

# Witiko Possession & Starvation Cannibalism among the James Bay Cree: Monstrosity or Madness?

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## **Abstract**

The witiko was a monster of mythical proportions in Cree and other Algonquian traditions, but remained frighteningly real, especially in the case of witiko possession of human beings. Imbued with a profound sense of contingency, of dependence for survival on other persons – both human and non-human (animals and spiritual beings) – Cree culture gave paramount importance to personal virtues required for competence in interpersonal relations, both to avoid or mitigate hardship, and to maintain self-control in potentially dire circumstances that defy control. For 19th-century Cree hunters, the human witiko epitomised and embodied social, ethical and epistemological incompetence in the extreme: the rejection of relationships – which are essential to our humanity – and their corresponding responsibilities, the perversion of the distinction between edible (animal) and non-edible (human) persons, and ultimately the dehumanisation of self and other. The witiko was the anti-thesis of self-control, provoking fear, and evoking chaos. Cree culture may no longer have quite the same notion of the witiko, but some notion of the witiko and of the monstrous is perhaps still needed in their culture and especially in western culture, in which – as Philip Rieff argues – the ‘therapeutic has triumphed’. In short, if we lie to ourselves enough about reality – especially on the ethical plane where it effects our relations with others and our ability to appreciate and fulfill the responsibilities that flow from these relationships – then we risk becoming monstrous. And that is something we should fear no less than the Cree feared witiko possession.

**Key Words:** Cannibalism, Cree, cultural relativism, fur trade, Hudson’s Bay Company, James Bay, possession, starvation, violence, Witiko (windigo).

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## **1. Historical Incidents of Starvation Cannibalism: 1817-1889**

The Cree are an Algonquian people of subarctic North America whose encounter with Europeans began with the French penetration of the St. Lawrence valley in the 16th and 17th centuries, and intensified with the advent of French and English exploration and trade expeditions directly into Hudson Bay and James Bay in the 17th century. Charles Fort, the first Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) post – later re-founded as Rupert House – was established in south-eastern James Bay in 1668. By the early 19th century, the HBC would have several well-established posts along the James Bay coast, the most important of them being Moose Factory, the headquarters of the Company’s Southern Department throughout most of the

19th century, and located at the south-western tip of James Bay. The ‘partnership in furs’ – Francis and Morantz’ depiction of the HBC-Cree relationship – soon extended beyond furs to intimate connections of marriage and, to varying degrees, mutual recourse for alternative sources of subsistence.<sup>1</sup>

The Company depended more heavily and regularly on Cree country provisions, but when these failed – which they did both unexpectedly and periodically on account of fluctuations in weather conditions and animal populations – the fur traders could normally fall back on their European supplies, and it was the Cree, having no fall-back option, who turned to the Company for help. In short, fur traders and Crees often relied on each other to avoid deprivation and escape starvation in a land that could be very unforgiving. Nevertheless, as the following stories reveal, European expansion into the North American interior brought with it a shift in the balance of interdependence, with the fur traders and other Europeans in an ever-stronger position towards the turn of the 20th century.<sup>2</sup> More relevant to our theme, however, the following stories shed light on how the Cree and their neighbours understood and coped with disturbing incidents or threats of starvation cannibalism and violence, and the recourse they had to notions of madness, monstrosity, and the witiko. One thing is certain; in this cross-cultural context, they were forced to both exercise and set limits to cultural relativism.

Depicted below are three interconnected 19th-century incidents of starvation cannibalism and witiko possession that are passed down in both Cree and Orcadian oral traditions as well as European documents.<sup>3</sup>

On September 10, 1817, several HBC servants left Rupert House, the Company’s main trade-post in south-eastern James Bay, and travelled upriver and inland. Led by John Greely, their mission was to investigate the feasibility of establishing a new fur-trade outpost in opposition to competing fur traders based out of Montreal. An early onset of winter weather, however, forced them to winter near present-day Lake Evans, some distance from their planned destination of Waswanipi. Hastily building a shelter, they set their nets and hooks, for they had been able to bring food for the outward journey alone. Supplies had been low in James Bay when they left, because the annual HBC supply ships had been forced by another early cold front to pass the winter of 1816-17 in James Bay.

A sudden November thaw led to the loss of some of their fishing supplies, but Greely’s letters – delivered to the coast by one of two Cree men who had been engaged to guide the expedition – exuded confidence. Alexander Christie, the Superintendent at Rupert House, moreover, was ‘under no apprehension for their safety’ for he had been told by the Cree that fish were abundant in that area, and he expected to be able to send sufficient supplies to get Greely and his companions through the winter and on to Waswanipi in the spring.

It took Christie some time to find a Cree hunter who knew the route and was available to bring supplies to Greely and his companions. On February 23, a Cree hunter named Stacimow and his wife left Rupert House with this very mission.

Arriving at the camp, however, they found only one survivor: the unnamed wife of Henry Swanson, one of Greely's companions. Her husband, as well as Greely and another man, had starved to death, and the remaining three were missing. Stacimow and his wife began the trip back with the woman, but he killed her before reaching Rupert House. Upon arrival, he reported to Christie that, being deranged, the woman had refused to eat the food he provided, and that he had killed her in self-defence. Christie later commented that he did not think the woman had been insane; yet knowing that the Crees would kill even their closest relatives 'when they know of their having been reduced to the dreadful necessity of eating human flesh,' he did not pursue the matter further.

At the end of March, Christie sent several HBC servants with Stacimow's brother Sheutickush to find the three missing members of Greely's party: Peter White, his wife and William Laughton. They soon discovered that White – no mention is made of his wife's fate – had starved to death and that Laughton had been killed by Amoshish, a Cree hunter with whom Laughton had been living. Laughton had left Amoshish' camp earlier that month to get rum and tobacco from the Lake Evans camp, and when he did not return promptly, Amoshish had followed him. In the words of Christie, Amoshish had 'found ... Laughton by himself, at the same time observing that Laughton had been subsisting upon human flesh, he through a superstitious fear, unhappily deprived him of life'. Another Cree hunter named Camitchesit later told Christie that he had initially helped Greely with provisions and in mid-January attempted to convince him to be guided to the coast or to spend the rest of the winter with his own camp. Greely, however, had refused both offers.

The Cree who had come in contact with the starving HBC servants clearly attempted to help them as best they could. However, by subsisting on human flesh Laughton and Mrs. Swanson had become what the Cree call *witikowak* (plural of *witiko*) in Amoshish' and Stacimow's eyes. Christie does not show signs of doubting their sincerity in either case. Retired HBC servant William Weigand, half-brother of Mrs. Swanson later recalled that Stacimow's wife had reported that 'Mrs. Swanson, when unable to get rabbits, cut a slice of the flesh of [the] dead men'. 'This accounts,' he explains, 'for the Indian thinking she was dangerous'.

Fifteen years later, Stacimow and his brother Sheutickush, two of the principal Cree hunters involved in the incidents near Lake Evans, again confronted starvation, this time their own. The winter of 1831-32 was a particularly difficult one in James Bay; poor weather and scarcity of game put many Cree families in danger of starvation. Then, late in the month of January 1832, three Crees and a young Hudson's Bay Company apprentice fled from the HBC's Hannah Bay House, midway between Rupert's House and Moose Factory. Arriving at Moose Factory cold and shaken, they hastily divulged the news that Quappakay, along with his sons Stacimow and Sheutickush, as well as other family members, had arrived in starving condition, within two days had attacked the small outpost, and

had killed William Corrigal, the Orcadian HBC trader stationed there. The survivors feared, moreover, that none of the nine others (all of Cree or mixed ancestry) who were there had escaped. Within two days, John George McTavish, Chief Factor at Moose Factory, sent out a party to investigate, warn and punish if possible. Led by William Swanson, brother-in-law of the woman killed by Stacimow in 1818, these HBC men arrived at Hannah Bay to find frozen evidence confirming the report, but no sign of the alleged assailants. Quickly, they advanced to Rupert House to alert its Chief Trader, Joseph Beioley.

There was no sign of the accused until the end of March when Sheutickush and Bolland (Quappakay's son-in-law) arrived at Rupert House with their wives and children. Although alleged to have stripped Hannah Bay House of provisions, they were nevertheless starving. When questioned, the men soon confessed their involvement in the sacking of the post. Joseph Beioley attributed Sheutickush's involvement in the whole incident to 'gross mental delusions,' and for this reason favoured leniency, promising to try to 'procure a conditional pardon for him' if possible.

Sheitickush was escorted to Moose Factory by Beioley, Swanson and several others (Bolland escaped en route). Several days after being interrogated at Moose Factory, he was summarily executed by an HBC and Cree punitive expedition as it set out from the island post on a mission that had now put Beioley and McTavish sharply at odds, with Beioley apparently still favouring caution and leniency, and McTavish – who outranked Beioley – ordering a swift retaliation. By the end of April, Quappakay, Stacimow and another 15-year-old son – had been found and executed. Bolland was the last to be apprehended – by Cree hunters and HBC servants at Rupert House – and apparently with the help and consent of his Cree father who told him he must face the consequences of his conduct. In the end, only the women and children were spared, all of them being sent in separate ways to other HBC posts, some allegedly as far away as British Columbia.

John Dick, the Cree son of one survivor of the attack, alleged in 1935 that Quappikay's family had engaged in cannibalism: 'It took many shots to kill them because they were living on human flesh'. There is only circumstantial evidence supporting this allegation of cannibalism: the fact that one young girl went missing at Hannah Bay House and was never found. According to a much more recently recorded Cree account by George Diamond, Quappikay and his family had killed an elderly woman in their camp before ever arriving at Hannah Bay House, but Diamond makes no mention of cannibalism. Even if provoked by the alleged stinginess and roughness of Corrigal – the brother-in-law of the woman Stacimow had killed in 1818<sup>4</sup> – the violent attack at Hannah Bay was not only seen by the local Cree and their descendants as unjustified, but as representing a dangerous loss of self-control. 1832 HBC post journals, for example, reveal that other Cree hunters left the vicinity in 1832, being 'afraid to stay longer on their own lands for fear of the Indians who are reported to have committed the atrocious outrage'. In

John Dick's view, shared by some but not all Cree, the Quappikay and the others who attacked Hannah Bay House had lost their self-control and engaged in actions that cost them their humanity: they had become monstrous *witikowak*. Among the male members of Quappikay's family, only his youngest son, Peetawabano, was spared execution.

Almost half a century later, however, in the winter of 1888, Peetawabano would die at the hands of his sons in another period of starvation.<sup>5</sup> He, his wife, his five sons, their wives and a number of children found themselves in a dire situation at their inland camp in 1888. Peetawabano drew his own blood to feed his family, and only one member – a daughter-in-law – apparently refused to partake. Peetawabano was then killed by one of his sons and eaten. Subsequent acts of cannibalism apparently continued through the winter and into the following year. Peetawabano's daughter-in-law, who had been hiding out and surviving some distance from the camp near a travel route where she hoped other Cree families would pass, finally fled to the HBC post at Eastmain in February of 1889, apparently carrying a young child. One month later, the youngest of Peetawabano's sons – about sixteen at the time – showed up at the same post; he was the only other survivor. He claimed to have escaped, but his sister-in-law had already revealed quite a different story. And in contrast to her, he had been slow to eat regular food when he arrived. He was held at Eastmain for a while. According to W.K. Broughton, who was in charge of the Rupert River District, if he was turned loose again, 'without giving him the means of subsistence ... he might either resort to his practices of last summer again, or he might be hunted down and shot by the other Indians'.<sup>6</sup> Eventually, he was brought to Rupert's House where he was interrogated and finally confessed to participating in the killing and consumption of his family members. He was not killed, however, but was sent far inland to an HBC post at Mistissini. According to Cree elder John Blackned's account from the 1960s – Blackned's grandfather had previously shared a camp with Peetawabano's family – the HBC trader there

expected him to get crazy again and kill somebody. He stayed there for many years and never did anything bad. ... Some of the Mistassini Natives were scared of him at first ... because they heard the story. When he first tried to get a wife, the girl didn't want to, she was scared that if she married him he would eat her!<sup>7</sup>

Eventually, however, he did get married, and apparently he later died trying to save the drowning daughter of an HBC trader.<sup>8</sup> In the end, he was deemed cured from his *witiko* possession.

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Having prepared a makeshift raft in my historian's workshop I will now launch out into an imposing sea of questions, themes and problems. Hopefully my raft will keep me afloat, but I cannot promise it will do much more.

## **2. The Limits of Cultural Relativism**

Arnold W. Green wrote in 1948 that 'anthropologists with a psychological bent are unanimous: that standards of normality are relevant only within a given cultural system.'<sup>9</sup> Whether Green's assessment was or remains true, I do not know, but I will unfairly strip this quotation from its context in order to push my little raft out to sea. One of the greatest challenges we face today is defining the limits of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism – that is, suspending judgement of a culture until that culture is understood on its own terms – too often becomes moral relativism – indefinite suspension of judgement, both in popular and academic culture. We thus find ourselves ill-equipped to propose universal principles that can transcend particular cultures' interpretations of human rights, for example, or to establish pan-culturally relevant standards for normality, or – in our case – its counterparts: madness and monstrosity.

There are two preliminary problems that need to be briefly addressed: first, our conception of society, second, our conception of culture. Very briefly, if we think of society as formed of individuals and groups we are predisposed to think along the lines of a collection of buttons sorted into different containers, when – as we all know – social ties and networks are both much more binding and complex, and social boundaries much more permeable and fluid. I would propose that the concept of the person-in-relationship – very predominant in Cree culture – captures the reality of who we are much better. We can only come into being in relationship to others; it is our nature to be in relationships, multiple and fluid, substantial and accidental – in Aristotelian terms. What we simplify as groups are really intertwined and overlapping clusters of persons-in-relationship. It is a simple point, but very important for understanding culture, especially Cree culture.

Within cultures we find both unity and tension between experience, understanding and action – the constitutive elements of culture – and between them and objective extra-mental reality. Philip Salzman writes that 'culture is [and needs to be I would add] integrated into a whole that tends toward consistency' and conversely, Philip Rief writes that the 'death of a culture begins when its normative institutions fail to communicate ideals in ways that remain inwardly compelling'.<sup>10</sup> Essentially, we and our cultures suffer if we cannot connect our understanding of reality to our experience of it, if we cannot connect our action to our understanding or do not act as we understand we should, or if we never experience the results realised and/or intended by our actions. In other words, our psychological well-being and competence (practical and ethical) are largely dependent on our ability and willingness to seek unity between our understanding of reality and our

experience of it, our experience of reality and our action on it, and our action on reality and our understanding of it.

A competent relationship between understanding, experience and action, therefore, is circular and it revolves around reality, which no human being can understand, experience, or act upon in its fullness.

Our action, experience and understanding, of course, are not formed in isolation from, or in complete unity with others.<sup>11</sup> Contact and contingency draw their root from the Latin *contingere* – literally ‘to touch together,’ a meaning not so different from its homonym which means ‘to bathe together’. As noted above, our very being is contingent upon contact between our parents, and both they and others we have contact with (physically, emotionally or intellectually) help shape our experiences, our understandings and our actions. Moreover, insofar as we ‘bathe together’ with others in the same river of reality, we form with them a common culture, a collection of shared understandings (from how to use a fork to the nature of divinity) based on shared experience and action. Nevertheless, we always remain distinct. If we come from common earth and even a common seed, we are nevertheless cultured (formed and informed) distinctly. ‘The ‘culture’ of a group as a whole is not a true reality. ... the individual is the bearer of culture’ writes Edward Sapir.<sup>12</sup>

When we speak of ‘cultures’ as independent entities, what we are referring to are clusters of common understandings, or cultural centres of gravity with some understandings that are closer to the core and others that may be more peripheral. In that sense, we can participate in numerous cultural centres of gravity simultaneously. Moreover, among persons-in-cultural-relationship – to echo Preston’s phrase, ‘individuals-in-culture’ – there are varying degrees of tension and unity, both within generations and between them.<sup>13</sup> We cannot *separate*, but we must *distinguish* everyone from the cultural contexts they participate in through their relationships. Finally, common understandings or cultures – based a common but not shared experience – often transcend space and time, but remain hidden because of language barriers, political polarisation, racial constructs, etc.

To return to Green’s statement, for standards of normality, madness, or monstrosity to be relevant only within a given cultural system, cultural systems would have to be what they are not: that is, self-contained within neatly definable groups, with experiences, understandings and actions that may be logically interconnected but have little or no unity with any objective extra-mental reality. This would be a good starting point for a definition of madness, monstrosity and perhaps also the witiko.

### 3. Witiko, Madness and Monstrosity

Richard Preston’s excellent overview and critique of the literature on the witiko prior to 1980 argued that there had been too much theorising of scant evidence.<sup>14</sup> He concluded – based on the accounts he had collected – that the witiko ‘is more a

matter of attitude than he is a definable person'.<sup>15</sup> The following year, Regina Flannery published substantial excerpts from what is the earliest and most extensive collection of James Bay Cree witiko stories – including those involving starvation cannibalism – recorded by herself and John M. Cooper in the 1930s. She noted that their Cree informants 'made a clear distinction between Witiko, a supernatural being with anthropomorphic characteristics, and witiko, a human who develops cannibalistic cravings'.<sup>16</sup> She also suggested that Preston's conclusion about the witiko being 'more a matter of attitude' may reflect the fact that his interviews were done three decades later.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of whether the witiko was primarily attitude or a definable person, what was distinct about the witiko was what its attitude – its disposition of will, mind and emotion – exhibited: a break with reality, the rejection of relationship and the loss of self-control.

The understanding of the witiko was born out of the particular experiences faced by the Cree, and from the drastic actions they were sometimes forced to take in order to protect themselves. In times of starvation or deprivation people might lose self-control and resort to cannibalism, or resort to cannibalism and then lose self-control, becoming dangerous. And with no mental asylums or medical sciences – as we understand them – how could one cope with the traumatic and monstrous transformation of a friend or relative, who could not be left at home with other family members while a hunter left camp to hunt?

Often, but not always, originating as a human being driven to loss of self-control and cannibalism in times of starvation, the witiko ('windigo' in Ojibwa) clearly attained mythical proportions in Cree and other Algonquian traditions, but remained frighteningly real, especially in the case of human witikowak. Richard Preston's study of Cree narrative, begun in the mid-1960s under the mentorship of respected elder John Blackned, reveals a culture imbued with a profound sense of contingency, of dependence for survival on other persons – both human and non-human (animals and more powerful spiritual beings).<sup>18</sup> Cree culture, therefore, has long given paramount importance to personal virtues required for competence in interpersonal relations, both to avoid or mitigate hardship, and to maintain self-control in potentially dire circumstances that defy control. For 19th-century and early-20th-century Cree hunters, therefore, who emphasised self-control and who fostered distinct relationships with human persons and the animals they personified – out of respect for the lives they took to nourish their own – the human witiko epitomised and embodied social, ethical and epistemological incompetence in the extreme: the rejection of relationships – essential to our humanity – and their corresponding responsibilities, the perversion of the distinction between edible (animal) and non-edible (human) persons, and ultimately the dehumanisation of self and other. The witiko was the anti-thesis of self-control, provoking fear, and evoking chaos.

Within the mind of a human witiko, there might still be a degree of unity between experience, understanding and action, but it was isolated from others and



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from reality. Moreover, the perverse understanding (of human beings as edible) had been brought into unity with action (the loss of self-control in eating others) in a perverse reversal of the quest for unity of action with understanding. With the help of others, one might regain unity of experience with reality – experiencing the results of one’s monstrous actions – or be force-fed human food, and this could overcome the witiko possession. Such was the case of one man, who after receiving such treatment, was cured and would often be heard crying lamentably over the loss of the wife and child he had killed and eaten.<sup>19</sup> This also explains why, in another case, a man who ate his children – already dead of starvation – and saw his actions for what they were – showing no disconnect with reality and others, or loss of self-control – was not deemed to have become a witiko.<sup>20</sup> When disconnect with reality and loss of self-control appeared permanent and threatened to manifest itself in dangerous ways – a person was deemed monstrous, possessed by a witiko. This explains the rare but documented killings of insane people in Cree society, a last recourse if the person was becoming dangerous and manifesting witiko traits.<sup>21</sup>

In Western culture there is plenty of ambiguity connected with madness and monstrosity, but we tend to associate madness with a non-culpable breakdown in unity between experience, understanding, action and of course extra-mental reality, as Beioley did in 1832, wanting to exercise leniency with Sheutickush. We also consider madness subject to varying degrees of treatment, whether curable or not. Monstrosity tends to be associated with much more culpability and perversion, with a wilful, but almost if not fully irreversible breakdown in unity between experience, understanding, action and extra-mental objective reality, above all, on an ethical plane. In this context, madness does not take away our humanity, but monstrosity does. A madman might commit a monstrous act without becoming a monster, but we never speak of mad acts committed by monsters.

In Cree culture, the concept of madness, as something medically and scientifically definable and treatable, is only a relatively recent importation from Western culture (beginning with the influence of fur traders who tried to protect and treat insane people). It was the concept of monster that was used to understand and cope with all forms of deviant behaviour that were harmful to society. The witiko was the monster that epitomised such behaviour. Witiko possession could imply culpability – if one wilfully engaged in actions that were wrong, but it could also be used to preserve the innocence and humanity of someone who committed a monstrous act. Imagine your loved one, a brother, sister, spouse, parent or child losing self-control, killing and eating someone, or eating dead human flesh and losing self-control. How would you understand and cope with the shocking transformation that has occurred? And how would you take the necessary measures to protect yourself and others from further violence in a society without institutions we take for granted? As a Cree hunter, would you leave your possessed wife at camp with your children while you go to get food? If necessity forced your hand,

killing a witiko that had possessed your loved one would be easier than killing your loved one.

Few, if any, Cree today would reject what medical sciences have taught us about mental illness. If they did so contrary to their better judgment, they would risk becoming witikowak themselves. Most Cree, in fact, have continued to seek unity of understanding with reality (the classical definition of truth). We must do the same, acknowledging that our experiences of reality are limited and different. If we refuse to accept our contingency and limitations and abandon this quest because it is too hard, we risk falling into two forms of the same thing: fundamentalism ('don't bother me with questions and mystery – I've got reality figured out') or relativism ('don't bother me with truth and reality – everything is subjective'). If we follow the Cree example, we can perhaps resolve our contradictory understandings and add to and refine our complementary ones.

Monstrosity and madness appear to have in common an inability to seek unity between understanding, experience and action, and – more importantly – with extra-mental objective reality. However, in the case of madness, the inability stems from circumstances primarily beyond our control, and often has potential for treatment. In the case of monstrosity, the inability stems from a persistent epistemologically dishonest and wilful break with reality – a lie insisted upon to the point that the ability to see the lie as a lie has been lost, and we have become monstrous. These reference points for defining madness and monstrosity are relevant in any cultural context.

Cree culture may no longer have or need quite the same notion of the witiko, and it may have incorporated the medical notion of madness, but the notion of the witiko and of the monstrous is perhaps still needed in their culture and especially in western culture, in which – as Rieff argues – the therapeutic has triumphed.<sup>22</sup> In short, if we lie to ourselves enough about reality – especially on the ethical plane where it effects our relations with others and our ability to appreciate and fulfil the responsibilities that flow from these relationships – then we risk becoming monstrous. And that is something we should fear no less than the Cree feared witiko possession. And in our society, no less than for the Cree father in the 1910s who – for fear of turning witiko – cut a hole in the lake ice to dispose of the dead body of his starved child – avoiding or curing witiko possession may require painful acts of detachment or painful reunifications of understanding with reality.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See D Francis & T Morantz, *Partners in Furs: A History of the Fur Trade in Eastern James Bay, 1600-1870*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston, 1985.

<sup>2</sup> See C Chabot, 'Coping with Starvation and Deprivation in Moose Factory, 1882-1902: As Revealed in the Moose Factory HBC Records,' *Papers of the 39th*

*Algonquian Conference*, University of Western Ontario, London (Ontario), 2009 (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Detailed references for the first two of these historical incidents can be found in C Chabot, 'Merging Amerindian and Euroamerican Understandings of a Shared Past: The 1832 Washaw Conflict,' MA thesis, Université de Montréal, 2002. Any additional references not found in this source are provided as needed.

<sup>4</sup> This relationship is revealed in 'A Hudson's Bay Veteran: Death of Charles Weigand Who Sailed on Hudson's Bay Sixty Years Ago,' *The Colonist*, Winnipeg, 1892.

<sup>5</sup> The main primary source for this third incident is an account from Cree elder John Blackned, recorded in R Preston's *Cree Narrative: Expressing the Personal Meaning of Events*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston, 2002, pp. 133-145. The link between Petawabano and the Hannah Bay incident is confirmed by C Gordon's 'Peetawabinoo, the Ill-Fated,' *The Beaver*, March 1923, pp. 235-236.

<sup>6</sup> Hudson Bay Company Archives (HBCA), B.135/e/28a, August 20, 1890.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Preston, 2002, 144.

<sup>8</sup> Preston, personal communication, August 8, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> A Green, 'Culture, Normality, and Personality Conflict,' *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 50, No. 2, April-June 1948, pp. 225-226.

<sup>10</sup> P Salzman, *Understanding Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theory*, Waveland Press, Prospect Heights, 2001, p. 69; P Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud*, Harper & Row, New York, 1966, p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> R Preston, 'Reflections on Culture, History and Authenticity,' in *Theorizing the Americanist Tradition*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1999, p. 159.

<sup>12</sup> E Sapir, *The Collected Works of Edward Sapir*, Vol. 3: Mouton de Gruyter, New York, 1999, p. 545.

<sup>13</sup> Preston, 2002, 237.

<sup>14</sup> Preston, 'The Witiko: Algonquian Knowledge and Whiteman Knowledge,' *Manlike Monsters on Trial: Early Records and Modern Evidence*, UBC Press, Vancouver, 1980, pp. 111-131.

<sup>15</sup> Preston, 'Ethnographic Reconstruction of Witigo,' *Papers of the Ninth Algonquian Conference*, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1978, pp. 65-66.

<sup>16</sup> R Flannery, ME Chambers & PA Jehle, 'Witiko Accounts from the James Bay Cree,' *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1981, p. 57.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>18</sup> I am heavily indebted to Preston for my understanding of Cree culture, but any errors in interpretation are my own.

<sup>19</sup> Flannery et al., 1981, p. 75

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>21</sup> See T Fiddler & JR Stevens, *Killing the Shaman*, Penumbra Press, Moonbeam (Ontario), 1985.

<sup>22</sup> Rieff, opus cit.

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