearean speech:
Wiseguy speaks eloquently but returns to moving cement blocks: the proverbial rock pile of prison, an unrewarding chore, pedestrian activity compared with his style of speech.
Alludes to the Greek myth of Sisyphus, who, because of his disrespect to Zeus, was condemned to push a heavy rock up to the top of a hill, only to have it roll down again; Sisyphus was known for his cunning—refers back to Wiseguy being Trickster.
 - Wiseguy says he shouldn’t complain about his fortune, then complains.

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- Wiseguy turns the whole thing into an unlikely game by tossing a piece of heavy concrete into a garbage can like it is a light basketball, and shouting, “FIVE POINTS!” Visual metaphor.
- Allegory: Wiseguy talks about inside/outside of Troy, city, the dirt on the outside and beauty on the inside once the grime is cleaned away. He is also speaking of Aboriginal people (street people) who may appear to be one thing, but are another. This will prove especially apt at the end of the play when we are asked to accept and forgive various characters (especially Cassandra) who have been “besmirched” by harsh experiences.
- Wiseguy engages audience members by speaking directly to them (this is a technique of experimental, avant-garde theatre); he is speaking to those who directly repressed Aboriginal people, but he is also speaking more broadly about any nation or people that represses another.
- Irony: Wiseguy says his people have had everything taken from them and yet they are still rich.
- Irony: Wiseguy says he would like to meet Seventh sister, yet she is right there talking to him—it is Cassandra, who tells him to be quiet

Second selected section (Raven rapes Cassandra), pages 220-1:

- It is important for students to take note of the information in the square brackets.
- Students should try to play with the Sisters’ speech/song/chant and decide how they might present it.
- Raven says he doesn’t believe Cassandra; what he is probably referring to here is that he does not believe her claim that the (residential school) priest Apollo raped her. This is a profound reference to the authenticity of oral testimony and (child) witness testimony regarding the residential school crimes; the witness testimony was not accepted as “truth” for many years but instead was just regarded as ‘stories,’ exaggerations. Justice was delayed because of this. Even though Raven says he doesn’t believe Cassandra’s story, he regards her as sexually violated (which means he must believe her story to some extent) and therefore fair game for his sexual attack on her. He perpetuates stereotypes (sexual victims can continue to be sexual victims) and violence. Raven also says he does not believe Cassandra when she is in one of her insane fits; this alludes to the historical sexual abuse of other “captive” victims in mental hospitals.
- Metaphor and symbol: Cassandra says the chariot is coming, referring to the priest Apollo driving/arriving in a chariot, meaning that she is about to be raped (but this time by Raven).
- Double entendre: Raven says, “She knows what it is to come... and come,” and then laughs. “Come” referring to three things: the arrival of a vehicle (chariot), what is about to happen next (sexual assault), and physical orgasm.

Third selected section (seizure of children for residential school), pages 252-3:

- Tragic irony: Cassandra says she wants to go to residential school. She sees only what she imagines are the benefits that we now know rarely existed.
- Tragic irony: Cassandra says she wants to learn about Apollo and maybe even become a priestess. “To know” in the biblical sense was to have carnal knowledge; to become Apollo’s priestess then would be to become his whore. Cassandra appears to be speaking about the brighter world of teacher/student; what happens is the sexual violation.
- Juxtaposition, contrast for irony: Children playing happily on the mountain when the residential school authorities arrive to seize them and take them to the school where they will not be able to play, not be able to play with each other, and in which they will be very unhappy (if we predict based on most residential school experiences).

- Symbolism: Cassandra thinks the car is just a car; Eileen sees it for what it is—the symbol of the residential school authorities, or at the very least, a threat.
- Symbolism: White car and black wheels symbolize the appearance of purity and goodness on a base of vileness and evil.
- Symbolism: White light that traps Cassandra is the control of the residential schools and the control of Apollo (priest); highlights Cassandra’s lack of control over her own life because of the rape by the priest.

Fourth selected section (end of the play), pages 272-3:

- Cassandra’s lines reveal she is the Seventh Sister and that she has been redeemed in some sense; she is going home to Father Sky. She is going back to the sky sisters to take her rightful place, go back to her roots. Could this possibly allude to her dying and ascending to ‘heaven’?
- All the characters admit their own weaknesses and beg our forgiveness and understanding. Students should remember a similar appeal by Maria Campbell in *Halfbreed*.
- Oxymoron of sorts: Wiseguy says opposites are in each of us (knowledge and ignorance, shame and boldness, shameless and ashamed, strength and fear, war and peace), and warns us to understand ourselves. Again, students might refer back to similar comments by Maria Campbell.
- Blessing: request by Raven and Wiseguy for a blessing at the end of the play, the end of the meeting (of audience and players); traditional Aboriginal way of ending an event or gathering.
- Cyclical nature of play: By referring again to the sky, greetings, request for a blessing, it is a return in one sense, to the beginning of the play. May refer to the cyclical nature of humankind’s history through periods of war-peace, understanding-ignorance. Blessings and good manners at the end are also attempts to soothe any ill feelings, negotiate any offences, help audience readjust to going back out into life, to re-establish balance. This is a less clearly verbalized version of the speech by Shakespeare’s Puck at the end of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: “And if we shadows have offended,/ Think but this, and all is mended,—/ . . .Gentles, do not reprehend:/ If you pardon, we will mend.”

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Student willingness to take part in discussions and risk interpretations.

5 marks

Take Home Assignment

Free choice; representation of themes.

Students should think about something in these script selections that impressed them and to which they had strong reactions. Students may choose to express their thoughts, feelings, and reactions in whichever form they feel would best represent their perspective: song, dance, rap, poster, poem, monologue, soliloquy, 3D model, costume, created object that might have been on the set, etc. Students may also get together in teams and practise either one of the last two short selections with the idea of doing a good dramatic performance. Students will be expected to display their projects or perform at next class and to be able to explain the connection of their assignment to the *Age of Iron*. Teachers can orally outline criteria for students to remember as they work on their assignments.

20 marks

Closing Discussion

Unit 12: Métis Literature

Teachers may wish to have a five or 10-minute wrap up of any questions or comments from students. Here is one question the class might wish to address: How is this play specifically Métis, or is it? Is this question relevant given that one of Clements's objectives is to broaden the connections between Aboriginal people and the rest of the world?

SELECTIONS FROM *AGE OF IRON*

[Below is a substantial portion of the opening act showing characteristics of experimental theatre found in the set, plot, dialogue, and character interactions. Following that are some shorter selections to show Clements's handling of some of the central themes found in the play, and finally, the ending of the play is presented.]

First selected section (opening of the play, street warriors), pages 194-202:

Trojan War: A war waged by the Greeks against Troy that lasted ten years. In the ten years, the usually proud and festive Trojans lost much of their passion for their traditions and living ways, having to concentrate instead on fighting an unrelenting war that continued to wage on them. Eventually the long battle subjected them to plagues and seizures that sacrificed them, or forced them into captivity.

The Urban Troy: The urban streets of the inner city where street warriors battle for survival.

Age of Iron: The blending of Trojan Warriors with the historical reality of the First Nations people of the Americas, the blending of Greek and Native myths, of classical and colloquial languages. Age of Iron – a loss of a way for all peoples. An age of war but also of transition, bravery and courage.

Cast of Characters:

Wiseguy: Veteran Trojan Street Warrior/Elder

Cassandra: Trojan Street Warrior/Daughter of Hecuba/A See-er/Prostitute/7th Sister

Hecuba: Trojan Street Warrior/Queen of Mothers

Earth woman: An earth woman beneath the cement

Raven: Trojan Street Warrior/Half-bird/Half-boy/Half-man/Trickster

Eileen: Childhood sister of Cassandra

Alfred: Childhood brother of Cassandra

The Sister Chorus: Three earthly sisters of the streets that eventually join the star constellation of the Pleiades to make the six stars, or sisters in the night sky who watch from above.

The System Chorus: Detective Agammemnon, a cop (previously a messenger of Troy), a social worker, the watchman, a judge and workers at the mental institution. They are the voices of social, law and governmental bodies which govern the urban Troy.

Apollo: A Christian priest of a residential school symbolized by the shining God of Light, Apollo, known for his power of healing and light.

The Muse Chorus: Muse Manifestations of Apollo the priest who does his bidding and uses the beautiful choir music of Christianity to manipulate.

ACT I

The annual re-telling of a legend, a story. Not a new story but one known to all and re-enacted in an Urban Troy Drama. The characters regard this as a custom, a sureness of movement, a festival, a showing off of dance and song, an unfolding of a great drama.

Darkness.

The Planet Mars fades up on the backdrop of the stage. It is pale red and looks to be made of exposed muscles and arteries. It grows redder and more exposed.

Native drumming rises up and as it does it awakens movement from a great breathing city wall. As lights fade up the exterior of the wall is made up of street debris that begins to breathe as one and move slightly to the call of the drum. As the living wall awakens the sound of breath increases to form vocals that meet the drumming. As the sound increases the movement on the wall begins to clatter as the wall reveals human shapes of warriors dressed in the iron street armour of shields and masks. Wiseguy emerges from the wall fierce and war-like. As Wiseguy talks, the wall comes alive. Mars begins to fade.

WISEGUY: The discovery of the first metals and first attempt at civilization thus the earth arose from her confusion. (*SFX: Sound of rain*) Water from her terror, air from the consolidation of her grief, while fire was essential in all these elements as our ignorance lay concealed in these three suffering in the contemporary age, our Age...the Age of Iron.

The stage lights up with different hues of earth. In the centre a red and glowing fire burns.

THE WALL OF TROY: If I do not understand how the fire came to be, I will burn in it because I will not know my own roots.

WISEGUY: Ignorance brought about anguish and terror. And the anguish grew like a fog, so that no one was able to see, but a few.

THE WALL OF TROY: If I do not first understand the water, I will not know anything.

WISEGUY: So we all lived as if we were sunk in sleep and found ourselves in disturbing dreams. Either there is a place to which we are fleeing; or, without strength, we come from having chased after others; or we are involved in striking blows ourselves; or we are receiving blows, or we have fallen from high places; or we take off into the air, though we do not even have wings.

THE WALL OF TROY: If I do not understand how the wind that blows came to be, I will run with it.

WISEGUY: Again sometimes it is as if people were murdering us, though we cannot see who or what is killing us; or who or what is pursuing us; or if we ourselves are killing our neighbour, for we have been stained with their blood. When we, who are going through all these things, wake up. We see nothing. We, who were in the midst of these disturbances, see nothing; for we too would seem to be nothings. And you too would seem to be nothings. We have all cast ignorance aside as sleep, leaving its chaotic works behind like a bad dream in the night.

The Wall of Troy [figures] begin to disappear in to the wall from where they came.

THE WALL OF TROY: If I do not understand how the body that I wear came to be, I will perish with it. If I do not understand how I came, I will not understand how I will go, how we will go.

WISEGUY: This is the way everyone has acted, as though asleep at the time when we were ignorant. And this is the way we must come to a knowledge, as if we had been awakened. (*turns around*) Haaa!...just kidding. (*he laughs and stretches out on the ground and looks up*)

SFX: The rain ceases.

The sky becomes blue and shines with stars that appear one by one as human shadows carrying a white light.

WISEGUY: Grandmother Moon... I see you and your Seven Sisters How are you fine ladies tonight? Me? (*gestures to himself*) I am fine thank you for asking... I could be better and I could be worse ... So, yes I am just fine. Wait a minute, where is that Seventh Sister? She's so faint and dim, though it could be these ol' eyes. Don't see like I use to you know, which sometimes is just as well. (*looks up again squinting at the sky*) Let me see here... (*starts to count Star Sisters*) One... two... three... four... five... six. Where are you Seven? Where might that Sister be? Maybe she saw me and thought what a handsome fellow I was and decided to come down and take a closer look. Not likely eh? Well I was quite a looker when I was younger you know. (*he gets up and starts to look around. Picks up garbage lid and looks in garbage*) Are you in there Sister? So you are hiding on this ol'man... I bet you wouldn't have hid on me when I was a young man. Geez, I was good lookin' if I don't say so myself. You probably would've taken a fancy to me coming down from the skies. I would've caught you dancing, not at the Number 5 Orange Nightclub or anythin' like that, just kiddin', but somewhere out in the bush where a walker can feel the earth beneath his feet and in him at the same time. I would have seen all you pretty Sisters dancing in secret and I would have just sat and watched, that's all. I wouldn't have scared anybody. Or at least you wouldn't have been scared of me. Nope. You would have looked at this fine red warrior and said, "I'll have to stay here now." That's it. "I'll have to stay her and marry this man." End of story. Except you'd probably miss your Sisters and we'd have to go and visit them once in a while. (*acting like an old woman*) Only problem now is look at me, talking like an ol' woman on her wedding day. Oh well, always a bridesmaid, as they say, never a bride... haha.

SFX: sound of door opening and music escapes out, footsteps leaving.

MUSIC: "A Tear in my Beer"

Wiseguy listens and then stiffens. The door shuts. Silence. The spell is broken he sits down and stares at the cement beneath his feet.

WISEGUY: Earth beneath my feet. Poor ol' Mother, suffocating with this heavy load. (*He starts to peel the slabs of cement off the Earth revealing a crust of soil and body like pieces of earth.*) Don't cry. It's okay, Wiseguy's here now. Shhh.. it's alright.

Wiseguy's tearing up as many slabs of cement as he can. He hears a rustle behind him. He stops. Rustle. He stops. He puts his head in his hands and pretends to cry. Cassandra is about to talk to him but as of now she is still part of the Wall. The six human Star Sisters disappear.

VOICE: Why all this crying? This melancholy?

Wiseguy jumps up to catch the Voice. He looks to find the body of the voice.

Unit 12: Métis Literature

VOICE: Have you longed a very long time for your native Troy? With a torturing love?

WISEGUY: Aye... so that for joy my eyes weep tears upon it.

VOICE: Then learn that it is a sweet languishing you have taken.

WISEGUY: (puzzled) How so? How do you know? I need a dictionary to master your sayings.

He gets closer and closer to wall. He listens for a breath, reaches in and roughly pulls her out.

WISEGUY: I should have known it was you my little witch. Cassandra, alright you've got me, how so?

She kisses him affectionately on the cheek and points to the opening of cement. Earth woman is moving cement off her body.

CASSANDRA: It is a passion which has stuck inside you and is as passionately returned by her.

Wiseguy runs to Earth Woman and digs his hands in the dirt surrounding her. Earth woman rubs her earth hands on his face as a caress.

WISEGUY: (returning picking off cement from the earth) A man must speak well of his fortune, though this part is not so good. (He picks a piece off and throws it toward an open garbage can.)

FIVE POINTS! (They laugh. Wiseguy sets in to tell a legend-like story all the time working at the task of tearing the cement off.)

You have only seen this Land of Troy from the outside. The walls and floors are thick and grim with the wars and plagues and now hardened. But inside it is a beautiful woman, alive with happiness and living. The ancient ones talk to us.

(to audience) You envy that. You have no such land because you have covered it with an ungiving surface. You call us barbarians. But that is what we call you. You attacked our people and keep attacking, because we are truly rich and powerful. And our roots are red from the earth. But most of our treasure is gone. So what do you hope to gain? Glory perhaps? But is it glorious to destroy? Yes, you believe it is. But I am not so stupid.

(gazing up at the stars) All the lovely things the ancient ones have made and still stay with us, despite ourselves.

(points upward to each star as they appear) One sister... two... three... four... five... six. Six Sisters I would like to meet the seventh one before it is too late.

(angry and loud, struggles with slabs of cement throwing pieces) We are civilized, and the wise among us know that we are doomed.

CASSANDRA: You should be quiet now.

.....

Second selected section (Raven rapes Cassandra), pages 220-1:

ALERT

The selection below contains vulgar language and in somewhat symbolic language describes a rape. Cassandra has been raped by the priest Apollo and this is alluded to here, although the timelines in the plot are not presented chronologically and readers do not clearly discover this until Act II.

CASSANDRA: Shhhh... The Sisters are coming.

RAVEN: I don't believe you. I'm no fool. I don't believe a word that spits out of your mouth in fits of epileptic orgasms, or words that sing at me all soft and spent. Isn't that cute? I don't believe you. I don't believe anybody.

CASSANDRA: The Sisters are coming.

RAVEN: The Sisters, my feathery ass.

Cassandra is on the floor. Shaking in an epileptic fit. She struggles to speak. Cassandra spits onto her words as a song filters down from her Star Sisters.

SISTERS:

There's a song in the flame	(weh ya hehy)
still burning	(weh ya hey)
an emerging Troy	(weh yo hey yo)
from within and out from	(oh yo ho hiya)
the ignorance and fear	(yo ho hi ya)
to find the songs left by the trail	(yo ho hi ya)
a rekindling of voices	(yo ho hi ya)

RAVEN: I don't believe you... not one word... don't believe you Cassandra. Always got to talk, talk, talk, never letting a guy get half a chance.

CASSANDRA: The chariot is coming.

RAVEN: She wears a laurel wreath and her hair runs free and wild. (he spreads his wings over her) She'll whirl into a frenzy alright. She knows what it is to come... and come. (laughs) No one will believe what she says, because she is cursed in the ol'head. Aren't you Cassandra? Dance in a frenzy for me Cassandra? I never did a bitch when she was having a seizure. Dance Cassandra. Dance. I don't believe you. I don't believe you. I don't believe you, Cassandra.

ACT II

Third selected section (seizure of children for residential school), pages 252-3:

[Alfred and Eileen have asked Cassandra to tell them a story. She tells them a story about going away to residential school. The two children tell Cassandra they don't want to go, that they don't want to leave their mother and father. At the end of the selection, the children are seized by authorities.]

CASSANDRA: I want to go to school. I want to read and write. I want to wear new clothes and learn about Apollo, maybe I'll even be a priestess if I want to.

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ALFRED: It's a stupid story.

EILEEN: Really dumb.

SFX: sound of organ notes stop.

They start to get up. Cassandra shoves them.

CASSANDRA: I'll race yah up to the top of the hill.

They race toward the top of an imaginary hill.

CASSANDRA: I'm the King of the castle and you're the dirty rascal.

The other two pull her down.

EILEEN: I'm the King of the castle and you're the dirty rascal.

Cassandra and Alfred pull her down.

ALFRED: I'm the King...

Cassandra and Eileen pull Alfred down and they wrestle and laugh on the mountain top.

ALFRED: Look!

SFX: Sound of a car travelling on gravel road.

They watch as a car makes its way down a road.

ALFRED: Run...!

EILEEN: It's the chariot... Run!

CASSANDRA: It's just a car. A white car with black wheels, that's all.

Alfred and Eileen run frantically around stage looking for a hiding place. They rest, huddled in the darkness on stage right and left. They start singing a Native song, childlike and softly as if to comfort themselves.

CASSANDRA: Eileeeeen.. Alfred... come back! I promise you it will be alright. Nobody's gonna hurt you. I'll always be with you, I promise we'll be together... I promise. *(Cassandra reaches out towards them)* Eileennn... Alfreeeeddd.

Just as she's about to go towards the children's voices, lights click on. A pure white light defines an area around her in which she freezes. She joins in with the other children's voices, slowly rocking herself.

.....

Fourth selected section (end of the play), pages 272-3:

[Below are the final lines of the play.]

Song: (Begins)

CASSANDRA: As long as there have been stars. As long as I could hear them. As long as I have breathed I have known. The sky will be falling to take me back up.

Blueness gets brighter, stars appear.

Movement into dance either traditional and/or a mixture of Trojan warrior movements similar to prologue but less fierce and more beautiful, flowing.

WISEGUY: Look upon me, you who reflect upon me, and you hearers, hear me.

HECUBA: Do not banish me from your sight.

RAVEN: In my weakness, do not forsake me, and do not be afraid of my power.

SISTERS: I am the members of the Great Mother.

CASSANDRA: I am she who exists in all fears and strength in the trembling.

HECUBA: I am the solace of my labour pains.

WISEGUY: We are the knowledge and the ignorance. We are shame and boldness. We are shameless and we are ashamed. We are strength and we are fear. We are war and we are peace. Give heed to yourselves. We are all disgraced and the great one.

Final drum beat, music stops, movements stop.

RAVEN: How you doing, sky?

SISTERS: Fine, thank you.

RAVEN: How are you Mother today?

Earth Woman points to him.

RAVEN: Me? Just fine, thanks for asking.

WISEGUY: Grandmother Moon. Kiss us, please.

END OF PLAY.

Student Projects for Age of Iron

Learning Outcomes: A1-13; B1-3; B6-12; C3, C4 or C8 depending on presentation form; C13

Supplies

Video equipment if teachers and students wish to video presentations.

Teacher Information

See the first lesson in this unit, “Aboriginal Connections to the Avant-Garde”: This class is for student presentations. There will be, or should be, a wide variety of presentation forms.

Suggested Activity Sequence

presentation procedures as best suits teacher

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Criteria were orally given to students. Refer to the assignment instructions at the end of the last lesson. Teachers will have set their own criteria for this assignment; students will be expected to have remembered them as part of the oral tradition methodology.

20 marks

Closing Discussion

If time allows, teachers may call for constructive criticism from the class on the various presentations. Students may also have a discussion about experimental theatre in general and make connections to experimental music, film, etc. Students may wish to consider the question of whether experimental theatre is a good medium for expressing Aboriginal themes.

PART V: HUMOUR STUDY: *JOE FROM WINNIPEG* BY IAN ROSS

OVERVIEW

Ian Ross was born in McCreary, Manitoba, in 1968. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film and Theatre from the University of Manitoba. Ross has worked at a wide variety of jobs, but in more recent years has focused on writing, acting, and stand-up comedy. His first professional theatre production, *fareWell*, won the 1997 Governor General’s Award for Drama. Ross’s popular “Joe from Winnipeg” commentaries were written for CBC radio and television, and have been collected and published in a book series.

In his “Joe” series, Ross deals in a light-hearted but insightful way with such issues as moose on the road, little dogs wearing nail polish, Batman and bandaids, Christmas cake, letter glue, odometer checks, immunization, and springrolls. Joe represents Everyman, and this universal appeal is what has made the “Joe” series a success.

The selections for use in this lesson are at the end: “Cold and Sorries” and “Global Warming.”

Ross said some people told him the Joe in “Cold and Sorries” was too political. Ross feels that being native is inherently political and he says he doesn’t understand people when they tell him there are different Joes. Ross said, “I like this one though, because Joe’s speaking up about an issue that isn’t always heard that way.” He felt Joe’s gentle approach was a counterpoint to the often antagonistic discussions about Native people’s grievances.

Stand Up, Broadcast Humour

Learning Outcomes: A2-11, B1, B4-13, C7, C9, C10, C12-14

Resources

Ross, Ian. *Joe from Winnipeg*. Winnipeg, Man.: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 1999.

Note: There is a new collection out, which selects from the best of Ross’s Joe series:

Ross, Ian. *All My Best (Joe from Winnipeg Series)* Winnipeg, Man.: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 2004. Selections used in this unit plan refer to the 1999 publication pages 53-4 (Global Warming), 64-5 (Cold and Sorries).

Supplies

Flip charts, felts, possibly recording devices from school media lab (if available)

Suggested Activity Sequence

1. Teachers should share some of the biographical information about Ian Ross from the Teacher Information.
2. Have the class brainstorm what makes humour and specifically what makes Aboriginal or Métis humour. Let students know their participation will be part of the class mark. Ask

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- students what the “techniques” of humour are (e.g. language use, persona, etc.). This is an exploratory activity and may include suggestions that students may remove at the summary activity at the end of the lesson. Use flipcharts to record the responses on two different sheets (Humour/Aboriginal-Métis Humour). Write the names of students who contribute next to their suggestions to use for evaluation. Once the lists are complete, ask students if they would remove or change any of the comments; changes must be a class consensus though the suggestion for a change can be made by an individual. See the information on humour at the end of the lesson.
3. Divide the class into two large groups (or smaller ones if that works best with the class) and give out photocopies of “Cold and Sorries” to one group and “Global Warming” to the other. Every student should have a “Joe” piece. Go over the objections people made to Ross’s “Cold and Sorries” as outlined in the Overview section. Ask students to discuss the pieces and identify the humour and techniques of humour in them. Student groups should have a recorder to write on flip charts or rolls of newsprint in printing that is large enough to display to the class, and a speaker(s) who will report to the class. Recorders should note which students contribute which comments by writing their names next to their comments, which teachers can later use for evaluation with regard to participation. Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity. See the list of characteristics of Joe humour at the end of the lesson.
 4. Have the student groups report out. After the reporting out, have students revisit the lists they developed in Step 2 and further refine those lists. Student recorders should turn in their flip chart lists to the teacher for marking.
 5. The last in-class activity is for each student to “edit” his or her “Joe” piece and turn “Joe” into correct, grammatical English. Remind students to mark colloquialisms as well as slang. Teachers might want to copy the “Joes” onto overheads and mark them up to display to the class at the next lesson. Teachers may wish students to use correct editing marks. An excellent summary with great visual examples is at:
http://wadsworth.com/english_d/templates/student_resources/1413001890_burnett/UsageHandbook/edit_marks.htm.

Students should turn their edited Joes in at the end of the lesson as part of this lesson’s mark; it is worth 15 marks. Teachers might want to ask their students if they found the edited, grammatically-correct English “Joes” as funny as the original “Joes,” and discuss.

Characteristics of Humour and Humour Theories

There is no consensus on what makes something humorous, though theories of humour have often been tied to laughter (though people laugh for other reasons than responding to something funny, e.g. when inhaling “laughing gas” or when being tickled).

There are several main theories about what makes something humorous: incongruity (ambiguity, logical impossibility, irrelevance, inappropriateness); superiority (the sudden glory of the self over others); relief (release of energy caused by repression); and play (enjoyment of laughter, tickling, etc.).

Students will have their own ideas and hence develop their own list. The suggested theories above can help stimulate discussion. Teachers can find out more about humour theories at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/h/humor.htm>.

Joe Humour

Students should be able to identify the following qualities and characteristics about “Joe” humour, and they may find more:

- Persona: Joe is a created character that appears real and appeals to a wide cross-section of people; the humorist uses him as a “mask” through which he can speak.
- Gently self-deprecatory: Joe’s un-pretty ears in “Cold and Sorries;” Joe washing his hands in public washrooms only when another man was watching.
- Gently self-critical of community: drunkenness etc., “Cold and Sorries;” failure of Canadians to understand their fellow Aboriginal citizens, “Cold and Sorries;” loopholes in treaties in “Global Warming;” French being scratched off hand dryers in “Global Warming”
- Language: street slang, colloquialisms, conversational, “gonna,” “eh?” “Hey you guys”
- Language of ethnic group: dropping of “g” in “-ing” endings by Aboriginal people, and often as well by others who do not enunciate
- Story-oriented: personal tales, observations, much like conversation except that we don’t hear the listener’s part
- Personal relation to listener: “Hey you guys, this is me, Joe from Winnipeg.” “What’s up with that eh?” “This is Joe from/in Winnipeg.” “Meegwetch.” Fuses relationship between speaker and listener.
- Humour in everyday: street name in “Cold and Sorries;” washroom stories in “Global Warming”
- Playing on personal ignorance: “rems, whatever that is” in “Cold and Sorries;” dispensing machines for condoms in women’s washrooms in “Global Warming”
- Social criticism: about treatment of Aboriginal peoples in “Cold and Sorries” and world abuse of natural resources and failure to respect Mother Earth in “Global Warming”

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Participation in the class and group activity regarding definitions of humour: class lists regarding Humour and Aboriginal-Métis Humour (5 marks); group lists for the specific “Joe” pieces (5 marks).

10 marks

Edited, marked-up “Joe” piece.

15 marks

TOTAL: 25

Take Home Assignment

Students will write their own humour piece for stand-up comedy or radio broadcast. The pieces should be no longer than a few minutes at most, just about as long as Joe’s pieces. Remind students about appropriate language and subject matter. This assignment will be presented at the next class OR students have the option of recording their assignments. The assignment is worth 25 marks. See the rubric below. It would be helpful for students to have a copy of the rubric while they work on their assignments. Teachers may want to request that draft outlines/notes be submitted as well to show student planning and original work

Unit 12: Métis Literature**Humour: Performance Piece****Total Possible Mark: 25**

Name: _____

Mark	Criteria	Student Mark
21-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate subject matter • length is good; short and snappy • wide-ranging focus • uses many different types of humour • uses a personalized style or persona • language is appropriate • projection and oral presentation is clear • audience finds work appealing 	
16-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate subject matter • length is good; short and snappy • focus shows a few good selected subjects • uses a good selection of types of humour • shows personalized style or persona that needs some development • language is appropriate • projection and oral presentation may need some polishing • audience finds work mostly appealing 	
11-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some of the subject matter is not appropriate or not developed • length is showing signs of being too short or too long • focus needs broadening • a moderate selection of types of humour • personalized style or persona needs more development; it is in the 'draft' mode • language is appropriate • projection and oral presentation need work • audience finds some of the work appealing 	
6-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject matter not appropriate • length too short or too long • focus is narrow • only a few types of humour used • personalized style or persona is thin • language is not appropriate • poor projection and oral presentation • audience finds very little appealing 	
5 or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject matter, length, focus, types of humour, style/persona, language, projection/presentation absent or poorly developed • audience finds nothing amusing 	

Closing Discussion

Students may wish to express their opinions about whether or not they like Joe's sense of humour. Some may find it too obtuse or gentle. Others may find it appeals to their storytelling nature.

As a class, students may wish to brainstorm topics for their humour take home assignment; this discussion will help those who struggle with these kinds of creative assignments. Some students may wish to sign out recording devices.

COLD AND SORRIES
by Ian Ross

Hey you guys, this is me, Joe from Winnipeg. Today I'm gonna be talkin' to you about cold an sorries. Now the weather, what's with that? Enough said about that. I was walkin' down McGee Street the other day an, boy, was it cold. My ole ears were jus tinglin'. An you know what happens when yer ears get real cold. They stop hurtin'. But when that happens, I get kine of scared 'cause even though they're not the prettiest lookin' ears, I still need 'em and when you can't feel 'em no more, that's not good. So anyways, oh yeah, another thing. You know that street McGee? Like in the song, "Bobby an McGee." You guys ever been on that street? It's funny. It's half back lane. Half front of the street. Kine of like when you're tryin' to match wallpaper or else wrappin' on a present. The pattern doesn't fit so you jus put it on there anyways. I think that's what Winnipeg did with McGee Street. But I like that eh? Somethin' honest about it. Kine of like when you see someone's tummy when they pick somethin' up off a shelf. It's like a reminder that we got skin under our clothes. So anyways, I walked home an went to bed, but boy, I got woked up about three in the morning eh? I didn't even get my rem sleeps whatever those things are, but I know I need 'em. An my cousin woked me up by playin' the TV loud eh? Really loud. An I said, "Hey, what's up with that?" An I seen that my cousin was drunk. An we started arguin'. An then we pretended we was sleepin'. An I'll tell you somethin'. I even cried there after we argued. For lots of reasons. Drunkenness. TV too loud. No rems, whatever that is, but I know I need 'em. An it wasn't till the next night that we apologized to each other. A real long time. We shoulda said sorry right away. But at least we said our sorries. An that made me think about how our government's apologized to the 'Nishnawbe eh? An that's a good thing. That's a first step an there's even the promise of money there too. But that's not the important part. That word sorry can warm a lot of cold boy. An I'm glad somethin's happenin' finely. I know there's more that has to be done, but I believe that's gonna happen. An I gotta say, I was pretty sad when I heard someone say that that thing the government's doin' is too much. Too much money. We're wastin' enough on Native people as it is. An normally I would say, "OK fine," an ignore them. But this time I got to say somethin'. Now you think about what this country's worth. An what the land's worth. An the air. An the water. All the things we shouldn't be puttin' a money value on there, but we do. An some people are complainin' that they're givin' the 'Nishnawbe too much? What's up with that? An hey, maybe the 'Nishnawbe don't need money. Maybe we jus need more moose and whitefish an a place to sleep. But then I guess we got reserves for that eh? I have to say sorry for talkin' like this. 'Cause it's not the way I wanna be. I'm just sayin' these things because they're very heavy in my heart eh? There's a great pain there when I think of my cousin who abuses substances. An alcohol. An I'll tell you somethin' else. I don't know a single 'Nishnawbe who hasn't been hurt by that alcohol through their family or themselves. Not one. An I know a lot of people boy. An I also don't know one single 'Nishnawbe who's what we would call material wealthy. An these things aren't important. 'Cept when it comes to decent standard of livin'. There's lots of my friends who should eat better an sleep in better places. Accordin' to the Stats Canada we're the fastest growin' community in the country. So it seems to me, we gotta look harder to fine a way to include Native people in the wealth an potential of this country. I know people are good. I see it ev'ry day. An even though some people may think the 'Nishnawbe are askin' for lots we're not. This is Joe from Winnipeg. Meegwetch.

GLOBAL WARMING
by Ian Ross

Hey you guys this is me, Jo from Winnipeg. Today I'm gonna be talkin' to you about the global warming treaty that they're signing there in Japan. Boy, right away people are sayin' some of those countries aren't bein' fair. Tryin' to find loopholes an stuff. Hey you guys, it's a treaty. What do you expect? But I'll get back to that later. You know, the other day I was in a res'traunt, an so I happened to go to the bathroom eh? I know you don't want to hear that part, but anyways, I was washin' my hans. Not 'cause there was another guy in there, but because it's sanitary. But boy, I tell you, there used to be a time that I would only wash my hans if there was another guy in there, so that he wouldn't think I was a pig. I think a lot of guys do that eh? Anyways, I was using the han dryer, kine of thinkin' about how ole Madonna used one of these things in one of her movies to dry under her arm. I doan know about you guys, but I never dry any other part of my body with those things. That's too much like stickin' yer head out of a car goin' fast. Anyways, I look at the directions on the han dryer. Not that I need them, or any of us do for that matter. But I look on there an somebody's scratched off the French part of the instructions. Now what's up with that? Who has got time to do this? An how come nobody's ever caught the guy who's doin' this? 'Cause I realized every time I use a han dryer, the French is scratched out. Sometimes the English on there too. Does this guy think he's gonna trick us? Oh good, now the people won't know how to use this hand dryer thing. An they'll never figure out to push that big shiny button. An if they do, they won't know that they're s'posed to shake the excess water off their hans before they use that thing. Maybe it's just a guy thing. An how come in the ladies' can they got machines that dispense stuff ladies need on the one side and the other dispenses something for men? What's up with that? You women know what I'm talkin' 'bout here. An the only reason I know about this is 'cause I used to clean toilets, men's an ladies, for a livin'. But anyways, I think han dryers are a good thing 'cause it means we use less paper. I know, I know, some people say that han dryers have bacteria an stuff. But hey, what doesn't? Paper does too. An you know, we all have to think in diff'rent ways when it comes to conservin' stuff. An recyclin'. 'Member the seventies an the gas shortage? That can happen again real soon. We never seem to learn eh? Jus like disco. I hear that music all over again an I thought disco was s'posed to be dead. But I guess it's like that Sigourney Weaver in Alien. She jus keeps comin' back. As long as there's money to be made, someone or some ole fad'll be there. But you know what's not gonna always be there if we're not careful. Our trees. Our air. All the stuff we don't even think about eh? An right now they're arguin' over this stuff in Japan. How they can get around not doin' their part, some of them. Even Canada. What's up with that? This environment stuff is like teeth. We only got one set. So you better take good care of it. 'Cause when it's gone, you doan want false ones in there, boy. I doan know about you guys, but I like real Christmas trees. So the last thing I'm gonna say about this is, "Come on you guys. Stop actin' like you own what's not even yours. An remember, when you breathe out, that little bit of breath goes into everybody else. An vice versus." This is Joe from Winnipeg. Meegwetch.

Joe From Winnipeg: Student Presentations

Learning Outcomes: A1-13, B2, B3, C1-4, C11, C13

Supplies

Possible video equipment and/or recording devices

Teacher Information

Teachers may wish to use the first few minutes of this class for a review of the editing take home assignment.

The rest of the class will be devoted to those who are going to personally perform their humour pieces. It might be an idea to video these presentations and view them as part of another class on oral work. Students should remember to turn in their rubrics with their work or before their performance.

If there are outstanding pieces, teachers may wish to submit them (with student permission), or help students submit them, to an Aboriginal radio station and/or to the school radio station.

Assessment/Evaluation

25 marks

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR UNIT 12: MÉTIS LITERATURE

- Armstrong, Jeannette C., and Lally Grauer, eds. *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview P, 2001.
- Campbell, Maria. *Halfbreed*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973. [There are later editions; this is the first edition.]
- Clements, Marie, Greg Daniels, and Margo Kane. *DraMétis: Three Métis Plays*. Penticton, B.C.: Theytus, 2001. Four selections included from “Age of Iron” by Marie Clements.
- Deschamps, Gilbert, and Sheila Wahsquonaikeshik. *Two-spiritedness*
educ.queensu.ca/equity_and_exceptionality/Aboriginal/2spirit%20def.doc
- Jannetta, A.E. “Anecdotal Humour in Maria Campbell’s *Halfbreed* (1973).” *Journal of Canadian Studies*. Summer 1996. Online at:
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3683/is_199607/ai_n8755080.
- Moses, Daniel David, and Terry Goldie, eds. *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*. Don Mills: Oxford U P, 2005.
- Mosionier, Beatrice Culleton. *In Search of April Raintree*. Critical Edition, ed. Cheryl Suzack. Winnipeg: Portage & Main P, 1999.
- Préfontaine, Darren R. “Métis Writers.” The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research.
<http://www.Métismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00733.pdf>

Further Resources

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis Literatures and Cultures
<http://compcanlit.usherbrooke.ca/links.html#Inuit>
- This is an informative site with links to an extensive list of Aboriginal authors, publishers, etc.:
- Borgerson, Lon and Suntep Theatre. *A Thousand Supperless Babes: The Story of the Métis*. Prince Albert, Sask.: Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI).
- This multimedia theatre work, with both a book and a CD, reveals Métis history through story, song, and dance. Included in the package are the play’s script, sheet music, musical score, and a media presentation of historical images.