

IMAGINARY SPACES OF CONCILIATION AND RECONCILIATION

>> DAVID GARNEAU

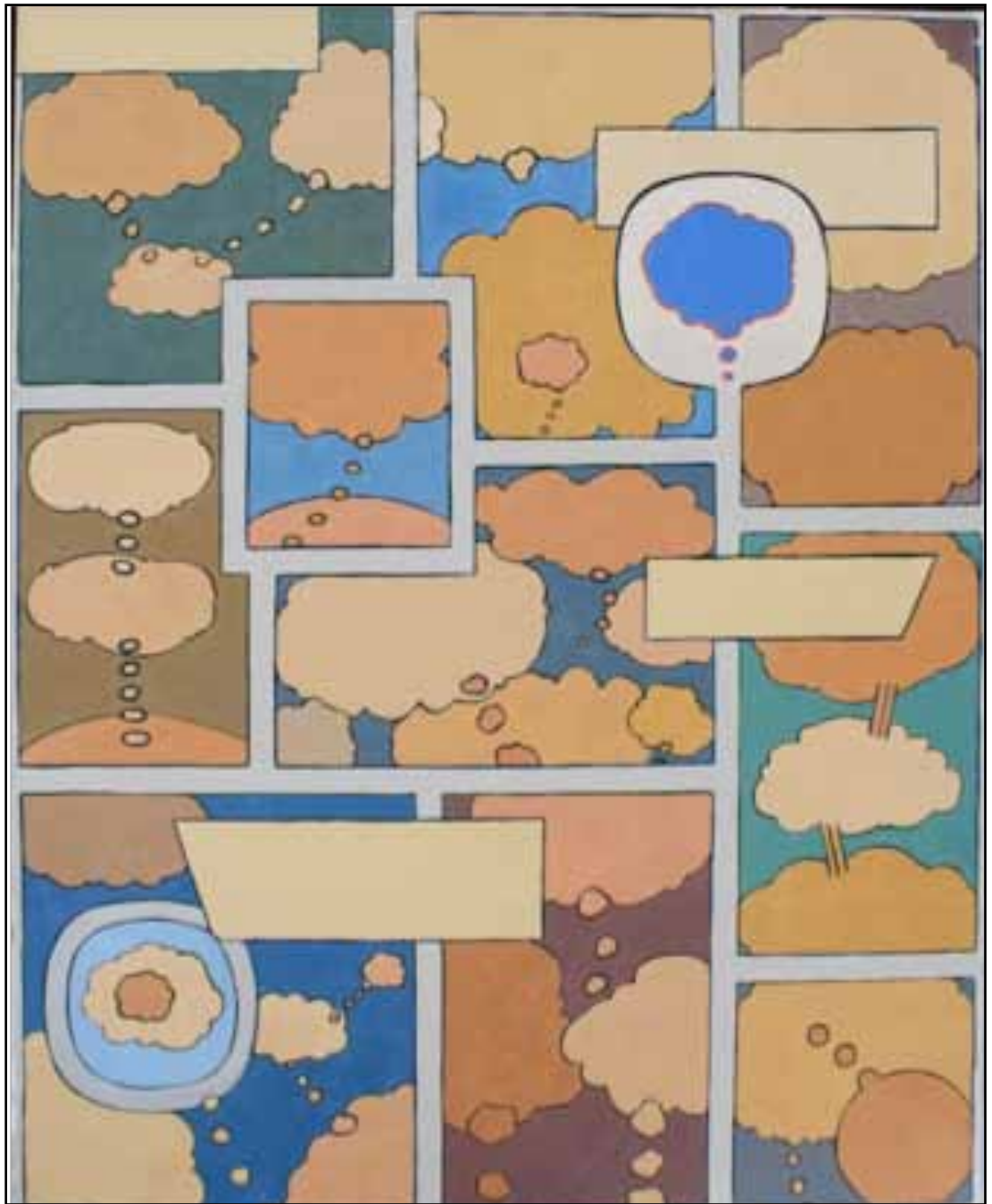
The oil paintings *Aboriginal Curatorial Collective Meeting* and *Aboriginal Advisory Circle Meeting* attempt to picture my memories of two gatherings I recently attended. The canvasses are composed like comic book pages; however, the panels do not show people or scenes and do not follow a conventional narrative sequence. They are arranged circularly without a clear beginning or end, and are only populated by empty speech and thought bubbles and the coloured spaces between them. The bubbles stand in for specific speakers and thinkers and so have the varying flesh tones of individual First Nations, Métis, or Inuit people. Knowing the conventions of comics and meetings, I hope viewers will read emphasis, assertion, withdrawal, attitude, argument, agreement, overlapping dialogue, shared and evolving ideas, and innumerable other things into these abstract shapes and thereby get a sense of the meetings portrayed. I also imagine that many will feel frustrated that their comprehension is limited.

The paintings are mnemonic devices, images that store my perceptions of specific moments from actual councils. Each reminds me of the relationships, exchanges, and affects in the room: who said what, who aligned with whom or what idea, and what I imagined they felt and thought. Perhaps people who attended these events might also recognize a familiar dynamic in these pictures. Most importantly, the paintings allow me to show what happened without giving anything away.

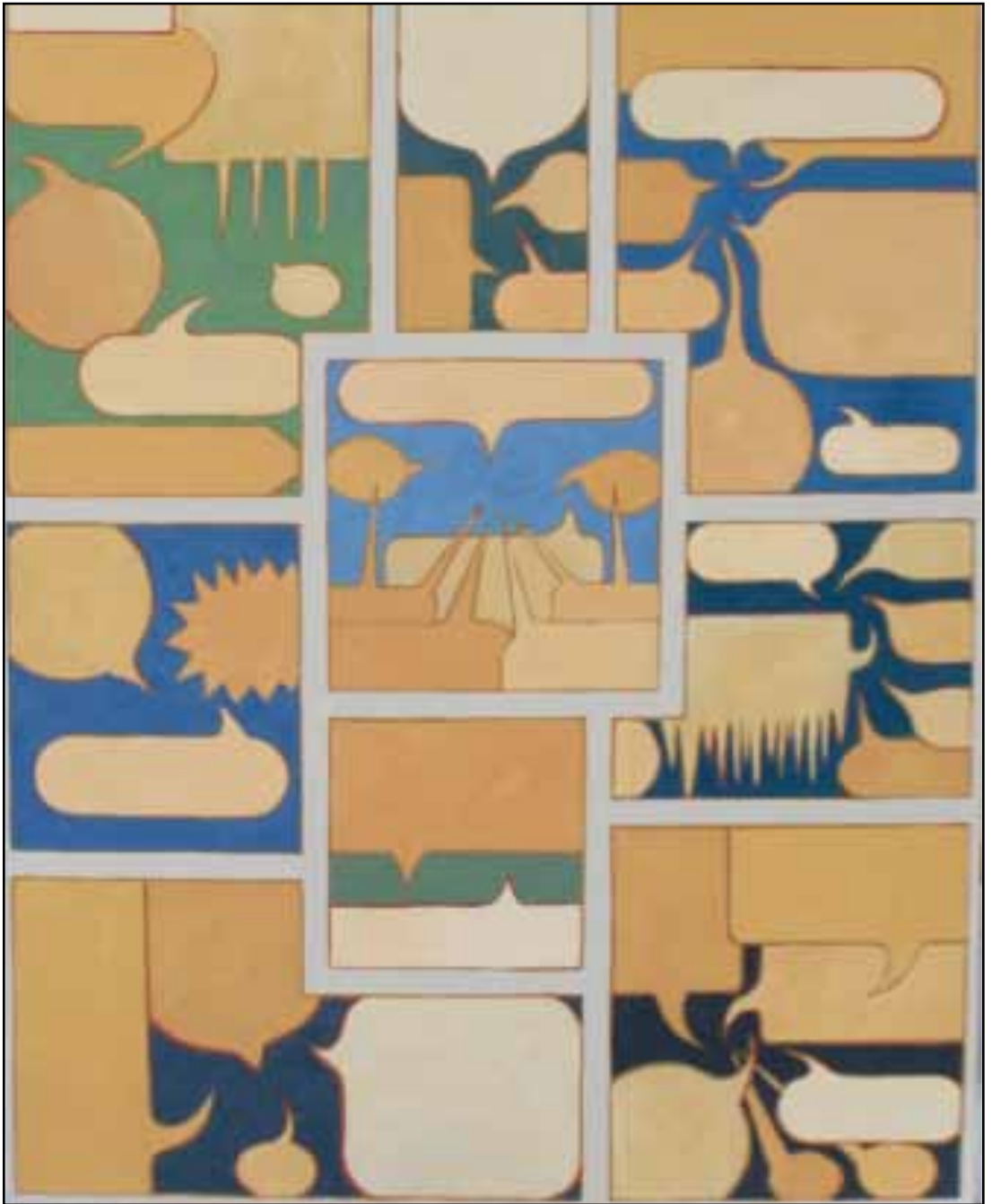
In an article "Altars of Sacrifice: Re-membering Basquiat," bell hooks explains that the young African-American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat's paintings are like a "vattier, a wall between him and the established art world." His works are "a barrier," "designed to be a closed door," and "like a secret chamber that can only be opened and entered by those who can decipher hidden codes." His paintings are closed to the "Eurocentric gaze"¹ and are only fully available to those who share like experiences with the work's creator. The codes are not just signifiers that can be read into denotative signs by a competent reader, though that is an important aspect. They also have empathetic undertones in tune with the felt relationships and wordless understandings shared by members of a culture.

The colonial attitude, including its academic branch, is characterized by a drive to see, to traverse, to know, to translate (to make equivalent), to own, and to exploit. It is based on the belief that everything should be accessible, is ultimately comprehensible, and a potential commodity or resource, or at least something that can be recorded or otherwise saved. Primary sites of resistance, then, are not the occasional open battles between the minoritized, oppressed, or colonized and the dominant culture, but the perpetual, active refusal of complete engagement: to speak with one's own in one's own way; to refuse translation and full explanations; to create trade goods that imitate core culture without violating it; to not be a Native informant.

1 hooks, bell, "Altars of sacrifice: re-membering Basquiat," 1993, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics* (New York: The New Press, 1995) 35-48.



DAVID GARNEAU, ABORIGINAL ADVISORY CIRCLE MEETING (OIL ON CANVAS, 5' X 4', 2012).



**DAVID GARNEAU, ABORIGINAL CURATORIAL COLLECTIVE MEETING
(OIL ON CANVAS, 5' X 4', 2012).**

The oil paintings *Aboriginal Curatorial Collective Meeting* and *Aboriginal Advisory Circle Meeting* attempt to picture my memories of two gatherings I recently attended. The canvasses are composed like comic book pages; however, the panels do not show people or scenes and do not follow a conventional narrative sequence. They are arranged circularly without a clear beginning or end, and are only populated by empty speech and thought bubbles and the coloured spaces between them. The bubbles stand in for specific speakers and thinkers and so have the varying flesh tones of individual First Nations, Métis, or Inuit people. Knowing the conventions of comics and meetings, I hope viewers will read emphasis, assertion, withdrawal, attitude, argument, agreement, overlapping dialogue, shared and evolving ideas, and innumerable other things into these abstract shapes and thereby get a sense of the meetings portrayed. I also imagine that many will feel frustrated that their comprehension is limited.

The paintings are mnemonic devices, images that store my perceptions of specific moments from actual councils. Each reminds me of the relationships, exchanges, and affects in the room: who said what, who aligned with whom or what idea, and what I imagined they felt and thought. Perhaps people who attended these events might also recognize a familiar dynamic in these pictures. Most importantly, the paintings allow me to show what happened without giving anything away.

In an article “Altars of Sacrifice: Re-membering Basquiat,” bell hooks explains that the young African-American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat’s paintings are like a “vattier, a wall between him and the established art world.” His works are “a barrier,” “designed to be a closed door,” and “like a secret chamber that can only be opened and entered by those who can decipher hidden codes.” His paintings are closed to the “Eurocentric gaze”¹ and are only fully available to those who share like experiences with the work’s

creator. The codes are not just signifiers that can be read into denotative signs by a competent reader, though that is an important aspect. They also have empathetic undertones in tune with the felt relationships and wordless understandings shared by members of a culture.

The colonial attitude, including its academic branch, is characterized by a drive to see, to traverse, to know, to translate (to make equivalent), to own, and to exploit. It is based on the belief that everything should be accessible, is ultimately comprehensible, and a potential commodity or resource, or at least something that can be recorded or otherwise saved. Primary sites of resistance, then, are not the occasional open battles between the minoritized, oppressed, or colonized and the dominant culture, but the perpetual, active refusal of complete engagement: to speak with one’s own in one’s own way; to refuse translation and full explanations; to create trade goods that imitate core culture without violating it; to not be a Native informant.

Every culture has at its centre a set of objects and spaces that are designated as being beyond trade. They are national treasures, sacred sites and texts, symbols that must be protected because they define the culture. The colonial attitude—the state of mind required to assume control over the space, bodies, and trade of others—begins by refusing the specific contextual, living value of these entities. This is done in one of two ways: either, historically, the colonist refuses the sacred character of the object or site because it derives from a metaphysical system that it rejects in favour of its own cosmology; or, in a recent and more sensitive version, materialist scholars can recognize the semiotic value of sacred objects but not experience their symbolic value; that is, materialists recognize the object’s sociological and instrumental value for the “believers” but not for themselves. Because of their objectivist creed and position as outsiders, materialist scholars do not know the essential, sacred qualities of these entities from within the “believers” lived experience.

If the metaphysical qualities of these things—

1 hooks, bell, “Altars of sacrifice: re-membering Basquiat,” 1993, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics* (New York: The New Press, 1995) 35–48.

Incan sacred sculptures or Blackfoot medicine bundles, for example—are not recognized, then they are available for trade and appropriation if, that is, the possessors of the colonial attitude can back their reconceptualization with force. Through the alchemy of the colonial imagination, combined with power, sacred objects are transmogrified into commodities, melted for their gold value, or collected for their artefact or art value (“art” in the Modern Western sense of objects having “universal” and therefore no longer local value; creations that are expressions of man and therefore belong to all of mankind). The desire of the colonist is not just directed at appropriating these material things but at destroying their local symbolic value and, therefore, causing the decay of the culture and the assimilation of the people so the land may be turned into property, colonial holdings.

In the face of alien ideology backed by force, Indigenous cultures have devised since contact ingenious ways to protect their sacred objects through the use of “screen” objects. In Freudian psychoanalysis, screen memories² are seemingly insignificant and incomplete memories that both suggest and conceal meaningful but repressed content. In order to satiate Settler cravings for the sacred objects of others, Maori, Haida, and every other Indigenous people produced trade goods specifically for visitors. Screen objects resemble the sacred things they imitate but do not include anything that might animate them. These sculptures, masks, and garments have the patina of the originals but none of the meaning, ritual, or context. They are cultural *artefakes* designed for others and give nothing essential away. The hope is that colonizers might settle for the appearance and leave the essential undisturbed. My favourite example comes from the Haida who carved argillite to look like “authentic” ceremonial pipes, only the holes in the bowl and stem did not meet. Visitors bought signifiers of Haida

culture but could not enjoy full use.³

Aboriginal Curatorial Collective Meeting and *Aboriginal Advisory Circle Meeting* are from a series-in-progress in which I visualize Indigenous intellectual spaces that exist apart from a non-Indigenous gaze and interlocution. The idea is to signal to non-Aboriginal spectators the fact that intellectual activity is occurring without their knowledge; that is, in their absence and based on Native epistemologies. I think of these as irreconcilable spaces of Aboriginality.

Irreconcilable spaces of Aboriginality are gatherings, ceremony, Cree-only discussions, kitchen-table conversations, email exchanges, etc. in which Blackfootness, Métisness, Indianness, Aboriginality, and/or Indigeneity is performed apart from a Settler audience. It is not a show for others but a site of being where people simply are, where they express and celebrate their continuity and figure themselves to, for, and with each other in a complex exchange without the sense of feeling they are witnessed by people who are not equal performers. When Aboriginal folks (anyone, really) know they are being surveyed by non-members the nature of their ways of being and becoming alters. Whether the onlookers are conscious agents of colonization or not their shaping gaze can trigger a Reserve response; an inhibition or a conformation to Settler expectations.

This is not to imply that in these spaces our identities are suddenly resolved and constant. Participants are still engaged in the perpetual assessment of their status and other meanings: perceived degrees of Indianness or assimilation, rank in the traditionalist hierarchy, etc.; but these negotiations are performed in relation to like others. The codes are different than the mainstream, and we are different in these spaces. When people gather *as a people* they act not only as individuals but as part of that group—they are, there, Ojibway, Aboriginal artists, or whatever—differently than what they are when they perform themselves for dominant others.

This is a delicate matter. The non-Aboriginal

2 Freud, Sigmund, “Screen Memories,” *The Uncanny* (New York: Penguin, 2003) 3–22.

3 I am indebted to Carol Sheehan’s exhibition *pipes that won’t smoke, coal that won’t burn*, 1983.

friends, colleagues, and collaborators who have long worked to raise awareness, to create opportunities, to re-think art and exhibitions, the academy, and ideas of Canada are themselves Other-wise and are essential to our complex struggles. They are front-runners who risk a great deal to be our allies and work toward justice and fundamental change. But they know that the core of Aboriginality is in their absence as surely as the centre of White privilege—or Koreanness or Swedish immigrantness—is incompletely available to most Native people.

Among other things, irreconcilable spaces of Aboriginality are sites of epistemological debate. In the exchange of stories, gestures, touches, thoughts, feelings, and laughter the very nature of contemporary Aboriginality is subtly tested, reconsidered, provisionally confirmed, or gently reconfigured, composed, and played in rehearsal. This requires separate discursive territories for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit folks to be themselves and to work themselves out.

These spaces are irreconcilable in the sense that their function depends upon a difference from Settlers. It is axiomatic that their contents are not candidates for reconciliatory discourse. They are also irreconcilable in that they do not have a mythology that places them in previous seamless accord with Settlers or a theory that proposes a future other than one of perpetual struggle with the dominant.⁴

What I am trying to describe without giving away are intervals where, for example, stories and emotions that are not subjects of reconciliation are exchanged. Many residential school survivors will not tell their stories to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Some have not and will never speak of such things even within the safety of autonomous Aboriginal spaces. As Alex Janvier writes on the

4 It is true that for many generations after contact, Aboriginal people in the northeastern parts of what is now North America had equitable trading relationships with people from Europe. The trouble began when the visitors became Settlers, when traders were replaced by colonists, when invading nations decided they would rather have the well than just the water.

back of his painting *Blood Tears* (2001), “Many, many died of broken bodies. Many, many died of twisted conflicting mental difference. Most died with ‘broken spirit.’ Some lived to tell about it. The rest [] permanently, ‘live in fear.’ The rest will take their silence to their graves as many have to this day.”⁵

For some, the trauma visited upon their young minds and bodies are a private matter or, rather, these profound dislocations and violations created an impenetrable private space, a sealed cave, a “twisted conflicting mental difference,”⁶ an asocial region of shame and despair, a disassociation seemingly beyond both Aboriginal and dominant culture community, or a secret chamber no code can break. For others, hints of these experiences are shared in irreconcilable moments; that is, they are not confessions designed to be reconciled in the sense of being smoothed over or even brought into agreement. They are open wounds shared with intimates for complex and inconclusive reasons. They are not for public consumption; they are not subjects of analysis. Their listeners are not only witnesses but are often fellow sufferers; for example, children of residential school survivors. All this lies behind the play of representations circulated in the national space of reconciliation.

The extraordinary people who do share their residential school experiences with Canada do so for many reasons: to speak the truth, to witness, or to heal. I do not wish to offend these folks, but I do want to discuss a peculiar aspect of the display mechanisms they are caught up in.

As someone raised Catholic, I cannot help but notice an ironic religious nuance in the choice of the word “reconciliation” rather than “conciliation” in “Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Journey.”⁷

5 Janvier, Alex, “*Blood Tears*” (painting), *From Truth to Reconciliation: Transforming the Legacy of Residential Schools*, Eds. M. Brant Castellano, L. Archibald, and M. DeGagné (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2008) Plate 1, xi.

6 Janvier.

7 This is a reference to the image used in the title of an

“Conciliation” is “the action of bringing into harmony.” It is an extrajudicial process that is a “conversion of a state of hostility or distrust”; “the promotion of good will by kind and considerate measures”; and “peaceable or friendly union.”⁸ The word calls to mind the meeting of two previously separate parties. Applied to the Canadian situation, it allows the picturing of First Nations and Inuit people having an independent existence prior to contact.

“Reconciliation” is a synonym with a difference. *Re-conciliation* refers to the repair of a previously existing harmonious relationship.⁹ This word choice imposes the fiction that equanimity is the status quo between Aboriginal people and Canada. Initial conciliation was tragically disrupted and will be painfully restored through the current process. In this context, the imaginary the word describes is limited to post-contact narratives. This construction anaesthetizes knowledge of the existence of pre-contact Aboriginal sovereignty. It narrates halcyon moments of co-operation before things went wrong as the seamless source of harmonious origin. And it sees the residential school era, for example, as an unfortunate deviation rather than just one aspect of the perpetual colonial struggle to contain and control Aboriginal people, territories, and resources.

In theory, the numbered treaties were Nation-to-Nations conciliations. Especially from the point of view of the Aboriginal signatories: treaties recognized the pre-existing and ongoing sovereignty of the conciliating parties. This understanding is eloquently figured in the two row Haudenosaunee treaty wampum belts (1613):¹⁰ two boats—a Dutch

ship and a canoe—go down the river of life together but do not touch. Two communities live parallel to each other, trade, but do not violate each other’s space and way of being. Two states acting as states can establish a neutral space of negotiation—like the Haudenosaunee’s river—in which general conciliation is established without compromising each other’s core spaces. Conciliation is not the erasure of difference. Conciliation is not assimilation.

Re-conciliation implies a very different imaginary, one that carries such profound affective and historical meanings that it seems a deliberate tactic in the ongoing assimilationist strategy of the Canadian empire.¹¹ Whether the choice of this word, imaginary, and process is an accidental inheritance, it is ironic, if not sinister, that survivors of religious residential schools, especially Catholic ones, are asked to participate in a ritual that so closely resembles that which abused them.

In its religious context, Reconciliation is “the reunion of a person to a church.”¹² Reconciliation is a sacrament of the Catholic Church. It follows Confession and Penance. According to Vatican teachings, “Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God’s mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labours for their conversion.”¹³ This text is found in “The Sacraments of Healing” section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Reconciliation here, as in the secular colonial version, ignores pre-Catholic or pre-contact Aboriginal states. It instead focuses on conversion as the site of Native

Aboriginal Healing Foundation book: *Response, Responsibility, and Renewal: Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Journey*, Eds. G. Younging, J. Dewar, and M. DeGagné (Ottawa: AHF, 2009).

8 *Oxford English Dictionary*.

9 “To bring (a person) again into friendly relations to or with (oneself or another) after an estrangement.” Also, “to purify (a church, etc.) by a special service after a profanation.” “Reconcile,” *Oxford English Dictionary*.

10 Accessed April 2, 2012: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Two_Row_Wampum_Treaty

11 Canada is a modern empire in that it rules over a vast geography comprised of numerous ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse (First, Métis, and Inuit) Nations.

12 *Oxford English Dictionary*.

13 Accessed April 2, 2012: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm

origin. In sinning—or, it seems, in being sinned upon!—the penitent is separated from God and the Church. Only by telling their secret to an agent of the Church can harmony be restored and the individual and Church/State reconciled. Reconciliation assumes that the parties were once in harmony (through the contracts of Baptism, Confirmation, and Communion) and only through Reconciliation can the proper stasis be restored. Beyond the pale of Reconciliation is the (im)possibility that the Church could be wrong. Individuals are faulty and in need of reformation, not the Church.

If this imaginary were to affect the secular version of reconciliation, then the relationship would be individual to State, rather than the Nation-to-Nations or person-to-person negotiations of a Truth and *Conciliation* model. The system would appreciate the spectacle of individual accounts (confessions). It would prefer to lay blame on its individual (mostly dead) members, and, while it might acknowledge that the abuses were the result of (past) systemic policy, it would not do anything to risk the integrity of structure. Because the system would not recognize that it is in a perpetual relationship, it would impose a time limit on “healing.” The imagined end result of this restoration project... is “*Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation.*” Truths are told, the destroyed are mourned, the broken repaired, order restored, and the national identity endures.

You can imagine that those removed from their culture, language, and spiritual traditions and who were indoctrinated by religious residential schools would slide rather easily into the similar confessional narratives of such a Truth and Reconciliation system. And that those who retained or regained their cultural and spiritual practices are likely to be suspicious of the homology and resist. Cree artist, poet and oral historian and theorist, Neal McLeod explains that there is no equivalent in the Cree language for the Western notion of an apology. The closest equivalent to “I am sorry” is *nimihta tân*, which means ‘I regret something’. McLeod explains that the word used in reference to the residential school experience is

ê-kiskakwêyehk, which means “we wear it.”¹⁴ This is a profound difference. It is visual and visceral rather than abstract. It describes a recognition and acceptance that cannot be washed or wished away.

To be fair, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has developed into a complex organism and has permitted multiple anti-colonial possibilities... for as long as the government entertains them. It (the TRC of Canada) has gone to great lengths to establish sites of healing apart from state monitoring. And the public airing of the outlines of these facts, the government apology, and the work of the Commission have encouraged many people to discuss things they might not have otherwise. However, questions remain: How are we to change sites of reconciliation into sites of conciliation? How do we prevent reconciliation from being primarily a spectacle of individual pain? How do artists and curators contribute to conciliation?

I have been an Alex Janvier fan for a long time, but my interest was primarily formal. I love his designs and appreciate his ability to create a unique synthesis of Western and Aboriginal styles. Then, in 1995, the Glenbow Museum hosted a travelling solo exhibition curated by Lee-Ann Martin, *The Art of Alex Janvier: His First Thirty Years, 1960–1990*.¹⁵ Instead of the usual artist talk and slide show, Janvier toured a small group of us through the exhibition. He spent over an hour and a half explaining every picture. The biggest revelation was that many of these seemingly non-objective works were in fact maps. In one, he pointed out where he lived relative to his *Kookum*, and where the good fishing and hunting spots were. That he invented a way to record his physical, relational, and spiritual territory in a format that could be mistaken for Modernist art was a great lesson. I love the idea that this secret knowledge has infiltrated non-Aboriginal spaces and patiently waits for its Native knowledge to be decoded.

14 McLeod, Neal, Poetry reading, Saskatchewan Writer’s Guild, Regina, SK. May 4, 2012.

15 April 22–June 17, 1995, at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary.

Janvier slowed at the end of the tour, and the group had whittled to a handful. He spent a long time in front of his most recent paintings. They were about his experience in residential school. They contained recognizable figures, buildings, and landscapes; he did not want his messages to be missed. They were addressed beyond the space of irreconcilable Aboriginality. Even so, until he explained the images, until he talked them into life, they remained oblique hints of lived experience. It is the combination of visual art, embodied knowledge, and a gathering of engaged participants that made the experience significant, made it exceed the colonial container.

Exhibitions of Aboriginal art shown within a dominant culture space are always in-formed by the world views of those who manage the resources and the site/sights. Reconciliation exhibitions, if they are held within these institutions, are also likely to be designed within the colonial narrative: reconciliation rather than conciliation; the theory that public display of private (Native) pain leads to individual and national healing; text over speech; etc. If art galleries and other display spaces are to be potential sites of conciliation, they should not meet the dominant culture viewer halfway in their space in their way; the non-Aboriginal viewer who seeks conciliation ought to enter Aboriginal sovereign display territories as guests.

Imagine a keeping house located on reserve land (including urban reserves) that is managed by Aboriginal people and only open to Native people of that territory. That would be an irreconcilable space of Aboriginality. Now, picture the same space, but open to any respectful person that would be an Aboriginal sovereign display territory¹⁶ that could also be a space of conciliation. The first gallery would be directed to the people of the community

by members of the community. If the culture was oral perhaps there would be no written signs or catalogues; your experience would be guided by knowledge keepers. Sovereign display territories might be nearly identical, but they would make some concessions to outsiders. The degree of inclusion and exclusion would be part of what would make these spaces interesting. These Aboriginal managed spaces would include languages of the visitors. Many objects would not be available to all visitors, but clever screen objects would be (photographs, models, etc.), so they would have a sense of the real without violating it. The theme of some of these spaces might be less a revelation of “authentic” Aboriginality and more a working through of how Indigenous people have changed and adapted within contact.

I imagine that such safe spaces would encourage Aboriginal people to make work that not only spoke to their own people but also to visitors. It would probably value (local) meaning over Western notions of (universal) quality, and blur the boundary between art and artefact. However, because it is engaged with the larger world rather than being primarily a keeping house that preserves objects and encourages customary practices, it would also function as a cultural lab where artists would struggle creatively with the contemporary world as well as traditional forms.¹⁷

Some people might not want to share their experiences because the sites of reconciliation administered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are temporary and privilege text and speech over visual and tactile forms of storytelling. Knowing that an Aboriginal sovereign display territory is permanent and includes visual and tactile objects that are activated by embodied knowledge (their makers and others talking about them) would encourage a slow unfolding of truths. Capital ‘T’ Truth in Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation is a Platonic form designed not to be achieved in this veil of tears. These sites, like the Holocaust museums, have a more

16 Garneau, David, “Indian to Indigenous: Temporary Pavilions to Sovereign Display Territories.” Keynote speech: Aboriginal Curatorial Conference, (*Revisioning the Indians of Canada Pavilion: Ahzhekewada [Let us look back] A colloquium for Aboriginal curators, artists, critics, historians and scholars*), Ontario College of Art and Design University, Toronto, ON, Oct 15, 2011.

17 This is an expression of my optimism for Ayumi Goto and Jonathan Dewar’s *Reconcile This!*

modest goal. Because no master narrative could contain these events, the designers of these spaces elect to make room for the many truths to find their form and audiences. There is no definitive story and no conclusion; there must be room, over time, for everything and everyone.

The government apology and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are important, but the deeper work of conciliation will be among individuals who re-cognize themselves as also other than agents of the State. Settlers visiting these permanent sites of conciliation do so as individuals who are conscious that their institutions perpetrated systematic abuses designed to assimilate or destroy Aboriginal people so they could take their land. To use the Catholic metaphor, this is the original sin that made the country possible. It is the Settler's inheritance. And here is where I lose my faith, or at least stretch the metaphor until it snaps. Colonialism is not a singular historical event but an ongoing legacy—the colonizer has not left. The “sin” cannot be expiated. There is no Redeemer in this situation. An apology and cash payments will not remove the stain. The essence of a conciliation project is individual transformation: living with this history and, hopefully, engaging in perpetual conciliation. There is no end result, no conclusion or assimilation, only the Haudenosaunee's river of life with irreconcilable camps on either side and a wide zone of trade and sharing between.

If these possible galleries were like the

Haudenosaunee's river of life, they would not be a (First) nation's display of wealth and power but sites of learning and exchange, cultural laboratories where, for example, Aboriginal curators would invite non-Aboriginal artists to consider their colonial inheritance, or Indigenous artists from other territories to relate their similar experiences.

Art is not healing in itself, but it can be in relation. Art is a stimulant and a balm when taken internally, but dangerous if mistaken for experience. There is a profound difference between reading signs and being engaged by a symbol. Sharing in a discourse about histories, responsibility, and transformation among artworks and with other human beings is a corrective to the colonial desire for settlement.

The paintings at the start of this essay, *Aboriginal Curatorial Collective Meeting* and *Aboriginal Advisory Circle Meeting*, try to picture irreconcilable spaces of Aboriginality without giving away any content. I want to signal that something interesting is going on beyond the colonial gaze. At the same time, by using dominant culture vernacular, I want to show that what happens in these spaces is very like what happens in similar spaces but with different people. While the core of Aboriginality is incompletely available to non-Native people, Settlers who come to spaces of conciliation not to repair Indians but to heal themselves, who come not as colonizers but with a conciliatory attitude to learn and share as equals, may be transformed.