The 25-year-old Minneapolis man sentenced to 17.5 years in murder of Steven Blair

By Gary Blair

A Minneapolis man found guilty of killing his 17-year-old cousin, a teenager was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to 17.5 years in prison. The victim was found dead in his home in December, 1996, and the 17.5-year-old sentence is the maximum for the crime.

Hyacinth Cray, 25, was found guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced to 17.5 years in prison. The victim was found dead in his home in December, 1996, and the 17.5-year-old sentence is the maximum for the crime.

An inquest was held on the victim, a 17-year-old teenager, who was found dead in his home in December, 1996.

Janet Gordon-Boy argues in favor of the death penalty for her own 17-year-old cousin, who was found dead in his home in December, 1996.

Marvin Manypuny announces candidacy for White Earth secretary treasurer

My name is Marvin Manypuny and I am a member of the White Earth Tribal Council. I am a member of the White Earth Nation, which is a sovereign nation recognized by the United States government. I have lived my entire life in the White Earth Nation and have been active in community affairs and political campaigns. I am running for the office of White Earth secretary treasurer to promote the interests of the White Earth Nation.

My name is Marvin Manypuny and I am a member of the White Earth Tribal Council. I am a member of the White Earth Nation, which is a sovereign nation recognized by the United States government. I have lived my entire life in the White Earth Nation and have been active in community affairs and political campaigns. I am running for the office of White Earth secretary treasurer to promote the interests of the White Earth Nation.

Back to top
Reflections from the Ahnishinahbæ’jibway (We, the People)
Once upon a time, not so very long ago, the air in Southern California was clean, faintly resinous with chaparral on warm afternoons, tangy with the sea, softly perfumed with the flowers that carpeted the hills and canyons in the early spring. I, who have lived perhaps half a lifetime, remember standing amid the toyon and manzanita in San Diego, watching the snow shimmering on distant mountain peaks. As a child I played beneath the gnarled giants of ancient live oak trees, and cupped my hands into cool small streams to drink the sparkling water.

Language from an Ahnishinahbæőjibway perspective

[Co-authored by Wub-e-ke-niew and Clara NiiSka]

Presented to the University of Minnesota’s Spring Anthropology Conference in the context of a workshop on language jointly given by Wub-e-ke-niew and Clara; the paper was circulated at the conference.

Once upon a time, less than fifteen years ago, my husband, Wub-e-ke-niew and I cut through the winter ice on Red Lake to get our drinking water. The deer trails were many across the snow in the woods. We ate duck and rabbit, partridge, venison and moose, and in the summer our nets were heavy with fish. We filled our pails with blueberries and raspberries, highbush cranberries and chokecherries, ate a surfeit, and left more than we picked. We filled the cars of visitors with vegetables from our garden, and still had more than enough to last the winter. The
morning birdsongs of spring and early summer were loud enough to wake us at first light. Wub-e-kene-wied is Ahnishinahbæójibway of the Bear Dodem, and dialogue and meta-dialogue with Grandmother Earth are an inherent part of his native language. Unlike “English, which is a pseudo-male language,” he says, “the Ahnishinahbæójibway language is both male and female.”

It tears my heart apart to go to Southern California, now. Richard Nixon signed the Clean Air Act, and the air is brown and acrid, burning the eyes, clogging the lungs and obscuring even the closest hills. From the mountaintops, I have looked down at scarred land disappearing beneath the filthy haze. The smog spills through mountain passes out into the desert, poisoning and even killing trees which grew when Columbus landed, some of them older than Christianity. The Pacific Ocean is faintly slimy with sewage, and I would hesitate to dip my hands into the scummy trickles of polluted water where clear streams once flowed. Freeways roar through the canyons, shopping centers and parking lots entomb the land once vibrant with chaparral, and tier upon tier of ticky-tacky suburban housing developments suffocate the hills where early spring flowers bloomed. Wub-e-kene-wied, who visited Southern California in 1995, told me, “The original plants are gone, replaced by alien plants from all over the world. It is a dead land, like a fatally ill man on life support—and they should pull the plug and let it die, it’s going to anyway. They are downsizing the ecosystem, and before everything is gone, we need to downsize the big corporations and governments that are wrecking it. We all live here. We are all a part of it, and it belongs to all of us. But, the English language disenfranchises us and we become corporate slaves.”

On a warm afternoon last summer, I sat on the rocks by the shore of Red Lake, and watched the sun move slowly toward the horizon. The play of light between sky and water belied the dying lakes, the water so murky I would not swim in it. Those who still fish pull many empty nets, and I would hesitate to eat any of the few fish they catch, some with cancerous growths on them. The snow-water we melt for washing in the winter-time leaves a faint ring of oil in the pails—it’s been that way since the Gulf War.

Grandmother Earth has been raped and plundered: vast expanses of clear-cut stretch toward the horizon at Red Lake. Snowmobile trails along the highway have replaced most of the deer trails through the woods, and the rabbits and partridges are very few. I went blueberry picking two summers ago, and during the course of a day found only a few handfuls of berries. My husband says that insecticides have killed the pollinating bees, and when a hibernating bee woke early in the house last winter, he lived with it rather than killing it or taking it outside where it would freeze. When spring came, he caught the bee and let it go outside, and watched as it sat on a tree, stretching its wings and cleaning itself. Each year, we see a few more of our trees die, and last spring the birdsong was but a faint echo of what it was ten years ago. My husband has begun feeding the birds to get them through the winter, and tells the clerk in the co-op where he buys the seed, “You cut down the forests to plant sunflowers and corn, and I have to come to town to buy sunflower seed and corn to feed the birds whose natural food grows in the forest, and that’s foolish and obscene. The forest took care of the birds—that’s how it’s naturally supposed to be. I’ve never fed the blue jays before, but now everything has been destroyed, and I had more than fifty blue jays stay to eat all winter. It’s sad.”

I have a friend who defends the forest with the ferocity of a grandmother protecting her young, writing passionate and carefully researched letters, and testifying to congressional committees. I thank her for the acres for which she has gained a reprieve, and grieve for each new swath of clearcut, and for the regimented rows of sterile tree-farms. I look beyond the few rows of pine trees planted in what the Department of Natural Resources calls an “aesthetic” buffer along many highways in northern Minnesota, to the ragged stands of aspen behind
them, and notice that the piles of pulp-sticks waiting by the railroads in Bemidji are of smaller trees than they were just a few years ago. Some were very young trees, only a few inches in diameter. Destroying the ecological infrastructure upon which all life—including our own—depends, is unthinkable thought in Ahnishinahbæótjibway, beyond the pale even of insanity.

Wub-e-ke-niew says that the Ahnishinahbæótjibway language is egalitarian, but that English has hierarchy, disharmony and disrespect, “built right into the language.” In the late modern/postmodern world, where the dominant discourse is in English and other European languages, Wub-e-ke-niew says, “There are no checks and balances on the multi-national corporations. They are like a runaway bulldozer with no operator at the controls, destroying everything in its path. There need to be some checks and balances on the multi-national corporations. They are like a runaway bulldozer with no operator at the controls, destroying everything in its path. There need to be some checks and balances, people taking responsibility for what is being destroyed. Newt Gingrich says that they are downsizing ‘big government,’ giving responsibility back to the states—why isn’t Congress solving the problems? The states are only part of the problem, and the states are throwing money to institutions like the school boards and the prison system, and the problem never gets solved. It’s pretty clever: delegating and delegating again, throwing money to some bigmouth, who gets the money and it’s gone. It’s like Johnson’s War on Poverty: they kept delegating responsibility until the money was all spent, but the poor are still with us. They are not going to solve the problem: there are no viable goals and objectives, they have slogans but they don’t have a plan to solve the problem of destroying the ecosystem, and they don’t want to solve the problems because they need conflict and chaos in order to govern.”

Wub-e-ke-niew remembers the old-growth forests which stretched across northern Minnesota for the many millennia his indigenous ancestors spoke in harmony with Grandmother Earth and Grandfather Midé. Here lived white pines two hundred and fifty feet tall and nine feet in diameter, sugar-maples more than two thousand years old. In his book, We Have The Right To Exist, he writes:

In my great-grandfather’s time, old-growth forests covered more than half of this Continent, from the Atlantic Ocean to the tallgrass prairies west of the Mississippi. The trees rose to meet the skies, and the sentience of these ancient living beings was a part of our Ahnishinahbæótjibway community, part of the seamless continuity of time. They were more magnificent than the finest of the Europeans’ cathedrals, but they were not oppressively cold, psychologically manipulative man-made canyons of stone; nor flying-buttressed edifices like hordes of giant locusts crouched in waiting to devour the land and suck the life out of Grandmother Earth. Our forests were comfortable and nurturing, like the haven of baby chicks under their mother hen’s wings. The forests were home, serene and secure, gentle and wise. Theirs was a concert of voices: the sharp snapping of trees in the cold winter nights, the wind in the pines, the low calls of mother foxes to their young, the soft conversation of our Dodemian and the crackling of the fires in the sugarbushes, the spring symphony of birds, the drumsongs drifting across the water in summer, and the whooshing beat of the air as millions of birds flew south in the fall. When I was young, I walked through these forests. The earth was soft underfoot, like walking on a plush carpet. The undisturbed primeval forests had very little underbrush, and a person could see a great distance.

When we were young boys playing in the old-growth pine forests, we used to watch the flying squirrels in the pines in wonder and amazement. We watched them glide from one tree to the next, walking behind them on a thick carpet of pine needles. They were beautiful, graceful animals. It’s been more than forty years since I have seen a flying squirrel. They have joined the vanishing species that disappear with the plunder of the ecology. They are gone, because their home in the ancient pines has been clear-cut, replaced by aspen, and the whole ecosystem has changed. There is no habitat for flying squirrels in aspen brush. Where are the smallest of the woodpeckers, that used to be all over the woods when I was a boy? In the last ten years, I have only seen...
Reflections from the Anishinabëwitibway (We, the People) 1997

three of these tiny birds. Where are the cedar swamps, so thick that it was dark at noon? I used to go down into these swamps and pick our swamp tea, and a few of the moccasin-flowers. All of this is gone ... (1995:91-92)

Generation after generation, the ecosystem that sustains all of life on this Earth has been destroyed by the “civilization” brought to this continent by the Europeans. Generation after generation, small freedoms have been nibbled away. Returning to the Cities after an absence of eighteen years, I feel the tightening constraints: photo ID to work, photo ID to enter the stacks at Walter library, hyper-alert caution when walking alone after dark, police sirens and gunshots at night, windowless school buildings, car-alarms... the list goes on and on. When I talked to my husband about my culture-shock, he told me, “violence is built into the English language.”

Some of the older anthropologists at the University of Minnesota have talked in class about the destruction of the social fabric of the villages where they did their early fieldwork. The integrity and harmony of those villages has been profoundly altered by global market economies, they say. Social theorists like Anthony Giddens write about the transformations wrought by “late modernity”—in time, space, community and interpersonal relationships—what seems to me a certain forced optimism. As one who has seen the remnants of an intact egalitarian community, who has glimpsed the enormous loss of human possibility in late modernity, I read such writing with sorrow. Wub-e-ke-niew adds, “This society does not have manners and respect. People are not treated as human beings—manners and respect are not a part of [Western] culture. Until that’s built into the culture and language, to treat other people with manners and respect, it’s going to keep getting worse.” But, it is pointless to lament without offering an alternative.

A crucial key is language, defined in the broad sense of [any] “systematic means of communicating ... “ (Webster, 1993). Language is a core aspect of the “software” of society: mediating social interaction, structuring the ways in which one interprets and then behaves in the world. The shared meanings conveyed in language are a vital aspect of culture and society. Although I disagree with those who say that language is uniquely human, language is fundamental to human society. However, Wub-e-ke-niew emphasizes crucial distinctions between indigenous language and Western hierarchical languages. Indigenous languages like Anishinabëwitibway were an integral part of being a human being. Hierarchical languages like English, however, “dehumanize you. I look at the English language as a human rights violation, giving you an identity which is not really you. I see
that language as being crooked and full of dishonest schemes. Part of its pious hypocrisy is its hierarchy—the people on the lower levels of the Western hierarchies are excluded from what is called ‘proper English.’ These people’s adaptations to the language, like Ebonics, are discredited. Rather than being a part of the community, the English language is being used as a tool of oppression and dehumanization.”

From at least the moment of our conception, we are bathed in language, our mother’s voice resonating through amniotic fluid, surrounded by our mother’s emotional energy in conjunction with language, exposed to subtle biochemicals transmitted through the placenta in association with language. As neonates, we grow in the context of language; to some degree “hard-wired” for our native language as our neurons grow and our synapses link in the setting of language. The discourse through which our identities are formed and maintained is coded and structured by language. The interactions through which we negotiate our relationship to society—and, in the aggregate, form our society—are mediated by language. Our understanding of the world is powerfully influenced by language, as are our actions within the world. The thoughts which we communicate to others, and much of what we tell ourselves, is in language. Each language transmits across the generations the history and values of those whose language it is. Language and the deep structure of society are inextricably linked.

Changing the language in fundamental ways, will inevitably change society. The kinds of deep linguistic transformations which will heal the social ills compounded over millennia are not instantaneous—the pathologies of Western civilization cannot be cured in years or even decades. However, profound metamorphoses can happen over just a few generations. Hierarchical language has been an effective tool of oppression because most peoples’ understanding of their native language is implicit and the generative forces of grammar, syntax, structure, patterns of discourse, and constellations of word connotation are outside of their usual awareness. Deconstructing the language and its meta-narratives (both present and absent) is a necessary precursor to debunking and transcending the illusions of Western Civilization.

Modern languages change continually, and a comparison of popular dictionaries, from the present and from fifty years ago, for instance, will reveal subtle but important changes which are interconnected with social changes like the decline in personal autonomy. Wub-e-ke-niew sees such shifts as being phase changes rather than structural or paradigmatic transformations, pointing out that, “When the Western Europeans emigrated from Europe, the majority of them were slaves. What they found here was an abundance of resources, which subsidized the ‘American Dream.’ But, now the resources are gone, and the social system is changing back to the feudal slavery of medieval Europe. Old folks talk about the ‘cabin at the lake’ they used to have, but now, they and their children don’t have cabins at the lake anymore. It’s not like it used to be. There are no more resources, and the ‘American Dream’ has become an abstract, hierarchical illusion. The imported European social system hasn’t fundamentally changed—they can’t get out of the box that confines them, and the underlying feudalism will resurface and prevail. They go around and around, like a caged animal pacing back and forth, but they are prisoners of their language. In order to change, they need female as well as male language, to create balance. Then, they can escape from the cage of feudalism.”

In English, the word “communication” has acquired a new meaning involving transmission of information in one direction only, as in “mass communication.” The maintenance of hierarchical society has historically involved the use of euphemisms, particular ones changing as their currency transmutes them from discrete hint to direct reference (an etymological study of euphemisms could disclose some interesting patterns about a society). Public relations and advertising professionals are sensitive to the con-
structive power of language, coining such canny phrases as the “Wise Use Movement.” Wub-e-ke-niew adds, “Euphemisms and metaphors are abstract illusions. Replacing something that’s real with something that’s full of metaphors—I think that’s funny. The English language is so crooked, it allows people to tell lies with euphemisms and metaphors, while pretending they’re telling the truth. An example is the special way that junk dealers have of dealing with people. An old junk dealer not too far from here, when somebody asks him how much he wants for an old rusty wheel-rim, for example, has a long and eloquent speech about how valuable his junk is, and how it’s worth much more than the (inflated) price he’s asking for it. He will tell his customers that his junk is so valuable, he might want to keep it for himself instead of selling it. He uses the same reverse psychology even when he’s selling his used cars—he’ll tell you, ‘I want to keep this car.’ But, when you give him a good offer, he’ll sell it right away.”

The underlying nature of Western languages, including English, is partially revealed by ancient writers like Plato (428 BCE - 348 BCE). In Phaedo, he writes in language in which hierarchy is already implicit, embedded in apparently unquestioning acceptance of the legitimacy of institutions of God and rulers. In a voice which he writes as that of the condemned Socrates, Plato urges retreat into what he’s selling his used cars—he’ll tell you, ‘I want to keep this car.’ But, when you give him a good offer, he’ll sell it right away.”

Wub-e-ke-niew observes, “Creating an abstract and an illusion like God—that’s disgusting, revolting. They need a god to go to war, and that’s obscene. Their god only talks to certain groups of people; He never talks to me. With illusions and abstracts talking to them, they should be locked up in a crazy house. I never did see the devil, either, although the Catholic prefect at the Catholic mission school was always chasing him, always looking for the devil. I never saw the devil, but I did see a crazy man chasing an illusion—that’s what cults do to people.

“Abstract language is detached from the land. It needs to connect back to the land—we are all human.” With the rejection of reality embedded in Western philosophy, and in the abstract “ideal” of the English language, there is no culturally validated way of even communicating clearly about the extent to which the ecosystem is being devastated. The material world, including the web of life of which human beings are inextricably a part, has been devalued, ignored and evaded as a part of the ancient philosophers’ strategy of denying death by denying the corporeal, visceral, vital aspects of life. We and our children are confronted with the very real possibility of the extinction of all humanity because of our destruction of the ecosystem which sustains us—we have nearly come full circle to the ultimate irony of the ancient Greeks’ rhetorical denial of death. Wub-e-ke-niew points out, “They destroyed the ecosystem in Europe, and now they have come over here, but they haven’t changed their language or their values. They look at the ecosystem for their food, clothing and shelter, but they destroy it to get money, and use the money to buy things. Because of their male language, they continually keep on taking, and never put anything back. We looked at the ecosystem for our food, clothing and shelter, too, but we took only what we needed and kept it in balance. Why are the immigrants from Europe destroying the ecosystem? They didn’t take care of the ecosystem in Europe, and they are not taking care of this one, either. Their language shows their destruction of it, their violence.”

Plato’s rejection of reality has powerful political implications. In Phaedo, he has Socrates state the legitimacy of God and civil rulers in other contexts, as well as in the construction of discourse removing their inherent hierarchy from easy challenge. By also discrediting direct observation of reality in favor of an abstract which
is deeply knowable only by experts such as philosophers, he claims a monopoly on “truth” and delegitimates any potential challenge to the deep structure of the state and its religious infrastructure. Plato defines the senses as, “An impediment which by its presence prevents the soul from attaining truth and clear thinking” (1971:66a). This has been a very effective strategy: during the past millennia empires have risen and fallen, revolutions have toppled leaders, but the underlying hierarchical structure, once established, legitimized and embedded in the vulgate, has endured and spread around the globe. In present-day Euro-American society, this inheritance from the ancient Greeks applies not only to church and state, but also to multi-national corporations. Wub-e-ke-niew says, “Another abstract, make-believe, is living in La-La Land so the corporations can steal from you—they say, ‘make believe we’re not stealing from you.’ They all have a juvenile mentality, very childlike. That’s what’s wrong, part of it.”

Another aspect of late modern language which is crucial to the problems facing us all, is dualism. Plato writes in Phaedo, “Are we satisfied, then, said Socrates, that everything is generated in this way—opposites from opposites? Perfectly, [said Cebes]” (1971:71a). Dualism helps mask the dissonance between the abstract and reality. Wub-e-ke-niew writes, Westerners, “Use dichotomies to keep people inside of their culturally and linguistically constructed box. Within the structure of illusions which comprise the ‘shadows on the walls of the cave’ of Plato’s truth, harmonious reality has been distorted and stretched, spun out into insubstantial polar opposites. ... [Western] reality-of-the-mind is characterized by denial, loss of awareness into the black hole of artificial subconsciousness, and an overriding, transcendent fear” (1995:352). Dualistic language rends the coherent totality of indigenous reality into abstract shreds which are then compartmentalized hierarchically. It is the deep structure of English and other Western languages which sustains the mind:body, master:slave, culture:nature, war:peace and male:female dichotomies, and in conjunction with linearity, makes coherent holistic understanding extremely difficult. Dualism makes possible the violence which saturates the English language. Wub-e-ke-niew adds, “It also legitimizes slavery by defining slaves as the ‘other.’ They create illusions; the language lets them be grand masters of deception.”

Dualism also generates a second, less visible, set of schisms on English, what Wub-e-ke-niew calls a “double perspective—everything that comes out of their mouth has a double meaning.” Because the reflections of reality which course down the hall of mirrors comprising the abstract are split into opposing pairs, there is, in English, an “unsaid” for everything that is said, an unspoken shadow of discourse, an implied opposite that is an inherent part of the message—potent, but difficult to challenge because it is obscured beneath a surface of literal meaning. The consequence, Wub-e-ke-niew writes, is, “Layer upon layer of lies so deep that the truth has become invisible to them. By understanding the Euro-Americans’ language, and studying their behavior and thought patterns through their language, I can see who they are. They live in a maze of unreal dichotomies. Many believe that they are telling the truth, but beyond the boundaries of their language, they are lying” (1995:72). When George Orwell, in his novel 1984, wrote of “double-speak,” he was touching on the dualism of English.

Violence and dualism are linked—violence which is directed at a language-constructed, abstract other is significantly different in meaning from that which is directed toward the extended self. In English, we can do to “them” what we would find unacceptable when done to “us.” Wub-e-ke-niew provides the example of “War and Peace. The Ahnishinahbeo’ejibway did not go to war. The European colonizers created an artificial foe—the Indians—and used their language to create a program of war, in order to justify their stealing. In English, war is violent, but peace is even more violent than war. The Western Europeans claim that we were violent,
but we didn’t go on their land—they are the ones who came onto our land. If we were so violent, why didn’t they use our prisons, instead of having to build their own? They brought the Bible and the gun, and these are both violent.”

The violence which permeates the English language is perceptible semantically and grammatically. A thesaurus hints at the range of violence which writers of the English language have lexicalized, including: anarchy, anger, bedlam, brawl, brutality, chaos, choler, commotion, confusion, discord, disorder, ferocity, fierceness, fight, fray, frenzy, fury, harpy, intensity, ire, lawlessness, mayhem, pitch, protest, rage, rebel, revelry, revolt, riot, savagery, scuffle, severity, shrew, temmagant, tumult, turmoil, upheaval, uproar, vehemence, virago, wrath ... the list goes on and on. English grammar molds one’s most egalitarian intentions into hierarchical sentences: the subject verbs the object, one-up, one-down, subjecting the objectified to a good verbing (with aggressive sex-and-violence connotations lurking in that grammar). In the English language, Wub-e-ke-niew observes, “sex and violence are inseparable—they are ‘two peas in a pod,’ if you want to use a metaphor.”

Violence also pervades the discourse of English. Wub-e-ke-niew says, “Every day, you hear abusive language on the streets, ‘butch,’ ‘son-of-a-bitch,’ ‘mother-fucker.’ We did not have anything like that in our language—there are no swear words in Ahnishinahbæowjibway (and the closest translation of ‘war’ is ‘two or three guys talking about something’—in nonviolence, and they would be able to come to a consensus about it, in balance and harmony). Why are the Western European languages so violent? You can see the same kind of violence on the freeway every day: people cutting each other off, shaking their fists at each other and cursing. Whenever they get behind the wheel of a car, their anger comes out. The Western languages are designed to dehumanize people, to take away their humanity, their identity and their self-esteem, to domesticate them, and to stereotype and label them, and that has to change.

“Western European civilization cannot exist side-by-side with indigenous peoples—it is too violent. It has to destroy other people, and egalitarian indigenous people are dangerous to Western hierarchy.” Wub-e-ke-niew says, “You can almost see the vanishing species that are gone, because of the violence. It is out of balance.” Scholars of late modernity and postmodernity write of fragmentation, of deconstructed theory and of an emphasis on the individual. From another vantage point, one can see profoundly disturbing patterns of violently oppressive hierarchy, of invidious oppression, of shattered communities and of devastating destruction of the ecosystem. Those of us who live in relatively privileged positions, in places insulated from the cataclysmic eradication of ecological integrity and indigenous communities, may not be fully aware of the total price extracted by the civilization, nor of the entire cost of its fruits.

As Machiavelli makes explicit in The Prince, violence is an intrinsic part of Western strategies of government. “Divide and conquer” is a ploy older than Julius Caesar, and the violence embedded in English destroys extended families and community which might provide a base for resistance to the domination by those whom Chomsky calls “the opulent.” English, Wub-e-ke-niew says, “is not designed for extended families, but for nuclear families within a society where the church, state, and other institutions are artificial surrogates, rather than the indigenous Dodems. The institutions created by English are like adoption or placement in foster care—they take away more of a person’s identity. The hostility of the state toward families shows in its welfare policies. Their institutions are such that people are depending on being fed by the state, but now the leaders say, ‘go find a job.’ But, that’s just a slogan—they don’t have a plan, or goals or objectives. If the state is a surrogate family, why aren’t they out there helping them? It’s a very distant and cold father and mother that they have. ‘Find a job’ is the same kind of rhetoric they used on us during Reloca-
tion. ‘Relocation’ means taking you out of your home and abandoning you—there was nobody there to help you, no friends, they dump you out in the streets. It’s like abandoning an infant in a church (or like Moses left in the bulrushes). The leaders of Western Civilization don’t take responsibility: they are still juveniles, like schoolyard bullies.”

English takes away people’s identity, Wub-e-ke-niew says, “Like a ‘broken’ horse that a child can ride, compared to a horse in its natural state. A domesticated horse will run back into a burning barn, although a horse in its natural state will run away from the fire. English is designed to have power over you, take away your identity and domesticate you. The English language takes away people’s spirit and their energy, what they call the ‘soul.’ English-speaking people try to domesticate everything including the ecosystem—that’s why everything which was so beautiful, has been destroyed. For example, the water has been polluted, and you can’t drink it. We might as well live in the desert—you can’t drink the water there either. They put animals in zoos. In zoos, there are emotions which are not natural and normal, man-made (and very childish) emotions like anger, jealousy and greed. They dam up rivers and then sell land on the flood plain, where the land is supposed to flood. ‘Honest Bob’ sells used cars, but he also sells real estate, for example in downtown Grand Forks. People don’t belong on the flood plain, in high rises, or on Hale-Bopp.”

Racism and ethnocentricism are among the symptoms and manifestations of deeply ingrained violence in the English language. Of particular relevance to anthropologists are the perceptions of autochthonous peoples which are embedded in the language and in the discourses in which that language plays a constitutive role. Although the word “primitive” has often been replaced by politically-correct (but similarly loaded) substitutes such as “non-modern,” the word primitive is one which is not infrequent in currently-used anthropology texts. In a thesaurus, primitive leads to untamed, as well as to brutal, ruthless, cruel, sadistic, animal, and fiend—as well as to wild, aborigine, native and uncivilized. Wub-e-ke-niew observes that, after having been in contact with Western civilization for most of his lifetime, he does not want to be “civilized, because only civilized people kill one another. (If we would have been civilized, we would have killed Columbus.) I don’t want to be civilized, and I don’t want to be a White man. I don’t need a soul, either—you can keep all of those European things.” He also comments, “There are many prevailing stereotypes of primitive people, for example putting anthropologists in big iron kettles and boiling them. Where did the ‘primitive’ people get the kettles from, and did they take the dirty socks off of the anthropologists first?”

Language structures the way in which one perceives and interacts with the world; it is simultaneously at the core of culture and society, the primary means of communication and the generation of praxis. In the Ahnishinahbæôjibway language, Grandmother Earth is a powerful, female being; nurturing, loving, and along with Grandfather Midé, the source of all life. In English, “natural” is wild, wild is primitive, and primitive is but a short semantic distance from Satan. “Earthy” is crude and vulgar—and vulgar is disgusting, obscene, and offensive. These linkages are more than word-games: the consequences of language are writ large across both society and the landscape, starkly and appallingly visible to anyone who takes even a tentative first step beyond the constraints of “civilized” language. As Wub-e-ke-niew puts it, “Civilized men—and women—are allowing our Grandmother to be raped.”

“My Ahnishinahbæôjibway language is both male and female,” Wub-e-ke-niew explains. “English is a male language, and language is the heart of any people and their culture. Language takes away peoples’ identity and their self-esteem, and they don’t know who they are. They are confused by the language, by their imposed identity—disconnected from their roots and from who they are, molded into slaves for the corpo-
rans. They are trapped by the dualism in English, and some become homosexuals because of the false unreality of the English language.” Wub-e-ke-niew continues, “Language molds the way people understand the universe, the way they live their lives and how they are as human beings. I remember the old Ahnishinahbeoøjibway women who were still living when I was young. Those old women had beauty, strength and balance which I have never seen in a White woman. When women change the English language so that it is a balanced male-and-female language, then the world will change.” By transforming the English language so that it is balanced, male and female, Western women can help rebuild the harmonious inter-relationship with Grandmother Earth and with community and family which was once the birthright of every woman. We can reclaim our real identity and live as who we are meant to be as women.

Succinctly, Wub-e-ke-niew says, “Western European man is a prisoner of his language; Western European woman doesn’t have a language. Indigenous women had languages, the ones that the White man destroyed. Indigenous language is what kept this land a paradise; it was the balanced male-and-female understanding which preserved the harmony... Grandmother Earth is very female. Grandfather Midé and Grandmother Earth, that is what our over-all-of-Aboriginal-time ‘religion,’ ‘philosophy’ and ‘myth’ are about.” Wub-e-ke-niew adds, “The female was not involved in making the languages of Western Civilization. Using institutions and disciplines which he controlled, the White man said, ‘We’ll make a language, and she can use it with us. That’s arrogance. It says it right there, that the language does not have respect, nor manners, nor feelings for anyone else, just the few males at the top of the hierarchy.’”

Language is the legacy of countless generations. Hierarchy, duality, abstractions, violence and pseudo-male imbalances have been entrenched in Western languages over millennia, and resonate throughout these languages from the deep structure, through the grammar and the lexicon. It is not probable that this heritage can be fully transformed in a handful of years. However, this is a moment in history profoundly unlike any other. The self-proclaimed heir of Western hegemony, the United States, is perched upon a land from which a few of her surviving autochthonous people still speak: cogently, urgently, and in thoughtfully articulated and nuanced English. It is becoming increasingly apparent that Western society cannot long continue in present directions without dire consequences, including irreparable devastation of the ecosystem. We are at the brink of profound changes, at the edge of a narrow window of opportunity to transform the deep structure of society—in ways which could lead to millennia of oppression amid the toxic ruins of the Golden Age of America, or, alternately, toward healing the violence, disharmony and imbalance which have been inherent in Western Civilization.

Transformation of the English language is a way of beginning the healing. Such metamorphosis needs to be done from the grassroots, regenerating from a network rather than orchestrated from a position of authority within a hierarchy. Beginning the process of understanding ourselves as embodied human beings, intrinsically connected to each other and inherently, inseparably part of the whole ecosystem, is a part of it. Deconstructing the English language, understanding the ways in which English has distorted our perceptions and disconnected us from our selves and the rest of nature, is another part of the process, and one in which the first tentative steps have begun. Wub-e-ke-niew suggests that, for women, it could be profoundly helpful to rename our body parts, drawing on our own understanding of ourselves as female human beings and transcending the definitions imposed on us by authorized—and/or aggressively puerile—male terminologies. I have begun to see myself beyond words, in faint flickers of wisdom beyond the abstract knowledge of Western mind.

I dream of midafternoon spring sunlight glistening across meadows golden with California poppies, and remember the feel of warm earth
beneath my bare feet. Another one of us may dream of crystalline midwinters punctuated by starlight and the sharp popping of trees in sub-zero night, and, as Wub-e-ke-niew describes it, “the comforting howling of a family of wolves sharing a rabbit, and the safe, secure and blissful sleep that I had as a boy hearing the lullaby of the wolves, knowing that everything was in balance. In the morning, I would go outside and breathe deeply in the fresh, clean clarity of frigid air.” And, yet another one of us might dream of the kinetic, sensuous heaping of seals basking on rocky islands, nuzzling infant yelps wafted amid the keening of seagulls on salt-tanged sea breezes. Everything is connected; we are all part of nature.

References Cited
Wub-e-ke-niew and Clara’s house from the air.
VICTIMS OF CONGRESS:

According to Friday’s Minneapolis Star Tribune, Congress finally passed its flood relief legislation—which the President is expected to veto. The disaster which was sandbagged in the Red River Valley, is now being stonewalled in the Halls of Congress. Law makers are in the back rooms cutting deals to get more Pork for their Districts, and they are using promises to flood victims to get re-elected. Meanwhile, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Blow foot the bill: paying for Congressional boondoggles out of one pocket, and inflation has got its hands in all of their pockets. While the people of Grand Forks and other towns in the flood plain are digging the mud out of their basements, the politicians are rubbing their hands in glee, thinking about the money that will go through their good buddies into their district.

The people who are living on the flood plain choose to live there, and should not be called flood “victims.” If you bought a used car from Honest Bob, and it broke down before you got it home, would the Federal Government reimburse you for your good judgement? Honest Bob also sells real estate on the Red River Flood Plain. If you bought any property in that area—which has flooded for millennia, and is supposed to flood—should the Federal Government bail you out, or should Honest Bob reimburse you? It should be obvious to any schoolchild that the reason a “flood plain” is called a flood plain is because, plain and simple, it is supposed to flood there. It has always flooded there. That’s how all that nice rich black dirt got there—from floods. Or, didn’t anybody ever tell you that?

There is a song about the Red River Valley, which starts, “From this valley, they say you are leaving.” That’s kind of a prophecy for you folks who got caught up in the Army Corps of Engineers’ grandiose delusions that they could change the course of Mother Nature and the Red River of the North. The U.S. Army Corps is fighting a losing battle, building dams to move the floods out of the floodplain and onto the top of the watershed. Did they ever hear of Isaac Newton, or gravity? Water is heavy, and the weight of all that water (upstream) is another disaster, just waiting to happen. The Army Corps of Engineers should have opened their floodgates and let the excess water out last fall, but the arrogant dummies didn’t do it. Now, Red Lake—and probably other reservoirs—are filled beyond capacity.

As one old timer says, “the more water you put in a hog waller, the harder it is to get them out.” Instead of letting the politicians play games with you, buying your votes with your own money, and selling you pork in a poke in the form of more—and very expensive—dikes, why not take your flood insurance and get out of the flood plain? Or, better yet, why not reverse the swindle and sell the land back to the “Indians” who supposedly sold it to you—for the original purchase price of four cents an acre? (Who were the victims, then?) You don’t have to be a “victim” unless you choose to be—or unless you’re caught up in cultural S & M.

ANOTHER SOB STORY: The National Congress of American Indians has a half page ad in the Sunday Star and Tribune. This slick piece of propaganda shows an old Indian woman, looking into the camera sadly. With all of the money that is supposedly going to Indian people with the “New Buffalo” of Indian gaming, why doesn’t this old lady have a new hairdo, eyeglasses, a new sweater ... why doesn’t she have teeth? The NCAI’s ads remind me of fund-raising drives that the National Council of Churches used to
have years ago, with portraits of starving children who would never get any of the money given to the churches to help them.

John Collier said, about the new Indians he intended to empower with the Indian Reorganization Act, that these Indians have a “white-plus psychology.” In plain English, this translates to Collier’s Indians exploiting their own people even more than the white man did, if that’s possible. The National Indian Gaming Association paid for the NCAI’s ad exploiting the old lady. The next time you NCAI lackeys and you white Federally Recognized Tribal henchmen run this ad, why don’t you give the old lady you’ve been portraying some nice gold earrings, new clothes, a new house in the background, a new car with a chauffeur—and some good teeth, with gold in them.

The point of the NCAI’s ad, was to protest proposals to tax the IRA “tribal” governments established by the United States Congress. This proposal to tax these “tribal governments,” who are political pawns created and controlled by the white man, doesn’t make a lot of sense. What this new tax proposal amounts to, is the US Government taxing itself—Newt should save some paperwork and send the Indians’ proposed tax bill to himself. If he’s really serious about Indian taxation, he should also charge himself sales tax and surtaxes on all of the land that the Indians are supposed to have sold.

**SPEARFISHING:** The annual spring rite of Indian spearfishing controversy and promoting white tourism has begun again. The flurry of news articles generated every year, blame the Indian spearfishers for declining walleye populations, but never write about preserving the ecosystem.

The Indians make a big deal about “ceremonial fish,” which reeks of New Age Indian mystique. But then again, maybe these fish are “ceremonial” because nobody in their right mind would eat fish contaminated with mercury and PCB’s. The white resort-owners are going after tourist dollars by promoting “catch and release,” so they don’t have to put warning labels about mercury poisoning on each fish. That’s a job that the DNR needs to start doing: labelling every fish in the lakes: “This fish is contaminated with mercury and other pollutants, and eating it is harmful to your health.”

But then again, reviving the old treaties is just another con job: a remarkable example of cooperation between the Indians and the Whites. They are like two peas in a pod, and so wonderfully crooked it has become a science. Just remember: Jesus loves you, but I don’t. Have a good day.

My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Bemidji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.

*Wub-e-ke-niew*
Six Questions About Language
from Wub-e-ke-niew to Dr. Harvey Sarles

1) If you destroy the language, you destroy the culture. What is culture comprised of?

2) If you destroy the language, do you destroy the people? Do the people go extinct?

3) Why do you want to destroy the language and culture of any people to begin with? What benefit is it to you (plural) to do this? What are your (plural) motives?

4) The Western European culture and language have no respect or manners for other people, including themselves. Why doesn’t it have manners or respect? They invaded this land, and remain here.

5) After all of these years, when they said they wanted to destroy the Indians (implying that the Indigenous people were Indians), saying, “they will not live amongst us,” now, all of a sudden, they are promoting the Indians. Why are they promoting them? They are teaching Chippewa in the schools, but they are not teaching it in the homes. They are teaching it with White teachers and wanna-be’s. I would like to know who is an Indian, and why is he here? Indian is a foreign language, a foreign term. What do they mean by Indian languages? From India? They are being very vague. They need to explain themselves. I want to know, and nobody tells me. I have been asking this question, and nobody answers me.

6) The indigenous language and Chippewa are two very different languages. Why are the distinctions being blurred?
As Mr. Townsend, a Métis student of the Carlisle Indian School, told the Lake Mohonk policy-makers:

I believe in education, because I believe it will kill the Indian that is in me, and leave the man and the citizen ... I believe in the Indian learning the English language: one people, one language, that is my idea. I contradict the statement that the only good Indian is a dead Indian. The only good Indian is an educated Indian.

In 1887, General Whittlesey said:

... The reasons for desiring the Indians taught in the English language are so self-evident and apparent that it was supposed every friend of Indian education would gladly co-operate with the government in the good work. ... These Indians ought to be English-speaking Indians to-day. The Seneca language should be a dead language to-day, just as much as the language in which the Elliot Bible was printed has become a dead language. There should not be a tribe of Indians that had to be addressed in the native tongue after sixty years of missionary work. Judge Draper told us the other day that the majority still speak their own dialect and hold to their traditions and superstitions in the State of New York. ... We have heard it said in this room that we do not want to raise any more Indians; we shall keep it up, as long as we keep teaching them their own language. ... They have found that the way to educate and civilize is to teach them English, so we shall find it all over the country.

In 1888, the Reverend Lyman Abbott said:

... The impalpable walls of language are more impenetrable than walls of stone.... If the Government were at once to assume the entire work of educating the Indian children of school age in the United States, and of compelling them to attend the schools, and of furnishing them thereat with sufficient knowledge of the English language, the methods of industry and the moral laws to fit them for civilized life, the churches ... could bend their energies to the twofold work of the higher ethical and spiritual culture of the Indians ...

And, in 1890:

As to the subjects taught, there must, in the first instance, be the English language, which should be required of every pupil. Their own tongues tend to narrow the intellect, and are not fitted to impart and express the ideas which expand the mind and excite higher aspirations. ...
INDIAN TAXES, AGAIN: In Wednesday, June 18, staffwriter Pat Doyle published an article in the Minneapolis Star Tribune. According to the article, headlined “County to get a fraction of its request from tribe,” the Scott County board has “settled” for only two hundred thousand dollars a year from the Shakopee Sioux to pay for “road maintenance, law-enforcement and court costs related to the casino in Prior Lake.” Is this an exclusionary rule, or is it an inclusionary one? Is Scott County trying to tax the Sioux, is this an insurance policy, or is this just a plain old shake-down?

Bud Grant has been telling his fishing buddies that we’re all equal under the law, and that no group of people should have special privileges. But, then again, that’s not how the U.S. Constitution (or the Declaration of Independence) reads. Both in the fourteenth amendment, section 2, and in Article I, Section 2, Subsection 3, the U.S. Constitution clearly says, “excluding Indians not taxed.” They put it there twice, so that you wouldn’t forget it. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has spent years (ever since a few Indians finally became literate) trying to put spin on this clause, telling people (with a straight face and tongue in cheek) that this part of the U.S. Constitution means “sovereignty.” But, the Founding Fathers referred to “merciless Indian savages” in their Declaration of Independence, so I doubt that they had “sovereignty” in mind, not even the “limited sovereignty” of “domestic dependent nations” (no matter how the BIA defines these crooked, ambiguous words). What this slippery English, “excluding Indians not taxed,” really means, is not including Indians under the protections of the U.S. Federal Constitution—that Indians are Constitutionally prohibited from owning land or having representation in the U.S. Government.

Bud Grant is talking about a “level playing field,” but he’s not dealing with the facts. Bud Grant has probably been out in the sun, fishing, too long, and he’s only thinking about hooking suckers. Perhaps the time has come to repeal this little clause in the U.S. Constitution, especially now that President Clinton wants to address racism, or else to amend the Constitution, and to change the “ex” to “in.” But, then again, instead of calling the Great White Fathers racist or apartheid, a person could give them the benefit of the doubt, and call this devious little phrase a “typo.”

I don’t know what the Scott County Commissioners are complaining about. If they want to treat the Indians just like everybody else, instead of having the Indians pay special fees, they should just negotiate an in-lieu-of-property tax settlement. To be fair, they could charge the Indians: the Scott County rate on the price that the White man claims to have paid for the land, from “the Indians.” If they used their own assessment of the price of the land, when they said they were paying for it, Scott County wouldn’t be entitled to one red penny from the “red man.” They wouldn’t get anything, because even ten percent of nothing, still comes out zero.

POLITICKING: In the last election, President Clinton’s campaign slogan was “building bridges to the twenty-first century.” I guess that a lot of people wanted to be bridge-builders, because he got elected. But, Clinton and the Democratic Party didn’t let you in on the full details: that these are toll bridges, that they want to build. You have to pay to get on, and you have to pay to get off.

On the other side of the aisle, Newt Gingrich has been censured by his colleagues—but he still has ambitions to become President. He wants to forget about his shady past, his
money-making schemes and good ol’ boy deals. Bob Dole, who was defeated, has paid Newt’s fine, so Newt is hoping to start his Presidential campaign with a clean slate. His new campaign slogan will be, “burning bridges.”

Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister who recently got elected into Parliament, his campaign slogan doesn’t make much sense. His slogan was, “radical center.” It got him elected, but does anybody know what it means, besides bamboozling people with socialist pork, or maybe just empty words?

FLOODGATES: The Army Corps of Engineers’ floodgates at the top of the Red River watershed are bulging at the seams. I suppose they’re waiting for a drought, so that the sugar beet growers down in the floodplain will have water for irrigation. But, there are other gates.

Twenty five years ago, Watergate was in the news. The White House “plumbers” were trying to close the gates for the twenty-first century. Since then, there have been a lot of other “gates” in this supposedly open society. There was Iran-gate, and there was Whitewater-gate. There’s Finn-gate, and then there’s Bill Gates. Just recently, there was Heaven’s Gate. In Minneapolis, developers are talking about building “Gated Communities” to protect the opulent from the unwashed masses ... and then you have prison gates. Last but not least, there’s San Francisco’s Golden Gate. Have a good day.

My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Bemidji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.

Wub-e-ke-niew

RED LAKE WINS $27 MILLION? According to the front page of the June 19 Bemidji Pioneer, the Red Lake Band recently “won” 27 million dollars “compensation” for destruction of red and white pine after 1889. But, there is more to a forest than the pine trees. What about the destruction of the indigenous people’s homeland? That pine forest provided food, clothing and shelter for us. What about the deer, moose, buffalo, partridges, rabbits and fish? What about the permaculture: berries, nuts, grapes, chokecherries, pin cherries, and medicinal plants? The White man’s attorneys and their rubber-stamp Indians make no mention of what else was destroyed, along with the pine trees. The proposed settlement ignores indigenous people’s burial grounds, rice lakes, the loss of our homes, and pollution of our water. It also ignores the violence that the White man brought in here.

What these Indians are settling for, is rapacious hypocrisy. They ignore the devastation and pollution caused by these “first environmentalists” and so-called conservationists. Since Roger Jourdain and his cronies brought the 1934 I.R.A. onto Red Lake, the Bureau’s Indians have been plundering the forests, clear-cutting. For nearly forty years, truckload after truckload of stolen timber has been hauled off of this land at discount prices. And, what about the lake? The greedy Indians have destroyed one of the richest fisheries in the country, and it will be fifty years before Red Lake recovers, if ever—and now they want “Indian management” of Mille Lacs Lake. The forests and the lakes go together: there are no fish flies to feed the young fingerlings, the food for the fish has disappeared with the forest, and the Lake has been polluted by runoff from commercially grown domesticated rice and other sewage. You can’t drink the water here, it’s all polluted. We might as well live in the desert, you can’t drink the water there, either. The barren environment that is now at Red Lake is the re-
result of greedy self-interest on the part of the Anglo-Chippewas and Franco-Ojibwas—wanna-be’s of Western European imperialism acting for the benefit of the colonizers, selling land and resources that have never belonged to the Indians or to the Whites.

The United States Government is trying to buy time, with yet another “settlement.” Using their crooked English language, they created institutions to steal, and now they are negotiating with themselves, through their in-house “instrumentality” the IRA Tribal Council. The purpose of the 1889 Nelson Act was to steal nearly three million acres of land, but the Tribal Council isn’t even questioning the land theft. In the White man’s backroom deals with himself, the Tribal Council signed legal papers that include the stipulation, “By Exception 41, the Red Lake Band does not contend that the Nelson Act is void,” and agree to “ab initio” provisions “that a statute or treaties, in and of itself,” does not need to be “fair and honorable.”

The $27 million dollars mentioned in the Bemidji Pioneer headline is a misleading figure. According to the next-to-last paragraph in the Pioneer article, “before the settlement can be finalized, the band must submit a plan describing how the money will be used.” This is the first time I’ve ever heard of a lawsuit where the plaintiff had to justify their use of settlement money. Could this be a smokescreen? After the lawyers take their 33.3% share off the top of the settlement, about nine million dollars, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs takes its third for “administrative costs,” and then Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal,” the DFL party, takes it’s third in “campaign contributions,” what have you got left? Only a red herring, and it smells.

ECONOMIC SUMMIT: The Sunday Pioneer published several articles about an “economic summit” held at Red Lake last Friday. About two hundred people, mostly outsiders, discussed strategies to increase employment at Red Lake. The Pioneer could have entitled their articles, “Deja-vu all over again,” “Treaty Reruns,” and “White history repeats itself.” The majority of people who claim to be Red Lakers, both those living on the reservation and those who have already been relocated, did not attend, according to Bobby Whitefeather as quoted in the Pioneer—although there were a few hang-around-the-fort Indians in attendance.

Although Friday’s session was billed as a “summit,” it sounds like yet another crooked deal was being cut in the backrooms. This time around, instead of selling stolen timber, they’re caught up in enabling further encroachment on land that doesn’t belong to them, using 99-year leases. By the way, the colonizer’s lease on Hong Kong’s is up this year. Western European Imperialism is all over the world, where it doesn’t belong, hidden under the slippery euphemism of “globalization.”

The themes of the 1997 “Red Lake summit” are more than a hundred and thirty years old. Only the language changes: refurbished versions of slippery and crooked English make it look more appealing. The kinds of economic plans that are being offered generate low-class jobs like working in a car wash at less than the minimum wage—and you’re addressing poverty and unemployment? It sounds like the White Buffer Indians and wanna-be’s are just doing their jobs, brokering the dirty work for their Western European colonizing relatives. They are using social engineering to entrench the class system promoted by the Whites. The in-group will keep their high-paying jobs working for their masters in the Federal government, and once the welfare payments are cut off, the out-group will be forced off of the reservation, in another historical re-run relocation project. This isn’t surprising, since forced migration is a part of the here today and gone tomorrow, fly-by-night European culture.

VIOLENCE AT RED LAKE: President Clinton has been in the news lately, trying to address racism. Could it be that racism hides the real issue, which is classism? The class system at Red Lake was created by the White colonizers, using social engineering and eugenics blood-quantum policies. The White man’s Buffer Indians are so good at math, that the Whiter they
get, the higher their “Indian” blood quantum is and the more Hollywood Indian movies they watch. When I was in school in the 1930’s, I was told by the Catholic nuns, “You Indians are the Vanishing Americans, and you will go.” I am not an American and I am not an “Indian,” and even as a kid in boarding school, I was wondering who they were talking about. The White man has painted himself into a corner with his guilt about the genocide they committed here: killing off the indigenous people, and then replacing them with Anglo-Chippewa and Franco-Ojibwa Indians who are in fact Indo-Europeans.

The violence which is escalating at Red Lake has nothing to do with the indigenous people. In school, the forcibly administered theme, repeated so many times I’m still sick of it, was “assimilate,” and “you will become civilized.” Apparently the Buffet Indians got the message, and assimilated into the White man’s violent civilization. If the indigenous people of this continent would have been “civilized,” Christopher Columbus would have never landed—we’d have killed him. Only Western European “civilized” people go to war, and kill one another. Christian and other Western values have made their people immune and desensitized to their stupid and senseless violence. People need to take responsibility, take charge of their lives, and take back their real identities, instead of acting like juveniles, gangs and schoolyard bullies.

Perhaps the violence at Red Lake is a message about the genocide that was committed here. Maybe the land is saying something to you—and being not connected to the land, you don’t listen. The English language is out of balance—before the coming of the European, the language on this land was always a balanced male and female language. This is why we had all of the tall, beautiful red pine and white pine here, that you Indo-Indians are brokering to the White man. The English language is a male hierarchical language, and it’s out of balance with Grandmother Earth and the female ecosystem. English has no manners or respect for anybody—even for themselves, that’s why there’s all this senseless violence. We need female language, to balance everything out. With a female language, we can become human beings, treat each other with respect and manners, and nurture Grandmother Earth—she gives us all life. On the other hand, the White man’s male, violent hierarchical English language takes away life. This is called “civilization.”

My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Bemidji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.
“Clinton is the first president to level about race,” according to journalist Syl Jones in the Commentary section of the June 17 Star Tribune. Historically, all of the U.S. Presidents were “level” about race—most of them were prone, although Lincoln went toward a vertical dimension in Mankato. Clinton, like other second-term presidents, is playing politics for future history writers, wanting to leave his legacy. But, like most politicians, Clinton’s noble posturing is meaningless: just another slogan. Nixon’s Clean Air Act was a slogan, Johnson’s War on Poverty was another slogan, and Affirmative Action is another empty slogan. Without a serious plan of action, these words are nothing more than hot air. Like the Ten Commandments, which are ten slogans, they are meaningless: hypocritical catchphrases and empty platitudes.

APOLOGIES: Ever since the Roman Catholic Pope apologized to Galileo (about five hundred years late), public figures have gone ape, monkey-see, monkey-do, making headlines with meaningless apologies. Sunday’s Star Tribune mentions a number of these would-be apologists, including British Prime Minister Tony “Radical Center” Blair, who apologized for the Irish famine of 1845. From another British colony, former
U.S.A. President F.W. De Klerk apologized, “on our knees before God Almighty” for living at the wrong time, and getting caught. The *Star Tribune* quotes de Klerk as begging God’s forgiveness (but not the forgiveness of the South African Blacks’) for being “the product of the cultural and political circumstances into which we were born and with which we grew up.” From yet another continent of the stolen British Empire, Prime Minister John Howard of Australia “rejected recommendations” that he apologize to the aboriginal people of Australia for more than a century of British genocide, rape, forced removals and other human rights violations. And, from still other heirs of the British, state of Minnesota representative Martin Sabo is said by the *Star Tribune* to be “not prepared to respond” about either slavery or racism. Sabo is the DFL Party’s in-house Congressman. Another apartheid statesman we haven’t heard from yet is Nelson Mandela: who has been a highly touted advocate of “democracy” and “freedom,” but whose administration is henching for European globalization and NATO imperialism. “Democracy” and “freedom” are some snake-oil salesman crooked English words, and in spite of the positive “spin” on them, what they really mean is “exclusion” and “apartheid.” What Nelson Mandela should be doing, is apologizing to De Klerk for kicking out the old horse-and-buggy form of European apartheid, and bringing in a newer, updated, “electronic age” form of European apartheid. If Nelson Mandela does the manly thing and apologizes, watch De Klerk’s face light up with a big, devious smile.

**MILITARY PROMOTION:** The Major Crimes Act has been promoted to the General F--k-up Act at Red Lake. The Major Crimes Act, now known as the General F--k-up Act, was passed by the White man in the 1800’s, as encroachment legislation to control the community on Indian Reservations, and that’s just how Attorney General Lillehaug is using it. He’s throwing the blame for recent reservation violence onto the people of Redby, and hiding behind the “60 to 70 day” countdown “to make a case.” What Lillehaug is doing is even more encroachment, social engineering to give the FBI and the fed-
eral government an excuse to create a police state at Red Lake, and get their hands into the casino coffers at the same time. Lillehaug could have easily arrested the people who were part of the school-party murder. “60 to 70 days” is an empty excuse, because the Feds could have arrested the murderers on other trumped-up charges, like they do for everybody else. Lillehaug’s delay is a part of a long-standing strategy, an old Machiavellian concept, of creating conflict in communities which the Europeans have invaded and occupied. The people at Red Lake need to sue Lillehaug for the “consequential damages” caused by his unnecessary social-engineering delay—and, as a part of the wanna-be White government, Lillehaug needs to make an apology for the pain and suffering that his high-handed apartheid policies have inflicted on people at Red Lake.

KA-LAI-JA: Years ago, when former vice-president Hubert Humphrey was still campaigning for Congress, Chairman-for-Life Roger Jourdain adopted Humphrey into the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians. Not so very long ago, when Roosevelt’s machine politics were still running smoothly on well-greased wheels, Roger Jourdain didn’t need a medicine man to help him play Indian, and he didn’t need a shaman, either. He adopted Hubert Humphrey, but through the Indian grapevine, it was always said that they gave Humphrey the wrong name—that his real name was “Walking Eagle.” And now, you know the rest of the story.

As long as I can remember, all the White man had to say about Indians was “assimilate, and be civilized like us.” Now, politicians have given up on kissing babies, and are being adopted into Indian tribes. Under the authority of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal I.R.A., the Red Lake Tribal Council has adopted Roger Moe (presumably with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior or his duly authorized representative).

Back in the 1950’s, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs was “precipitating factions” to get the Indian Reorganization Act onto Red Lake, the landless Indians who aren’t from here, like
Roger Jourdain and his flunkies, backed the I.R.A. because the United States Government was promising to give these outsiders land at Red Lake. (The United States Government has never had any legitimate claim to the land at Red Lake, but that’s another issue.)

Bobby Whitefeather isn’t an Indian Medicine Man, like Roger Jourdain was. So, he had to go get the Minnesota Legislature’s Indian Shaman to make Roger Moe into an Indian. The newspapers don’t report how much blood quantum they gave Roger Moe when they adopted him—back in the old days, when they turned White men into Indians, they usually made them into “halfbreeds.” There’s something strange going on, with the highly advanced civilization that the White man was forcing us to assimilate into. Now, the children of the White Man who said that God entrusted them with Manifest Destiny are regressing, and their guilt is showing. (Guilt makes people do strange things.) They’re so civilized they’ve degenerated, and they all want to become “natives,” “New Age Indians,” and White Federally Adopted Wanna-be’s. If you Republicans really want to get rid of Roger Moe, all you have to do is terminate the Indians. With “one stroke on the keyboard,” you’ll get rid of that degenerated half-breed Indian Roger Moe, and then your troubles are over (or maybe they’re just beginning). Well, anyway, the rest of you, who aren’t adopted Indians and wanna-be’s, have a nice day.

My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Bemidji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.

My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Bemidji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.

ANOTHER NEW DEAL: Newt Gingrich and his cronies are making moves to bring one of Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt’s projects, the “New Deal,” to an end. Their “reform” package includes privatizing social security and abolishing FDR’s social safety net, welfare (which has become a dirty word).

Before the 1929 stock market crash, most of the United States economy had been privatized under President Hoover. Even small investors were encouraged to put their life savings into Wall Street—and then the stock brokers sold them more stock on credit. As long as the patterns remain embedded in the language, history will repeat itself. If the reform to do away with FDR’s new deal, and privatize the economy again, succeeds, then the money in the Social Security trust fund will be invested in the stock market. Stock prices will rise dramatically. Then, more credit will become available for the U.S. Government investors to buy even more worthless stocks. You guessed it: the stock market will crash—it will be 1929 all over again. The only difference is that along with your social security number, you’ll be assigned your own private window to jump out of. That’s progress.

CRIMINAL CULTURE: In the editorial section of Tuesday’s Star Tribune, the editorial staff writes that the new Congressional “juvenile-crime” legislation “forbids the use of its funds for crime prevention.” The policy advisors to the U.S. Congress are not fools, and in their criminal minds, they know perfectly well that investment in prisons increases the crime rate. So,
why are they voting to condemn another generation of children to a marginalized life of crime and imprisonment? Ever since the Europeans got to this continent, they have developed their criminal culture: stealing land through crooked treaties and unjust wars, killing all of the indigenous people and replacing them with Indians, ripping off resources, polluting the water, and creating mayhem everywhere they went. The funny part of it is, they’re so crooked they won’t even admit to what they did.

The congressmen who are voting to build more prisons, create gangs by forcing single mothers into a marginal job market, destroy communities with “urban development,” and continue their generations-long strategy of attacking women and families, know perfectly well what chaos their policies will create. They are buying time, and making money for themselves and their good buddies in the prison-contracting business, while the taxpayers pay to entrench the police-state more deeply.

The propaganda and spin doctors of the mainstream media are very effective in hiding what the elite policy-makers are doing in this “land of the free and home of the [apartheid] brave.” The electorate looks straight at the schemes and con jobs, and most of them are so brainwashed by crooked English that they don’t see what’s right in front of them—or, they’re into denial. According to the July 15 Strib, Green Bay Packers’ defensive end Reggie White told a group of high school students in Knoxville that the white government and white police “provoke young black men in order to put them behind bars, thus allowing the government to deprive them of education. [They] want young black males to sell drugs, join gangs and use guns, so they can be arrested.” Sportswriter Patrick Reusse dismisses Reggie White’s observations by implying that his comments referred to a “conspiratorial view” of the white electorate, but, the common person in the U.S. lost his power with the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. It’s hard to see from inside the English language, but the feudal history of medieval Europe is repeating itself. Serf’s up, peon the peasants.

MORE SCANDALS: While we’re on the subject of crime, congressman Fred Thompson of Tennessee is described by Robert Reno, in an editorial reprinted in the Star Tribune, as “soldering bravely” through the muck of campaign finance. There are different categories of financing the political parties, and nobody seems to have a handle on what kind of money they’re upset about—it remains nameless in this bastardized English language (as the Indians would say, “it’s so sacred, we can’t talk about it”). The issue of the moment is that somebody got caught publicly doing business that is supposed to be discretely conducted behind closed doors and remain part of the good ol’ boys’ exclusive tradition. In the old days, some kinds of foreign relations were called “gunboat diplomacy,” and very few people protested about that kind of influence in other peoples’ governments. Desert Storm was another example of sticking your nose into other peoples’ business, a “world policeman’s” shakedown for well-entrenched vested interests. But, now that the circle’s come around, and the former victims of gunboat diplomacy are using their finances to protect their own interests, the good ol’ boys don’t like it, but nobody knows exactly what to call it: is it soft money, hard money, cold cash, clean money, laundered money, hush money, Indian money, bread, lots of dough, or good old fashioned influence peddling?

GOLD DIGGERS: When the colonial investors wanted to get Europeans to leave their homeland and come to this continent, they planted rumors about the streets on this continent being paved with gold. When they wanted to get settlers into California, they had the Gold Rush of 1849. Then, when they wanted people to go to Alaska, there was another gold rush. They make their advance settlers into fly-by-nights, crazed with gold fever. Unwilling participants in these gold rushes and settlement schemes are “transported” prisoners—a lot of prison-boats were unloaded on these shores, and it looks like their de-
Reflections from the Ahnishinahbæötjibway Nation
(We, the People)

By Wub-e-ke-niew (Francis Blake, Jr.)

Reflections from the Ahnishinahbæötjibway Nation
(We, the People)

By Wub-e-ke-niew (Francis Blake, Jr.)

Scendants are going to take another flying leap. There hasn’t been a good old American gold rush in a long time, so Uncle Sam sent Pathfinder to Mars to look at rocks. If you’re going to invest in the stock market, I recommend stocks in pick-and-shovel companies ... good luck to you Martian prospectors, and don’t forget to be inoculated for gold fever. ‘Bye.

My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Bemidji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.

Wub-e-ke-niew

August 8, 1997

they would be focussing on big polluters instead of on mickey-mouse issues and scapegoating tobacco. They’ve already castrated Babe the Blue Ox, so the pillars of Bemidji might as well take away Paul’s symbol of manhood, his pipe, so he’s not a big example of filthy, rotten, dirty habits.

Doublespeak: The discussions about the Boundary Waters “wilderness” have reached an impasse, and so the final settlement will be hashed out in Washington, D.C. Those of us who have dealt with Washington on a long-term basis know what that means. The spin departments for the timber industry are already planting “trial balloons,” including improbable stories about how the ecosystems work, into the media. Among the rationales that they’re testing for public acceptance are the “global warming” and the end-of-the-world theories: that the BWCA is at the “southern boundary of the conifer forest area”—it never used to be, until the immigrant European lumberjacks came in here and cut down the rest of the pine forests. In another year or so, the paper mills will try to persuade the public to cut down the forests in the BWCA because the forests will “die anyway” from global warming and pollution, so they might as well cut down the forests so the trees aren’t “wasted.” Another corporate fable is that the trees in old-growth forests are “too crowded,” and “sound management” requires that they cut down two out of three trees to “make room” for the remaining trees. The part of this fairy story that they don’t tell you is that this is the next step in demolishing the entire ecosystem: cutting down the few stands of old-
growth which remain on this continent, replacing them with “tree farms,” and then telling the public that there are “more trees” than there were five hundred years ago. What they don’t say is that these “more trees” are only about three inches tall, and in sickly, chemical-laden tree farms—like the modern agricultural cornfields with nothing but dead birds in them.

Looking beyond the doublespeak, the English language tells me what they’re going to do. I’m making a prediction and a prophecy: the entire Boundary Waters Canoe Area is going to be destroyed: cut down, logged off, and “developed,” and the animals will be driven into extinction. Your European English language is out of balance with nature, with yourselves, and with reality. Even if God came down and performed a miracle, the BWCA will still go into extinction—the bottom line for the White man is making money, and the English language is filled with blueprints for exploiting women, nature ... and everything else. That’s why the Euro-Americans left Europe and gave themselves a new name (although they kept their old criminal values).

**LAND OF THE FREE:** In a *Strib* “Counterpoint” editorial on August second, attorneys for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People quoted from a NAACP position paper stating that, “segregation was and is tied inextricably to the ideology of white supremacy.” The NAACP proposes battling the consequences of white supremacist thinking in the courts, as well as in “state legislatures and executive mansions, before boards of education and councils of local governments, with local businesses and civic organizations, and last but not least, with parents and students.” All of these proposed NAACP “battlegrounds” are White institutions, including the NAACP, which, if it was all Black, wouldn’t be “colored.” If they’re expecting to win “justice” with their battles, they’re in for a big disappointment. There’s another institution, called “repeat after me, ‘our father who art in heaven,’” but that’s a dead-end White institution, too.

Dealing with problems created by White institutions inside of the context of these institutions isn’t going to solve the problems of racism and “race relations,” nor the hierarchical apartheid which is embedded in the English language. If Euro-American language was not inherently apartheid, both the White immigrants and the descendants of their Black slaves would not be here—they would still be at home, taking care of their “motherlands” and their “fatherlands” in Europe and Africa.

Violence is a part the un-natural makeup of cultural and religion of Western Civilization, and is inherent in the English language. It amuses me, when the Euro-Americans create all kinds of different religions, political parties and other institutions, and then fight about them. They are stuck in the violence, abstract unreality and stupidity of their language. If the NAACP and other organizations looking for social justice are serious about wanting change, they need to look beyond “race relations,” which is a White institution created by the language, and take a damn’ good hard look at the violence and oppression in the pathologically unbalanced English language.

Perot said, “Go ahead, Mike, I’m all ears.” Y’all have a good day, eh.

My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Bemidji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.

Wub-e-ke-niew
Greetings and hello to all of you peasants and you immigrants, and boozhoo to all you Indians, eh. Achtung! to you Germans and sainted Germans.

**ONE NATION UNDER JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY:** According to the Metro/State section of the August 14 *Star Tribune*, TV evangelist Robert Schuller was convicted for assault on a United Airlines flight attendant. In my book, *We Have The Right to Exist*, I write about the violence of the Christians’ religion. In St. Mary’s Mission School at Redlake, and in other boarding
schools across the country, run by the U.S. Government and the religious reich, indigenous children were beaten daily in the name of God and civilization, so that we would become numb and immune to the violence which saturates the White man’s culture. Now, people are concerned about the violence in Euro-American culture, about the daily gunshots and murders which are a part of Euro-American urban life. They keep pointing fingers and blaming television as causing the violence. Instead of blaming the symptoms, they need to go to the source: male violent language and the western religion that it molds, are the cause of their violence, and what about the Branch Davidians at Waco? The surro-great white mother (acting on behalf of the Great White Father) burned up all of those little children to “protect” them.

TIGHT SHOES (if the shoe fits, wear it):
My name is Wub-e-ke-niew. That other name was given to my father in the Mission School by racist Christians, to destroy my people’s real identity. My father was the first generation with the name “Blake,” and using that derogatory “Indian” name is an insult, a human rights violation, disgusting and obscene. I have my identity—and I am not a European and I am not an Indian or a “Native American.” The Indians, who were brought onto my land by the White man, call me “Blake” just like their racist full-White relatives do, because the Indians are hiding from their genocidal history like the rest of the immigrants. When you claim to own stolen property, you are just as guilty as the people who murdered to steal it.

Hitler learned from the Americans, the British, and other European colonizing nations, how to commit genocide and other vile human rights violations. These perversions remain embedded in Western European thought, and are still a part of Euro-American language, culture and tradition. In this beginning of this century, United States Senator Albert Beveridge spoke for the mainstream when he addressed Congress: “We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race, trustee, under God, of the civilization of the world. And we will move forward to our work ... with gratitude for a task worthy of our strength, and thanksgiving to Almighty God that He has marked us His chosen people, henceforth to lead in the regeneration of the world... Mr. President, this question is deeper than any question of party politics; deeper than any question of isolated policy of our country even; deeper even than any question of constitutional power. It is elemental. It is racial. God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. No! He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. He has given us the spirit of progress to overwhelm the forces of reaction throughout the earth. He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples. Were it not for such a force as this the world would relapse into barbarism and night. And of all our race He has marked the American people to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. [Such garbage—they didn’t take care of their land in Europe, and they still don’t know how to take care of the land here.] This is the divine mission of America, and it holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible for man.” By “man,” Beveridge and his cohorts meant the invading European white man, and not even their own women.

If anyone is looking for the Third Reich, all they have to do is look at their own Euro-American history—where did you come from, and what are you doing here? The indigenous people of this continent did not invade Europe or anywhere else. The European invaders and their Indian descendants have been on this continent for five hundred years, and they are behaving in a way that gives pigs a bad name: polluting everything, killing people and sending entire ecosystems into extinction. All you have to do is look at Red Lake—the fish are gone, and the forests have been cut down by wanna-be Indians who have European values and are a part of the Euro-American parasitic culture.
Racism is a European concept, and it always has been. It’s embedded in the European languages in order to justify stealing, enslaving people, dehumanizing and domesticating them, and taking away their real identity. There were no “Indians” on this continent until the Europeans got here—the artificial Indian identity was created by the Europeans and Euro-Americans as a part of their racist culture, and it continues to be funded by the White good ol’ boys who run “America.” The darker-skinned children of White men were called Indians because these Whites were so racist they excluded their own children from their community. These Indians, who all have a White patriline, were used by their fathers’ people to destroy indigenous people and our permaculture, and to hide the near-total genocide of my Ahnishinahbæótjibway people.

The “one drop of black blood” rule segregates people. Madame Albright points to Chinese “human rights violations,” but what about her own back yard? The “black blood” rule remains enforced to this day, with Indians (whose ancestors were categorized as “mulattos” 137 years ago) classified down to 1/508th non-White blood quantum, and “federal recognition” of Indians based on this fictitious “blood quantum” and controlled by the White government. Indian “sovereignty” is a part of this Euro-American apartheid, in which the lily-Whites keep all of the power and segregate their relatives who are a darker shade of White, into dependency as a part of a feudal class structure. And, you want me to be a part of that civilized society by calling me “Blake.” No thank you!

If the indigenous people here had been civilized like the Europeans, we would have killed Christopher Columbus—he would never have landed. I don’t need to be civilized, and I don’t need a “soul,” because I don’t condone slavery. Western civilization is a slave society, and I do not want to be a part of it. By refusing to recognize me as an indigenous person of this land, the language of the invaders and their heirs like c.e. saint germaine, tells me that they want to continue creating the American Reich, dripping with the blood of my people. And, stay away from me, saint—the further people like you stay away, the better I like it: in your arrogant self-righteousness, you have bad “manifest destiny” vibes.

“Racial purity” is an illusion and a con job, and “peace” is just another word for continual violence. The people of Western Civilization have been mongrelized by the rape of war-and-peace ever since their violent society began. There is no such thing as race, but there is a class system. The egalitarian indigenous people of this continent did not have either “race” or “social class,” but we had family, the Donetsk, which is my identity. This has nothing to do with “race.”

As a diatribe-writer in last week’s Native American Press/Ojibwe News observed somewhat less than compassionately, I am among the last of my people. All of my relatives of my Donetsk were massacred in the genocide against my people. They are gone. To label my remembrance of my relatives who were killed in the continent-wide holocaust of half a millennium, as “racism” is bad manners and no respect, as well as being active complicity in the coverup of the White man’s perverted philosophy of “my brother’s keeper” which is an euphemism for genocide. When I reach down into the soil, when I touch Grandmother Earth, the bones of my ancestors for hundreds of millennia are right here. My Donetskian may be dead, but I am not alone. I am still connected to the Earth here.

There was never any genocide against the Indians, because they all have European patrilines—those who were killed, were murdered in fratricide (like Cain and Abel) by their own father’s people for economic reasons, greed. Both miscegenation and primogeniture were used to disinherit the White man’s children: “race” is a part of the White man’s economic system and class structure. That’s why the Indians never talk about genocide of the Indian people, and they’re not going to. And, they never admit to the genocide of the indigenous people, because they are in complicity with it.

According to the Christian calendar, we stand at the threshold of a new millennium. Some
Indians write about their “venture into the next millennium,” because they are a part of the invader’s Christian system. What I have to say to them is: if you want to create a decent future for your next generations, you had better talk a long, hard look at your history, if you can. But, you are caught up in the Euro-Americans’ language, you are into denial, you are a foreigner to this land and it still terrifies you where you haven’t completely trashed it, beaten it into submission and domesticated it—like in the BWCA, where the land is still a reflection of my ancestors’ language. Even if you cut down every tree, become a tree farmer, and said there was “nothing here” but what you created, you would still be a stranger to this land. Because of your alienation with everything here, you refuse to say my indigenous name, Wub-e-ke-niew. I am among the very last of my people, and I will not vanish in silence—you will not get away with your “perfect crime” of stealing this content. American imperialism and the Third Reich have the same roots and the same values. You aren’t afraid of the Thousand Year Reich—you already have that, and after more than a five hundred years on this continent, you’re more than half done. It can’t last, and projecting your immoral values and guilty fears onto me will change nothing: Euro-America had a beginning, and it will also have an end. And, until you face reality, the violence of the American Reich will circle back around on you, again and again and again.

You need to be cleansed of some of your ignorant illusions, c.e. saint germaine—a golden shower to you, eh. And the rest of you have a good day.

My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Be- midji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.

Wub-e-ke-niew

Since I’ve been writing this column, I’ve been getting a lot of mail and telephone calls that need to be answered. Tuesday, my mail-order certificate for completing a home-study course in Shamanism finally arrived. As is documented by my genuine, gilt (guilt) edged diploma from the International Institute of Shamanism, I’ve become a full-fledged Shaman, D.D.—but I’m only going to work part-time ... it depends on how I feel.

Under my new title as Shaman, D.D., I want to thank the young lady in Cass Lake for calling to let me know she agreed with me, on the last column that Wub-e-ke-niew wrote. There are a very few Ahnishinahbæö’jibway people left. Thank you for calling.

Now, to the stack of mail:

Dear Shaman,

I grew up a Chippewa reservation with an Indian name, and there is no way I’m going to let anyone denigrate that upbringing. Yes, the whole nine yards: the tar-paper shack, 11 brothers and sisters, cutting wood for heat and cooking, hauling water, outside toilets, spearing fish in the spring for food, hunting ducks and deer in the fall for winter food, trapping with the old man for needed cash items, etc. When we went into town to spend our hard-earned money, the white folks were so glad to see us. We never experienced any racism. The BIA was always there to help us out when we needed it, and they gave us fine schooling, with scholarship opportunities to go to college so we could work as mid-level Token Indian bureaucrats for the Bureau and other white...
institutions. So, why don’t you quit bitching and crying in your news column?

Signed, Jean-Paul

Dear Wemetigozhens (translated into English, this means, “Little Burnt Stump”),

Yeah, I guess I should quit complaining. Some of the descendants of the French fur traders, who got turned into Indians during the War of 1812 with England, got a pretty good deal. Forty years ago, there were quite a few tarpaper shacks in the northwoods, and almost nobody had electricity or running water—a lot of the white people didn’t have it, either. Back then, there were actually ducks and deer to hunt, and wood to cut. Nobody had refrigerators, and the only way to keep fresh food was to share it. Abe Lincoln was born in a log cabin, and so were a lot of other people.

Dear Charmin,

Indian Religion, doesn’t it have degrees? How do I go about studying this religion, and getting some of these degrees? Is it like Chemical Dependency certification? And, do I have to learn the language so I can help my people?

Signed, Wanna-be

Dear Helpful,

First of all, you spelled my name wrong. It’s Shaman, with an “S.” If you want Charmin, you’ll need to go see Roger Jourdain, Butch Brun, Bobby Whitefeather, Buggers McArthur, or former Tribal Chairman Chip Wadena. Those are the official Indians you want to see; I’m not an IRA Indian, never have been, and never will be.

The idea of “degrees” is a historical accident. There was a Frenchman trying to be a medicine man, and he didn’t speak English too well. He couldn’t say “the,” he always said “de.” He was talking to a blood quantum Indian about the seven Crees up in Canada, and what he said sounded like “de Crees” or “degrees.” It’s time to start debunking this mythology of “degrees.”

If you want religion, there are still a lot of missionaries around who will be happy to give you a free Bible and save you. And, if you want to help your people, it’s more useful to learn English.

Dear Shaman,

How do you make the wigwam shake?

Signed, Curious

Dear Nosy,

Use a bungee cord, some of the Real Indian Traditionalists (especially those with college degrees in Indian Studies) spell it bangii.

Dear Shaman,

Some of your story-telling, some of your Wannaboozhoo stories, seem to be outdated. Why don’t you get “with it,” and give up on all your useless old antiquated ideas? I don’t know why you can’t be more like us.

Signed, White Traditionalist

Dear White Liberal,

The fish are all gone and the deer are disappearing. The forests are mostly clearcut or turned into sick agriculture called “tree farms.” The buffalo are gone, and the passenger pigeons are extinct. They’ve been tearing down piñon nut trees to make room for more cattle, and the spin doctors are creating public opinion to destroy the BWCA. They want to “develop” the BWCA to make money. In plain English, their Euroamerican motto is, “greed is good and exploitation is healthy.”

We’ve given up a lot, already. Why don’t you try giving up something for awhile, like maybe quit stealing other people’s lands, stop giving other people different identities ... why don’t you give up your apartheid Constitution? And, violence seems like a useless old antiquated idea to me. As long as you’re talking about giving up worthless customs, why don’t you straighten out your language so it doesn’t lie so much?

Dear Shaman,

I wanted to know if there really was a Nanaboozhoo.

Signed, Anthropologist

Dear Grave-Robber,

I went and consulted a Real Indian Medicine Man, and then I went and talked to several
Dear Shaman,

Why are the Treaties only written in the English language, why aren’t they also written in the Indian languages? Shouldn’t a Treaty be written in both languages, eh?

Traditional Indian

Dear Wanna-be,

That’s a very good question. I’m glad you asked that. The treaties have been interpreted many in different ways, by many different people: by sportswriters, by the DNR, by the BIA, by the courts, by would-be Indian leaders... The treaties were not recorded in the indigenous languages because they were never interpreted into them. Here, for example, the treaties were interpreted into French and into the creole trade language, Chippewa, but not into the indigenous language, Ahninishinahbæójibway, which is a language the treaty interpreters did not speak or understand.

One of the big problems with the so-called Indian Treaties is that they were negotiated between European parties: the Americans and the French Métis. The indigenous languages are not a part of the treaties, because the indigenous people were excluded from the treaties. The “Indian Treaties” were based European laws of “discovery,” which are foreign European laws which do not belong here.

The “Indian Treaties” are not really treaties. The World Court does not recognize them—and they never were a part of international law. Even when they were being negotiated, the “treaties” were considered to be internal affairs of the United States, on land already claimed as United States territory. They were never intended to be international law, because neither the United States Government nor any other European nation ever recognized indigenous people’s right to our own land on this continent. That’s a human rights violation.

The so-called treaties were written to fulfill the bare letter-of-the law requirements of Article V of the U.S. Constitutional amendments, that: “No person ... shall be ... deprived of ... property, without due process of the law.” Because of their white patriline, the Indians all came under the Constitution, and the “Indian Treaties” were the U.S. Government’s way of claiming that they stole the land legally, in their way of thinking. The English language is so crooked that it creates a criminal culture.

Dear Shaman,

What about the “hunting and fishing rights” in the Treaties? Where do the rights of the red-blooded American citizens fit into this?

True Sportfisherman (Catch-and-Release)

That’s all for now. Keep the mail coming. My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Bemidji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.

Wub-e-ke-niew
Dear Bearer of Tall Tales,

The whole thing is a tourist trap. Any way it’s been interpreted, the Indian still has to buy a license from the White man: from the State, or from the IRA “tribal councils” that the White man established. Whether sovereign or semi-sovereign, the Indians have always come under the jurisdiction of the White man, because Indians are also Europeans.

The Mille Lacs Treaty has been a big circus, because both the treaties and the white laws behind them are written only in crooked English, from a European point of view. The White man keeps reviving the dead treaties because the existence of the United States depends on them. In the early 1970’s, the American Indian Movement was hollering, “honor the treaties,” as were the IRA “Tribal” governments. The U.S. didn’t honor the treaties, so the Indians quit hollering—their loud and violent protests didn’t produce anything but job security for the media, more violence and social problems. But, the United States Government’s claim to this land rests on the treaties, so now the White man (Congress and everyone else) is hollering, “honor the treaties.” It’s hot air out of Washington, D.C.—the Euroamericans are hiding their genocidal guilt behind the Indians that they created.

Hunting and fishing is a red herring: it aggravates and agonizes public feeling about the treaties, builds White backlash, and makes money for the White man. Even though some of the treaties have clauses about hunting and fishing in them, the United States never intended to honor anything but job security for the media, more violence and social problems. But, the United States Government’s claim to this land rests on the treaties, so now the White man (Congress and everyone else) is hollering, “honor the treaties.” It’s hot air out of Washington, D.C.—the Euroamericans are hiding their genocidal guilt behind the Indians that they created.

Dear Future Shyster,

“Sovereignty” is a form of segregation, and the “Indian laws” are so bad that the Whites don’t want to apply them to their own people. They are part of the Jim Crow system of apartheid which was supposedly abolished in the South after the Civil Rights Act in the 1960’s. The United States has no legal basis for taking indigenous peoples land and resources—they simply stole them by declaring eminent domain under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. “Indian Sovereignty” discriminates against both Whites and Indians, and it hides the genocide and the grand land theft here. The Whites need to get honest about their history, but they can’t, because their language restricts them.

Dear Shaman,

Why are all the Indians called “the First Americans”?

A Concerned White Guy

Dear White Boy,

The indigenous people of these continents were destroyed in the genocide. The “Indians” are called the “first Americans” to hide this genocide and to pacify the Euroamericans’ conscience.

The Pope made a statement in 1985 about the genocide here, when the Catholic Church was going to Canonize one of the Spanish Missionaries in California. But, the Catholic Church was into genocide on this continent. Since the mid-1500’s their legal documents have justified genocide here with statements like Aristotle’s, “War arises in a certain sense from nature, since a part of it is the art of the hunt, which is properly used not only against animals, but also against those men who, having been born to obey, reject servitude: such a war is just according to nature.” Aristotle tells you a whole lot about your European criminal culture and values.

Dear Shaman,

I went up to get my last payment check from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and it wasn’t
Reflections from the *Ahnishinahbæó’jibway* (We, the People) 1997

Reflections from the *Ahnishinahbæó’jibway* (We, the People)

*By Wub-e-ke-niew (a.k.a. Francis Blake, Jr.)*

September 19, 1997

Dear Shaman,

Why did the Pilgrims and other European immigrants call this “The Promised Land,” when there were people living here?

Signed, D.A.R. Blueblood Daughter

Dear Holier-Than-Thou,

The “promise” in “the promised land” comes from claims that the Christians made about what their God said to them. Although the Ten Commandments say, “Thou Shalt Not Steal,” the Christian God apparently told His followers that it was fine to steal from the indigenous people here. The Christian religion changed when good Christian men saw the vast wealth belonging to the indigenous people—greed became their illuminating light, and this enlightenment created such shady doctrines as Manifest Destiny.

There were a number of allegedly Divine mind-games that the Christians used to justify their rapacious theft to themselves, which are still in operation today. Their thieving rationales included saying that the indigenous people were not really human beings (in the 1500’s the Catholic Church revealed the “truth” that indigenous people were half-human *homunculi*). This is the same kind of thinking as modern racism. They also said that their God created this land and therefore it “naturally” belonged to Christian immigrants and not to the people they labelled pagans, heathens and savages. This is the still the modern legal foundation for the United States’ “eminent domain,” which is why the media is devoting so much attention to the Landless Indian Treaties and to the IRA White Government Tribal Councils.

The immigrants’ Godly thieving strategies depend on crooked hierarchical languages, like Crooked English. They called some of their earliest settlers, “Pilgrims,” but pilgrims are supposed to go back to where they came from, and pilgrimages don’t usually last three centuries, either.

Interpreted from crooked English, what “The Promised Land” really means, is “The Land of Broken Promises.” The American Dream is a broken promise, a decent living wage is a broken promise, and the Mille Lacs Treaty is only one treaty out of more than four hundred treaties. Are they going to honor the rest of those crooked treaties? I think not.

Dear Shaman,

It was in the year 1972 that Roger Jourdain told all of the Red Lake Indians, “I am building, for you Indians and you white people, a good
road from Bemidji to Red Lake. Look at what I have done for you, and you still don’t appreciate me.” People gossip about him and make fun of him, instead of honoring our first constitutionally elected leader, the Father of the Red Lake Chippewa Nation.

Dear Landless Indian,

What Ira Jourdain did not tell you: to watch out for the big logging trucks that might run over you, which have been going day and night ever since they straightened out that road. He also did not tell you that the White IRA government that he put onto this land, was not to serve you Indians, but to serve the White institutions and the White corporations. Take a good look around you, and see that the forests have been clearcut, you can’t drink the water, and everything is going into extinction. The Indian Reorganization Act was encroachment legislation which concentrated political power into the hands of a few White Indians, and that 1934 IRA is a human rights violation.

Dear Shaman,

What is the meaning of “Indian and Free”? 

signed, Indian and Proud

Dear Mr. Crow,

The Red Lake Schools have been trying to teach you English, and you haven’t been listening. You’ll have to go to the back of the segregated bus, Jim. The meaning of “Indian and Free” is a con job, and whoever started it is ripping you off. If you’re “free,” why are you living on the reservation under the U.S. Government’s White IRA Tribal Government, without any civil or human rights? Why is the white man paying you to be Indian, when he could get all those New Agers to be his Indians for free? The hypothetical $27 million is just another the devoting so much attention to the Landless Indian Treaties and to the IRA White Government Tribal Councils.

The immigrants’ Godly thieving strategies depend on crooked hierarchical languages, like Crooked English. They called some of their earliest settlers, “Pilgrims,” but pilgrims are supposed to go back to where they came from, and pilgrimages don’t usually last three centuries, either.

Interpreted from crooked English, what “The Promised Land” really means, is “The Land of Broken Promises.” The American Dream is a broken promise, a decent living wage is a broken promise, and the Mille Lacs Treaty is only one treaty out of more than four hundred treaties. Are they going to honor the rest of those crooked treaties? I think not.

Editor’s note: Space limitations in the September 19, 1997 paper precluded publication of the remainder of this column:

Dear Shaman,

I’ve heard that the Red Lake Schools are going to institute a tax on the Red Lake people to encourage reading the English language.

signed, Concerned Future Taxpayer

Dear Bearer of Bad News,

Well, you already live on the reservation, which is segregated and at the bottom of the White man’s social class hierarchy. Why should anybody teach you the White man’s tricks, like the English language, when you might rise up and do the same thing to the White man as he has done to you: put him on a reservation and mis-educate him so that he doesn’t know who he is or where he came from.

If Superintendent Schmidt is really going to teach your kids to read and write—do you think that five hours a year is too much to give your kids?

Dear Shaman,

Maybe you could clarify the statistics about the millions of Indians who live in the United States. Do people who are 15/16 White, count as one “Indian” in these statistics?

signed, Full Blood Quantum Indian
Dear Apple Indian,

According to the White man’s way of thinking, one drop of “tainted” blood makes a person not-White. A lot of people remain “Indians” because they don’t want to be discriminated against as low class almost-White people. Years ago, I used to hear the tired old worn-out broken slogan, “Assimilate.” Now, the White and Indian leaders are using a divide-and-conquer strategy of splitting their subjected people into little ethnic groups with artificial wanna-be identities. The educated ones who are related to the leaders, get better-paying bureaucratic token jobs than they could get in the White corporate world, and the dregs get commodities, rations, and free rides in the trunk of a police car.

In answer to your question, the White man created Indians, so he can do anything he wants with his Indian statistics. His blame-the-victim White culture needs somebody like Indians to be his political hockey-pucks and scapegoats.

Dear Shaman,

I think you are a fraud and a fake, and you’re actually nothing but a horse-trader and a horse thief.

signed, Unbeliever

Dear Pagan,

Infidel dog! May the fleas of a thousand camels infest your armpits, and may you leave no footprints on the sands of time.

My mailing address is P.O. Box 484, Bemidji, MN 56619, and my telephone number is (218) 679-3984.
Clara by the Farm Station Road, west of Redlake.

“Out west” of Redlake, where Highways 1 and 89 fork.

Ravaged ecosystems: pine plantation at Red Lake.
Reflections from the *Ahnishinahbëwewijibway* (We, the People) 1997

Photo — Clara

475
 reflections from the Ahnishinabé ojibway (We, the People) 1997

Clinton White House refuses to release documents

Former TEC president charged U.S. with backing coup

Anderson only dissident in MCT vote against deal

Minnesota tribal lobbyists focus of investigation

Movie discussed about employee abuse,
government contract with the Executive taken under the law..." 

Refuse cont'd on 3

Refer to next page for full text.
Wub-e-ke-niew of the Bear Dodem died Thursday, October 16, at home with his Ahnishinahbæótjibway land which, as he said, “has been in my family for hundreds of millennia.”

Wub-e-ke-niew’s patrilineal great-grandfather was Bah-se-nos of the Bear Dodem, who lived with his wife Nay-bah-nay-cumig-oke in a birchbark longhouse at Be-kwa-kwan, part of the Ahnishinahbæótjibway land of the Bear Dodem. His grandparents were Bah-wah-we-nind, also of the Bear Dodem, and Ke-niew-e-gwon-ay-beak of Leech Lake. Wub-e-ke-niew was born in Bah-wah-we-nind’s log house, also at Be-kwa-kwan, about June 6, 1928. His parents were Bah-wah-we-nind’s son Wub-e-ke-niew, and Delia Lufkins of White Earth. Wub-e-ke-niew explained that his father was “given the name Francis Blake in order to impose an artificial Indian identity on him,” and often added that, “my Indian name is Francis Blake, Junior.”

Wub-e-ke-niew spent most of his “formative years” with his grandfather Bah-wah-we-nind. After Bah-wah-we-nind’s death in 1935, Wub-e-ke-niew “spent nine years as a political prisoner” in the Catholic boarding school at St. Mary’s Mission, Red Lake. Then, he worked for two years as a part of the migrant labor force in the Red River Valley. In 1946, he joined the United States Army, and after schooling in the Military Police Academy, served with the 28th Constabulary in Germany. Wub-e-ke-niew wrote of his military service, “I didn’t even realize that I was not a U.S. citizen. Indians were made U.S. citizens in 1924, but in 1946 I hadn’t learned enough English to figure out that I’m not an Indian. I enlisted, rather than waiting to be conscripted, because I figured that if I had to go, I might as well get it over with on my own terms.”

Wub-e-ke-niew worked after the war in Great Falls, Montana and in Seattle, and then moved to Minneapolis, where he married Norby Fairbanks of White Earth in September, 1953. In the 1950’s and early 1960’s, he worked in industrial labor, as a handyman, truck driver, and for J.D. Holtzerman of Minneapolis. In 1963 he was a Teamsters Union 544 driver for Custom Cartage in Minneapolis, and he drove truck until 1970. He wrote, “I was teaching myself to read during the time that I was parked at the docks waiting for a load, or waiting for my turn to unload the truck. Sometimes I would spend half a day waiting at the dock, and so I kept an assortment of magazines and books and a dictionary with me in the truck. Whenever I got to a word I didn’t know, I would look it up in the dictionary, and then write it down. I have always spent time observing people: their dialect, their accent, how they used their words and their body-language, what they said and what they meant. The English language and the Euro-American culture are still foreign to me—although I understand the immigrant peoples fairly well by now, I’m still astounded by some of the things that they think and do.

In 1965, Wub-e-ke-niew was part of the alcohol self-help group which started the American Indian Movement. From 1971 to 1973, he served as the Treasurer of AIM. He wrote, “The way I initially saw AIM, was that this organization was going to create a vehicle for Aboriginal Indigenous people to take back our identity, and re-empower ourselves and our community. As I look back on it now, this was a big mistake.” While Treasurer of AIM, he “managed to get the first American Indian Movement Survival School,” Heart of the Earth Survival School, started in Minneapolis. After the occupation of Wounded Knee, Wub-e-ke-niew resigned from AIM in June of 1973. AIM, Wub-e-ke-niew wrote, had an “implicit charter with the White liberal organizations, who wanted to support AIM in working toward social change, but not in actually making structural changes to society. The kind of Indian leaders the White man supports are professional Indians who talk a fine speech, but who are European subject people. When it
1997Reflections from the Ahnishinahbæótjibway (We, the People)

comes to reality, many of these externally-supported community leaders value their job and superficial prestige more than they do their own community, and can be manipulated into stealing from even their own children. BIA Commissioner John Collier described these Indians as having a ‘white-plus psychology.’” He continued, Métis people have their own identity, and the capability of realizing themselves as a people in their own right, but they cannot do it from within the Indian identity, because that’s owned by the White man. I can’t speak for anyone else; it is up to each person to figure out who they are and to chart their own destiny. The only thing that I will say is that the Indians are not the Aboriginal Indigenous people of this Continent, and that they do neither themselves nor us any good by pretending that they are.”

After he resigned from AIM, Wub-e-ke-niew “devoted more attention to politics, still trying to make positive change from within the system.” He worked with his family in the Jimmy Carter campaign of 1975, then after the election, went to Kansas City, Missouri. While there, he worked as an apartment caretaker and as a jack-of-all-trades for an office supply company. He also helped organize the Longest Walk through Kansas City, and wrote that at that time he “did not know what it was supposed to accomplish,” although he came to “understand why this kind of demonstration, although the participants feel a fleeting moment of release and unity, is inevitably a charade and a waste of energy.”

In 1981, Wub-e-ke-niew returned to the Ahnishinahbæótjibway land of his Bear Dodem, where he spent the remaining sixteen years of his life. He wrote that he “realized that I needed to become a part of the land again, and regain my roots and my identity. I was born here, and I will die here. This is my land, my Ahnishinahbæótjibway philosophy, my spirituality, my place with Grandmother Earth.” Wub-e-ke-niew married Clara NiiSka by the Ahnishinahbæótjibway tradition, on his land in 1984.

Wub-e-ke-niew drove school bus for several years, then attended Bemidji State Univer-
system,” Wub-e-ke-niew decided to heal the “deformed culture” which the Euroamericans brought to his land by going to the root causes. He began doing research and writing *We Have The Right To Exist*, reading archival and historical documents validating what he had “always known but couldn’t prove.”

In December of 1990, Wub-e-ke-niew wrote to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior that, “I will no longer be identified by your racist term of ‘Indian.’ I am not an ‘Indian,’ I am not a ‘Chippewa,’ and I am not a ‘Native American.’” He explained that, “If I allow myself to continue to be falsely identified as ‘Indian’ I am guilty of complacency and conspiracy; I want to part whatsoever of the fraudulent Indian identity that the United States Government is still using to destroy the legitimate people of these two continents. ... I wipe my hands clean of being identified in the same category as those who are contributing to ongoing genocide, dispossession and destruction of my own Aboriginal Indigenous people and my own Traditional Aboriginal Indigenous culture. I’m sending my ‘Indian Identity Card’ by certified mail to the Supreme Court. I am turning it in as a false document issued with felonious and genocidal intent by the United States Government in collusion with their colonial Indian Reorganization Act ‘Tribal Councils.’ I am not an Indian!” In accordance with provisions of the U.S. Constitution, Wub-e-ke-niew sent his Indian Identity Card to Chief Justice Thurgood Marshall of the U.S. Supreme Court, who kept it, and so Wub-e-ke-niew legally regained his own real identity, *Ahnishinahbæójibway* of the Bear Dodem.

In 1995, Wub-e-ke-niew’s book, *We Have The Right To Exist*, was published after nearly ten years of research and writing. Wub-e-ke-niew wrote columns for the *Native American Press/Ojibwe News* for many years, and did other writing and public speaking. He was also studying language, comparing the harmonious male-and-female balance of his egalitarian *Ahnishinahbæójibway* language, with the violent hierarchical abstractions of male-dominated languages like English. He had begun writing two novels.

Wub-e-ke-niew gardened for many years, and maintained his ancient *Ahnishinahbæójibway* permacultural tradition, making maple syrup and maple sugar in the sugarbush of his Bear Dodem. He cut his own firewood, repaired his own vehicles, and led an active life. In collaboration with Jean Houston and the Mystery School in New York, he was working to establish a radio station as a memorial to the indigenous people who were killed in the genocide of these two continents.

Wub-e-ke-niew was buried on his land Friday by family, joining his ancestors “who are a part of every handful of this Earth.” His legacy includes the decades of his work “to make this a better world for all human beings.” Wub-e-ke-niew described himself as, “just an ordinary human being.”
Dear Noam Chomsky,

Thank you very much for your letter of condolence about my husband Wub-e-ke-niew. Your letter is one that would have meant a great deal to him, as it does to me. (Ahnishinahbæójtibway people communicate with their deceased relatives, so perhaps “means” is the more appropriate verb.)

Wub-e-ke-niew credited you with giving him the insight which enabled him to understand the English language beyond its surface. One of the agreements which we made at the outset of our relationship, was that he would teach me as much as he could of what he knew, if I would in turn teach him as much as I could of what I knew, especially the English language. After we had been together only a few years, he would ask me repeatedly what was the “key” to the English language, which was a question I did not know how to answer. He would say, “Why won’t you tell me? It’s your native language—you should know what it is.” At that time, I did not have the insight into an Ahnishinahbæójtibway perspective, from which might have answered his question. Among Wub-e-ke-niew’s many gifts to me were such questions about my “native” language and culture, pushing me to consider things which I had taken for granted, to try to explain them in the context of a very different world-view.

Wub-e-ke-niew read some of your books, and after having read an article of yours in The Progressive, wrote to you, although without really expecting a reply. He was delighted when you answered, defending Lorraine Kingsley’s paper on “discipline.” We subsequently gave your letter to Lorraine, who also very much appreciated it. From his reading of your work, and his correspondence with you, he gained what was a deeply meaningful insight from his perspective: that the “key” to the English language was that it is “abstract, linear and hierarchical.” He would tell people with pride, “Noam Chomsky showed me the English language.”

Wub-e-ke-niew thought about issues of language until the very end of his life. As he understood the English language more clearly, he became increasingly convinced that “language creates the world,” and that transformation of English, particularly to include what he understood as an “indigenous female perspective,” had the potential of radically transforming the world.

Throughout this past summer, I worked with Wub-e-ke-niew intensively, trying to understand the meaning behind what he was saying about “language.” One of my academic advisors, Robert “Robin” Brown, is a linguist (among other things). During my brief sojourns to the University, Robin Brown and I also discussed what both Wub-e-ke-niew and you were saying about language; Wub-e-ke-niew and I would talk at length about what you and Robin Brown were saying.

The topic merits a longer discussion that what I can give you right now, but it seems as though part of the crucial distinction between Ahnishinahbæójtibway and English has to do with underlying organization: that the core referents of Ahnishinahbæójtibway are patterns of interrelationship, while in English they are abstract ideals. There is more to it than that, and another part of it has to do with interrelationships with the natural world. After nearly a full day of wrestling with questions this past summer, Wub-e-ke-niew finally told me, “All you have to do is look at the ecosystem. Ahnishinahbæójtibway maintained a paradise. Now look at it. The water is all polluted, everything has been wrecked and plundered. There’s your answer.” He returned to this idea, of the environment as a manifestation of language, several times throughout the summer.

Another aspect of it became apparent only toward the end of the summer. Wub-e-ke-niew had given me a car this spring [to be strictly factual, he repaired a car which I’d bought from a friend last winter for $35 (neighborhood entrepreneurs pay people $25 to tow them away before the City does), turning it into something very close to my “ideal” car]. He steadfastly maintained it was “your car, so you drive.” During the years of our marriage, I had always let him drive when we traveled together, in part because he had been an extremely competent professional truck driver and was a fairly critical backseat driver. During the summer, I struggled to make sense of his often urgently-delivered advice on how to drive, and finally, I asked him what he was seeing, that I didn’t. He told me that I wasn’t paying attention to “the energy,” which he then extended into lessons on how to see around corners and predict other drivers’ actions. What he said fit with what he had showed me, years previously, about hunting; as well as with the context of other aspects of Ahnishinahbæójtibway culture and ways of being. ...

I’m not certain what else to write about this right now. I am amply aware that much of what I might say is not only quite strictly beyond the parameters of Western academic discourse, but that there are...
dogmatic defenses in Western epistemology to keep it outside of those parameters. However, it is quite clear to me that there are integrated elements of Ahnishinabëwøjibway awareness and culturally legitimated communication which include these domains—and Wub-e-ke-niew was always right about whether or not there was a car around the curve, on the lightly trafficked rural roads we drove this summer. “Keeping people in a box” which cuts them off from these kinds of awareness and communication is something which fits quite nicely with other patterns of Western societal hierarchy; using old anthropological terms, it’s functional within the system. And, there are people in what Wub-e-ke-niew called “White society” who do communicate in these domains, although perhaps in ways which are only vaguely recognized as “intuition.”

... Wub-e-ke-niew very clearly saw his approaching death. During the last few days of his life, he asked me to do a number of things, “because I can’t.” Among the four key issues, which he returned to several times during his last days, was his request, “Be sure to tell Noam Chomsky that it’s in the language, not in the institutions. The language creates the institutions.” [Wub-e-ke-niew and I] talked at some length about that letter [that you wrote me last Spring]. Wub-e-ke-niew then gave me several examples of “institutions” excluding people, including observations about the buildings at the University of Minnesota. He explained that, “those buildings are designed through language,” and noted that their imposing architecture made them inaccessible to people in wheelchairs; he also commented that access to them is limited fairly exclusively to people of certain social classes.

Wub-e-ke-niew and I had discussed your fairly tightly delineated definitions of “language,” both in the context of your letter and with regard to the terminology I might use in my Ph.D. thesis. I had conveyed to Wub-e-ke-niew, Robin Brown’s explanations of the political and historical factors which, according to Brown, may have played a role in your definitions, focus and research emphasis. Wub-e-ke-niew and I talked at length about “discourse” versus “language”—and Wub-e-ke-niew insisted that what he meant was language.

If one begins at the reality-base of the Ahnishinabëwøjibway instead of the philosophical base of the Western Europeans, then what Wub-e-ke-niew was saying begins to make sense, at least to me, although I haven’t figured out how to describe it clearly, yet. ...
This is getting to be a long letter; the main point of it is Wub’s message to you, that “it’s in the language.”

…

Your correspondence with Wub-e-ke-niew, the work of yours which he read, your ideas, and your endorsement of his book, meant a great deal to him. He was passionately interested in language: both in thoroughly understanding and being able to use the English language, and, especially during the last few years of his life, in understanding “language” in a broader sense. He deeply believed that language as he saw it, was a key to healing the pathologies which he saw in Western society. “Thank you” is an inadequate acknowledgement, but I don’t know what other words one might write.

Sincerely,
Clara NiiSka