Introduction
The Link between an Anthropologist and His Subject: Eric Schwimmer and (De)colonization Processes

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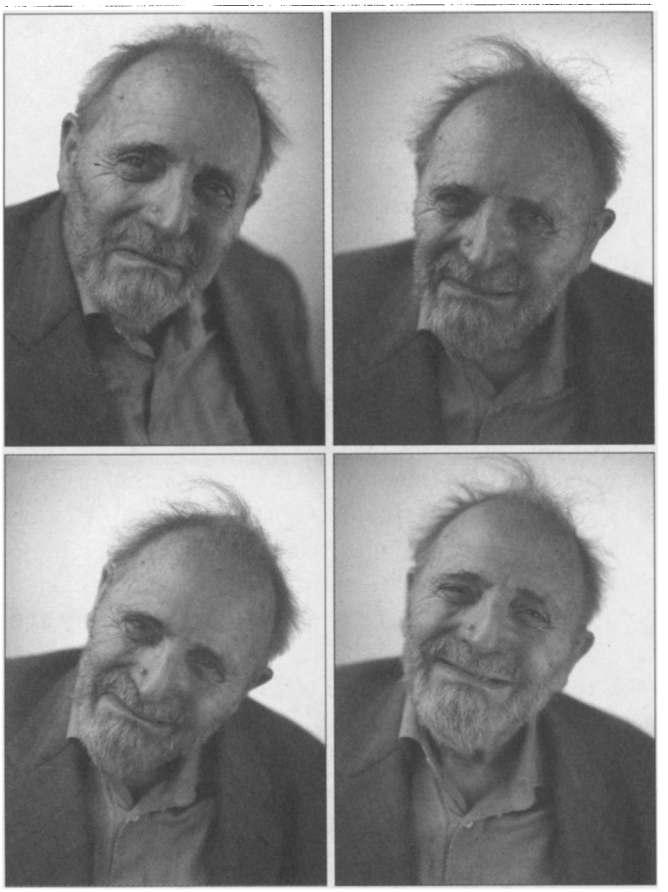

Eric Schwimmer. Photos by Anne Bergeron 2007

In 1994, in an article titled "Le localisme au Québec," Eric Schwimmer formulated the ideas that, in our opinion, outline the future of anthropology. For Schwimmer,

> the way that every material and immaterial context is understood by local subjects should be the principal subject of anthropology. From this point of view, humanity's future is played out locally. Among all the sciences, only anthropology is engaged to such an extent in small communities. Let us hope that, despite the pressure that the dominant discourses continue to apply, anthropologists will not abandon this primary responsibility. [Schwimmer 1994:173; authors' translation][1]

All of Schwimmer's work reflects this belief. The study of a local situation is matched with the examination of "contexts" as experienced locally. For Schwimmer, it is important to understand what the connections are between subjects and contexts, how local subjects interpret these contexts and how they decode their inherent contradictions and inconsistencies. Are they mystified in the way they understand their "realities"? What is their behaviour in such contexts? What are their constraints and points of reference? What kind of pattern of transition to the political sphere is there when some favour a kind of co-existence with the Other and some do not? Can we use the concepts of colonization, decolonization, negotiated co-existence or a combination of all these various possibilities? And how can we study the connections between subjects and contexts? From what angle? According to what theoretical approach? In what field of enquiry?

These questions are at the heart of the current concerns of many anthropologists. They can be found in this issue in texts on a variety of subjects—written in homage to Eric Schwimmer, the anthropologist—which in one way or another are all associated with the decolonization process of minority populations.

For Schwimmer, the

> issue of decolonization is that the colonized tend to lose some of their autonomy in the colonization process. Thus the work of decolonization, with which the active agents of the decolonized peoples are charged, often includes the recovery of pre-colonial knowledge and values. And during this process, what is recuperated also undergoes modernizing transformations. [Personal communication, January 2004; authors' translation]

He also believes that:

> While there are many very different applications of structuralism and semiotics, the analysis of the reproduction and production of signs in a decolonization process remains a complex and remarkable field in which all human creativity is revealed, where the task of demystification by the active agents of the decolonized peoples dramatically revives the quality of life of these peoples. [Schwimmer personal communication, January 2004; authors' translation]

This is why Eric Schwimmer, in his research (Aotearoa-New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Québec and the Basque country) and in his teaching, believes that:

> the task of anthropology is to analyse *the struggle* between three levels of identity: the local, the national and the state. Because this process (of transforming, for example, a spoken local language into a written national language which allows above all the development of national institutions) is indeed one of struggle—albeit frequently a relatively peaceful one—which serves to diversify that which was initially more unitary without destroying one or another of these levels. [Schwimmer 2001:146; authors' translation, emphasis added]

In the same issue, he also writes that his

> job is to analyse *myths*, particularly the contemporary myths, whose practical pertinence is often under-estimated. Far be it from me to identify with and to venerate those who created these myths as the fathers and mothers of new peoples. Instead I try to understand them and make them understood. [Schwimmer this issue; authors' translation, emphasis added]

Eric Schwimmer's contribution goes far beyond the analysis of struggles and myths. His multifaceted production covers many areas (see the bibliography compiled by Gagné, Campeau and Chartier in this issue). In our opinion, an original anthropology of the subject is obvious throughout his work which is based on the self in its close relationships (such as family, neighbourhood, friendship, men-women relationships) and those of sovereignty (between nation and state, for example, or between nations). It is from the perspective of this subject that Eric Schwimmer analyzes institutional and discursive behaviours in several societies with a view to establishing the forms that change the hand dealt to minority nations throughout the world.

Seen from this perspective, Schwimmer's point of view as he said in an epilogue and a text produced in 2004 (Schwimmer 2004a, 2004c), led him, we think, to question the relationship between the individual and the universal. We learn there that Schwimmer follows an approach that is analogous to that identified by Foucault (2001:29) in Spinoza: a hermeneutic-like interpretation of the subject. Schwimmer tries to discover how and in what way a subject transforms their very personal being to attain the truth, the conditions they impose on themselves and the extent to which their journey allows them to reach the object of their search, a sense of sovereign well-being.

If Schwimmer introduces the idea that the universal can take the form of a truth constructed by the subject of knowledge (Schwimmer 2004c), the subject which he examines cannot be analyzed solely within the framework of Cartesian modernism (see, for example, Clammer this issue). In his analyses, Schwimmer does not lose sight of the fact that this subject, because he is minoritized, can be confused in attempting to answer questions that are outside the usual field or that are of an ontological or metaphysical nature. Schwimmer advances the idea that these questions present an ordeal from which the subject cannot escape. Therefore he believes that the theory and methods available to anthropology are not always the best tools to deal with the nature of a problem that the subject may face at the moment.

Given this perspective, Schwimmer questions what someone who is minoritized says about the way one understands oneself and one's place locally, nationally and universally. He builds his interpretation on trying to understand the "why" of these narratives, because for Schwimmer, discovering the "why" means understanding what feeds the narratives of the subject as well as what is told: a coming-to-pass contained in the story they tell about themselves and the world.

That is where, in our opinion, the strength and originality of Eric Schwimmer's work lies. Its special nature can be found in its openness to the world so as to understand the deepest aspirations of a minoritized subject and to discern the political and cultural machinery that restrains them as well as those that allow them to express these aspirations. He puts forward a particular way of constructing the relationship between the ontological

and political spheres and of a mutual openness to dialogue between colonizer and colonized to allow minoritized peoples to create other ways of life for themselves and find access to the universal within the present context of globalization. From the beginning of his work as an anthropologist, he closely examined the transformation of such relationships among the Maaori[2] (for example, Schwimmer 1963, 1965a, 1965b). This research developed in different directions and varied in fields of study. It opened the way in his most recent texts to an anthropology of ontology (Clammer, Poirier and Schwimmer 2004).

We invited researchers aware of his work to develop their ideas while taking into account the questions raised by Schwimmer and the fields in which he conducted his research. In so doing, we were not attempting to put together an issue of this journal whose content would reproduce all the theses of Eric Schwimmer. Instead, we wanted a focus on the ideas and places that he holds so dear. We were convinced that such a focus would not restrict the fertile expression of different points of view because we share Jackson's idea that "our understanding of others can only proceed from within our own experience, and this experience involves our personalities and histories as much as our field research" (1989:17).

As Gagné (2001) noted, from this idea stems the knowledge that experiences in the field affect anthropological theorization because they are lived subjectively by the anthropologist who experiences them with their body, their emotions and their intellect. The text by Campeau (this issue) is an example. Therefore, before we introduce the articles in this publication, we thought it would be interesting to echo certain crucial moments in the professional development of Eric Schwimmer because they allow us to understand the way in which he came to be interested in the processes of decolonization. We were inspired by his own testimony about the social occasions which he feels had a fundamental effect on the way his thought developed and which had an enduring effect on his work, occasions that he described as a heritage in *Le Syndrome des Plaines d'Abraham* (1995).

The Relationship with (De)colonization

In *Le Syndrome des Plaines d'Abraham* (1995), Schwimmer reveals that his "education in sovereignty" began with him learning the history of the country where he was born:

> like every Dutchman, I heard at length, first in elementary and then in secondary school, about the most dramatic event in our national history: the war of independence—nobody used the word sovereignty yet—of the Netherlands against the king of Spain...The national genesis of the Netherlands appeared to us in hindsight as a spontaneous event but at the start of this war, the Dutch were "beggars" whose only resources were their marshes and their small boats. As for the king of Spain, he was very rich. He made a significant error, however, when he instituted the Inquisition in the Netherlands. There were too many Protestants to burn. What I learned at school was that at the end of this 80-year war, the Dutch had become wealthy *bourgeois* with a significant international maritime industry and a vast empire. They had fewer marshes, a lot of churches, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, a synagogue...Nobody felt sorry for the Spaniards who had, in fact, become less wealthy. [1995:14; authors' translation]

This discovery of the history of the land of his birth occurred at the same time that he acquired from his mother the sense of a movement for a political homeland. She was very involved in Zionist organizations in Amsterdam in the 1930s and he learned what happens to a people[3] that is turned into a minority and targetted first with policies of assimilation and then with extermination. Unable to prevent himself from asking questions, Schwimmer said he was struck at a very young age by the inherent colonialism contained in the model of the creation of the State of Israel. In fact, if the proposal had a certain attraction for him, he was uncomfortable with the idea that the Palestinians did not have the same rights as others in this State and were administered on the basis of experimental colonial models imposed on indigenous populations elsewhere in the world.

His interest in struggles for sovereignty grew. In 1940 when Eric was 16, the Schwimmer family was exiled to New Zealand. He began his studies at Victoria University in Wellington but they were interrupted when he volunteered for the Dutch army of the East Indies where he served in the Information Service. During this period, he was sent to Australia because Indonesia was under Japanese occupation. That is where he met Indonesians from what was known at the time as the Dutch East Indies. Some served as soldiers in units that were distinct from Dutch ones and others did not:

> I cultivated certain friendships with Indonesians in Melbourne. I ate with them in their modest mess and also at the more luxurious Dutch club where they could not be members. One of these friends wrote poetry in Javanese. With his help, I translated some of his poems into English and they were published by the government-in-exile for political reasons that I did not fully understand yet. I understood, however, that these kinds of personal contacts, while not forbidden, were not well thought of by the military authorities. But I had no

> choice because my Javanese friend was the only poet in this little army. And I never hid my opinion that Dutch colonialism would not survive this war. [Schwimmer 1995:14-15; authors' translation]

After the Second World War, he spent "six months in Indonesia in 1945, still working for the Dutch but very involved in the Indonesian fight for independence" (Schwimmer 1995:15, author's translation):

> In Djakarta, while I was still with the Information Service, I continued my contacts with Indonesians but it was more political and this caused problems. They sent me back to Australia and I returned to New Zealand where my father was still living. [Schwimmer personal communication, August 2006; authors' translation]

After his return in 1947, Schwimmer completed the final year of his B.A. in Latin, Greek and English literature. In 1948 he got his M.A. in Latin:

> Looking back, the way it happened was this: I had finished a degree in Latin but no position was available in Classics. My other great interest, the Indonesians, was too far away. I still remember letting all the various job alternatives pass vaguely through my mind and then coming to the odd conclusion that Maori Affairs was the only possibility in the country. I did not know the first thing about Maoris. My choice, although it seemed sane at the time, was completely irrational. Analysing the occurrence, I must have felt unconsciously that I would be unable to work happily within the framework of New Zealand culture and I had chosen the most accessible escape to freedom. I fear that many mediators, attempting an equally frank introspection, will come to some similar result. [Schwimmer 1958:343]

So in 1950, he began a career as a civil servant that led to an experience that still gives cause for reflection (see Allen 2002):

> After scratching my memory, the name of a village came back: Naseby, somewhere in the South Island [of New-Zealand]. I went there...just to meditate about my possible future in New Zealand. The family went from Amsterdam to New Zealand in 1940 but my mother, my sister and my brother had all gone back to Europe. I had decided to stay with my father in New Zealand... The connection between Classics and New Zealand was far from obvious. What could Herodotus or Euripides or Livy or Virgil or Catullus do in New Zealand? Who could they even talk to? There was nobody they could speak to in Naseby at the time. The logical conclusion I came to was that the only people they could have talked to were the Maaori...It was on this basis, to the astonishment of my friends, that I applied to join the Department of Maaori Affairs, became a public servant and concocted the idea of the journal *Te Ao Hou*. [Schwimmer unpublished note, April 2006]

After a year of preparation, in 1952, Eric Schwimmer became the editor of a magazine called *Te Ao Hou: The New World*:[4]

> As a government official in the New Zealand Department of Maaori Affairs from 1950 to 1961, I founded and edited *Te Ao Hou*, a quarterly magazine that was bilingual in English and Maaori. Its official role was to publish general information but—less officially—it was a tool to help revive the Maaori culture that was generally neglected by the New Zealand government whose policies at the time aimed at the assimilation of the Maaori. Every issue, 5,000 copies of the magazine were sold at low cost and it became rather popular among this particular indigenous people as well as among the white professionals who worked with them. Because of well-known official points of view, it restricted itself to reporting on local cultural events and avoiding ideological controversy but it helped draw forth a good number of unknown Maaori writers who expressed themselves in either English or their mother tongue. Despite its name which means *The New World* in Maaori, its purpose was primarily to cover the cultural revival of the Maaori people while appropriately celebrating social and economic success. It had political support within the department but irritated the ultra-assimilationists, including several influential high civil servants. [Schwimmer N.d.; authors' translation]

His work as a publisher involved collecting and correcting texts as well as laying them out in the magazine. He also wrote articles for it himself. He was also its administrator which could at times put him in a delicate situation with departmental authorities:

> My job was not only to edit *Te Ao Hou*, but also to draft letters to obtain official permissions, finance, etc., and to write the Department's Annual Reports. Nobody at the Department supervised the contents of *Te Ao Hou*. Officers answered my questions but avoided involvement. The Tourist and Publicity Department was supposed to censor the journal, but never found anything to suppress, except once when I accepted poems by Hone Tuwhare, who was then totally unknown as a poet. A big argument about their poetic value blew up, involving two Ministers as well as Parliament. I was able to justify my selection convincingly, in the view of my Min-

> ister, and we heard no more from Tourist and Publicity...In general, I did not discuss the journal with anyone in Head Office, but did so regularly with Maori outside government, who were often rather critical of the Department and acted as my guides. I have forgotten many of their names but the first was Reweti Kohere and later there were Wiremu Parker and Pei Te Hurinui Jones. These people, together with many Maori welfare officers, were like my policy team, pursuing the same purpose. I followed their lead, as only they knew the local situations. Without ever saying so to each other, we were all working for the Maori cultural revival. My role was a menial one: *Te Ao Hou* was made as much by these others who prompted me. [Schwimmer 2004a:11-12]

The context in which the magazine was published indicated a certain openness but also gave rise to various kinds of resistance:

> It was a period of apparent compliance, but many texts we received expressed hidden, indirect and symbolic resistance...The one point on which I disagreed with the Department of Maori Affairs...was that I did not see this cultural revival as being in any way a threat to the Department or to New Zealand in general. I deeply thought, and still think, that New Zealand was destined to be bicultural and that the Maori people and their culture were a wonderful source of cultural enrichment. [Schwimmer 2004a:11]

So Eric Schwimmer took the risk of making *Te Ao Hou* a "*marae* on paper," (see Allen 2002:Chapter 1; Schwimmer 2004a), a kind of forum for discussion and the exchange of ideas, thus creating a place of openness and inclusion.[5] While he was a young civil servant who published the magazine with the guidance of several Maaori advisors as he mentioned above, he did not realize the extent to which the government regarded his activities with a jaundiced eye and he did not find out until relatively recently when he read Chadwick Allen (2002) (see also Kawharu this issue):

> It was fascinating to read the chapter about the magazine...because he [Allen] had seen many government files of whose existence I was not even aware, and he discovered many background dramas that had never been revealed in public...It was curious to see, in Allen's book, that there had been many earlier written complaints from the Department of Tourism and Publicity, which I was never shown by my superior officers. By this time, T.T. Ropiha, head of the Department of Maaori Affairs, and other prominent Maaori in senior departmental positions were aware of the journal's popularity among Maaori, and they were probably pleased with my editorial policy. They must have decided not to tell me about the complaints and to let me continue what I was doing. [Schwimmer 2004a:11-12]

The period in which he served as publisher of the magazine was one marked by widespread decolonization in many countries in Africa, and Asia. When Schwimmer got involved in the decolonization process, he put himself in a difficult position with the department that employed him:

> Needless to say, I was a strange bird in that department. Its objective at that time was assimilation and my only real interest was cultural revival, which would have the necessary consequence of decolonization. The spirit of a new Rome, a new Athens in New Zealand—a project of that kind was perhaps what my education fitted me for and it would surely benefit the quality of life in my new habitat. *Te Ao Hou* survived in spite of some frivolous paakehaa [persons of predominantly European ancestry] opposition, due to warm response from Maaori, outside and even within the Department of Maaori Affairs. [Schwimmer unpublished note, April 2006]

A reflection on his work, that he wrote towards the end of his time as publisher of *Te Ao Hou* in an attempt to make sense of what he was doing, places the anthropologist in the context of his job:

> On the surface, it often looks as though people become mediators by accident. For instance, through editing a magazine for the Maori people, I have now in a sense become a mediator. But it is not a position I had been consciously looking for; it looks completely accidental that I should have joined a particular department in the public service and then taken on a particular job there. [Schwimmer 1958:343]

Towards the end of his employment with the Department of Maaori Affairs, he devoted some of his time to teaching and started his ethnographic research among the Maaori of North Island. This research became the subject of his Master's thesis at the University of British Columbia—*Mormonism in a Maaori Village: a Study in Social Change* (1965a). It also led to his first two books, *The World of the Maaori* (1966) and *The Maaori People in the Nineteen-Sixties* (1968) which is today considered a "classic" in New Zealand (see Kawharu and Gagné this issue).

Contacts that he made during his work as a publisher led him later through a number of places and meetings down a path that took him from Maaori sovereignty to Québec sovereignty:

> It was also due to my well-wishers, met through my work for *Te Ao Hou*, that I was able to start a second career as an academic in Canada, and more recently in Québec. How can humanity keep on establishing new Romes and new Athens among the many *moorehu* [survivors], the ex-colonised of the world? I met them in many places besides New Zealand—first in Indonesia, in Papua-New Guinea, in North America, and among the Basques, until I found myself in the middle of a powerful movement of the same kind in Québec. [Schwimmer unpublished note, April 2006]

Then, he came to know Québec from the inside:

> For me, when the University of Toronto hired me as a professor of anthropology in 1968, Québec was an impressive foreign country. I listened to Michel Chartrand talking and Pauline Julien singing about the independence of Québec. I spent many weekends in Montréal, going to the boîtes-à-chansons, talking politics, making friends...After a few years of Charlebois and Pauline Julien, joyful discussions and good home-made cider (that alas disappeared from Québec in the early 1970s) and contacts with my Québec colleagues, the American Anthropological Association met in Mexico City. There, for the first time, I met anthropologists from Laval University. Shortly afterwards, I resigned from my position in Toronto and moved to Québec City. [Schwimmer 1995:20-21; authors' translation]

It was 1975. It was after other experiences of colonialism and the independence process during his doctoral studies in anthropology at the University of British Columbia that led him to the Native people living in Western Canada (see Schwimmer 1972) as well as to the Orokaiva of Papua New Guinea who became the primary subjects of his doctoral thesis:

> After having examined Maaori culture for many years, I began to study in Melanesia, in 1970, among the Orokaiva of Papua. There, I could observe the process of establishing independence. During my first visit in 1966-1967, the territory was still administered by Australia. The first election in which the pro-independence party (PANGU) presented candidates was in 1968. I was able to understand what was happening because a PANGU candidate was one of my best friends there. During my second visit, tensions had increased. The people were in a state of expectancy because the Australian administration was sending ambiguous signals, mixing conspicuous statements of enlightened impartiality with mean-spirited police actions. Three years later the situation had clarified. Australia had decided not to block either self-government or even an eventual declaration of independence if necessary. And as far as the Papuans were concerned, any great fear of the risks of sovereignty had been forgotten in a six-year period.
>
> Why had Australia changed its policies? What obstacles could still stand in the way of independence for Papua-New Guinea even if Australia no longer objected to it in principle? How did these obstacles disappear? These apparently quaint and exotic questions can be applied...to the situation of Québec. [Schwimmer 1995:17-18; authors' translation]

Eric Schwimmer's doctoral thesis was published as a book in 1973 titled *Exchange in Social Structure of the Orokaivia: Traditional and Emergent Ideologies in the Northern District of Papua.*

As a professor in the anthropology department of Laval University between 1975 and 1993, he continued his research on decolonization with a primary focus on the Québec question through, among other things, his research on the gift and on celebration, while maintaining his work among the Orokaiva. He developed his comparative approach by again considering the case of the Maaori and later adding the Basques to the mix.

Since he retired in 1993, Eric Schwimmer has displayed the same persistence as he continued his research on national minorities and their struggles, myths and relationships. The last ten years have been particularly fruitful because he has made a full summing up of all his work and has extended his thought. This has allowed him to co-operate with various projects such as the development of an ontological anthropology (see Poirier this issue; Clammer, Poirier and Schwimmer 2004), the creation of new concepts such as "negotiated coexistence," (Schwimmer 2003b) and the further indepth examination of the minority "subject" that has been a constant in his consideration of decolonization.

In 1995, just before the second referendum on Québec sovereignty, he published a significantly thought-provoking work on the Québécois proposal for sovereignty titled *Le Syndrome des Plaines d'Abraham.* He does not hesitate, even today, to identify with the Québécois and support their decolonization process. He does so as a consultant or political analyst while maintaining a certain distance from the situation. He also does so as a Québécois who is fully participating in the struggle (see Bariteau this issue). Thus he recommends that Québec acquire new ways of understanding itself and learning about the world. And he suggests that "it is urgent to eliminate from thinking on Québec those parameters defined within a Canadian perspective and to favour the expression of a Québec reading of ourselves and the world" (Schwimmer 2003a:86, author's translation).

He also thinks it is important for the people at the grassroots level to remobilise themselves for the struggle and invest a substantial stake in it:

> For years, sovereignty has been an activity for recreation or the drawing-room, a pass-time for the image makers. It must be presented differently. It should become a struggle across the spectrum that—in particular—is backed with a significant financial investment. This is a winning strategy which cannot be that of the PQ [Québécois party] when it is in power. It requires going back to the catacombs, to the basics, where we can mobilize determined actors with solid arguments who can convince the Québécois to establish a new country here. [Schwimmer 2003a:91; authors' translation]

In a way, Eric Schwimmer's journey has taken him to many different places but he has always been guided by questions related to (de)colonization, a theme whose importance he discovered in Holland and which became, as he said in 1995, a constant preoccupation "as a series of chances led me to various parts of the world to become a witness to struggles for sovereignty. I do not claim to have become an "expert" on the subject, but this experience has helped me understand the nationalist fight" (Schwimmer 1995:13; authors' translation).

Texts and Contexts: An Introduction to the Articles

All the authors in this special issue accepted our invitation to consider the decolonization process by participating, each in their own way, in the dialogue to which they were invited by Eric Schwimmer in his work. This gave rise to an explosion of ideas that both extend his concepts and propose original developments.

The texts of Hugh I. Kawharu and André Campeau are those that come closest to the thought of Eric Schwimmer. These three authors emphasize the importance of the minority nation having the benefit of its own autonomous sphere of activity if a transformation and thus a decolonization process is to ensue. They also emphasize that the decolonization process implies an institutional reaction on both sides. And they insist on the necessity of a recognition by the majority state and nation of the minority nation and of the efforts of the minority nation in its struggle for recognition.

Discussing his article, Schwimmer returned to this point:

> In the latest article I wrote, *La bonne distance* (The right distance), I tried to describe a universal concept that underlies them all. It proposes no total war against colonising powers but the defence of adequate autonomy, coupled with the necessary inclusion in some larger tier of civilisation and political power. Setting up the larger tiers has always been a difficult task, but it has often happened, in a great variety of forms. We never know what those forms will be. All we know is that many forms offered to us are delusions, but that there have also been true civilisations. [Schwimmer unpublished note, April 2006]

This article analyzes the mythic constructions of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Jacques Ferron and Margaret Atwood. By placing the relationships of proximity and sovereignty between the two nations that cohabit Canada within the same analytical framework, he reveals how Trudeau and Ferron had different conceptions of the "right distance" necessary for Quebec's co-existence and development. He also shows how these two conceptions differ from that of Atwood who is more preoccupied with establishing a distance with the United States.

Hugh I. Kawharu deals with the situation of his own sub-tribe in Aukland and its strategies for change. He advances the idea that transformation—here seen as inclusion in the larger society—results from welcoming, sharing and exchanging with other citizens, particularly those in Aukland, as well as with different government structures. This requires long-term work which is always threatened by assimilationist policy directions.

André Campeau emphasizes the importance of mediation through citizenship in the recognition process of fatherhood in Québec. He analyzes two sites: a Québec fathers' association and a genealogy of the Canadian regime in Québec's upper St. Lawrence region. He notes the deadlock of mediation with the Canadian state that does not recognize the specific nature of the minority nation and maintains its unitary policies. And he states that effective mediation requires two basic conditions: the minority nation must have the symbolic resources needed to construct its particularity in order to conduct its struggle, and the state must encourage the development of an independent policy.

Continuing the theme of the transformation of colonial relationships or domination, other contributors place more emphasis on taking ontologies into account or reinforcing them which includes particular ways of thinking or particular concepts about relationships with the world, with things, with people and with ancestors.

Sylvie Poirier emphasizes the importance of recognizing ontological, cosmo-political and poetic differences among Native peoples within modern Western nation-states that allow them to co-exist in the dominant society. Through her analysis of the Atikamekw of Québec and

the Kukatja of the western Australian desert, she invokes the particular nature of these ontologies that she considers relational in their metaphysical, theoretical and practical aspects.

André Iteanu insists that in our analysis of globalization, ideological variances among the populations studied must be taken into account in order to allow a better understanding of conceptualizations of this phenomenon that differ according to context. Iteanu is particularly interested in the Orokaiva version of globalization but also refers to examples in Guadeloupe and Rumania. In all three cases, he shows that the vision of the world corresponds to the primacy of relationships between people (living and dead) and advances the indissociable nature of relationships with things, a vision that runs counter to the Western point of view which favours a relationship with things. In the first vision, globalization is interpreted through a particular kind of lens in terms of relationships (or non-relationships) with ancestors while the second is predicated on a natural continuity between all the world's societies which means that the planet is seen as being progressively invaded by a single model.

Natacha Gagné, on the other hand, starts with a controversy about the property of the foreshore and seabed in New Zealand, dissects the way the minority being studied—the Maaori—finds itself caught in a status quo that takes the form of a historic alternation between assimilation and an ethnic or racial withdrawal, and wonders whether other options are possible within the framework of the existing system. Her text, like that of Campeau, highlights how a historically imposed structure narrowly defines the possibilities available in terms of transformation or change and in terms of living together.

Claude Bariteau, dealing with the population of Québec and the political nation that affirms itself there, goes further in advancing the idea that a secession from Canada is possible by the awareness and the putting in place of an action aimed at changing the political order of things as well as the authority that assures its existence. In a dialogue with the work of Schwimmer, he puts forward a political understanding of Quebec—to distinguish it from cultural understandings—that can overthrow the power relationships that presently exist within Canada.

Recalling the triangular work of Eric Schwimmer who goes from the Maaori to the Orokaiva to the Québecois, Pierre Maranda's article reaches similar conclusions by analyzing an Orokaiva myth using the canonical formula of Lévi-Strauss by insisting on the importance of the passage—through a "double spiral" dynamic (Schwimmer 2004b)—from a biological ontology to a social ontology. According to Maranda, the change, presupposing a repositioning in relation both to one-self and to others, enabled the passage of Papua New Guinea towards independence and modified its relationship with worldwide trends and forces.

The articles of John Clammer and Michael Herzfeld bring forward the importance of decolonizing research and invite anthropologists to be prudent in their assertions.

Herzfeld addresses himself directly to researchers in an effort to make them aware of the play of symbols—whether familiar or exotic—in the weave of power which, beneath their apparent simplicity, can have powerful effects. Using mainly European and North American examples, he insists on the need for anthropology to fight hard to maintain its pertinence in this world controlled by the neo-liberal public media which tend to reduce critical space and contribute—without question—to the hiding and reproduction of power relationships, particularly colonial relationships and those of domination. He also suggests the need to be critical of the political forces at work within the very field of anthropology through what he calls "the politics of significance."

John Clammer—who concludes this special issue—brings out the principal elements of a "schwimmerian" postcolonial anthropology. For Clammer, it is important to develop methodologies allowing us to better understand the point of view of the colonized subject and support it in the conception of a political epistemology. Echoing the work of Habermas, he insists on the need to examine strategies, struggles and (re)negotiations—including their symbolic dimension—through which those who are minoritized maintain and negotiate their ontologies. In that respect, this text, like those of several participants in this issue, reminds us of the need to be attentive to the actors and their agency. In preparing this issue, we noted the extent to which this point is a fundamental one for Eric Schwimmer.

Finally, concerning the article that he wrote especially for this issue, Schwimmer told us:

> This article is very difficult to write. My problem isn't simply my age, but my tendency to write about themes that I don't really know very well. I'm...always in a state of perpetual learning. The only remedy I have found is to read. I recover my serenity and my youth every time I find a source that gives me information that I need to continue [the analysis]. [Schwimmer personal communication, February 2006; authors' translation]

Listening to him, we discover his extraordinary openness of mind and spirit combined with an intellectual vigour

that everyone recognizes. This openness can be found in his work and that is probably what makes Eric Schwimmer—along with his great generosity, exceptional creativity, rare intelligence and the exemplary determination to validate the position of populations made minorities by colonialism—such a fascinating man. May he continue to enrich the anthropology of decolonization for many years to come!

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Notes

1 All quotations translated from French are available in the original in the French introduction to this issue.

2 We will follow the Maaori spelling of Maaori words, indicating the long vowels with a double vowel (some authors indicate long vowels with macrons, tremas or circumflex accents) and by not changing the form to the plural. This is a purely technical choice and indicates no political-linguistic positioning on our part. Note that the lengthening of vowels (by any of the methods mentioned) affects not just the pronunciation but also the sense of the words. When we quote authors who use macrons, tremas or circumflex accents in their texts, we change them to double vowels in the interests of uniformity. For those texts that do not mark double vowels (generally, or according to the period of the text or the publisher) we do not mark them either and we reproduce quotations without changing them. When the authors change the form to the plural, we respect this choice by reproducing the quotes as they appear.

3 According to Gresh and Vidal, "the very concept of a Jewish people...is ambiguous," as much as (but for different reasons) such concepts as "ethnic group," "nation" or "religion" (2003:346). All these expressions are polysemous and require more precision. Here, if we use the word "people" we refer to a political community in its links with a government.

4 Editions of the magazine have been digitized and are now available on-line at http://teohou.natlib.govt.nz/index.html (page consulted September 10, 2006).

5 The *marae* is the traditional gathering place of the Maaori. It is a ceremonial place dedicated to the practice of rituals as well as of various social and cultural activities (see, among others, Salmond 1975 on so-called traditional marae). Also see Gagné (2004) for a discussion on the meaning of the word *marae* as a space for frank and open discussion and a place to resolve problems, in the proper sense of the word "place" as used metaphorically.

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