

manawan

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Now remastered onto DVD, filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin's educational kit *Manawan*, originally produced in 1972, is an important and in some cases the only documented accounts of Atikamekw life.

In *Manawan*, C zar N washish tells the story of how his reserve, born just before he was--70 years earlier--came to be. N washish recounts in his native Atikamekw how after several trips to Ottawa by their first Chief, his grandfather, their people were given the reserve of Manawan, a fraction of the land they originally possessed. Also featured are the Atikamekw couple Mariane and Athanas Jacob, who demonstrate the traditional moose call and the craft of snowshoe making.

Contents and Timing

- Chapters 1 & 2: History of Manawan, Part 1 (20 min.)
- Chapters 3 & 4: History of Manawan, Part 2 (23.5 min.)
- Chapters 5 & 6:
 - Moose Call, with Marianne and Athanas Jacob (4 min.)
Note: No English or translation
 - Snowshoes (7 min.) *Note:* No English
 - The Canoe (5 min.)
- Chapter 7:
 - Children (2 min.) *Note:* no speech
 - Partridge (2 min.) *Note:* Teachers should be aware that there is mention of residential schools in this segment.
- Credits (3 min.)

Table of Contents

	Page
Social Studies	
➤ Suggested Discussion Questions – Junior High	
Before Screening.....	3
After Screening.....	3
➤ Suggested Discussion Questions – Senior High	
Before Screening.....	4
After Screening.....	4
Aboriginal Studies	
➤ Suggested Discussion Questions – Junior High	
Before Screening.....	5
After Screening.....	5
➤ Suggested Discussion Questions – Senior High	
Before Screening.....	6
After Screening.....	6
Media Studies	
➤ Suggested Discussion Questions – Junior High	
Before Screening.....	7
After Screening.....	8
➤ Suggested Discussion Questions – Senior High	
Before Screening.....	8
After Screening.....	8
Suggested Resources	
➤ National Film Board of Canada Web sites.....	9
➤ Recommended NFB Films With Aboriginal Content.....	10

Social Studies

Suggested Discussion Questions – Junior High

Before Screening:

- What do you know about the Manawan peoples? In small groups, research any information you can find about the Manawan peoples. Where did they live? What was their culture like?
- Find out more about the filmmaker, Alanis Obomsawin at <http://nfb.ca/webextension/alanis-obomsawin/>. Watch the interview clip called “The Filmmaker’s Life and Works (4.41 min.)”
 - How did she get started in filmmaking?
 - What significant Canadian award was presented to Alanis Obomsawin? Why?
- This film was originally made in 1972. Why do you think the NFB has re-released it in 2008, approximately 35 years later?

After Screening:

- Life and Culture:
 - What was life like for the Manawan peoples before the white man came?
 - Explore ideas of what “the land” might mean in this film.
 - The speaker in Parts 1 and 2, the “History of Manawan”, identifies many differences from his grandfather’s time to his time. Discuss some of these differences. What do you think the speaker’s attitude is about his culture in his own time?
 - What do you think that life might be like for the Manawan peoples today?
 - In groups, research any information available about the Manawan peoples. Create a multimedia presentation to share with your class; include a sound track that represents the community.
- This film was originally made in 1972. Now that you have seen the film, why do you think the NFB has re-released it in 2008, approximately 35 years later?
- There are many peoples in Alberta who have stories to share about their cultural perspectives.
 - Invite a guest to the classroom, connect with a guest via video conferencing, or conduct a personal interview with a family member or someone who remembers growing up in your community.
 - Use some means of recording this interview and share it at a school event.
- What different peoples have contributed to the development of your community? Using a variety of research sources, develop a list of sources where someone might find information about the history of your community.
 - Also check out the NFB *Across Cultures* web site at <http://www.nfb.ca/acrosscultures>. It identifies some NFB films that document contributions made to Canada by different ethnocultural communities.

- In small groups, develop a multi-media presentation on “cultural perspectives” combining images and sound, and present it to the class. After the presentation, reflect on the decisions that were made in shaping this presentation, and evaluate your presentation.

Suggested Discussion Questions – Senior High

Before Screening:

- In small groups, research any information you can find about the Manawan peoples. Where did they live? What was their culture like?
- The film maker of this documentary is Alanis Obomsawin. Check this link and find out more about her and her films. nfb.ca/webextension/alanis-obomsawin/.
 - On the National Film Board of Canada web site noted above, watch the video clip titled “News and Resources” (4:50 min.).
 - What cultural contributions has Alanis Obomsawin made?
 - What significant Canadian award was presented to Alanis Obomsawin? Why?
- This film was originally made in 1972. Why do you think the NFB has re-released it in 2008, approximately 35 years later?

After Screening:

- “Harmony” is an Aboriginal world view. Discuss how the filmmaker attempts to harmonize the various elements in this documentary.
- Perspective is the point of view of an individual or group and is shaped by who the person/group is and the experiences the person/group has had. Whose perspective(s) is presented in this film? Discuss the elements or components that lead you to this conclusion.
- How do Manawan peoples stay true to their traditional culture while living in a contemporary world? How can they find balance?
- This film was originally made in 1972. Now that you have seen the film, why do you think the NFB has re-released it in 2008, approximately 35 years later?
- Explore the concept of multiple perspectives by discussing how the stories in this film would be different if they had been told by someone else.
 - Prepare a power point presentation presenting a similar story from a different perspective, blending tradition with modern culture.
 - After the presentation, reflect on the decisions that were made in shaping this presentation, and evaluate your presentation.
- What multiple perspectives have contributed to the development of your community? Discuss examples in your community where tradition has been blended with modern culture.
- Consider the impacts of globalization on the Manawan community.
 - Using a variety of research methods, identify and view a number of films that present some aspect of the effects of globalization on individuals and/or communities.

- Then, individually or in small groups, select one film to present to the class, and lead a discussion about the similarities and differences of the effects in the film to those in your community or your life.
- After the presentation, reflect on the decisions that were made in shaping this presentation, and evaluate your work.

Aboriginal Studies

Suggested Discussion Questions – Junior High

Before Screening:

- What do you know about the Manawan peoples? In small groups, research any information you can find about the Manawan peoples. Where did they live? What was their culture like?
- Learn more about the filmmaker, Alanis Obomsawin, at nfb.ca/webextension/alanis-obomsawin/. Watch the interview clip called “The Filmmaker’s Life and Works (4.41 min.).”
 - How did she get started in filmmaking?
 - What important Canadian award was presented to Alanis Obomsawin? Why?
- This film was originally made in 1972. Why do you think the NFB re-released it in 2008, approximately 35 years later?

After Screening:

- Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 present the history of the Manawan peoples from the perspective of the grandson of the first chief. He talks about when the white man first came, the English and the French, and about the fur trading relationship between these peoples and the Hudson Bay Company. Discuss the different views towards trapping furs.
- What were some of the old customs that are no longer followed?
- What impresses you the most about the Manawan?
- How do the Manawan stay true to their traditional culture while living in a contemporary world? How can they find balance?
- Now that you have seen the film, discuss why you think the NFB re-released it in 2008?
- Chapters 5 and 6 present traditional culture and skills – moose call, snowshoes and the canoe. Do you know anyone who practises skills like these today? Invite artists (musicians, sculptors, painters, storytellers, dancers, weavers, craftspeople, etc.) or an Elder to your classroom to share their knowledge.
- There are many drawings in this documentary. Who has drawn these? What do they represent? How do they show the relationship of the people to the land?
 - Individually or in small groups, create a painting, drawing, or other work of art that represents some aspect of your culture and present it to the class.
 - After the presentation, reflect on the decisions that were made in shaping this presentation, and evaluate your work.

- Check out “The Arts” section in the NFB *Aboriginal Perspectives* web site at www.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/visau/index.php?mode=theme&language=english&theme=30660&submode=resources. In the film excerpts under this theme, an Inuit stone carver, a Wendat artist and a Maliseet painter reflect on the role of art; a wood carver descended from the Haida and a Mi’kmaq painter talk about their sources of inspiration.
 - Divide into small groups and each select a different clip to view.
 - View it several times, and then present the clip and your critique to the class.
- Visit the NFB *Aboriginal Perspectives* web site noted above.
 - In small groups, choose one of the following films or excerpts and view it several times: *The Caribou Hunters*, 1951, excerpt 1 (6 min 37 s – 8 min 20 s), Cinema and Representation theme; *Kanata: Legacy of the Children of Aataentsic*, 1999, excerpt 1 (1 min 37 s – 3 min 6 s), History and Origins theme; *You Are on Indian Land*, 1969, excerpt 1 (38 s – 2 min 47 s), Sovereignty and Resistance theme; *Riel Country*, 1996, excerpt 3 (35 min 40 s – 39 min 36 s), Sovereignty and Resistance theme; *Circle of the Sun*, 1960, excerpt (13 min 36 s – 16 min 6 s), Indigenous Knowledge theme.
 - After some group discussion, show a clip and present your critique of this film to the class.
 - After the presentation, reflect on the decisions that were made in shaping this presentation, and evaluate your presentation.

Suggested Discussion Questions – Senior High

Before Screening:

- In small groups, do some research about the Manawan peoples. Where did they live? What was their culture like?
- The director of this documentary is Alanis Obomsawin. Learn more about her and her films. <http://nfb.ca/webextension/alanis-obomsawin/>.
 - What important Canadian award was presented to Alanis Obomsawin? Why
- On the National Film Board of Canada web site noted above, watch the video clip titled “News and Resources” (4:50 min.).
 - What cultural contributions to Canadian filmmaking has Alanis Obomsawin made?
 - What are some of the visual techniques that she uses in her films?
- This film was originally made in 1972. Why do you think the NFB re-released it in 2008, approximately 35 years later?

After Screening:

- “Harmony” is an Aboriginal world view. How does the filmmaker attempt to harmonize the interview segments, the photographs, the drawings and the sound track?
- Aboriginal world views are transmitted in an oral tradition – through story, music, and dance. What aspects of the Manawan world view are revealed in this film?
- What impresses you the most about the Manawan peoples?
- How do the Manawan stay true to their traditional culture while living in a contemporary world? How can they find balance?

- Now that you have seen the film, discuss why you think the NFB re-released it in 2008?
- Chapters 5 and 6 present traditional culture and skills – moose call, making snowshoes and canoes. Do you know anyone who practises these skills today? Invite artists (musicians, sculptors, painters, storytellers, dancers, weavers, craftspeople, etc.) or an Elder to your classroom to share their knowledge.
- Check out “The Arts” section in the NFB *Aboriginal Perspectives* web site at <http://www.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/visau/index.php?mode=theme&language=english&theme=30660&submode=resources>. In the film excerpts under this theme, an Inuit stone carver, a Wendat artist and a Maliseet painter reflect on the role of art; a wood carver descended from the Haida and a Mi'kmaq painter talk about their sources of inspiration.
 - Divide into small groups, each one choosing a different film clip.
 - View it several times, and then present the clip and your critique to the class.
 - After the presentation, reflect on the decisions that were made in shaping this presentation, and evaluate your contribution.
- Visit the NFB *Aboriginal Perspectives* web site at the address noted above.
 - In small groups, select one of the following films or excerpts and view it several times: *The Caribou Hunters*, 1951, excerpt 1 (6 min 37 s – 8 min 20 s), Cinema and Representation theme; *Kanata: Legacy of the Children of Aataentsic*, 1999, excerpt 1 (1 min 37 s – 3 min 6 s), History and Origins theme; *You Are on Indian Land*, 1969, excerpt 1 (38 s – 2 min 47 s), Sovereignty and Resistance theme; *Riel Country*, 1996, excerpt 3 (35 min 40 s – 39 min 36 s), Sovereignty and Resistance theme; *Circle of the Sun*, 1960, excerpt (13 min 36 s – 16 min 6 s), Indigenous Knowledge theme.
 - After some group discussion, show a clip and present your critique of this film to the class.
 - After the presentation, reflect on the decisions that were made, and evaluate your work.

Media Studies

Suggested Discussion Questions – Junior High

Before Screening:

- Find out more about the filmmaker, Alanis Obomsawin at <http://nfb.ca/webextension/alanis-obomsawin/>. Watch the interview clip called “The Filmmaker’s Life and Works (4.41 min.)”
 - How did she get started in filmmaking?
 - What significant Canadian award was presented to Alanis Obomsawin? Why?
- This film was originally made in 1972. Why do you think the NFB has re-released it in 2008, approximately 35 years later?

After Screening:

- In “Moose Call” and “Snowshoes”, Chapters 5 and 6, no English translation is provided. Mariane and Athanas Jacob tell the story in their own language.
 - What visual clues help you understand their story?
 - What effect do camera movement and editing have in these segments? If you were filming this today, what would you do?
- Note to the teacher: Play the 2-minute segment, “Children,” Chapter 7, with the monitor turned away from the students, and ask them to listen to the sound.
 - What does the soundtrack contribute to this film?
 - Now view the segment. Discuss the visual choices that the filmmaker made when editing the images.
- Now that you have seen the film, discuss why the NFB re-released it in 2008?
- As a class or in small groups, write a storyboard for a short film, and find an accompanying song or music. Present your storyboard to the class with the sound you chose. If time permits, prepare your own still or moving images in a multimedia. After the presentation, evaluate your work.
- Check out the link to *My Film School* at <http://www.nfb.ca/animation/objanim/en/>. It is designed for students ages 5-12 and contains 70 NFB animated films and several interactive games: *Animacat’s House* for ages 5-8; and *My Film Class* for ages 9-12.

Suggested Discussion Questions – Senior High

Before Screening:

- The film maker of this documentary is Alanis Obomsawin. Check this link and find out more about her and her films. <http://nfb.ca/webextension/alanis-obomsawin/>. Why did she get into filmmaking? Why did she choose the documentary form?
- On the National Film Board of Canada web site noted above, watch the video clip “News and Resources” (4:50 min.).
 - What significant Canadian award was presented to Alanis Obomsawin? Why?
 - What are some of the visual techniques that she uses in her films?
 - Can you predict some of the images that might be used in this film?
- This film was originally made in 1972. Why do you think the NFB re-released it in 2008, approximately 35 years later?

After Screening:

- In general, what attracts us to a film? What is the purpose of “*Manawan*”? Did this film produce an emotional response? Write a critique.
- Obomsawin, used a combination of live action and photographs and drawings in this film. Discuss this choice.
- Go to the NFB web page on Alanis Obomsawin to view clips of her more recent films. Have her style and technique changed over time? Discuss what is similar and different?
- Now that you have seen the film, discuss why you think the NFB re-released it in 2008?
- Are there any elements of the film that are striking or memorable (e.g. symbolic shot, music and/or dialogue, sound effects, camera angle, story, editing techniques, colour, lighting)?
- Analyze this documentary from an editing perspective.
 - Comment on the effect of the editing.
- Do you think that the filmmaker would change pace if she were to re-edit the film for today’s audiences?
- In “Moose Call” and “Snowshoes”, Chapters 5 and 6, no English translation is provided. Mariane and Athanas Jacob tell the story in their own language.
 - What effect do camera movement and editing have in these segments? If you were filming this today, what would you do?
- Note to the teacher: Play the 2-minute segment “Children”, Chapter 7, with the monitor turned away from the students, and ask them to listen to the sound track.
 - What does the soundtrack contribute to this film?
 - Now view the segment. Discuss the visual choices that the filmmaker.
- Perspective is the point of view of an individual or group and is shaped by identity and the experience.
 - Whose perspective(s) is presented in this film? Discuss your answer.
 - Individually, in small groups, or as a class, script and storyboard a short film that presents a perspective in your community. Present your storyboard to the class, and play examples of what an accompanying soundtrack might be.

- If time permits, prepare your own still or moving images in a multimedia presentation.
- Evaluate your work.
- Documentary film, like all media, are created by people, so they reflect the attitudes, ideas, interests and even the prejudices of the filmmakers. They also come from particular moments and places in history, so they tell us something about the societies of the time and the unstated values of our culture. Explore the A, B, Cs of documentary film on the NFB link to *Behind the Camera: Documentary Lens* at <http://www.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/btc.php?DLshown=true&language=e>.
 - Select a film for study.
 - Analyze and discuss how this documentary presents the cultural values of the “particular moments and places in history.”

Suggested Resources

National Film Board of Canada Web sites:

- www.nfb.ca/ **National Film Board of Canada**
Home page.
- www.nfb.ca/collection/films/
Browse the NFB film collection.
- nfb.ca/webextension/alanis-obomsawin/
Alanis Obomsawin
This web site provides information about this Canadian filmmaker.
- www.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/visau/index.php?language=english
Aboriginal Perspectives is a site for high school and upper elementary students and teachers. It features National Film Board of Canada documentaries by and about Canada's Aboriginal peoples. You will be able to watch key NFB documentaries on Aboriginal themes from the 1940s to 2004 and learn about past and current issues relating to the lives of Aboriginal peoples through excerpts or complete films.
Across Cultures examines Canada's diversity through NFB films.
- www.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/btc.php?DLshown=true&language=e
Behind the Camera: Documentary Lens encourages us to learn the tools and techniques of the craft.
- www.nfb.ca/sections/educational-resources/
Educational Resources - For teachers.
- www.nfb.ca/animation/objanim/en/

Focus on Animation presents: the history of animation from 1941 to today; the many different animation techniques honed by NFB filmmakers; and presents the work of some of NFB's internationally acclaimed animators.

Visit *My Film School*, designed for students ages 5-12, and *Animacat's House*, for ages 5-8, and *My Film Class* for ages 9-12.

Recommended NFB Films With Aboriginal Content:

- *As Long as the River Flows*
- *First Nations: The Circle Unbroken* series: *The Last Mooseskin Boat*, *Lord of the Sky*, *O'Siem, Kwa'nu'te*
- *If the Weather Permits*
- *Kainayssini Imanistaisiwa: The People Go On*
- *Lost Songs*
- *Man Who Chooses the Bush*
- *Redskins, Tricksters and Puppy Stew*
- *Silent Tears*
- *The Washing of Tears*
- *Yuxweluptun: Man of Masks*