

**ROOTED IN THE SPIRIT**

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in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

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by

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a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of York University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

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## ABSTRACT

As a Native student in university I experienced conflicts, contradictions and frustrations concerning methodology. Surprisingly, resistance to methodology was the beginning of an enlightening encounter with First Nations Research. Through engaging with Native researchers I explored how others manage the conflicts, frustration and resistance in Academia. However, through this engagement, I also discovered that other Native researchers were performing an important cultural function for me. Native researchers were mirroring cultural codes and cues through their words. Through this cultural exchange, I found that I was more able to articulate the implicit and explicit Native cultural knowledge inside of myself.

I was intrigued by the distinctive cultural patterns utilized by researchers in First Nations research, which I have identified as organizing principles rooted in tribal sensibilities. These cultural patterns and principles emanate out of a distinct Native world-view, a metaphysical understanding of the nature of existence quite different from the dominant culture. The cultural patterns and principles are the basis of the development of a Native discourse. I see this Native discourse as a new research genre.

Resolution to the conflicts I felt within came as I discovered that I was searching for something that was missing in my education. By adding a spiritual dimension to my education, my search for resolution became an important path on my life journey back to

my roots. Native research becomes a mirror for healing and reconciliation within both Native and Western culture and between those two cultures.

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## Prologue

I open my eyes to the first morning rays of the summer sun peeping back at me through my window. I feel its benevolent warmth on my six-year old legs calling me to this day. I hear the morning chorus rustling in the trees singing their welcome to the sun. Lying very still I can hear the leaves murmur in the gentle wind. Breathing deeply I smell the plenitude of Mother Earth--dew-moistened soil, fragrant flowers, refreshed morning air. Bounding from my bed I rush to dress--don't want to miss anything. After a hurried breakfast I run outside. Standing on the back step I scan the world, my world, calling to me in an embrace of vivid colours.

I wander to the field out back. Already the bees are hard at work among a myriad of blooms. I never tire of the little yellow snapdragons growing in the field. I check inside the blossoms to see what bugs they have captured today. Carefully turning over a few rocks or pieces of wood, I find some dew-worms, or an assortment of bugs, and beetles. There's a garden snake here, a toad there. The jarring caws of the crow interrupt my reverie reminding me of the canary course. I race down the street towards the railway tracks. I love to watch the huge flocks of wild canaries<sup>1</sup> swoop up and down the railway tracks early every morning and evening. I never tire of watching the vibrant kaleidoscope of yellow and black. Their zest for life infuses energy into my little growing mind and body. Joyously, I let them take me through my paces up and down the tracks. All too soon a trolley whistle scatters the flock. Factory workers with black metal lunch pails pour out of the trolley cars.

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<sup>1</sup> Sadly the flocks of wild canaries were wiped out by the use of herbicides along the railway tracks.

Luckily my summer days were filled with such delights, from running through busy fields, to wading in swarming waters, to climbing obliging trees. However, in the hot days of late July a special expectation filled my days. I was waiting to hear a particular message. I was waiting to hear the corn's ripe bug. I knew. My Mom told me that when I heard him, the corn would be ripe. Then one sultry summer day after a brief shower, I heard his call.

"Did you hear that?" I yelled to my friends.

"Hear what?" they shouted.

Again the corn bug pronounced his message long and clear.

"I hear the corn's ripe bug!" I screamed, jumping up and down. "Now we can all have some fresh corn."

"Yeah!" my companions shouted, jumping up and down, catching my enthusiasm.

"I'm going home to tell my mother."

"Me too", the group chimes in. Off we went to find our mothers.

Unfortunately, I was the only one whose mother could respond to the conversation between the corn's ripe bug and the corn. Only I had corn that day.

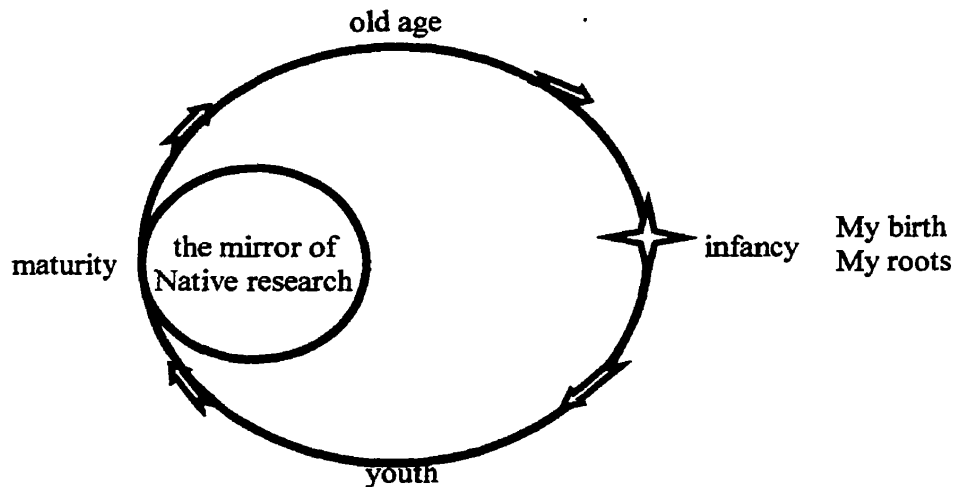
## Chapter One: Introduction

### *Roots*

*Indian educators and Tribal leaders must understand that the unexamined application of Western education can condition people away from their cultural roots. (Gregory Cajete, 1994, p.18)*

This work is one urban Native's journey back to her roots. There are as many different paths that lead back to the roots, back to the spirit, as there are people. Mine is just one of many. Initially I did not realize that it would have to be a spiritual journey. I just thought that it would be a cultural journey for me. My education had conditioned me out of my roots since there was no evidence of my roots anywhere at school. Nowhere were my roots reflected to me. I felt that I was not enough and was always trying to procure what I thought I lacked. For many years I have believed that I was travelling away from my roots. Since I have had the opportunity to engage with Native research I realize that I have been only been circling back to my roots, my foundations. I found my roots in the mirror of Native research.

Figure 1. Circling back on the path of life, patterned after the medicine wheel (Lana Tiller).



### ***Resistance, conflict and feelings***

*The American [and Canadian] society that many Indian students experience is wrought with contradictions, prejudice, hypocrisy, narcissism, and unethical predispositions at all levels including the schools. There continue to be educational conflicts, frustrations, and varying levels of alienation experienced by many Indian people because of their encounters with mainstream education. (Gregory Cajete, 1994, p.19)*

As a Native<sup>2</sup> student in the University setting I have experienced unsettling conflicts with traditional academic research methods. As different modes of research were presented in seminar classes and discussed, I began to feel tension and uneasiness within. At first I could not name these feelings or articulate my thoughts. I already felt grief over the fact that my mind had been colonized. By colonized I mean that I had been indoctrinated by the dominant society through their racist education. Although I loved my Native family and were proud of them, I had rejected parts of my Native heritage (See Appendix A # 1). I thought of my heritage in terms of “ignorant”, “pagan”, “primitive”, and “savage”. Because of these notions I sometimes had a difficult time respecting Native religion, thought, music or customs. A particularly painful remembrance occurred between my Native grandmother, Gauga, and myself. I loved this woman dearly and yet when she tried to teach me about Native music, I was unable to listen. I could see no merit in the music. I rebuffed all her efforts because the music was “primitive”.

During my post-graduate studies I experienced a growing awareness of the white middle-class education that I had received. Its effect upon my perceptions of self, family

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term *Native* interchangeably with *Aboriginal*, *Indian*, *American Indian*, *Amerindian*, *North American Indian*, *First Nations*, *Metis*, and *Indigenous* when I am referring to the Indigenous population.

and heritage had put me in a very wary state of mind. I felt that I had power restrictions at school. In my anxiety I rejected, for the most part, both quantitative and qualitative methodology within the university setting. I rejected the quantitative encompassing positivism and empiricism because I felt 1.) that mathematical uses of probability can not account for the meaning of people's lives, 2.) that scientific method does not guarantee the objectivity of the researcher or the research and tends to objectify the researched. "Research" about Native peoples has a bad reputation, as it tends to advance the interests of the researcher and claims the authority to determine what counts as truth or knowledge. I had an "attitude" towards research. This resistant attitude prevented me from being open to learning about any variations of qualitative research of which I knew little. I could feel the resistance crescendo until I was not sure that I would stay within the program. However, I persisted because my elders tell me education is a good thing to have and not to quit.

Knowing that I must complete a thesis and dreading it, I began a search for a research method with which my conscience would feel *comfortable*. I knew that I must speak from myself. In a native culture not speaking from one's self is a violation (Monture-Angus, 1995, p. 45). For me to speak for another, particularly, a family member that is older than me is a violation of respect. With this in mind I found it impossible to comment on any of my family's words, experiences, or understandings, only mine. In addition, I had this sense, this worry that a Native world-view<sup>3</sup> could not

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<sup>3</sup> A world-view answers the question: What sort of world does experience reveal or imply? Robert N. Beck, 1963, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston.



lie down comfortably with a Eurocentric one, let alone intermesh together in a research methodology. Even though I tried to work through some methodology, I always had a nagging doubt or worry that the product would be a lie, a fake. As a result I felt caught between the expectations of the academy of learning with its established research tradition and honouring my native culture. This was how my contradiction begins. The tension at times was immense. My challenge was how to find peace amongst tension. The situation posed quite a dilemma for me. I like learning. I enjoy thinking hard. I want to continue my education. I have a vision that I can be a professor and share in other's educational experiences. I knew my cultural heritage played a critical role in the values that I brought to research but I seemed unable to adequately verbalize the problem.

For a while I did not know what to do with this resistance except bear it. I started to develop a voice through my poetry (see Appendix A # 2). "Through voice we speak/write our acts of resistance, the healing and empowering values of our traditions and the role of the European colonizers in the destruction of our communities" (Graveline, 1998, p. 41). Looking back on this clash with research I now realize that this resistance was normal. Fyre Jean Graveline (1998) has a chapter wherein she theorizes about the place of resistance in Aboriginal lives. She agrees with Freire that resistance is universal: "The colonial process brings with it an incredible and dialectical counteraction. That is, there is no colonial intervention that does not provoke a reaction from the people about to be colonized" (Freire, 1985, p. 183, cited in Graveline, p. 36). Resistance is an inevitable result of colonization. My family has a history of resistance and I am proud of this fact. This inherited resistance only accounted for part of my feelings of resistance.

Hampton cites Wolcott (1987) as demonstrating that "the resistance and hostility of Native students is an assertion of Indian integrity. If educators realize that they are agents of cultural brainwashing rather than altruistic helpers, much that is otherwise incomprehensible becomes self-evident" (cited in Hampton, 1995, p. 35). The educational system as a suppressor of the Aboriginal consciousness explains another part of my resistance.

Another painful aspect of my resistance grew from a feeling that I was struggling with the values that were the basis of my Native identity and integrity. If I compromised those values I would compromise my Native identity. As I am half-blood, have a white complexion, and grew up off the reserve, I have felt that my Native identity was very fragile and needed a strong defense. The struggle felt like a life and death contest for survival. Graveline (1998) suggests that resistance is a survival strategy. Her words validate my extreme feelings. As feelings must be addressed I sought a way to resolve this part of my resistance.

### ***Research gifts, discoveries and understandings***

As a result of my personal struggle I became fascinated with and deeply engaged with the relatively new phenomenon of Native research conducted and written by Native researchers and the works of some culturally sensitive non-Native researchers. I decided to explore how other Native people handled academic research.

While engaged in this journey through First Nations research, I serendipitously discovered that two very basic and critical things were happening to me or for me. First,

throughout the process of reading various authors I found that I was bestowed with gifts. These were cultural gifts in the form of values, cultural patterns, symbols, principles and metaphors. What these gifts would mean to me I did not initially understand

Second, while reflecting upon my research endeavors, I came to the realization that written works of Native researchers were performing an important function or service for me. They provided a necessary opportunity for what I call cultural mirroring through the process of articulation of the implicit and explicit knowledge of Native culture within oneself. Native research was like a mirror that was reflecting something that I as a Native student needed and had not been receiving in the university setting. I had never had a Native professor and had met very few Native students in my programs. Through this cultural mirroring, I found that my identity was being supported, validated and enlarged. Once this process occurred I discovered that my defensiveness abated. An inner peace began to emerge as my feelings were addressed.

With the lessening of resistance and defensiveness my encounters with First Nations research yielded gifts, discoveries and understandings that I could fashion into a thesis. First, I recognized that Native authors were consistently interlacing their works with concepts and values from a traditional Native world-view, thus infusing their work with critical cultural cues and codes. I was able to recognize these as markers for a different world-view. These cultural codes, concepts and values were what granted a unique shape to Native research and became the cultural gifts that were given to me during my journey through Native research. Second, I found myself interacting with these cultural cues and codes, my gifts, in such a way as to augment my Native identity

and my cultural knowledge base through a process of cultural mirroring and articulation. Thirdly, I reasoned that philosophically Native research often was proceeding out of a different sense of reality than most academic research was founded upon. The cultural themes, notions, principles, patterns and cues that I had encountered in Native research were founded upon and proceeded out of an Aboriginal sense of reality--spirituality. In light of this I understood that spirituality animates all Native research. Fourthly, I concluded that in light of these basic philosophical and cultural differences, that Native research could be perceived as a unique genre of research. I drew upon new genre theory, such as articulated by, Caroline Miller (1984), Amy J. Devitt (1993), M. A. K. Halliday (1978), and John Swales (1990), to support my inference. Within this thesis I narrated these findings that have resulted from my gratifying walk and talk with Native research.

## **Chapter Two: The Mirror**

### ***My basket of cultural gifts***

When I looked in to the mirror of Native research I heard a conversation. This research conversation felt different from other research that I had encountered at university. And yet, it felt familiar, comfortable. One of the ways that Aboriginal research was different was the manner in which the content was presented. The many voices spoke of ideas and values in a Native style of cultural patterning. Cultural patterning encompasses thought structures of a specific culture that are reflected in repeated language usage and behaviours. It was this Native cultural patterning that had such a familiar, comfortable feel. Cultural patterning, in the repeated forms of word usage, metaphors, concepts, behaviours, pictures, art forms, values, pedagogical tools, and principles, were the gifts that were given to me.

In olden times, when a member of my tribe was going on a journey the rest of the tribe showers him with gifts. "Things" had a meaning in that they could be given away as gifts in order to strengthen relationships. Possession was meaningless since all resources were shared equally amongst the tribe. As I begin my post-graduate journey Native authors have showered me with cultural gifts in the form of cultural knowledge. I have carefully gathered them in my basket. Showing the gifts in my basket is my way of doing a type of literature review.

The greatest gift that I was given was courage. Within a dominant educational setting it takes courage for me to talk about Native cultural knowledge that I feel is valid for research. I am used to keeping my thoughts to myself in these areas.

The next greatest gift that I have received is an understanding of resistance. Instead of resisting by withdrawing, I can resist by participating in change within the academic setting. By calling upon cues and codes from a Native world-view, this thesis represents a resistance to dominant forms of academic representation that reflect Euro-western world-view. Graveline (1998) informs me that "cultural knowledge is an essential component of cultural resistance" (p. 41). Hence, for me just the physical act of formally recording these Native cultural patterns at this juncture in my education represents an act of resistance for me. Resistance is a survival strategy that assures the continuance of Native consciousness.

As I see myself as a neophyte in the area of my own culture, like a young child, I need the opportunity to practice the expression and utilization of cultural principles, values, and codes. These are my cultural ABC's so to speak. Opportunities to practice and express are basic to the education process in any culture or society. In this sense my thesis becomes a process of cultural nurturing from the university.

### ***Organizing principles rooted in tribal sensibilities***

I received many gifts from Eber Hampton (1993). Primarily, he showed me how to follow the pattern of other Native authors who use "organizing principles rooted in tribal or natural sensibilities" (p. 281) within their works. For example, Lincoln and Slagle (1987) organize their book *The Good Red Road: Passage into Native America* into four narrative sections based on the natural seasons of the year and reflecting the medicine wheel metaphor. By using the medicine wheel as an organizing pattern rooted

in tribal culture, the authors hope to “minimize academic scaffolding” and “to root scholarship in living experience and dialogical interaction” (cited in Hampton, 1993, p. 281). In a similar fashion Hampton uses a six direction circular pattern of four areas of east/spring, south/summer, west/fall and north/winter plus heaven above and earth below as an organizing principle for his data. The medicine wheel typology an organizing principle is rooted in Native world-view. The medicine wheel typology represents the cosmology of Native peoples depicting metaphorically that the order of the world is interconnected and interrelated. This type of patterning creates the sense of cultural *comfort* which I have craved and received.

### ***Cultural gifts of Native patterning***

#### ***Native world-view: Spirituality***

*Spirituality, in Aboriginal discourse, is not a system of beliefs that can be defined like a religion; it is a way of life in which people acknowledge that every element of the material world is in some sense infused with spirit, and all human behaviour is affected by, and in turn has an effect in, a non-material, spiritual realm. (RCAP<sup>4</sup>, Vol. 1, Chap. 15, paragraph 8 [On-line version]*

It is necessary to explore the notion of spirituality since I cannot speak of the gifts from the Native authors without directly addressing spirituality. In the traditional Native world-view all life is spiritual and as such, it is important to be conscious of the spiritual root of existence. This spiritual consciousness extends to all aspects of life, all interactions, and all political/social institutions. All life is equal on this plane of

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<sup>4</sup> RCAP refers to the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples. I have used the On-line version, Institute of Indigenous Government: RCAP Access.

existence, meaning that man does not dominate other manifestations of life. All have an equal right to existence. Because of the spiritual base, all life is inter-connected. This interconnectedness is captured within the sacred web of relationships; all life is related. Since all life is inter-connected, attention to balance and harmony are important aspects of Native lifestyle. Spirituality is the whole that circumscribes all of life including education. I cannot talk of one aspect of this life that does not have a spiritual dimension. Spirituality is not involved with an institution but is a reflection of the reality of life. The holistic view permeates all aspects of Native life and thinking. Consequently, all indigenous organizing principles used in research and education must have a spiritual genesis.

In contrast, within Euro-Canadian culture, spirituality typically falls within the domain of religious institutions and is separated from other cultural institutions. Education often has little to do with spiritual domains. There is a compartmentalization and separation of the aspects of life rather than inter-connectedness. Compartmentalization can be disconcerting for Native peoples, even painful. Unfortunately, the compartmentalized Euro-Canadian perspective, according to Patricia Monture-Angus (1995), “is never discussed as a perspective but as rational and reasoned truth. The uncultural (White/Canadian) truth is never described as cultural or racially biased. When another view of the world is introduced it is written off as emotional and not objective (irrational)...” (p.62). Certain strains of academic experience within the university setting train students to be ‘objective’. Academic objective training purposefully excludes feelings. Feelings are to be detached from academic thinking.



Monture-Angus (1995) explains that Eurocentric “academic understanding is more than mere thoughts and ideas. As it involves sanctioning of thoughts and ideas, it is fundamentally about sanctioning knowledge. Knowledge only involves those things that can be objectively proven” (p.39). Traditionally, feelings, which have important spiritual connections, have not been an acceptable source of knowledge in university. This results in part from the Western world’s desire for a theory of knowledge wherein to know means to represent accurately what is outside of the mind. However, the Native view is deeply concerned with representing accurately what is inside the mind and heart/spirit.

### ***Spiritual principles***

Most Native authors address the spiritual dimension of life within their works by capturing this dimension through the organizing principles of their typology. Some typical spiritual principles frequently encountered are prayer, inwarding, dreams, visions and prophecies. As cultural signs each one possesses specific meaning potential. I weave the meanings that spoke to me in each of the following sections.

#### ***i.) Prayer.***

According to Willie Ermine (1995) Western society seeks knowledge through the physical plane of life exploring the outer world. Traditionally, Aboriginals seek knowledge within a different knowledge paradigm. They seek knowledge through a being’s relationship to the spiritual world and the cosmos. Prayer becomes a way to obtain knowledge. I note that Volume 21 of the *Canadian Journal of Native Education* begins with a prayer to the Great Spirit. The Volume 21 supplement of this journal

documents the First Biannual Indigenous Scholars' Conference. This conference began and ended with prayers and blessings. In my work on this thesis I pray to my Creator to help me to understand. He wants me to succeed. I ask him to help me grow in the best way for me.

*ii.) Inwarding.*

Prayer assists in the process of exploring one's inner space. This inner search is called "inwarding". Archibald and White (1993) speak of going inward: "Ellen: They always say if you don't go inside, you don't look at yourself inside, you're not going to be learning deeply. Surface learning, it would be just on the top of the brain they said" (p. 152). Native traditions teach us to search for an inner knowledge through deep guided reflection. Tribal rituals such as sweat lodges can assist in this inward journey often resulting in spiritual manifestations. These manifestations may be dreams or visions, both of which are a valid source of knowledge.

*iii.) Dreams.*

Dreams are a source of knowledge and guidance that derive from inner space. Stan Wilson (1995) told of a dream of an old emaciated white settler. He could not get the dream out of his mind. Through time and good talks with others a meaning came to him. Dreams are an important source of cultural meaning.

*iv.) Visions.*

Visions help one connect with the spiritual world. Johnson (1976) explains that:

no man [sic] begins to be until he has seen his vision. Before this event life is without purpose; life is shallow and empty; actions have no purpose, have no meaning quotes Johnson. . . What makes the search difficult is that the vision is not to be sought outside of oneself: nor is it to be sought outside of one's being. Rather it must be sought within one's inner substance and found therein. Since it will be found within a person's inner self, the search must be conducted alone. (p. 114, cited in Ermine, 1995, p. 109)

To use vision within research is not only appropriate but also fundamental. Many of the Old Ones through their vision knew that treaties must be made with the education of the seven generations in mind. Chief Shingwauk (Miller, 1996) was such a leader. He had a vision. He wanted a "teaching wigwam" so that his people could, by learning European ways, adapt to and thrive in the new age that was coming to their lands" (p. 6).

Dennis H. McPherson & J. Douglas Rabb (1993) suggests "that the vision quest plays an essential role in re-enforcing Native values . . . one of the things discovered during the vision quest is that we are not really apart from the earth and other people" (p. 100). With this fundamental knowledge we are able to understand that good will for other people and the rest of the world is not self-sacrifice but what is best for the self. This type of vision is what supports the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace and the search for harmony.

*v.) Prophecies.*

Prophecies can be used to help people understand the happenings of this world.

From First Nations persons we heard that prophecies foretell a dark night when teachings given at the foundation of the world will be almost forgotten, when the elders who are the keepers of wisdom will fall asleep, thinking that there is no longer anyone to listen to their counsel. 'In our history it tells us of a prophecy of the seventh fire, fire representing time, eras. In that prophecy, it says that in the time of seventh fire a new people will emerge to retrace the steps of our grandfathers, to retrieve the things that were lost but not of our own accord. (Charles Nelson, Roseau River, Manitoba, 8 December 1992, RCAP, On-line version, Vol. 1, paragraph 3)

According to my uncle Gawithre prophesies fall into the sacred realm and should be shared only at appropriate times.

#### *vi Sacredness*

Dreams, visions and prophecies are an important part of the spiritual cosmology of Native people and are entirely appropriate for research. However, I must present a caveat. Having a spiritual view of life means that many words are sacred and as such should not be shared with just anyone or should not be in print. Sacred is different than sensitive. Sensitive has an emotional component to it, that while important, misses the spiritual ingredient that renders words and thoughts as sacred. At the First Biannual Indigenous Scholars' Conference, the blessings and opening remarks of Tom Porter are not recorded out of respect for his wishes. Because his words are sacred they were not printed.

#### ***Metaphors***

##### ***i.) The Sacred Circle: Cosmological Metaphor***

The Sacred Circle or Medicine Wheel, an important cosmological metaphor, is utilized by many as a powerful Indigenous organizing principle. Although the circle as a

metaphor is used by many cultures, the sacred circle possesses a particular meaning potential within Native research. The circle helps us to think holistically. Sioui (1992) uses the Sacred Circle of Life to explicate and ground his work in Native philosophy and belief.

The Sacred Circle portrays:

the American genius, acknowledging as it does the universal interdependence of all beings, physical and spiritual, [trying] by every available means to establish intellectual and emotional contact between them, so as to guarantee them -- for they are all 'relatives' -- abundance, equity, and, therefore, peace. This is the sacred circle of life, which is opposed to the evolutionary conception of the world wherein beings are unequal, and are often negated, jostled, and made obsolete by others who seem adapted to evolution. (p. xxi)

The power of the Aboriginal universe acts according to circles. Within the circle's cyclical movements of four, Sioui argues that all Native people can, should and will find personal strength and meaning by finding their place within the Sacred Circle. One finds strength by intersecting with the power of the universe.

There are many variations of the Medicine Wheel. It is a way of representing the order of the universe, which always acts according to circles. It is a circle of relations wherein all life is included within the circle in order to guarantee equality and peace. The wheel captures the notion of movement--"possessions and wealth circulated freely, according to the law of the great circle of relations" (Ibid., p. 13). Within the circle people can freely discover their own vision, the meaning of their life, and their religion. There are many paths around the wheel but no one travels the path without effecting all other aspects of life, all relations. The flexibility of the Medicine Wheel allows it to be utilized and applied as an organizer of meaning in many areas. (See Appendix B for examples of various interpretations of the Medicine Wheels.) This same flexibility

makes cultural expropriation easily executed (See Appendix C for Internet examples of appropriation).

Marie Battiste and Jean Barman (1995) use this type of organizing principle within their book *The circle unfolds*. The title itself refers to the Sacred Circle which emphasizes "the unity, continuity, and interconnectedness of each issue [within the book]" (p. xv). The unfolding of the circle shows Native education in dynamic process as we, as Native peoples, visualize our educational future. Battiste and Barman employ the door image so familiar to me as a member of the Haudenosaunee. The circle begins at the Eastern Door, reconceptualizing education, where light from the dawn and light from spring emanate bringing new life and new beginnings. Next, we open the Southern Door, connecting with and maintaining our relations, which represents summer and our emotional health. We maintain our health through our connections with language, traditions, and culture. Meeting the challenge of incoherence through the Western Door, we accept the dying of the grass and the harsher realities of our history and present educational realities. By way of the Northern Door First Nations education is transformed. We greet Aboriginal peoples with their legacy of endurance, contradiction, resistance, pain and survival

Within the book *The circle unfolds* Sharilyn Calliou (1995) in *Peacekeeping actions at home: A medicine wheel model for peacekeeping pedagogy*, constructs a peacekeeping pedagogy from within the medicine wheel and the Iroquois Great Law of peace. From the circle typology she portrays the continuousness and interconnectedness of events and conditions surrounding racism, multiculturalism, antiracism and

peacekeeping. From the Great Law of Peace she draw upon notions of unconditional consensus, equality, respect, compassion, participatory democracy, strength, courage, and reverence and hopes that these principles would be taught within the Native curriculum.

*ii.) Fundamental cultural metaphors*

The uses of indigenous organizing principles create numerous cultural metaphors for the Native mind and spirit to work through. Cultural metaphors are particularly important to Native research, as metaphors reflect the relationship style inherent in Native languages. Native languages are constructed around verbs in order to show relationships. Ethnologist Daniel Garrison Brinton (1868) describes the construction of Amerindian linguistic groups as a polysynthetic construction. This type of linguistic construction "seeks to unite in the most intimate manner all relations and modifications with the leading ideas, to merge one in the other by altering the forms of the words themselves and welding them together, to express the whole in one word" (cited in Sioui, 1992, p. 11). Similarly, metaphors constructs meaning holistically by welding meanings together in one figure such as the Medicine Wheel or the sacred circle. Metaphors<sup>5</sup> such as these can be seen as indigenous knowledge packages that transmit notions of spiritual relationships. Jo-ann Archibald (1993) writes "when I recall the power of her metaphors: trees, baskets, canoes, hair, paths, air/body. I see these metaphoric images so vividly, and when I do the comparison and connection to life considerations is so clear, so evident (p. 62). In the Native culture Metaphors are used as aids to reinforce learning and understanding.

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<sup>5</sup> I am not suggesting that metaphors are the sole property of Native peoples.

There are numerous metaphors that are reflective of Native world-view which can be used to shape and explain research notions. In a collaboration between Ellen White and Jo-ann Archibald (1993), the latter states that “educators working with First Nations learners are given fundamental metaphors that can be transformed to contemporary educational practices” (p. 150). These fundamental metaphors transform easily because their traditional use was educational in the Native setting. Examples of such are walking, talking, journey, the path, the good red road, the feather, gifts, eagle, turtle, beads, pipe, drum beat, sunrise, smoke, Longhouse, etc. These metaphors are imbued with particular cultural meanings for those who can listen and hear.

I mentioned at the beginning how I realized through my searching and researching that my journey has taken the form of a circle as I circle back to my roots, as I find meaning and understanding, and as I acquire Native values to enrich my spiritual life.

### *Native Values*

Other Native and non-native authors assume Native cosmology and center their ideas and research on Native values that flow as a logical consequence from Native world-belief. These values become the warp and weft of all Native research. They are valuable stays that can guide Native research through Western ideology. While these values are not unique to Native culture, they, like other Native cultural patterns, possess a meaning potential specific to the Native world-view. I have found that these values are complex and have great depth. It takes time, teaching and effort to understand the profundity of each Native value. I feel one must tread carefully when the metaphysical



reality of Native belief is assumed. The values must be firmly anchored in Native reality or else the values could become confused with Western notions. Values that touched me deeply are respect, honour, sharing, healing and justice

*i.) Respect.*

For Native peoples respect is a “way of being in the world which honours the harmonious nature and interconnections of all life” (Hill, 1995, p.32). Respect is a result of living the Native belief system. A human being that manifests respect understands that his or her relationship with all things and all forms of life is based on mutual dependence, actions and influence. Monture-Angus (1995) declares that “the ways of my people teach that there is a special beauty in living according to the old First Nations ways. These old ways teach us how to live in respect of creation” (p. 26). Respect is a value that I have come to realize must permeate all my research endeavors.

Celia Haig-Brown as a non-Native researcher has grounded her work within the Native world-view and reality by maintaining a vigilante air of respect. I am impressed with the care and sensitivity that non-native researchers such as Haig-Brown have adopted when researching within the Native domain. Archibald (1993) states that “sensitive, respectful non-aboriginal educators and researchers have a role and responsibility to place Elder’s knowledge in academe” (p. 142). Haig-Brown and Archibald (1996) wrote an article *Transforming First Nation research with respect and power*. The authors affirm that research must focus “on an ethics that is sensitive to and respectful of participants and their contexts...we seek ethical and respectful knowledge production” (p. 246-247). Thus respect becomes a facilitator of bringing First Nations

contexts and research together for knowledge production. Archibald (1994) enjoins researchers to conduct their activities with mutual respect.

However, respect understood in an Euro-western world-view is not the same notion of respect within the Native world-view. The Native notion of respect flows out a spiritual understanding of all aspects of life. As such the addition of the Native notion of respect as an integral research ingredient has the critical result of facilitating healing for all peoples involved. Rolling Thunder counsels that “to bring about the healing of an individual or nation depends on respect for all things that have life including the rocks, the mountains and the waters. We should show our respect for all things and all people.” (Garnier, 1990, p. 64).

Sheila Te Hennepe's (1994) article *Issues of respect: Reflections of First Nations Students' Experiences in Post-secondary anthropology classrooms* documents the grief, anger and confusion resulting from a lack of respect by an anthropology professor. Her respectful article facilitated a healing dimension for the Native students involved. Within the article she also emphasizes the importance of respecting the First Nations discourse of stories and lived experiences. Native stories are to be taken seriously. They are to be shared with the expectation that “the listeners will make their own meaning, that they will be challenged to learn something from the stories . . . the storyteller expects the listener to participate in the tale whenever it makes sense for him or her to do so” (p.207). Te Hennepe advises readers that they need to possess a mind of respect when encountering the Native culture.

Several authors counsel researchers to examine their motives and methods to see if their research practices respect First Nations ways. Archibald (1994) gives Aboriginal Peoples a series of thoughtful questions with which to guide their research writings:

1. Are my motives and methods grounded in First Nations ways?
2. Is respect demonstrated to the people and their culture in the research context?
3. Are the stories they have shared about themselves and their place represented in a manner that is true to their cultural discourse. (p. 190)

I find these questions quite useful guidelines that one can ask of oneself in order to retain respect and to ensure that research is situated within Native culture.

Russell Bishop (1996) is concerned with mutual respect between researchers and participants within the Maori community. He formulated some questions to guide research issues in a respectful manner.

*Initiation* Who initiated the research and why? What were the goals of the project? Who set the goals? Who designed the work?

*Benefits* What benefits will there be? Who gets the benefits? What assessment and evaluation procedures will be used to establish benefits? What difference will this study make for Maori? How does this study support Maori cultural and language aspirations? Who decides on the methods and procedures of assessment and evaluation?

*Representation* What constitutes an adequate depiction of social reality? Whose interests, needs and concerns does the text represent? How were the goals and major questions of the study established? How were the tasks allocated? What agency do individuals or groups have? Whose voice is heard? Who did the work?

*Legitimation* What authority does the text have? Who is going to process the data? Who is going to consider the results of the processing? What happens to the results? Who defines what is accurate, true and complete in a text? Who theorizes the findings?

*Accountability* Who is the researcher accountable to? Who is to have accessibility to the research findings? Who has control over the distribution of the knowledge? (p. 22)

I have found these questions helpful in thinking about the “good talks” (interviews) that I had with my aunts and uncles to insure respectful thoughts and actions.

*ii.) Honour.*

Honor is another cultural value upon which native researchers can base their research. Honor is a way to show respect to others. The Canadian Journal of Native Education formulated Volume 21 (1995) around the concept of honoring the experiences of Post-secondary graduates and what they have to say about those experiences. These words have a sacred quality as they are spoken from the heart. These words are represented on paper to nourish the future generations. Traditional Natives also honor the traditions and words of our Elders. We honor their life stories inscribed in books like *Life lived like a story* (Sidney, Smith & Ned, 1990) and *Resistance and renewal* (Haig-Brown, 1988). We take what wisdom we see there. Brant (1994) affirms that “as a writer, I must honor my ancestors, and the people I respect and love through the written way” (p. 3). When I have good talks with my relatives I think of how I can honor them. I can take care in how I re-present their stories that they are generously sharing with me.

*iii.) Sharing.*

As I read the writings of many Aboriginal people who were experiencing problems and concerns with academic research, I was struck by the outpouring of sharing that was contained within these works. Archibald captures the essence of this flow of sharing:

I want to share some of my understandings about ethnographic research in First Nations contexts with other researchers so they can incorporate this knowledge

into their research practices. An essential Sto:lo tradition is to share with others who indicate a need. We believe that by sharing knowledge we share the power of that knowledge, which ultimately benefits the individual, family, community, and the First Nations. We believe knowledge gains power, as it is shared. This sharing of knowledge and understanding has been and still is an important cultural responsibility. (Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996, p. 251)

As a new Native researcher I had a definite need. Through this sharing from other Native researchers and educators I felt bolstered up, connected, and rooted. This power of knowledge that is shared grows like a web throughout Native academics, hopefully drawing us together.

Sharing is a Native value upon which one can anchor Native research. Sharing is the:

ability to recognize, to feel and to understand the interdependence and interrelatedness of all that life promotes...to maintain harmony and balance within the collective requires the ability to act in a cooperative and generous manner for the purpose of experiencing the enjoyment and well-being of others. (Hill, 1995, p. 34)

Sharing reflects the motion that circulates in the universe. Sharing is an appropriate research motive as well as an important dissemination of power and resources.

#### *iv.) Healing*

Through the recognition of the spiritual aspects of life wherein all life is interconnected, attention to balance and harmony becomes an important aspect of Native lifestyle. Healing is the search for harmony and balance acquired by treating emotions with honor and respect. Only then can we attain reason (Sioui, 1992). "It is necessary to deal in the first place with the emotions [of people], to lift up the spirits so as to sit down [together] and think clearly" (Oren Lyons, cited by Sioui, 1992, p.5). The traditional objectivity of Enlightened thought detaches reason from emotion whereas Native values

seek reason through respecting and honoring emotions. Healing is a critical and welcome value in Native research efforts. *The Canadian Journal of Education*, Vol. 21, Number 2, 1995, has devoted its entire issue to the relationship between education and healing making this issue a valuable resource. Because few Native people have not been affected by abuse or violence of some kind, I think it is so important to have an educational venue where feelings are first addressed so that people can think clearly. I see this as the first principle in a Native concept of rationality.

Rupert Ross (1996) describes how a meeting with Natives living at Hollow Water captures this principle of addressing people's feelings first:

As the first Principle in *The Sacred Tree* is phrased: 'It is . . . possible to understand something only if we understand how it is connected to everything else.' Within that teaching I could not 'understand' the people who came into my first circle at Hollow Water without first understanding, for instance, that one of them had come to work intensely 'connected to' her daughter's school trip, while the other came vibrantly 'connected to' the dew on the spiderweb. Because they were given an opportunity to express those connections, everyone could come to an understanding of 'who-they-were-that-morning.' They could then begin to relate to each other in healthy ways . . . In this way, Hollow Water does its best to recognize the wholeness of each person in everything they do. They know that everyone has a life beyond their workplace, a life that cannot be put in a separate compartment and ignores for eight (or fourteen) hours a day . . . What is 'in you' from home is, without doubt, still 'in you' at work, affecting what you think, say, feel and do. To deny this is to deny reality--better to recognize that reality by making room for it at work." (p. 142-143)

Ross states that smoothing the transition from home to work actually improved work performance.

I will never forget one little boy, Tim,<sup>6</sup> in a class I was teaching in during my practicum. Tim was considered 'hyperactive' by school standards. It was difficult to get

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<sup>6</sup> Tim is not his real name.

him to attend to his work. One weekend Tim had gone camping. He had discovered a rabbit in the forest, and started chasing it. The rabbit ended up running over a cliff and Tim, hot in pursuit, almost went over with it. Come Monday morning Tim was all excited about his adventure. This was who-he-was-that-morning. I listened attentively to his story. I responded with excitement. Here was an experience that could blossom into a great learning moment. Here was energy to act! Here was something really interesting for show and tell or to put into his journal. There would be little need to drive him to do this work. There was so much energy to act that I was sure that he could create a whole booklet with pictures and all. Then, he could read that booklet to others. What a wonderful experience it could be for him. Sadly, it did not happen that way. Tim was not given an opportunity to express who-he-was-that-morning. He was told to be quiet about the rabbit, and when his energy wouldn't allow that, a tearful Tim was sent to the office by a very irate teacher.

I have a vision of education that addresses feelings first as the only road to true rationality. I see a school of students who are respected enough that that they can be seen for who-they-are-this-day in the reality of the moment.

### ***Pedagogical tools***

Native researchers also organize their works around important pedagogical tools. These pedagogical tools are rooted within the values and beliefs of the Native culture. Once again these tools may not be unique to Native culture but their meaning potential draws their power from the Native conception of reality. Prevalent tools encountered in

Native research are healing circles, oral tradition and storytelling, good talks and teachings from those further down the path, the trickster, and fundamental cultural metaphors

*i. Healing circles*

According to Michael Anthony Hart (1995) sharing circles are used for teaching, helping, facilitating discussion and supporting. The meaning potential contained within the sharing circle is indicative of the fact that everyone has an equal place in the social circle. In sharing circles everyone has a chance to speak and is never interrupted emphasizing the values of non-interference and listening. "Sharing circles thus reflect the basic philosophical world-view of traditional First Nations peoples. . . . First Nations traditions do not dissect their world into pieces for inspection, but recognize the world as a whole with all its connected components and offering to teach and heal (Gilchrist, 1994, as quoted by Hart, 1995, p. 70-71). In this way the sharing circles are an important component of teaching and learning and healing. Healing circles are an important component of justice. Sharing circles allow First Nations peoples to rely on themselves and not professionals or experts. I remember friends and family gathering around in a healing circle after a funeral service of a family member. We all took turns saying what was in our hearts this day. It is difficult to capture in words how beneficial this circle experience was to my personal healing.

*ii) Oral tradition and storytelling*

Storytelling is a powerful pedagogical tool that directly stems from native oral tradition. "Children were taught without knowing--through stories. Through stories, you



are tapping into the subconscious mind” (White & Archibald, 1993, p. 152). This is the power of the story. It is a process of circulating knowledge. The power of storytelling has impacted greatly in the area of Native research. For Native people to abandon story telling is to abandon who we are and how we think. It is to abandon what we know and where we know it. It is to lose the witness of our life (Brant, 1994).

My concept of oral tradition had been laced with colonial thoughts of superiority-- oral tradition was the characteristic of inferior people. The assumption was that these inferior people had not progressed far enough in the evolutionary scale to develop text in order to adequately transmit and preserve knowledge. However, in the Native tradition transmitting knowledge is more than the linear dimensions of text. The RCAP declares that:

Transmission of knowledge about living, or just plain information, in an oral culture requires personal contact – or at least it did until the advent of radio and television. This personal communication therefore takes place in a context that is shared by speaker and listener, and many of the spaces in the verbal content can be filled in by the context. [On-line version, Vol. 1, p. 6]

There are several types of story telling. There is the truth of the story of each individual’s life wherein we speak from ourselves, for ourselves. In a native culture not speaking from one’s self is a violation. If you think of everyone as a book with himself or herself as the author then to comment on someone else’s words would be similar to plagiarism. Each person maintains their own copyright of their lives. The significance of this value of speaking for oneself is that it situates the position of knowledge within each person. This is what makes each person’s story so valuable.

Celia Haig-Brown (1993) has utilized storytelling as mutual exploration, and co-investigations in her research on Aboriginal peoples. Through stories recorded in her book I learned a lot about the truth of my life and myself. Other stories become mirrors of my life wherein I can see and own my life. These truths were hidden from me until I looked into the mirror of other's lives. Haig-Brown (1992) argues that "stories convey knowledge within the context of the complexity of human affairs, expanding an understanding of other people and our sense of community with them" (p. 24). Stories capture our human complexity! They can be seen as a way of representing truth, therefore, stories have power. I drew power from other Native people's stories. This power enabled me to proceed in my educational struggles.

Beth Brant (1994) argues that through the act of "telling stories for all to hear, we [the reader] become witness to the truth of Native lives" (p. 12). She enjoins Native peoples to write their stories as a witness of Native history and the reality of the present, as a witness of continued resistance to colonialism and the terror of racism. What kind of power can stories construct? Brant explicates that Native women's writing is a gift of powers:

Our spirit, our sweat, our tears, our laughter, our love, our anger, our bodies are distilled into words that we bead together to make power. Not power *over* anything. Power. Power that speaks to hearts as well as to our minds. (p. 8)

I understand this power as the power to be, the power of the circle of the universe, the power to feel, to think, to grow, to express, and to share. This is a power that is easily and freely shared with no contamination of dominance, advantage or superiority. Brant firmly believes that "when Native peoples have the opportunities to do our own editing

and writing, a remarkable thing happens. This thing is called *telling the truth for ourselves*" (Ibid., p. 13). She observes that writing becomes "the Good Medicine that is necessary to our continuation into wholeness. And when we are whole our voices sail into the lake of *all* human experiences. The ripple-ripple effect is inevitable, vast and transcendent" (Ibid.). Brant teaches me of the sacred aspect of writing our stories--how I can witness, how I can heal and how I can impact.

Respecting the Native way of storytelling is important. Brant expresses that "the story is always enough for me, but editors insist on explanations, details. Does it matter how he got from here to there? Does it matter? Isn't story why we are here, no matter what the mode of transportation" (Ibid. p. 106). When my aunt tells me a story, it is like she has scissors. She can reach back in time and cut out a *real* conversation between two people. What a gift! Maybe to others her stories would seem fragmented, disconnected and the dreaded "inappropriate" word. Through her story technique I feel a deep connection to the people in her story.

My mother used to tell me many Native stories when I was little but I seem to have forgotten most of them as she has forgotten many of the ones her father told her. I hope that as I circle back to my roots those stories will return to me. I need these. The wonderful thing about Native stories is that each person is granted the respect to discover what that meaning potential is for him or her this day.

*iii) Good talks and teachings from further down the path*

Another powerful pedagogical tool is the teachings of the Grandfather/Grandmother or Elder. This concept is bound up with respect and wisdom (a

special kind of knowledge) and reflects a peace-oriented paradigm. Grandparents and Elders have traveled much further down the path of life. They can turn around and advise the upcoming generation about what that path is like further on. The elders warn that:

although literacy is a good thing . . . . books must not become our grandmothers and our grandfathers . . . . Native educators who have been schooled in the modern educational system must be prepared to accept and to take on the roles of the grandmothers and the grandfathers, who taught us, so that we can teach the children. With this in mind education becomes a responsibility of giving and taking--sharing with others. (Akan, 1993, p. 210)

Its funny how you don't even have to listen at the time to your Grandparents (see Appendix A # 3). Somehow their words have the power to come back to you when you need them. I think they know that and tell their wisdom in patience. Shirley Stirling (1995) arranges her article around her grandmothers' pedagogy as models for contemporary Native education. She speaks of the gifts that grandmothers can bestow to their descendants. "It was not what she said but how she said it. She took me seriously. She treated me as an equal" (p. 123). Grandmothers fulfill the philosophy of the circle--the responsibility of sharing life with the new faces.

I never had a Native grandfather. He died before I was born. I would like to have had the opportunity to meet him. He spoke seven languages. It is said that he knew every word in the English dictionary! He loved words. He never raised his voice in anger. I guess he is teaching me even though he is gone on. I have been reading Georges Sioui (1992). Reading Sioui's book *feels* like a grandfather talking to me. He tells me the things I need to know in a way I need to be told.

Linda Akan's (1993) grandparents had counseled her thus "Grandchild, don't ever forget who you are. Someday you are going to need it" (p. 191). Grandparents help us

with our identity and admonish us not to forget. Within Akan's article she wrote of a good talk she had with a Sauteaux Elder, Alfred Manitopeyes, about education. Here is where I learned of the notion of "good talks". Akan says that young people need good talks. Interpreting Manitopeyes she states that:

young people demand moral guidance and need character training...the Elder counsels not to 'let a child go,' implying that adults and educators should also consider the spiritual and psychological well-being of a child's development. The result of not having a 'good talk' may be 'poverty' for a young person, so the Elder says 'it is not good for a child to be alone with their thoughts. This is not right. (p. 214)

To have good talks with Grandparents and Elders makes one *rich* spiritually and psychologically (See Appendix A # 4). Good talks root the individual as to ones' place in the world.

Good talks depend upon repetition. Akan (1993) advises that repetition helps us "draw verbal circles of existence." Hampton (1993) talks of the iterative style. The iterative structure "progresses in a spiral that adds a little with each repetition of a theme. . . It implies a circular movement in both the natural and spiritual world" (Hampton, 1994, p. 162). Repetition also becomes an important pedagogical tool for Native peoples. The stories within good talks provide a continual opportunity for learning. A good talk story always has something new to teach with each telling and grows along with us revealing the appropriate level of meaning at the appropriate time. "Teaching through talking is tracing the chain of being with words; it is providing a cognitive map so students can walk around in life" (Akan, 1993, p. 214).

*iv) The Trickster*

The use of the trickster is a cogent pedagogical tool that many Native researchers use. The RCAP explains that the trickster:

appears in differing guises in the traditions of various nations across Canada – as Coyote, Hare, Nanabush, Old Man, Raven, Wesakychak, Kluskap. Trickster is half spirit and half human. He is creator and spoiler, hero and clown, capable of noble deeds and gross self-indulgence. He is unpredictable, one minute inspiring awe for his creativity, the next moment provoking laughter at his foolishness. The profusion of stories and the repetition of themes involving this character are often referred to as The Trickster Cycle. [On-line edition]

I found the following authors using this subtle device: Hampton (1993), the trickster and the lost needle; Archibald et al (1995), renamed the Trickster story “Old Man Coyote” in order to make it theirs. Ermine (1995) speaks of the trickster as a character that can advise us on how we may travel along the path of knowledge as we constantly step into the unknown.

The trickster-transformer continues to guide our experiences into the deep reaches of the psyche and the unfathomable mystery of being. The Old Ones knew of this character who directs us around inner space and saw in him the potential for much deeper exploration into and knowledge from the self. (p. 105)

Our journey within this life is still so incomplete; we need that trickster to guide our reflections. Trickster can make you laugh at yourself. “As we laugh we will become aware at some point, that we are laughing at ourselves and perhaps realize that we will all have some of the Trickster in ourselves” (Dumont, 1981, p.3). According to Dumont the trickster appears in Native mythology as a child’s tool to control the child’s developing ego. The trickster often engages in character flaws in ways that make that flaw appear funny, tragic, clownish, or absurd. In this manner the character flaw, the behavior, is

made fun of but not the child. As a consequence, the child's ego is controlled and his self-esteem remains intact (Ross, 1992). By utilizing this style of pedagogical tool, a child can safely learn with both heart and mind. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this pedagogical tool. As mentioned before in the Native world-view the heart and mind can not be separated; thoughts must be accompanied by feelings. Monture-Angus (1996) calls this process 'double-understanding' (p. 38). The Trickster tool allows learning to safely include both heart and mind. I suggest that this is a holistic approach to learning that is critically missing in the Western style of education. The Trickster can be a remedy for the hostility (Hampton, 1992, p.37) contained within the structure of Western education

### *Summary*

I do not assume that all of these previous patterns hold true for all American Natives. I recognize that each tribe has its culture. My basket of cultural gifts from these authors create a collection of thoughts, styles, patterns, and metaphors that are used in Native research as organizing principles and notions that are rooted in tribal or natural sensibilities. When rooted in the Native world-view, in the Native spirit reality, these principles possess and yield particular cultural meanings that speak to other Native people.

One of Hampton's propositions for a theory of education is: For most Indians, education has the dual purpose of promoting Indian cultures as well as providing skills and information relevant to the non-Indian society (1993, p. 277). I feel that we can go

one step further and say that Native people have a dual education-- a primary one that proceeds out of their culture world-view and a secondary one that proceeds out of Western formal education. I refer to cultural education as primary in that it shapes how Native peoples interrelate to the world and how we think, how we know and what our purposes are. The cultural patterning and codes that I have depicted above is what I feel grows out of that primary education. Culturally organized principles and notions are what is necessary for promoting and maintaining Indian culture within the area of research. I feel this education must come first. Then and only then do I feel that Native researchers can comfortably accept the research skills and information from Western education that are relevant to their success in the non-Indian academic realm.

The organizing principles and notions that are rooted in tribal or natural sensibilities that I have represented here are part of a specific discourse community. I mean discourse as “a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’ (Gee, 1991, p. 3). These features of discourse are markers for a way of thinking, interrelating, and knowing about Native views of reality. Our research discourse can be seen as our “identity kit” (Ibid.) identifying who we are and who we are not and standing for what it is that we believe about our reality.

By drawing upon patterns in each area one can root research and educational activities for education at every level within the Native world-view. Each of these authors, Gregory Cajete (1994), Frye Jean Gaveline (1998), Eber Hampton (1993), Marie Battiste and Jean Barman (1995) and D. Hill (Ed., 1995), present an educational



philosophy based on the Native world-view. Many of these cultural patterns which are drawn from the culture of the Native world-view are found within their views. Their works present an educational philosophy that is based upon a spiritual world-view and organized with indigenous principles.

### Chapter Three: Cultural Mirroring and Articulation

*Unless a child [or adult] learns about the forces which shape him [sic]: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972, p. 9)*

As evident in the preceding chapters the development of my cultural awareness has been gradual. Until 1995, the year I went to teacher's college, I just didn't think much about culture and its meaning in my life. Naively, I just wanted to be a teacher. However, I was challenged to think about what it was that I was bringing to my teaching experiences. I was challenged to reflect--"Who am I?". I characteristically responded with a poem by that name (Appendix A, # 5). By writing my feelings in a poem I understood that I identified my self primarily as Native. There was a lot of pain inside of me. This was me!

During one of the courses at teacher's college, my class viewed a film about First Nations people in Canada called *The Learning Path* (Todd, 1991). In this film there was an old Indian woman talking about the struggles and trials of life in the residential schools. Entranced, I watched this woman talk. Oh how she reminded me of my Indian grandmother—the expressions on her face, the look in her eyes, the way she moved her hands, the tone of her voice. My heart just swelled up with a yearning. Then the class watched a film about black Nova Scotians. There was an old Black woman telling about their struggles and trials. While I empathized with this women's painful experiences, my reaction did not possess the depth of emotion and connection as with the old Indian lady. Then and there I realized the power of culture. I could not deny it in myself (see Appendix A, # 6).

Through reading Carl E James (1995) within the same course I also realized that I had rejected many aspects of my Native self through the educational agenda that I was exposed to growing up. I became aware that I was not always in control of the way I reacted to my family and my heritage. I felt pain over this (see Appendix # 1). These three experiences led me to want to explore myself through my race, and my culture via graduate school. The educational path at graduate school that I embarked upon was arduous at times but also very rewarding.

While in the graduate program I discovered that the growing body of Native research that I was reading through was providing me with an opportunity for what I call cultural mirroring through the articulation of implicit and explicit cultural knowledge. Since I never have had the social opportunity to make my cultural thoughts and feelings explicit, many of my cultural values were *implicit* inside of me and some were missing. This process of mirroring through articulation has been a key component in my identity consolidation process as well as in my healing process. The mirroring allows the cultural implicit within me to become explicit, helping to be more aware. When cultural components become explicit, I am then able to articulate these cultural components, in thought, speech and writing. Through articulation, understanding of my self develops. I have come to university as that institution has been portrayed as a place where one can come in order to understand. I feel that University is a place where I can understand who I am, what world I live in and where my place is in the world . On one hand university, through culturally sensitive non-Native professors have provided a space for me to reflect upon my culture and my identity and to voice those reflections. On the other hand my

self-discovery opportunities have been severely limited by the lack of Elders or Native professors and opportunities for in class exploration of my Native culture.

Prof. Dennis McPherson, Coordinator and Co-director of the Native Philosophy Project at Lakehead University states that:

It is important to note that when the majority of undergraduates study ancient Greek philosophy and hence the origins of Western civilization they are gaining a better understanding of who they are, of their own background. Not so for the Native students who come to university. *They have little opportunity for this kind of self-discovery, for this kind of typical university experience.* (1993, p. ii)

The implications for universities and Native students are significant. I feel that

Universities need to admit to the necessity of providing more Native professors who can furnish personal self-discovery opportunities for Native students. I have not had the opportunity of having the model of a Native professor in my university studies.

However, I have found that the body of Native research has provided me with a degree of this kind of self-discovery at university. Native authors have furnished a form of cultural mirroring through their articulations, which has granted me an opportunity to confirm, consolidate and build my identity. My interactions with the readings of Native research have created identity-building moments with the specific “cultural codings” that are at work in the literature even though it is written in English. This cultural coding could be lost or missed by a non-Native reader (Weaver, 1997) but is a welcome *comfort* to Native readers. I emphasize the word “comfort” for I have come to understand the importance of comfort in relation to one’s culture. James (1995) explains that “subcultures serve as a means of providing stability and comfort” (p. 29). I am comfortable with the words of other Native researchers that I have encountered through my reading experiences.

I draw upon the example of Eber Hampton (1993) to show how university experiences with other Native people can aid in understanding oneself. He conducted a set of interviews with American Indian Program participants and Elders. Hampton found that his interview questions and critical thinking gave way to reflective discussion as participant and researcher built their thoughts in an additive and exponential fashion. Through this process Hampton felt that he was able to make explicit his implicit knowledge. In a similar fashion by mentally dialoguing with research authors I was able to make explicit my implicit cultural knowledge. There have been so many times that I have wanted to say something that I knew inside but could not find the words to convey the message. This was very frustrating. Then when I was reading I came across the meaning that I wanted to express. I said to myself-- "That is it! This is what I wanted to say" or "this is how I feel." There is such *comfort* in this experience as the culturally implicit is validated without. I have not had an opportunity of understanding my past and present reality until I starting searching through Native research. As I delved into my research I have become increasingly aware that this personal cultural process of mirroring and articulation was changing me. Through the exciting process of self-understanding and identity consolidation I found that the resistance to educational research that I encountered within myself slowly melted away and I found a new peace.

### ***What is cultural mirroring and articulation?***

I must first posit some basic assumptions. I posit that language carries and reflects cultural values. For people who identify themselves as Native, every act of

reading/writing English becomes a “bicultural activity” whether that person is a Native speaker or not. I propose that the values and thought-system of the Native world-view imbue the English language used by Native people as a double value cultural carrier mostly out of necessity. When I speak English with an English person the English values are reflected between us. However, when I speak with a Native person all kinds of subtle Native cultural values, understandings and meanings are reflected between us in both articulated and unarticulated ways. These values have been piggybacked upon the English language in our homes.

When I muse upon the way my mother used English I can see how this piggybacking can occur. My mother speaks only English and is a very literate well-spoken woman who loves to read and write poetry. However, Native language usage permeated her English with me. First, there were the inclusion of Native words, such as *agee* (ouch), *ehen* (yes), *git-git* (chicken). Then, there is the way these words are phrased in English. It was never “Do you want some *git-git*?” but “some *git-git*?” or just “*git-git*?”. I can’t help but laugh when my relatives revert to these sentence bits when talking with my English non-Native husband. He gets so lost. What cultural meaning do these sentence bits reflect? I think it is related to Native language structure and thought. Then there are the nuances and a whole range of guttural sounds that have concise meanings. For instance, one never points with one’s finger but with one’s chin. Consequently, when my husband asks me where something is and I point with my chin saying “over there”, he gets frustrated. I remember hours when my mother never spoke words just meaningful sounds. Silence was also important part of relationships.

It is so ironic that all of this cultural mirroring, and articulation takes place within the English language. On the one hand the use of the English language is fortuitous as Natives from diverse tribal extraction can communicate with one another. The cultural coding is able to work through this non-Native language use, particularly through metaphors. Jace Weaver, (Kiowa) discusses two stories of Native identity building moments that had occurred in English. He states that what is important is “the cultural context of each story and the cultural coding at work in them” (p. 24). But sometimes English is barely adequate to support the Native thought system as English is linear and Native languages are circular and relational.

### *Mirroring and articulation experiences*

Sifting through the cultural mirroring experience I was able to coalesce these into similar experiences of cultural mirroring through articulation. I propose areas of similar experience here. 1) Cultural notions I explicitly knew that were mirrored back to me. This mirroring process is a critical component of cultural integrity and identification. 2) Notions that I knew implicitly and hence could not articulate properly. Lack of articulation skills occurs partly because culture is absorbed implicitly. I attribute the other part of this problem to a lack of cultural discovery opportunities within my social circle, the type of education I experienced and the young age during which I absorbed most of my cultural cues. The articulations of these cultural notions in Native research have provided me with opportunities to make them explicit. 3) Notions I do not know or understand but are important to a more comprehensive understanding of the Native

worldview. This last notion is an important part of my growth for it is a process of putting some of the missing puzzle pieces into my cultural identity.

Many things that I learned from my mother were culturally/socially out of place for me as we were the only Native family in the neighbourhood. I often felt out of place. This made my need for cultural mirroring or validation even more critical.

My examples do not fall neatly into just one of these three categories. Inevitably, each example had a mixture of these categories of notions of cultural mirroring through articulation. The following examples are just a few of the many experiences that I could draw upon.

***Cultural notions I explicitly knew that were mirrored back to me.***

It is so important to see me reflected in the world out there. Native research mirrored back to me the value of laughter in my life and the reality of dreams.

***Laughter***

Several times I have relied upon counseling to deal with some of my life's problems. Consistently, counselors educated in the Eurocentric tradition would nail me to the wall about my inappropriate laughter (see Appendix A # 7). I didn't know what they were talking about but since I was obviously flawed and they were not, I tried hard to correct my inappropriate laughter. However, whenever I was around my native family it would pop out and boy would I ever enjoy myself. Then I would stuff it in when I was back in regular society. While reading Michael Dorris (1989) I came across his comments about his friendships with other native students. "I enjoyed talking with



Howard and Duane. They had the familiar sly sense of humor common among the Native people that I had known in Alaska and among members of my own family. . . .I was culturally relaxed with them in a way I had almost forgotten” (1990). I needed to read this to screw up my courage to laugh when I wanted to. “We encourage laughter and camaraderie” (Cordova, 1997, p.34). Oscar Kawagley (No date) explains how Aboriginal people feel about laughter: "Yupiaq people are admonished not to take themselves too seriously, but to laugh at themselves, with others, and make light of a lot of life's triumphs and tribulations. Joking is a necessary part of life. No matter how serious a ceremony, there will be joking and laughing interspersed between singing, dancing and moments of silence".

Now I treasure the laughter and the role it plays in our lives. My sister Delores was working for the Piute Tribe in Utah. Every couple of weeks they all went to the show together, which was shown in English. Delores phoned me the first time that she went with her Piute friends to tell me how wonderful it was to have everybody laugh at the same things and in the same places that she did. This is a small illustration of how cultural mirroring can validate, reinforce, and comfort.

### *Dreams*

I believe in dreams and yet I had no venue to express them. I felt that I had to suppress them. My dreams tell me important things. One night I dreamed that a train killed my son. I woke up crying. I paced the floor. I could not sleep. I wrote about it in my journal. About a year later a train killed my oldest son. When the accident did occur my dream swept over me like a warm wave and then I understood why I had that dream.

I feel that my dream helped prepare me. I knew that this tragedy must be so and I accepted it with a grace that perhaps I could not otherwise have commanded. Then I dreamed that a car hit me. A year later I was hit by a drunk driver while riding my bike. As I lay on the road waiting for the ambulance the dream swept over me and I knew once again that I had been prepared. I accepted it with grace and knew it must be so.

Around this time I dreamed of Gauga, my Native grandmother, shortly after she had died I was walking along a path in the beautiful peaceful forest that used to belong to my family before they were forced off the land. I saw someone further down the path. When I caught up to this person I realized that it was my Grandmother. I said, "What are you doing here. You're dead." She laughed and said, "I am. But I have come to give you a message." We walked on down the path and chatted. I watched her carefully. Finally I said, "Gauga, you are so happy!" "Yes I am", she said, "This is such a wonderful place, this life after death. I am at such peace. All the pain of earthly life means nothing. It is all wiped away. Go peacefully in this life, Lana." Laughing and waving she walked away down the path. I have never forgotten that dream even though eighteen years have passed (see Appendix A # 8). I am still searching for my way to go peacefully in this life.

To know that I can openly talk about this aspect of my inner life and be taken seriously greatly enhances my sense of who I am and my confidence in my self.

***Notions that I knew implicitly and hence could not articulate properly.***

Often times in university I had the opportunity to explain aspects of Native culture but the words just wouldn't come to me. I felt frustrated. I felt inarticulate. Areas that have been strengthened in me through the process of cultural articulation are child-rearing/education styles, heart and mind learning, language and land.

***Child-rearing/educational styles***

My mother tended to invoke traditional practices of native discipline when handling me. As a youth all of my peers were White Anglo-Saxon and they were disciplined in a completely different manner. I interpreted my Mother's style as *not caring* for me. As a child and even as an adult I suffered a great amount of internal pain from my interpretation. I knew the way I had been raised was different but it was hard for me to articulate and I still felt so different. Mixed in with this style were the effects of residential school on my family. Reading Celia Haig-Brown's Resistance and Renewal (1988) helped me to begin to understand the basis of Native child-rearing techniques that had shaped me as a child. Haig-Brown records childhood memories of several Native people documenting traditional child rearing/educational style: I could really relate to these stories. The interviewees were articulating what I implicitly knew--the importance of observing, modeling, participating and doing, the carefreeness of childhood, learning from the extended family, talks, learning from your grandmother, no physical punishment, closeness to nature, and being treated as equal to adults etc. There was laughter, fun times, games, music, and talks. From Patricia Monture-Angus (1995) my experiences were validated—"the Elders] did not tell us what to do or how to do it or

figure out the world for us—they told us a story about their experience, about their life or their grandfather's or grandmother's or auntie's or uncle's life. It is in this manner that Indian people are taught independence as well as respect because you have to do your own figuring out for yourself" (p. 11). What I interpreted as not caring was respecting my ability to figure it out myself. I was not willful or undisciplined but independent.

While I was researching information on why Native students drop out of school, I came across this observation in an article written by Dr. Andy Bowker (1992). "Child-rearing practices, neglect, and dysfunctional families certainly take their toll on American Indian girls. Some girls attribute parental *non-interference* as apathy, when parents are simply perpetuating child-rearing techniques of their own parents." (p. 16, italics added for emphasis). Wow! What a revelation for me. There were other Native girls who had trouble understanding their parent's child-rearing styles and mistook them for apathy. And there is even a name for this child-rearing style—"non-intervention". Now I can articulate this to others. This observation allowed me to put my childhood feelings into a healing perspective. I can be a non-interventionist type of parent. Some of my children have misinterpreted my structure as well but I can understand their reaction now. I can explain it to my children and most important I can feel at peace. As a child I just painfully yearned to be like the others: as a parent I worried that my parenting style was deficient. Now as an adult I am thankful that I was raised differently. As a parent I feel reassured. As a person I appreciate the uniqueness of thought and independence that my Native culture seems to occasion in me.

From McPherson and Rabb (1997) I was able to construct a chart comparing attitudes towards children. This helped me understand myself.

Figure 2: Comparing Native and non-Native attitudes towards children

<u>Native attitudes towards children</u>	<u>Non-Native attitudes towards children</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the age of mobility the child is considered a person and free to explore his own environment</li> <li>• Autonomous child</li> <li>• Learning styles independent and autonomous</li> <li>• Flexible and almost non-existent routines</li> <li>• Any routines are child-determined</li> <li>• Child rarely punished in a systematic way</li> <li>• Child's autonomy allows him/her his/her own decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watched and controlled by parents throughout childhood</li> <li>• Dependent child</li> <li>• Learning styles dependent and controlled by adults</li> <li>• Rigid routines dominated and controlled by adults</li> <li>• Child punished for failure to comply with adult expectations</li> <li>• Child dependent on adult's decisions</li> </ul>

I remember the irritated comment on my grade eight report card. "Plenty of ability but going to waste in *wooly thinking*. Lana is years ahead of herself in what she wants to do and how she wants to do it." I have never forgotten this comment. I certainly was puzzled by it at the time. It also made me feel different. I understand now that because my education was a natural flow of life, I possessed an autonomy in my learning strategies that others misunderstood.

Cordova (1997) description of how her daughter and her daughter's "Anglo" friend introduced their sons to the world in springtime brought back many poignant memories for me.

My daughter set her eight- or nine-month-old son onto a barely greening lawn. She introduced him to the grass, encouraging him to touch it, even taste it. She pointed out the temperature, the breeze, the sky, and clouds. The other mother came differently prepared for her son's encounter with the world. She brought a blanket, which she spread out for her son. She brought toys as distractions and she did not join her son so much as hovered over him in a protective manner: not allowing him to crawl away from the blanket; not allowing him to grasp at the grass ("dirty"). (p. 33)

I remember the freedom that I had to explore my world. Hollyhocks were my dolls and mud my pies and cookies. Shoes were an option. One needs to feel the cool green grass, the warm slippery mud on one's feet. Bees could be caught in your hands. My mother showed me little plants around me that I could eat. I remember putting my baby daughter out to sit on the grass. She loved to grab clover flowers and eat them. This was fine with me. In the summer when it rained hard I sent my kids across to the gully in the park with dish soap. They played for hours in the huge bubbly puddles that gathered there. In the summer when school wasn't there to regulate our lives, we had breakfast and then I sent my kids out to play. They played until they were hungry. Then we had supper. Flexible is good.

*Heart and mind learning.*

The implication of this Native world-view is that heart and mind can not be separated; thoughts must be accompanied by feelings. Monture-Angus (1996) calls this process 'double-understanding' (p. 38). Double-understanding knowledge has a price attached to it. If knowledge is always attached to feeling then there is liable to be more pain in your life. Conversely, your knowledge can add more joy to your life than is possible with thoughts and feelings compartmentalized. Wisdom comes from managing the feelings attached to the knowledge. I am grateful for the blend of heart and mind that

Monture-Angus has displayed in her work for her experiences teach that feelings must be respected and managed. She reveals that she has "muddled through my pain and anger until it has turned again to thunder. It has been a rewarding experience. It has also been a troubling experience" (Ibid., p. 2). Knowledge situated in the heart and mind more accurately reflect the reality of our lived lives. It is not enough to get the knowledge into your head but you must get it into your heart as well. The heart is also the place of the spirit. We must bear in mind that "formal education is just the tip of the iceberg. Education is also about understanding our real life experiences in both our hearts and minds" (Ibid., p. 83). Only then can one truly live what one has learned. The challenge of education becomes learning to live what I have truly learned.

#### *Language loss*

Another area that I had trouble articulating was how I felt about language loss. I told everyone that my Grandfather could speak six Native tongues plus English. My grandmother grew up in the Mohawk Institute, nicknamed the Mush-hole. She would not allow my grandfather to speak any Native languages in their home. Not only that, my aunt informs me that my grandfather, who attended school on the reserve, was beaten for speaking his language on the playground even though he knew no English. For Natives like myself there can exist an unarticulated pain of languages lost that allows us a suitable vehicle to express Native thought. Monture-Angus (Mohawk) (1995, p. 2) reveals that she is troubled by her inability to share Aboriginal ideas only in her Native language. I am constantly aware of the inadequacy of English for my deepest expressions and yet English is all I have. This inadequacy is one reason that I, like many other Native writers

such as Joy Harjo (Creek), prefer to express my most meaningful thoughts in poetry (Appendix A). Harjo (1992) thinks of poetry as a means of escaping the limitation and frustrations of English. For me poetry can be a means of escaping the constant irritating demand for clarity, precision, rules, and tidy thought packages that leave little room for imagination or independence of thought.

As a result of my research I have begun to ask myself what I have really lost. Is it just language? Or is it culture as well and a way of thinking about the world. I have learned that language is sacred for it carries the soul and spirit of the people. Today I struggle to learn my Native language.

### *Land*

Another area that I struggle with is how I feel about the land. For one of my courses at university I wanted to produce a video about how my family and I felt about places that were special to us. At this point I had only begun my relationship with Native research writings. I found it so hard to articulate how I felt about this land and its waters. Now I have much to say. First, I realize that my family's relationship to their lands and waters is sacred. The relationship is much more than a physical one; it is a spiritual relationship. Because we had this spiritual relationship with the lands and waters, we belonged to these places. Because of this spiritual relationship, the land and the waters nourish us spiritually. And we feel an obligation to take good care of this land and water. Because of this special type of relationship, land and water loss can be very devastating.



Another aspect that I knew but would not venture to say before was that my ancestors' spirits are connected with this land and waters. I feel them there. Their presence serves to deepen our spiritual connection with the land.

I can now tell how the land and waters nourished me as a child. Even when I was quite young I could wander to the river. When things were bad at home I went to the river. Why did I go there? I went because I was wounded. There was a small island at the side of the river. That became my healing spot. The land, trees, plants, insects, birds, rocks, animals, water and fish nourished me. I sang to them in return. Even today I love the islands in my river. I love my river. I still go there for nourishment and I am never turned away.

I remember once we had a family picnic at a place called Mohawk Park in Brantford. The park had been the playground for the Native residential school, the Mohawk Institute, when Gauga, my grandmother went there. We were all having a great time until the park attendant came up and asked if we had a permit to be there. My grandmother's eyes flashed. We all knew what was coming. My grandmother was a renown Native historian. She knew whose land this was and she told him! We stayed. Nobody bothered us. I laugh every time I think of this incident.

I can't camp in parks along my river where my family used to live. I tried. We paid our twenty dollars for a small campsite. We pitched our tent. I laid on my little square of rented land and felt a mishmash of ancestors, belongingness, respect, sacredness, desecration, anger, indignation, loss and sorrow. I will not go back.

*Notions I do not know or understand but are important to a complete understanding of my Native world-view.*

It can be very confusing to try to play a game and not know all the rules. Because of cultural disruption many Native people do not have important cultural cues. Areas that I found I needed help with were colonization of the mind, manners, hanging back, respect, justice and myths. I discovered these cues through my relationship with Native research and talking with family.

### *Colonization*

I think that the most important thing that I needed to understand was that my mind was colonized. Howard Adams (1995) was concerned because “Eurocentric history and the politics of colonization are not widely recognized are not widely understood by many Canadians, and particularly by Aboriginal peoples. . . .After five hundred years of colonized oppression, Indians, Metis and Inuit have internalized a colonized consciousness” (p.1). That this fact was a possibility within myself allowed me to have a “good talk” with my Native uncle. He confirmed to me that Native people can have a colonized consciousness. He described for me how colonization can work in your life.

I wasn't protected from the system by my own parents. In fact my mother wanted us to be assimilated. . . . its odd that on the one hand that my mother had wanted this and yet at the same time in her later life she became quite critical of this system itself, the very system that she wanted to assimilate us into or wanted us assimilated into. And yet it was her that sort of clued me into the umm contradictions of this society and I think probably that's what started me looking because you know when you are raised in an enclosed environment instead of actual windows where you could see outside with, you might get paintings on the walls representing a window like and you wouldn't actually see what is going on out there. It would be, you would be getting someone else's description of what is going on out there. So when I look at the wall, the picture window at this wall I would see maybe a church or the minister smiling, being kind to native people. Over here I see a picture

window of different racial groups working together in harmony, and so on. But it was my own mother who helped me to sort of punch a hole in that picture wall and really look out through that hole to see what was really going on. And then I guess then another picture window would be represented of what they would tell people about the environment lets say and how the environment was being taken care. We shouldn't worry about it because we have this agency and that agency taking care of the environment. That picture window would represent, you know, healthy growth of whatever- no problems -that we shouldn't worry. That's when I turned around and started walking the other way. (Tiller, 1997).

I realized that I, too, needed to push my way out of the pictures painted on the walls so I could see for myself what the real world is like, so I could be a real person. After this good talk with my uncle, I began a different kind of education about myself, my people and my relationships to the world.

#### *Justice*

When I accepted that colonization was a real issue in my life I soon realized that many basic notions in my thought structure would have to change. For example, I needed a sense of justice that was embedded within the Native world-view. The meaning potential inherent in the Native notion of justice is strategic to having a complete understanding of the Native world-view.

The Native Law Center publishes the newsletter, *Justice as Healing* [On-line], at the University of Saskatchewan through a grant by the Federal Department of Justice. The themes in the newsletter explain the Aboriginal concept of justice as including healing for all peoples concerned. Injustices affect many peoples and all need their feelings addressed. There are many interesting Internet links the newsletter's homepage showing the development of healing within Native law research (see Appendix D).

Ross (1996) records the Community Holistic Circle Healing Program (CHCH) at Hollow Water for community offenders. CHCH choose the healing and teaching path instead of incarceration since "incarceration actually works against the healing process, because 'an already unbalanced person is moved further out of balance'" (Ibid. p. 38).

Many of our Native families have been touched by the dominant justice system. I can not conceive of the intense pain that loss of personal freedom entails. My research has revolutionized the way I conceive of justice. I now see justice as relational, a community event, and an opportunity to heal and to realize harmony. Adding notions like justice to my understanding of a Native world-view is crucial. It is a matter of building the web of life wherein all things are interrelated and harmony is the goal. Changing my notion of justice calls for a response to the community from me. Where that response takes me I do not know.

#### *Manners.*

Manners became a part of that new education. Manners were a big problem for me growing up. I never heard the words "please" or "thank you" in my home growing up. In school we were taught our manners. I judged my mother to be ill mannered. While reading Gawittha (1991) I discovered that there is no word in the Haudenosaunee language for "please" or "thank you". In the Native world-view since we are to be always thankful in our minds to the great Creator and in the act of living, be thankful in all we do and say, there was no need to say "thank you" to anyone. In addition, since we are all equal and the tribe is mindful of each and everyone's needs, and the Creator has provided for all, there was no need to beg of anyone and say "please". I really needed to

know this fact of reality. I had misunderstood because my mother's cultural acts had taken place outside of their cultural context. My mother is not unmannered within her Native context.

From Lorraine Brundige (1997) I learn that I am not the only one to misinterpret manners or gratitude as Brundige calls it. Natives have been labeled "ungrateful Indians" since the time of the Jesuits. She analyzed "why Native people do not, as a rule show gratitude—at least not in a way that is understandable to non-Natives" (p.46). She quotes late Clare Brant, a Mohawk psychiatrist, who felt that this "ungratefulness" was linked to the historical importance of excellence since excellence was necessary to survive. Brundige ruminates that perhaps the lack of overt gratitude stems from the notion of respect for each person's worth. In talking with V. F. Cordova, Brundige records Cordova as believing "that saying "thank you" disrupts social equality" (Op. cit., p. 47). Brundige records Clare Brant and Bruce Sealy (1988) as concluding that "unlike non-Native society, where helpful or constructive behavior is rewarded, in Native society the behavior is *expected*; therefore, there is no need to praise or give thanks" (Ibid.). However, Brundige asserts that Native people live a life of respect, and the gratitude they have for what has been given them . . . because of a heartfelt gratitude for Mother Earth and her provision" (Ibid. p. 49). Brundige concludes that gratitude is inherent in the system and one should not mistake not "showing" gratitude with not "having" gratitude. Because of the lack of cultural articulation we Natives have to spend so much time figuring these things out. Who would have thought that "manners" could cause so much misunderstanding?

*Hanging back.*

Sometimes just one little line can supply so much understanding. For example, while researching on the internet<sup>7</sup> I discovered a chart on value conflicts between American Indians and Anglo Americans which was developed by Dr. Sander. One Native value was "Participates only when certain of ability as opposed to trial and error" (Vogt, 1994). When encountering new situations I always hang back until I am able to take in the whole situation, however long that takes. I have found that others have misinterpreted this hanging back characteristic for lack of confidence, or inability. It's so helpful to know why you act like you do. When I can articulate the how and why of my behavior meaning in life takes on a greater depth.

*Respect*

Values such as respect have such great depth in their conception that I found that it takes time, patience and effort to understand them properly. I discovered that respect is much more than an approach to research. For example, I was reading an article from the *Turtle Island News* that my Mother sent me the other day. In 1924 the RCMP and the government of Canada, in an effort to destroy the Hereditary Council of the Six Nations at Ohsweken, Ontario, had illegally taken by gunpoint the Confederacy Council House. On Tuesday January 27th the Hereditary Council hoisted their flag over the building because they felt they needed their building back. The article states that it has been "the desire of the chiefs to remain at peace with the community. We mean no disrespect [in repossessing the building]." (January 28, 1998, p. 2) I have ruminated many hours over

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<sup>7</sup> The internet contains much information about and by Native peoples. (See Appendix 4)

this statement. Perhaps, we do not need "control" of education. As First Nation peoples we mean no disrespect--we just need the minds and spirits of our people back for we need our people. We need their unity, their independence, and their strength. From this I see that respect is a way of being that understands, acknowledges, and works through the interrelation of all being and "control" is not the issue.

In a conversation with Alice Bomberry, Educational Director of the Woodland Cultural Centre<sup>8</sup> I learned to think of respect as "sacred space". We are all surrounded with this "sacred space." When we recognize each entity's portion of sacred space, we will show respect to that entity. We will be able to show respect for each entity's place in the world and their need for independence. We will search for harmony within as we learn the to respect the spaces of other persons.

I have a picture that will not leave my mind. Last summer when I was on the reserve, I had time to observe a very large plant (called a weed in Euro-western thought) that was growing along side of a sidewalk. I wondered why that plant was left there? Finally, I understood that it was a matter of respect. That plant was entitled to his space, sacred space and the people respected that. Then I can hear my mother saying, "Let it alone---he's doing no harm." I begin to understand respect on a spiritual plane.

### *Myths.*

Myths have taken on a fresh meaning in my new education. As a child I loved myths. I read every mythology book in the public library as least once. As I matured and

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<sup>8</sup> The Woodland Cultural Centre is located in Brantford, Ontario and was originally the Mohawk Institute, a Native residential school nicknamed The Mush-Hole.

became educated I was taught to scoff at mythology. I particularly derided my Native mythology--such childish nonsense of "primitive" peoples. I was influenced by the notion that "the medium, the Myth, is the full explanation, and does not pursue deeper questions of a cosmological or ontological nature" (Cordova, 1995, p. 18). In other words the "medium becomes the message." (McLuhan, 1964, cited by Cordova, 1995, p. 18). The meaning is overshadowed by the medium and is lost. I had read many times the story of how the earth was created by the woman falling out of the sky and how the animals worked to save her. The turtle caught the woman on his back. The other animals worked to bring dirt up from the ocean floor and that is how land came to be. In my reading recently I learned that this myth captured metaphorically for the people the interconnection and interdependence of all life. The animals are clan animals that denote special relationships. The myth displays the epistemology, the meaning, of Native beliefs. Suddenly the myth became sacred instead of secular, standing for the way I feel about life and the world (see Appendix A # 9). The myths denote the interrelationships of all life within the native viewpoint. To talk of Mother Earth, the sun our Elder Brother, the moon or Grandmother is to metaphorically display the dependence of our life on all creation. V. F. Cordova instructs us that Native American thought comprising myths "should be approached as a complete, alternate explanation for the world and for human nature. It is these alternate explanations for *undeniable human experiences* that make Native Americans the unique beings that they are today" (1995, p. 15, italics added for emphasis).



Seeing myths with new eyes has led to greater understandings of Native tales. Native tales were a great source of stress and distress for me. As a child I was terrified of *Ishga* and *Outnadsa*<sup>9</sup>. This was hard on me because no one else in my circle of peers even knew that these figures existed. *Outnadsa* was a just a physical bum--no top to the body just a bum and legs. My Mom used to tell me that if I was not good *Outnadsa* would get me. A few weeks ago my Mom told me that she had learned the moral of this creature's existence. A man was not to sexually fool around with women. If you just use a woman you only see that bottom part of her and not the whole part of her. The man is just using her for his pleasure. The man doesn't see her face, her personality, her family, and her intrinsic value--just a slice of the whole woman. In modern terms the man objectifies the woman. Here is wisdom couched in a tale I was terrified of and could not understand--wisdom that was detached through colonial destruction. A few years ago I would have dismissed her words as so much primitive ramblings. I would have heard out of respect but would not have been able to listen and learn. However, listening is an important Native value. Now I can listen and reflect on the underlying philosophical truths.

### *Summary*

The disruption of Native culture has fragmented many of our understandings of how the world is and what it means to be human. The cultural mirroring and articulation

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<sup>9</sup> I do not know if I am spelling these two Native words properly. I have no idea which of the six Haudenosaunee languages these two words are taken from.

coded within Native research is a community wealth. It is an important part of the process of Aboriginal spiritual revitalization. When there are no others similar to you with whom you can mirror, one tends to pull differences in and hold them like faint embers. I am grateful for all the mirrors out there that help me fan the embers and are contributing to my process of self-discovery. I now have a better understanding of who I am and of the reality that I think within. Through this process I am better able to articulate my world and my life. This is a gift. Through my positive response to Native Research I am able to pass this gift on to others--to circulate knowledge and thus participate in the circle of life.

## Chapter Four: Some Philosophical Underpinnings of Native Research

### *Getting the cosmology right in research*

*The problem with the concept of world-view is that too often we accept that it means that we all stand on the same world and view it differently, when, in fact, what we should learn from this phrase is that there may, indeed, be fundamentally different worlds to view. (O'Meara & West, 1996, p. 2).*

When I took my undergraduate philosophy degree I was stuck in the position of having my Native voice silenced. By that I mean that my mind was still colonized. I saw Eurocentric thought as civilized, advanced and Native thought as primitive. I listened in my head to a myriad of competitive and conflicting views of knowledge, reality, truth, being, values, and ethics within the Eurocentric tradition never dreaming that there could be a valid Native philosophy of life that effects my thinking and my way of relating to the world. Now I find that I must consciously rethink my life and learning. I wish that I had had the opportunity to compare the two philosophical cultures but I have to believe that it all happened that way for a purpose not yet revealed.

I struggled for a long time with "methodology" trying to find a space of comfort. I didn't know exactly what I was searching for. I finally came to understand that I was looking for reflections of my Native culture's philosophy. The reflection of "spirituality" was missing from my research encounters. By spirituality I am not referring to organized religion, a doctrine, or set of beliefs but to a way of portraying a coherent account of reality, relating to that reality, and experiencing life in that reality. According to the understanding of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Spirituality, in Aboriginal discourse, is not a system of beliefs that can be defined like a religion; it is a

way of life in which people acknowledge that every element of the material world is in some sense infused with spirit, and all human behaviour is affected by, and in turn has an effect in a non-material, spiritual realm" [On-line version, Vol. 1, Chap. 15]. Cajete (1994) supports that this view. He states that "there is a lack of an espoused doctrine of religion. Indian languages lack a word for 'religion'. The words used refer to a 'way' of living, a tradition of the people." (p. 43). That spiritual way of living is more than a rational, or ethical code. The way of living is "embedded in the way things are; they are enforced inescapably, by the whole order of life, through *movement* and *response* in the physical world and in the spiritual realm" (Ibid., italics added for emphasis). I see spirituality as a way of living that reflects the spiritual order that underlies all of life. I feel that it is not necessary to pin down exactly what spirituality is but we must know that our "spirituality evolves from exploring and coming to know and experience the nature of the living energy moving in each of us, through us, and around us" (Cajete, 1994, p.42). This exploring and coming to know is captured within the metaphor of the medicine wheel.

Since early Greek times philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle asked: What is there? This can be rephrased as: What is real? or How do we fit in with the universe?. Through the inheritance of Greek thought Eurocentric metaphysics<sup>10</sup> proposes two main views that rest upon a distinction between knower and thing known: metaphysical

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<sup>10</sup> Put simply, metaphysics is an attempt to find a true account of reality.

realisms<sup>11</sup> and metaphysical idealisms. Each main view has many subordinate viewpoints that are beyond the scope of this paper.

Generally, all metaphysical realists purport that the universe consists of "thing" or what is "thing-like" (objects). Realists hold that "some or all objects are independent of mind . . . that there is some reality<sup>12</sup>--such as matter, or universals, or neutral entities, or impersonal life--that is in no sense of the nature of mind" (Brightman, 1963, p. 203 ) Hence, we can say that realists see the world as mind-independent. That is things of the world exist whether they are known or not.. The world is full of independent "things", extended or space-occupying substances (Hunnex, 1985) that exist in their own right. These things are " not mental, not personal, not conscious, not ultimately mind or any part of mind" (Brightman, 1963, p. 292), nor are they spiritual. The realist stresses the fact that this mindless reality is what produces mind. In other words brain as matter and non-mental produces or explains mind. All first principles<sup>13</sup> founded upon realism are physical.

In contrast metaphysical idealists claim that "mind or what is especially characteristic of mind, is the fundamental explanation [of reality] " (Ibid. p. 309). Thus we can say that the idealist sees the world as mind-dependent and subjective. Mind is seen as unextended thinking substance (Hunnex, 1986). The universe consists of mind (personality) or what is mind-like. The existence of the universe is explained by the presence of mind. The idealist stresses the principal role of mind in shaping or producing

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<sup>11</sup> I am speaking strictly of metaphysical realism and idealism. This is not to be confused with epistemic realism and idealism which explores the question 'What can we know?'

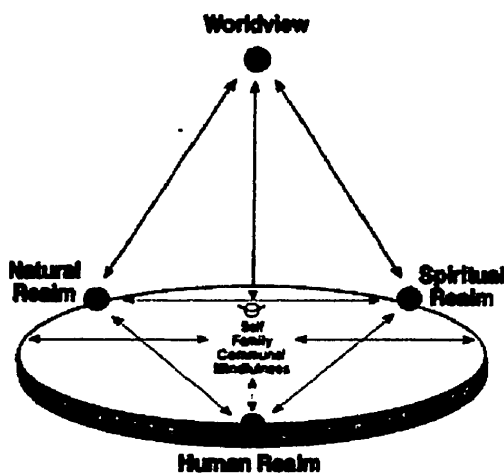
<sup>12</sup> Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann (1967) define reality "as a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition ('we can not wish them away')" (p. 1).

reality whether that mind is human or superhuman. All first principles founded upon this view would be mental.

At either end of the mind/thing distinction there are realists who hold that thing is all there is whilst at the other end there are idealists<sup>14</sup> who hold that mind is all there is. However, for the most part both views accept a dualism of substance: thing substance and mind substance. The issue revolves around which substance is most predominant in reality. In my understanding Native spirituality holds that there is a rudimentary substance in reality called "spirit"<sup>15</sup>. Spirit can be seen as the fundamental animating life force within the universe. Spirit is energy that manifests itself in this world as thing and mind. Because everything is fundamentally spirit everything is related and everything that has energy can influence everything else that had energy hence the importance of balance. All principles founded upon this view would be spiritual.

Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley [online] has drawn a chart (see Figure 3) in his

**Figure 3:** Native reality  
(No date. Used by permission  
of Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley,  
see Appendix D)



<sup>13</sup> Principles would be first truths or general truth that follow from a conception of reality.

<sup>14</sup> Within idealism spirit/soul is often linked with the notion of mind.

efforts to portray a Native metaphysics. Kawagley explains that "The Yupiaq people [Alaska] live in an aware world. Wherever they go they are amongst spirits of their ancestors, as well as those of the animals, plants, hills, winds, lakes and rivers. Their sense of sacredness is of a practical nature, not given to abstract deities and theological rationalization" (No date). (see Appendix A # 10)

My people, the Ongwhehonwhe, have declared in *A basic call to consciousness* that:

All things of the world are real, material things. Creation is a true, material phenomenon, and Creation manifests itself to us through reality. The spiritual universe, then, is manifest to Man as Creation, the Creation which supports life. We believe that man is real, a part of Creation, and that his duty is to support Life in conjunction with the other beings. That is why we call ourselves Ongwhehonwhe - Real People. Ours is a Way of Life. We believe all living things are spiritual beings. Spirit can be expressed as energy forms manifested in matter. A blade of grass is an energy form manifested in matter - grass matter. The spirit of the grass is that unseen force which produces the species of grass, and it is manifest to us in the form of real grass. [Online] (see Appendix A # 11)

Sioui (1992) confirms that "all Amerindians refer to the earth as their mother, composed like them of body, mind and spirit" (P. 14). The braid of sweetgrass<sup>16</sup> testifies to the cosmology<sup>17</sup> of Native spirituality--the spiritual realm, the physical realm and the mental realm. "I found teachings that talked to my spirit and teachers who taught me about body, mind and spirit and how they are braided like sweetgrass" (Monture-Angus, 1994, p. 82). In my understanding the braid refers to the composition of reality and captures the

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<sup>15</sup> I am not suggesting that Amerindians are the only people to believe in the presence of spirit in their view of reality.

<sup>16</sup> Sweetgrass is one the four traditional medicines that the Creator gave to Aboriginal people.

<sup>17</sup> Cosmology is the branch of metaphysics that concerns itself with the origins and general structure of the universe.

complete interconnection of that composition. It reminds us the balance that is required for existence.

This spiritual conception of reality is the foundation in which the Native world-view is embedded. And from this embedded Native world-view spring forth all the organizing principles rooted in tribal or natural sensibilities that Native researchers are utilizing within their works and thoughts (see chapter 2). As spirit is sacred then it follows that talk about spirit is sacred. One must be careful in how one uses the organizing principles. To be careful one has to be aware that the source of these principles is this spiritual conception of reality. If a writer uses these organizing principles that are to be rooted in tribal sensibilities but does not possess the Native sense of reality, then the appropriate spiritual/cultural meaning is completely severed. Principles, such as the medicine wheel<sup>18</sup>, when they are not rooted in Native reality, become cultural appropriation.

One problem with expressing the notion of spirit within a coherent account of reality is that Native notion of spirit has been linked to negative images of "primitive" and "pagan". I hold to this spiritually based view of reality. I am no longer repulsed by images of "primitive" and "pagan". As the sweetgrass intertwines so all life on this earth is intertwined and interrelated. This metaphysical view "that the Native belief that the natural world forms a complex, interdependent system of which the Native people are an integral part should not be dismissed as mere primitive or magical thought. It is a view

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<sup>18</sup> There is a multitude of examples of appropriation by non-Natives of the Medicine Wheel on the Internet.



they forged in the struggle for existence and it is based on thousands of years of experience and empirical observation" (Stevenson, 1992, cited by McPhearson & Rabb, 1993, p. 85). Through their experience our ancestors were able to live a good life.

### *A metaphysical story*

Holding to this view of reality can have profound effects on how one relates to the world and can confuse other people. When I was a little girl I had a tree friend. My tree friend was a beautiful weeping birch who lived at the side of my house. I would talk to this tree and hug it. One day when I was about seven years old the city decided that we needed a sidewalk. My tree was in the way and had to be pulled out. I could not believe that anyone would do that to my tree. I could not understand why they could not have made the sidewalk around my tree. The workman came one day. From the window of my house I watched them put a chain around my tree. My tears were flowing fast. Then a big truck started pulling my tree out of the ground. It felt as if my very heart was being wrenched from my chest. I pounded the window and was yelling "murderers!" at the workmen. To calm me down my Dad promised to replant the tree, so the workmen laid it behind our garage. My Dad, as an Englishman, did not understand. He never replanted the tree. With a broken heart I watched my tree slowly wither away and die behind the shed. Day after day I watched its roots shrivel and its leaves curl up and fall to the ground. What had really happened here? This was a very painful lesson for a little girl and a confusing situation for my Dad and the workman who were being called murderers.

We were all caught in a clash between disparate realities. I have often thought about this confusing and hurtful experience.

### *Conceptions of person*

By examining the principle of "person" in both world-views understanding leading to wisdom can be acquired. What is a "person"? Common sense tells you that a person is a human being. Scientific taxonomy tells us that a person is a member of the species *Homo sapiens*. Glancing through Eurocentric notions of person we can get a sense of what a person is thought to be in Canadian culture. Boethius (c. 480-524) suggests that a person is "an individual substance of the rational kind" (Flew, 1984, p. 265). It took the courts of Europe almost one hundred years to decide that the "Indians" in the New World were persons. "It was not until 1535 that a Papal Bull was issued recognizing the original people in the Americas as men [sic], as persons" (McPherson & Rabb, 1993, p. 26). John Locke (1632-1704) submits that person "applies only to intelligent agents capable of a law, and happiness and misery" (ibid.). Immanuel Kant (1742-1804) proposes that a person is the subject whose actions are capable of imputation". Kant says because persons are capable of imposing laws upon themselves they are worthy of *respect* (ibid.). Kant feels that humankind's ability to impose laws upon themselves separates and elevates humanity from the rest of nature thus granting humankind with a dignity (an absolute inner worth) (Ibid.). McPherson & Rabb point out that Kant's statement captures the Non-Indian Western attitude towards nature--one of complete alienation.

P. F. Strawson suggests that a person is a basic particular to which one can ascribe states of consciousness and corporal characteristics. According to Catherine McCall (1990) Strawson conceives of the term "person" to refer to a particular social way of understanding individuals or single entities. The individual or person is recognized as a public entity with a name. An individual can only exist as a person in a social situation as the properties that make him or her a person such as agency, accountability, responsibility for action, able to plan a future action, consistent decision-making, only operate in a social framework and is the result of language usage. I suppose if you are alone in the woods you become an individual not a person.

Consider the notion D. C. Dennett (1976) portrays of person. He explicitly states that "at this time and place human beings are the only persons we recognize . . . . we recognize conditions that exempt human beings from personhood . . . . For instance, infant human beings, mentally defective human beings, and human beings declared insane by licensed psychiatrist . . . ." (p. 175). Person seems to be a social status conferred upon meritorious individuals. Dennett claims that personhood is a metaphysical and moral concept. To be a person one must be a rational being, possess an intentional system, the capacity for verbal communication, and moral agency exhibiting reciprocity, and be a normative ideal. McCall concludes that the concept of a person refers to a set of characteristics which are typical of human beings--volition, intentionality, ability to feel pain, joy, depression, malice, moral feelings and attitudes. It is interesting to note that it has not been one hundred years since non-Native women were considered persons in Canada and very few years for Native people.

McPherson & Douglas (1993) have written an informative chapter on the notion of person in the Aboriginal world-view. The authors cite the words of Georgina Tobac (Dene): "Every time the white people come to the North or come to our land and start tearing up the land, I feel as if they are cutting up our own flesh because that is the way we feel about the land. It is our flesh" (p. 86). The authors identify an *experienced oneness* of land and person. This sense of oneness is beyond a belief wherein belief is something held in the mind to be true or actual. It is not that Native people *believe* in this oneness but that Native people empirically *experience* this sense of oneness that grows out of their sense of reality. At the age of seven I had *experienced* the reality of this oneness with my friend the tree. However, the workman and my Dad were working under the influence of alienation between nature and humankind.

McPherson & Rabb (1993) define a person as "someone who has a right to our respect. A person is someone with whom our relationship may be, indeed must be, evaluated morally. The concept of person is, at least in part, a value concept" (p. 89). This concept seems compatible with Eurocentric ideas. However, whom the concept of person can be applied to vastly differs. The authors draw upon J. Baird Callicott (1989) to explain that "the Ojibwa regarded animals, plants, and assorted other natural things and phenomena as persons with whom it was possible to enter into complex social intercourse . . . . Ojibwa narratives consistently represent the natural world as a world of *other-than-human persons* organized into a congeries of societies" (p. 88-89, italics added for emphasis). My tree friend was an other-than-human person with whom I was able to have had an intimate social relationship because of my sense of reality. As an other-than-

human person, as a member of my enlarged sense of society, my tree was deserving of respect and dignity. As a person the principle of non-interference would apply. My tree had a right to its life unmolested and undisturbed.

McPherson & Rabb (1993) also emphasized another important issue from Callicott's work that relates to my tree story. "Plant and animal species are, as it were, other tribes or nations. Human economic intercourse with other species is not represented as the exploitation of impersonal, material natural resources, but as reciprocal gift-giving or bartering, in which both the human and non-human parties to the exchange, benefits" (p. 89). My tree person and I had a reciprocal relationship. I loved to see and hear the wind touch its leaves. It gave me shade on hot summer days. It let me hang things on it. It provided me with lots of interesting other-than-human persons such as bugs, bees, birds, etc. I often gave it drinks on hot summer days. I kept my tree company. I protected it from harm as much as I could. Through our relationship we shared spirit. I think my tree gave me more than I gave him. Sioui (1992) explains "humans do not make life, but that life makes humans" (p. 23). My tree friend helped me learn what it means to be human in this world that I must share with so many other persons. Kinship with the rest of creation has a purpose (see Appendix A # 12 & 13). "The old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's heart away from nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too" (McLuhan, 1971, as quoted by Sioui, 1992, p. 25). Human beings need to touch the spirit of the earth.

I note the growing implication of the term “autochthonous” or “authentic” forms of self-representation. The organizing conference for the inception of an Indigenous graduate program at the University of Alberta was called *Autochthonous Scholars: Towards an Indigenous Graduate Program*. The word autochthonous is designated as “an original inhabitant/ originating from the soil/from the land” (p. 3). Autochthonous can mean authentic or a Native person attached to the earth. The journal explains that:

While maintaining and honoring their own separate realities grounded in unique form of inquiry and research, these Autochthonous scholars have succeeded and excelled in mainstream universities. They have kept their cultural roots intact and have gathered strength and assistance from their Culture and their Elders. (Ibid.)

It is my goal or vision is to be an autochthonous scholar, to be attached to the earth,  
Native culture and my spiritual roots of reality.

## Chapter Five: Conclusions: A New Research Genre

### *A new discourse community*

I postulate that within the academic forum Native research can be seen as an exciting new research genre because of a distinct general character that results from underlying cultural and philosophical *differences* inherent within the Native world-view. Daniel Chandler (1998) affirms that "certainly, genres are far from being ideologically neutral. Sonia Livingstone argues, indeed, that 'different genres are concerned to establish different world views' (Livingstone 1990, 155)"(1998). I purport that through their struggles Native researchers are developing unique research activities, which question the philosophy, politics and poetics of traditional Western representation. "We are resisting by 'writing back.' by disrupting the European narratives and replacing them with either a more playful or a more powerful new narrative style" (Graveline, 1998, p. 42). These activities are based upon a Native metaphysics or view of reality. Identifying Native research as a separate unique genre is an important step in the development of the Native intellectual within the academic forum. I feel that there needs to be a sense of independence so that "Native culture is not added piecemeal to an imported research methodology" (Archibald, Bowman, Pepper, & Urion, 1995, p. 11). This genre then becomes responsive to mind of the Native person thus insuring a necessary independence from the dominant culture. Moreover, recognizing a Native research genre validates the existence of a particular discourse community within academia that is working from a Native world-view.

The belief in the right of a people to define themselves, their culture, their reality, and any research concerning them (Hampton, 1993) is the foundation of this paper. As more and more First Nations students are entering university programs they are encountering research methods that are not reflective of their Native cultural meanings (Wilson & Wilson, 1995, p. 1). Many Native students are searching within themselves as to how they can comfortably formulate their research efforts (Bishop, 1995, a & b, 1996; Hampton, 1993) by couching their thoughts and words within the Native world-view. Native students/ researchers are trying to transform their research into an indigenous cultural activity. Russell Bishop (1995b) enjoins Maori peoples to free themselves from neo-colonial domination in research in their attempt to creating indigenous knowledge. Many minority groups are trying to put the appropriate horse--their culture-- before the cart--their written research productions.

In previous chapters the characteristics and cultural capital of Native research that roots body of work within the traditional Native world-view have been examined. By examining the works of Native researchers and non-Native researchers who are enmeshed with Native research I have documented the growing shape of Native educational research by examining their particular cultural principles and patterns. I demonstrated how Hampton (1993) along with other Native authors "were using organizing principles rooted in tribal or natural sensibilities" (Ibid., p. 281) within their research and their works. I posit that these organizing principles have become a dynamic source of cultural cues and codes within the relatively new genre of Native research. I feel that this idea of indigenous organizing principles emanating out of a spiritual view of reality is the critical



key to the genesis of distinct Native research genre. As I stated before these indigenous organizing principles creates cultural metaphors for the Native mind and spirit to work through. Metaphors within Native texts can be seen as indigenous knowledge packages that connote critical notions of spiritual relationships.

*Genre embodies a culture's rationality*

Chandler [1998] quotes Ira Konigsberg (1987) as suggesting that texts within genres embody the moral values of a culture. Miller (1984) submits that within an expanded theory, genre can perform important functions beyond what formalism grants to it. A genre can "embody a culture's rationality" (p. 165), meaning their thought system. Native rationality, as a thought system, emanates out of the foundation of spiritual reality. Miller further submits that "genres can serve as an index to cultural patterns and as tool for exploring the achievement of particular speakers and writers" (Ibid.). In chapter 1 I documented the cultural patterning that one would find in a Native research genre. Finally, Miller maintains that "genres can serve as keys to understand how to participate in the actions of a community" (ibid.). I propose that Native students and researchers can be seen as a "discourse community" held together by a similar world-view. Martin Nystrand (1982) defines a discourse community as a group of people "who may very well never speak or write to each other [however, they] could effectively so interact if required since they know the ways-of-speaking of the group" (p. 15). As was depicted in the section on cultural mirroring I have been able to interact with the discourse community of Native researchers even though I have rarely spoken to or

written to community members. I have been able to participate because I possess elements of Native rationality. Through participating within this discourse community Native people learn how to act together within the academic setting. Devitt (1993) states that communities construct genres. Through the process of acting together as a discourse community Native researchers have created a new genre within Academia.

### *Holistic genre theory*

Calling upon important work by theorists in several different fields--from literature (M. M. Bakhtin, Tzvetan Todorov, Jack Derrida), linguistics (M. A. K. Halliday, John Swales) and rhetoric (Caroline Miller, Kathleen Jamieson)--Amy J. Devitt (1993) presents a holistic understanding of writing and genre as opposed to the simplistic view of genre as form (See Figure 5 for a comparison between theories). In my view the holistic view of genre resonates with the holistic nature of the Native world-view. According to Devitt (1993) a new conception of genre is necessary for a holistic understanding: "our reconception will require releasing old notions of genre as form and text type and embracing new notions of genre as *dynamic patterning of human experience*, . . . a rhetorical and essentially semiotic<sup>19</sup> social construct" (p. 573, italics added for emphasis) The human experience of Native research coalesces about the

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<sup>19</sup> Semiotics is 'the study of signs' (or 'the theory of signs'). It involves the study not only of what we refer to as 'signs' in everyday speech, but of anything which 'stands for' something else thus including words, images, sounds, gestures and objects.

Old Genre Theory	New Genre Theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on formalism that describes the formal features (meter, layout, organization, diction etc.) of a particular genre</li> <li>• A trivial system that names types of texts according to their form</li> <li>• a formal classification system</li> <li>• genre is a product based concept which ends up emphasizing reading over writing</li> <li>• genre a static concept or product</li> <li>• genre is based on the dichotomy of the substance/content &amp; the form of discourse</li> <li>• divides form from context defining genre as the form into which the content is put</li> <li>• container model of meaning</li> <li>• refers to a category or kind of discourse</li> <li>• genre is seen as a text type</li> <li>• genre is a fixed classification system based on a set of similarities</li> <li>• based on the study of conventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form &amp; content in discourse are one</li> <li>• genre is depicted as a <i>dynamic patterning of human experience</i></li> <li>• Genre is depicted as a rhetorical situation</li> <li>• Genre is depicted as essentially semiotic situation</li> <li>• Genre is depicted as social construct</li> <li>• There is a dynamic relationship between "situation" and "genre development"</li> <li>• genre depends heavily on the intertextuality of discourse &amp; do not spring forth independent of all other genres -past genres help us respond more easily and appropriately genre respond to situation but genre also constructs recurring situation--a circle of creativity hence genre creates situation and situation creates genre</li> <li>• context is the larger framework against which genre is superimposed</li> <li>• Context is depicted not as a physical fact but as both situation and culture, an intersubjective phenomenon, a social occurrence</li> <li>• Any piece of text will carry with it indications of its context therefore given the text, we can construct the situation from it through genre since it is constantly responding to the recurrent situation</li> <li>• by selecting a genre to write within the writer selects the situation that the genre carries</li> <li>• genre is tied to the construction of a discourse community who choose to produce works that combine genre, that violate genre and create new genre</li> <li>• genre is as an abstraction that mediates between language and utterance, between text and context, between form and content</li> <li>• Genre is semiotic patterns and relationships that are constructed when writers or groups of writers <i>identify different writing tasks as being similar</i></li> <li>• <i>Genre becomes visible through perceived patterns in the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features of particular texts, therefore genre is a maker of meaning</i></li> </ul>

Figure 5: A comparison between genre theories

experiences of Native students and Native researchers. The dynamic patterning correlates with the characteristics and patterning of Native research.

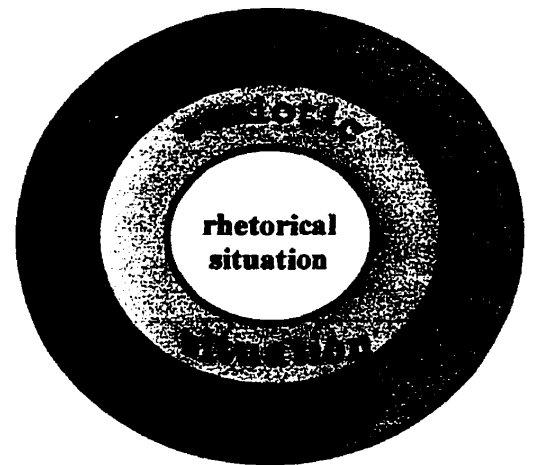
Significant elements of the reconception of genre begin with a recurring rhetorical situation, and expand to include a semiotic situation and a social context.

**Figure 6: Reconception of genre (Lana Tiller, 1999)**

**rhetorical situation** - an influx into university of Native students with a similar world-view who encounter recurring similar research/writing and respond appropriately. Similar responses become established patterns for Native research genre.

**semiotic situation** - the cultural capital of First Nation students or semantic cultural resources both of which contain Aboriginal meaning potential.

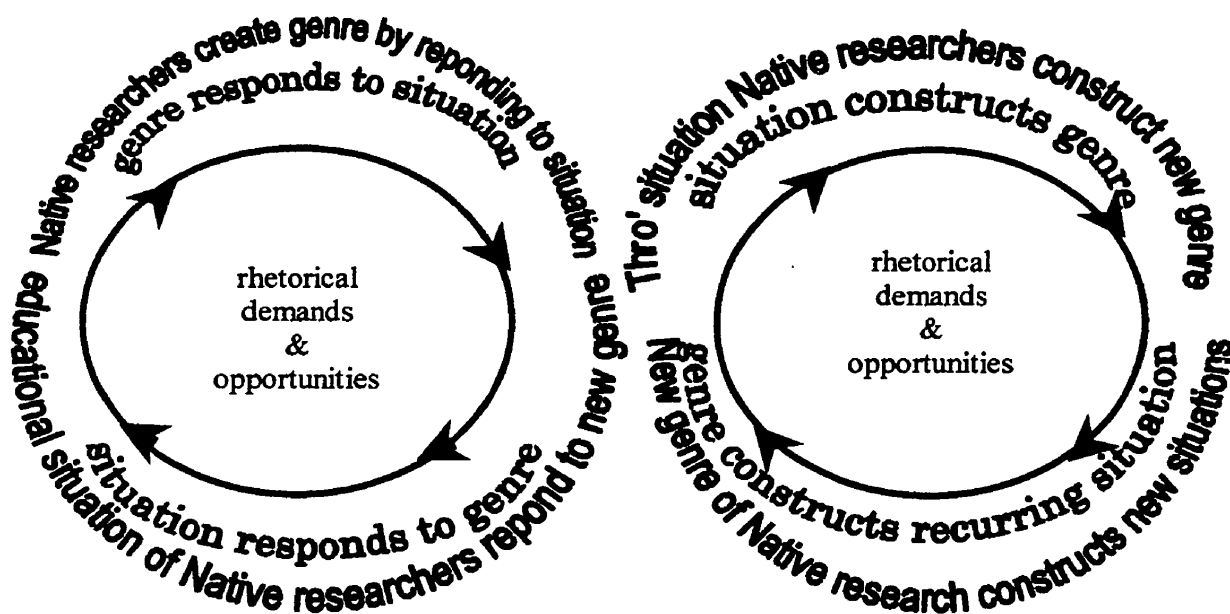
**social context** - changing social context - more students decide to go to school - academic space more open to change and acceptance of other world-views. Resurgence of Native consciousness. Working in two world-views.



Devitt develops a dynamic relationships between “situation” and “genre development”. “Genres develop, then, because they respond appropriately to situations that writers encounter repeatedly. In principle, that is, writers first respond in fitting ways and hence *similarly* to recurring situations; then, the similarities among those appropriate responses become established genre conventions” (Ibid., p. 576, italics added). Hence, genre can be seen as a response to a recurring situation. Since genre responds to situation the text should reflect the situation, thus when constructing a genre we are also

constructing the situation. This dynamic view of genre is manifested within a dynamic circle of creativity.

Figure 7: Dynamic circle of creativity (Lana Tiller, 1999)



The recurring situation is occasioned the rhetorical demands and opportunities that Native students and researchers encounter in post-secondary education. Native students are expected to create academic papers and do research as they progress through university and after they acquire their credentials. This dynamic concept of genre resonates with the fluid and circular motion within the Native world-view. Within this fluid concept of genre creation I feel justified in posing Native research as a new genre which has resulted from a recurring situation of Native students and researchers meeting

rhetorical demands. That recurring situation reinforces and shapes the growth of Native research genre.

The concept of "situation" is complex. The situation is embedded within a larger frame of context, which consists of situation, society, and culture. Context is depicted not as a physical fact but as Miller (1984) calls it "an intersubjective phenomenon, a social occurrence" (p. 156). Context is the larger framework against which genre is superimposed. Halliday and Ruqaiya (1989) assert that "any piece of text, long or short, spoken or written, will carry with it indications of its context (p. 38, as quoted by Devitt, 1993, p. 578). Native research carries indications of its social context. Most Native research carries indicators from both world-views. Native writers incorporate the principles and patterns that I reported in Chapter 2 in order to satisfy a basic need to reflect and work within a Native world-view. Many Native researchers and students are pushing at the edge of what is deemed appropriate in academia. At the same time every Native researcher/student has to compromise by pouring their thought structures into Western European rhetorical styles. This research situation is why it is so important to recognize and nurture the development of a Native research genre. Native people need to shape genre to fit their thought styles. The fluidness of this improved notion of genre encourages the development of genre that can be shaped to fit any thinking style

Because situation is a social concept as well as a rhetorical concept, it changes with society and human behavior. Over the past thirty or forty years there has been a resurgence of Native consciousness. My people, the Haudenosaunee, presented a call to consciousness wherein they stated that "the ways of the people of the Longhouse have

always been profoundly spiritual, their government, their economy, everything that is Haudenosaunee has deep spiritual roots" (Basic call to consciousness, On-line). This resurgence has resulted in change in society, which in turn has an impact upon genre. Ideas such as hegemony have had a great impact on thinking in educational institutions and society. The notion of hegemony has made more people in dominant society aware of oppression and its effect upon minority groups such as the First Nations. This expansive thinking has opened up minds to be receptive of other world-views.

Halliday (1978) defines genre as "the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with the situational type. It is the *meaning potential* that is accessible in a given social context (111)" (as quoted by Devitt, 1993, p. 577, italics added for emphasis). The making of meaning is the goal of all literary work within a discourse community. Meaning arises from the cultural connotations that coalesce upon the signs used in the discourse of a community. The cultural principles and patterns indicative of Native research as presented above are the cultural signs that connote a shared meaning. These signs have great meaning potential when woven in Native research. These are the meanings that speak to me like a conversation with a comfortable friend as I have shown previously in this work.

Devitte summarizes that:

Genre is patterns and relationships, essentially semiotic ones, that are constructed when writers or groups of writers *identify different writing tasks as being similar*. Genre constructs and responds to recurring situation, becoming visible through perceived *patterns* in the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features of particular texts. *Genre is truly, therefore a maker of meaning* (Ibid., italics added).

The Native world-view is also built upon patterns and relationships as are the semiotics of Indigenous languages. These patterns and relationships reflect a holistic sense of reality that allow Native writers to identify different writing tasks as being similar and thus generate a new genre of research. The meaning potentials of cultural signs are viewed as similar because they are rooted in the spirit.

### *Methodological implications*

#### *Intertextuality of genre*

Devitt (1993) notes that genre depends heavily on the intertextuality of discourse. New genres do not spring forth independent of all other genres. Existing genres can *constrain* responses to new situations, hence genre development is heavily guided by past responses. Accordingly, past genres can help us respond more easily and appropriately or perhaps even interfere. I am interested in the history of past genres that can constrain our genre responses. The Euro-western tradition draws upon genre traditions that stretch back to ancient Greece. These traditions assumed the stature of being preferred, best, right, superior, rational etc. However, when Native students/scholars/researchers act to write, they bring with them a wealth of genre tradition that should be allowed to constrain and shape their literary productions. Thurman Lee Hester (1997) demonstrates how this can work. In his essay he states that if this were a Choctaw paper he would end it after telling his story. "Indeed if this were a completely Choctaw paper, I would only smile and thank you for your attention at this point and consider the presentation over. I have said all I can say. From a Choctaw perspective, from here on it is up to you. If you think



hard and long, if you build enough stories like this you will come to understand . . . .It would be almost insulting you if I were to presume to continue and explain" (p. 83).

However, since his work was an academic exercise, Hester must go on and explain his meaning. Still in many academic places the independence to draw upon your preferred genre traditions is not granted or constricted.

When I consider my circumstances I am torn between two situations that are very disparate. On the one hand I am situated within an established academy of learning with a powerful Eurocentric research tradition and yet, on the other hand, I am struggling to be true to many of my principles and traditions which emanate out of my Native culture and belief. The tension results from the contradictory juxtaposition of Eurocentric reality and Native reality. Conflict can arise from trying to learn and accept the right academic genre. That genre is more than just an academic form has been well argued. As a dynamic entity genre carries more than convention. Genre carries a discourse community's values, assumptions and beliefs. Devitt (1993) records "a study of Athabaskans , a group of Alaskan Indians, discussed by Michael B. Prince, that found that learning to write a new genre implied *cultural and personal values* that conflicted with pre-existing patterns of thought and behavior (741)" (p. 583). I have felt that conflict! As a Native person I try to situate my struggle for a correct methodology that is respectful of that culture within the new phenomenon of Native research. I feel an obligation to justify an appropriate research method and to explicate my need for a particular method hence the creation of this thesis. My personal needs centers upon the cultural values that I bring into the research. Professionally, I concur with Lather as she

talks of “the necessity of self-reflexivity, of a growing awareness of how researcher values permeate inquiry” (p. 2, 1991). Cultural heritage plays a critical role in the values which both other Native peoples and I bring to research. Research should grow out of one’s philosophy and cultural principles, and values.

However, the question still remains--*How can indigenous people insure research is not piecemeal added on to imported research methodology?* For me this has been a large part of my research concerns. Part of the solution that I have proposed is to recognize Native research as a distinct genre. The other part is to recognize that Native research is rooted in a spiritual conception of reality.

***Why is there Native Research?***

Native research seeks to proceed out of and reflect an indigenous system of meaning that is rooted within the Native world-view, a world-view that has been around for thousands of years. Miller (1984) argues that in both writing and reading within genres we learn purposes appropriate to the genre. I think that part of Native people's research purposes is to convey, initiate and establish their cultural meanings within educational forums. This need is precipitated by the influx of native students in the university setting.

It was suggested to me that one purpose of the development of Native research is political process. The suggestion carried the idea that in order to procure academic credentials Native people had to carve out an academic space and that we are staking a territorial claim, not a land claim, but a staking out of academic territory. However, after

some thought, I have to disagree. Harsh and aggressive words like "carve", "staking a claim", "academic territory" just do not resonate within a paradigm of peace and harmony.

The *Haudenosaunee* realized when they first encountered the Europeans that this new group of people was also part of the Great Circle of Life. Attempts to bring the Europeans into the circle were rebuffed. According to *Gawittha* "the next best thing--a treaty of peace and amity--was agreed upon by the two parties. This treaty was known as the Two Row Wampum [or *Kahswenhtha*]" (1991, front inside cover). The belt consisted of two parallel purple rows symbolizing two peoples and their different lifestyles. The Native intent was that the two peoples should live in peaceful co-existence. Tolerance and respect were to underlie our differences. The *Haudenosaunee* always acknowledged the European's place in the Great Circle of Life. If the Europeans were here in Turtle Island, they were here as part of the Creator's acts. The Europeans were always a part of our spiritual reality from first contact.

The *Haudenosaunee* believe that spiritualism is the highest form of political consciousness (*A basic call to consciousness*, p. 49). In light of this view of interrelated reality I suggest that we, as Native people, were always there for or with the academy. It was and is the academy and the society it represents, which separated itself from Native people through its fragmented type of thought world.

I concede that the part of the purpose of the development of Native research is a recovery of cultural knowledge, a cultural reconnection and a metaphysical connection for Aboriginal people. The recovery and reclamation is necessary because of the

fragmentation and disruption resulting from colonization. Native education should include a recovery and reconnection to all that is. "To recognize interconnectedness is to know oneself as part of a vast circle in which all expressions of life--the birds, animals, tree, insects, rocks--are our brothers and sisters, are all equally beloved and vital to our Mother Earth" (Graveline, 1998, p. 56). This was the mirroring experience that I described in chapter 3.

Furthermore, I envision a purpose for Native research as not just a mirror for Native peoples but for non-Native peoples, so that they too may find connection to all life. I see Native research as producing healing opportunities for members of the dominant culture as well as Indigenous culture. I see a reciprocal nurturing process.

Why does the dominant culture need to find healing in the mirror of Native research? Frederick Douglas (1845), a former American slave, comments about slavery being a two edged sword. It did terrible things to the mind and heart of the slaves but it also did terrible things to the mind and heart of the slave owners. The slave owners could not protect themselves from the negative fallout of inhuman acts. All inhuman acts, acts of oppression and repression have the same negative fallout for individuals, communities and society.

The RCAP has researched the history of:

the relationship that has developed over the last 400 years between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada. We have seen that it was built on a foundation of false premises. . . . A country cannot be built on a living lie. We know now, if the original settlers did not, that this country was not terra nullius at the time of contact and that the newcomers did not 'discover' it in any meaningful sense. (Vol. 2, chap. 1, paragraph 1 & 2, On-line version)

Clearly there are plenty of opportunities for healing and reconciliation.

I make no claims of expertise. This thesis represents who-I-am-to-day resulting from what I have experienced this far in my life's journey. I can be no more than this.

(See Appendix A #14 for changes in my response to "Who am I?".)

## Epilogue

As an adult I still experience the same eager anticipation of the corn's ripe bug on sultry summer days. But without others to share the excitement I hold the experience within. I find it difficult reflect on it and do not discover the meaning potential within the experience.

How excited I was to discover Scott L. Pratt's (1999) recounting of the corn's ripe bug in order to explain the *Haudenosaunee* dual notion of *orenda*<sup>1</sup>. *Orenda* is a difficult concept for Non-Native people to understand and has repeatedly been depicted as the result of "the inchoate reasoning of primitive man (Hewitt, 1902, p. 36 as quoted by Pratt, no date, p. 7). Pratt notes that on one hand *orenda* is depicted as a uniform power or potency possessed by all things not unlike the European notion of being. On the other hand it seems to be a principle of individuation granting individuals distinctive powers or potencies. J. N. B. Hewitt (1902) states that the Iroquoian name for locusts is "it habitually ripens the corn". He postulates that "because when it sang in the early morning the day became very hot; and so the inchoate mind of the Iroquois inferred that the locust controlled the summer heat; its mere presence was not thus interpreted, but its singing was held to *signify* it was exerting its *orenda* to bring on the heat necessary to ripen the corn" (Ibid., p. 40, italics added for emphasis). Hewitt understands the locust's song as simply a sign signifying the exertion of *orenda*. Pratt suggests that *orenda*, in fact, refers to the locust's voices as an expression that has or calls for certain

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<sup>1</sup> Pratt states that *orenda* is comparable to the Algonquin and Objiva notion of *manitou*, the Lakota notion of *wakan* and the Shoshonean notion of *pokunt*.

consequences. Orenda becomes "an expression of individuals which operates in conjunction with listeners or respondents . . . . a change in the weather is not made by the locusts, but rather can be viewed as the result of a communicative interaction between locusts and the winds . . . . the song of the locusts is a song of individuals heard and responded to by others"(no date, p. 9). Orenda captures the spiritual relationship between individuals who have orenda--have a voice--and the listening and responding community. I, along with the corn, became part of the listening and responding community when I was taught to hear and respond to the orenda of the corn's ripe bug.

Since all things/persons are spiritual and possess orenda, and since all communities contain persons, therefore, we can conclude that all communities are spiritual and have orenda. I have posed Native research as a discourse community. That community possesses *orenda*; the persons within the group also have *orenda*, both of which call out for consequences and responses. As a person I heard the call, the song of the Native Research community. I heard; I responded. The consequences, the communicative interaction between me as a person and the Native research community are contained within my heart and within this work. As I express my orenda, calling for a response, I expect to hear from a listening responding community, whatever group of persons that may be. As a community Native discourse calls for response from and responds to other discourse communities.

I pray to the Creator that by my understandings, which have been a gift from others, a spiritual communicative interaction may arise within the academic community and perhaps the rest of the world, so that all may hear, rejoice and respond to the corn's ripe bug.

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## Appendix A: Poetry

I feel that it is essential for me to include my poetry along with my academic research. While reading Susan Griffin (1983) during course work I wrote a letter to her expressing my developing attitude towards poetry.

Dear Susan Griffin,

I too am a poet. Like you I realize that this trait has a profound effect on the way that I think. I had not thought of poetry as *a different way of knowing, a different paradigm, a different consciousness*, but now see that it is so. I prefer to present my knowledge in the form of a poem as I can capture in the metaphors of a few short lines what may take pages of academic writing. Poems are so succinct. I also can lace my poems with feelings that can flow out and envelop readers. Feeling is another way of knowing intimately related to poetry. Poetry helps me to consolidate my learning within myself and see it organized quickly in front of me on the page. It also frees me from demands of precision and clarity.



# 1 **Buttered white bread.**

I feel like  
 A painful bit of fluff.  
 The WASP inside of me  
 has eclipsed the Indian part of me.  
 I'm human and no fool.  
 I knew which side  
 my bread was buttered on—  
 I knew of the power and the privilege  
 that comes from being white.  
 And yet,  
 I feel like a traitor  
 because I cannot enjoy,  
 I cannot experience,  
 I cannot bridge  
 the richness of two worlds,  
 two diametric cultures.  
 Until my reflection was directed  
 To see.  
 I never realized  
 the systematic bias of my WASP viewpoint  
 --of history  
 --of teaching  
 --of values  
 --of tradition  
 --of religion.  
 Why was I angry?  
 Why was I was defending  
 That advantaged WASP viewpoint  
 against unwhite others?  
 Now I know  
 that I have hurt others,  
 particularly my self-effacing  
 and red facing loved ones,  
 by deriding parts of my Native culture.  
 I laughed at their legends,  
 I have denied them a voice,  
 I hoarded my space,  
 and glared in their face.  
 I never meant to create hurt.  
 I just couldn't see,  
 I just couldn't understand  
 the simple human demand—  
 Dignity!  
 O spirits on the ancestors—  
 forgive me.  
 I still can hear  
 The drumbeat in my ear.

**# 2 Finding Voice**

I have always framed

my narrative  
my story  
my song

Within

The constricted medium of a dominant world

And within

A fear of a formulated educational world.

Consequently,

I have rarely heard

my own song  
ring clear  
and strong

Outside the boundaries of my head.

I have never

Really listened

to my own voice  
as my own narrative,  
my singular song.

Why?

Because I have rarely been listened to

Different as I am

--a red and white woman--

Thus negating opportunities

For negotiation,

For participation

For development

That would build essential bridges between

Self and Others.

© 1995

**# 3 Seeds**

Seeds--  
 the very word  
 spiritually rings  
 from mouth to heart.  
 In the spring  
 carefully,  
 I kneel on the earth.  
 Tenderly,  
 I hold the seeds  
 in my hands  
 Thankfully,  
 I lay them in the  
 warm moist earth.  
 I thank the Creator  
 for the wonder of them,  
 for the promise within them.

Seeds-----Soil  
 sacred relationships.

In patience  
 My grandmother  
 Planted sacred seeds  
 in my warm heart.  
 Through our good talks  
 and through her deeds,  
 anticipates my future needs  
 and the promise within me.

Seeds-----Heart  
 Sacred relationships.

Sacred spring rains  
 fall upon my seeds.  
 They swell,  
 they burst  
 according to the circle of life  
 They poke their heads  
 up to the sun  
 in the light of life.

Sacred words  
 like spring rains  
 fall upon  
 the seeds of my heart  
 They swell,  
 They burst  
 According to the circle,  
 And poke their heads  
 within the light of life.  
 And within that sacred light  
 I find my place--  
 As Ongwehonweh,  
 part of the circle of life.

**# 4 My Ongwehonweh Uncle**

True bone of my bone  
True flesh of my flesh  
Honored Brother  
Of my esteemed Mother  
How I admire  
Who you are to yourself.  
Intellectually  
You belong to no master--  
You teach me  
Independence and freedom.  
Spiritually,  
You belong to all the earth--  
You teach me to love her  
and tread carefully.  
You teach me  
connectedness and place.  
And when I see you  
ruminating in your chair  
I feel your thankfulness--  
I feel the Great Peace.  
What more could an uncle  
Give his niece.

Lana Dale, Feb., 1998 ©

(Gawitrha, my uncle, passed away peacefully in April 1999. I owe so much to him for our many good talks that helped me along my path.)

## # 5 WHO AM I?

I am one of the people.  
 I am one of the tainted.  
 My life has been  
 Strangled,  
 Constricted,  
 Afflicted,  
 By a slippery, pervasive, protected enemy-  
 Ephervesant Alcohol.

I am thrice wounded!  
 I am wounded  
 For myself:  
 For the pain,  
 For the loss,  
 For the wasted years  
 I can not regain.

I am wounded  
 For my family:  
 For broken bonds,  
 For broken trust  
 Cruelly thrust asunder,  
 For members  
 Dismembered in the ground.

I am wounded  
 For my people:  
 For lost dignity and peaceful life  
 Abandoned for drunken strife,  
 With hungry, hurting children,  
 And beaten blue wife.

I am angry  
 At a culture  
 Which embraces blindness  
 And carefully cultivates it  
 In each member part  
 So all of us  
 Will never see  
 The carnage, wreckage,  
 Heaped around me,  
 And you and you and you  
 While.....

A l c o h o l l e a p s i n g l e e !

## # 6 Sweet Memories

Old Indian lady  
 (Grandmother to someone)  
 I do not know you--  
 But as I watch your every move,  
 The pattern of the wrinkles on your face  
 And on your honoured hands,  
 The curve of your smile,  
 The expressions on your face,  
 The glint in your eye,  
 Even the way your eyelids droop:  
 And as I hear the couching of your words,  
 The tone in your voice,  
 The emotion wrapped around your words,  
 That particular laughter  
 Reflecting a particular type of humor,  
 And the flavor of your life's view,  
 My eyes fill up with tears  
 In nostalgic yearning and burning,  
 My thoughts turning  
 To my old Indian Grandmother  
 Who was lovingly laid away so many years ago.  
 I can not watch the old black woman  
 And feel the same tremendous pull  
 That race and culture  
 Infuse into my pulsing heart  
 And into my reaching mind.  
 COMFORT!  
 I yearn for that cultural comfort  
 Of coming home to familiar things.  
 There is a comfort  
 In the union of race and culture  
 That now I never can disdain.  
 To run from this  
 Is truly effort done in vain.

© 1995

**# 7 Cursed White People**

Cursed White People.  
You stole away my *laugh*  
with your cursed helping craft,  
telling me from under  
disapproving furrowed brows  
with tight thin lips  
that it is--  
inappropriate,  
unhealthy,  
unmannerly,  
As you stroke your wise white chin  
while counting my laugh a pagan sin.

So embarrassed, I beat it down,  
My *laugh* which sustained me  
In so many subtle ways  
On many of the terrible days--  
O those terrible days  
Heritage of white man's ways.

Why couldn't they know  
I would need my *laugh* so.  
Laughter--  
My heritage of red man's ways,  
A staple of my strength.  
A staple of my voice.  
Would they leave me voiceless?  
Would they leave me powerless?  
© 1995

**# 8 Walking and Talking**

Grandmother,  
I miss you!  
So many times  
I want you here  
talking soft to me  
walking beside me  
in your kindly way.  
I saw you in my dream.  
We met in our forest of peace.  
Grandmother, you looked so young,  
Your heavy burdens come to surcease.  
Your laughter lilted through the leaves,  
The sun dancing and glinting on your sleeves.  
Even in your death you come to teach me of my life,  
To walk in peace, granddaughter, and shun earthly strife.

© 1998



**# 9 Re-membering myths**

Give me back my Native myths  
Terribly torn asunder  
From Creators kind gifts  
Which  
Forever distilled like dew  
Upon ancestors so true.

Put back the myths  
Into our lore  
Stories that liltingly lift  
Our spirits high above  
The further shore.

Sacred myth, Creator's gift,  
Help us weave together  
Life's painful rifts  
Into a life  
Bereft of strife.

Let us find our harmony,  
Our ancient unity,  
Within our identity  
Woven within our many  
Myths.

© 1997

**# 10 Brotherly Lessons**

My evergreen brothers  
 carry well  
 their heavy white burdens  
 in the cold of winter moons,  
 spreading spacious noble branches  
 to the four corners of the Earth.  
 With branches bowed  
 down before Mother earth  
 draped in her white robes,  
 they never complain,  
 even though  
 their burdens are ever great.  
 O great Creator-  
 what lesson is  
 herein contained for me  
 to learn well and wisely?  
 I too am bowed down  
 with heavy burdens.  
 Oh evergreen brothers  
 Show me how  
 to carry them  
 In this winter  
 of my life.

©

**# 11 Wonder**

I am struck in awe and wonder  
 At the tremendous potency  
 Of a single stem of sweet grass.  
 How can so much life,  
 So much possibility,  
 Reside in one singularity ?

©

**# 12 Lessons from a Tinsy, Winsy Bug.**

You crawl across my hand tripping on traps of hair.  
You labour on mountains of vein  
And valleys of wrinkles.  
I was going to squash you--  
Just a reflexive response--  
It seemed that  
You were invading my space,  
By walking on my self.  
But -  
You were so tiny,  
so lively,  
so sparkly purple,  
And so totally unaware of me.  
You are a little bug person;  
I could not squish you.  
So I watched you,  
Just a little speck of life,  
A small purplish sparkle in the sunlight.  
I became awed  
By your puny,  
perfect  
speck of self.

In that space created by awe,  
I felt infinity, affinity rush in  
Sweeping over my colossal frame.  
Somehow in that awesome space  
I knew that we are one.


© 1993

**# 13 A Snail Person**

I almost stepped on you while out running.  
The earthquake of my step  
Made you pull yourself in somewhat.  
That motion caught my eye,  
So I stood very still  
Until you felt safe enough.  
I watched as slowly, cautiously,  
Unfold yourself at both extremities.  
From an undifferentiated mass of flesh,  
You poked out the form of a head  
Elongating yourself,  
You pushed out a mouth.  
Then, you slowly raised up  
Two cute little antennae.  
There,  
Now you are all unfolded  
In your vulnerable form.  
I marvel at the wonder of you.  
Your skin so delicately pink,  
--so translucent  
-- so fragile  
Out of that rock hard shell.  
You are a mini wonder-  
And yet you have no consciousness  
Of that fact.  
For we are all alike before the creator  
Unconscious of His love, his pain,  
His wonder and delight in each of us.

© 1994

## # 14 A Beaded One



Perhaps,  
 Not until now,  
 Have I ever understood  
 The complexity of my life experiences.  
 I have never peeled back  
 The overlapping contexts  
 Of the one whole  
 That gives rise to  
 My own life  
 Experience.  
 But  
 Now,  
 When I hold me  
 Up to the light of life  
 I see a particular Native womaness  
 Refracted through this prism of life  
 Displaying for my mind  
 The layers of  
 Education,  
 Discourse,  
 Culture,  
 History  
 Family,  
 Power,  
 Faith,  
 Class,  
 Race.  
 Is it  
 Not that  
 Life functions like  
 A prism that focuses  
 Into the individual one?  
 If this is so, then I can take that  
 Ray of life that focuses within me  
 And pass it back through life's prism  
 So that I may examine all the coloured complexity,  
 All the myriad cast of competing, conflicting contexts  
 That can coalesce as a sacred center-point of  
 Shared peace and harmony  
 Within  
 Me.

Lana Tiller ©

## **Appendix B : Medicine Wheel Interpretations**

<http://www.bmee.org/mwheel.htm> 1 13/04/99

### **The Medicine Wheel**

The Medicine Wheel is the circle of life (sometimes referred to as the Scared Hoop) Starting with birth and continuing through out our lives until death, when we have gone full circle.

The Medicine wheel has four Direction, each direction offering it's own lessons, color, and animal guide. There are to paths shown which cross in the center, at which point for me is the heart. (for when you work from your heart, you can reach all directions.) The path from East to West is the path of spirits, (the Blue Road) the path from South to North is our physical Walk (the Red Road ).

Submitted by Kurihato

East - beginnings, purity, family, innocence, amazement of Life

South - youth - passions of life, friendships, self-control

West - Adulthood - solitude, stillness, going inside oneself, reflection

North - Place of the Ancient Ones who have gone over - place of wisdom

Above - Freedom of mind, body, spirit

Below - Nuturing, Mother, life

Mikmaq traditions submitted by Steps In It

East - Black Bear, Snapping Turtle, Eagle, Glooscap

South - Golden Bear - Sacred Spirit Woman - Thunder Beings

West - Brown Bear & Buffalo

North - All White Animals

Apache: submitted by Kurihato

East=Black

South=Blue

West=Yellow

North=White

As I first Learned

East - Eagle - Yellow - For beginning, enlightenment

South - Coyote, Mouse - Red- For lookin within - Innocence

West - Bear - Black - For introspect

North - Buffalo -White - Wisdom - Truth

## **Appendix C: Examples of Medicine Wheel Appropriation on the Internet**

### **21. Native American Art by Wolf Woman**

Birth Medicine Wheels The Birth Medicine Wheel is a collection of the Native Moon, the Animal Totem, Plant Totem, the Greek symbol, and the traditional zodiac sign for each of the 12 birth cycles. The medium is used, is a burning method of all...

92% 8/5/98 <http://www.lakotawolfwoman.com/wheels.htm>

### **24. Medicine Wheel Workshops**

THE INCA MEDICINE WHEEL WITH Richard Bassil A small group of explorers will meet over four weekends (within a year) to study the ancient ways of the indigenous peoples of the Andes. The Q!ero Indians are direct descendants of the Incas, and have...

91% 11/26/97 <http://www.supremebeing.com/wrkshp.html>

### **32. BEARDED WOLF: The Medicine Wheel**

THE MEDICINE WHEEL To learn about the individual parts of the medicine wheel, follow the links below. THE CENTER CIRCLE THE SPIRIT KEEPERS THE TWELVE MOONS THE SPIRIT PATHWAYS THE ANIMAL TOTEMS AND THEIR LESSONS FOR HUMANS BACK

91% 8/9/98 <http://sbwm.erols.com/brddwolf/medwheel.html>

### **50. The Insight Institute**

Upcoming Classes Are Now Forming For the Following Online Workshops: Calling All Auras Personal Dowsing -- What it Can Do For You Dowsing the Medicine Wheel of Life Medicine Tools For Transformation Finding Your Soulmate Coming Soon Developing Your.

91% 3/22/99 <http://www.intuitivespirit.com/insight.html>

### **55. Interpretations of Visions and Dreams Using the Medicine Wheel of Life**

Interpretations of Visions and Dreams Using the Medicine Wheel of Life 60 Minutes Discusses several techniques using the Medicine Wheel of Life in arriving at your own understanding of what you were shown in the dream time, and how to bring back...

91% 3/18/97 <http://www.warlance.com/redpath/iomadumw.htm>

### **69. MEDICINE WHEEL HERBAL DROPS**

PRODUCT LISTINGS Please check our symbols and legendary cautions. MEDICINE WHEEL HERBAL DROPS 1 oz for only \$9.93 each "This 20 to 30 day supply per bottle is ready to use, Packaged in amber dropper bottles." ITEM # DESCRIPTION 511015 Congest-Ease..

90% 3/27/97 <http://www.herbmarket.com/catalog/herbdrops.html>

## Appendix D: Justice as Healing

*Justice as Healing* is a newsletter which deals with Aboriginal concepts of justice founded upon our knowledge and language and rooted in our experiences and feelings of wrongs and indignation. The term refers to an old tradition in Aboriginal thought and society. After the Aboriginal experience with colonialism, racism, domination and oppression, we are returning to this tradition of Justice as Healing as a foundation for contemporary remedies. While there is no one single theory of Aboriginal justice, the common theme remains the necessity of our knowledge healing our people and ourselves.

Click below to see sample articles:

1. [Aboriginal community healing in action : the Hollow Water approach](#) by Rubert Ross
2. [Aboriginal Justice Learning Network](#)
3. [Aboriginal Legal Services of Winnipeg](#) by Pamela A. Jensen.
4. [Aboriginal Legal Theory and Restorative Justice](#) by James J. R. Guest
5. [Aboriginal People and the Canadian Justice System](#) by Ross Green
6. [Book Review...Return to the teachings...](#) by David R. Newhouse
7. [Defining Traditional Healing](#) by Gloria Lee
8. [\[The\] Energy with which it is done](#) by Marj Benson.
9. [Evaluating the quality of justice](#) by Russel L. Barsh.
10. [Exploring justice as healing](#) by James [sákéj] Youngblood Henderson
11. [Family Group Conferencing: The Myth of Indigenous Empowerment in New Zealand](#) by Juan Marcellus Tauri
12. [From the power to punish to the power to heal](#) by Bria Huculak
13. [Harmony in the Community](#) by Tony Mandamin
14. [Healing circle in the Innu community of Sheshashit.](#)
15. [Hoist them on their own petard](#) by J. Zion
16. [Implementation of alternative structures of dispute resolution](#) by Larissa Behrendt
17. [Indian Justice and Punishment Clause of Victorian Treaties in Constitutional Law of Canada](#) by James [sákéj] Youngblood Henderson
18. [Indian Justice: Our Vision](#)
19. [International Day of the World's Indigenous People](#) by Erica-Irene A. Daes
20. [Justice as Healing in a small Australian Town](#) by Margaret Thorsborne.
21. [Justice as healing: thinking about change](#) by Paticia A. Monture-Okanee
22. [Legacy of Colonialism](#)
23. [Minister's Reference on Institutional Child Abuse: Discussion Paper](#)
24. [Morin decision: an excerpt](#)
25. [Navajo Response to Crime](#) by Robert Yazzie, Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation.
26. [Native Content in Lethbridge area Schools](#) by Russel Barsh
27. [Native youth and alternative justice in Lethbridge](#) by Russel Barsh
28. [Newest Old Gem: Family Group Conferencing](#) by Gloria Lee
29. [Power in the Spirit: Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge](#) by Jason Warick.
30. [Promises Worth Keeping](#) by Harold Johnson.



31. Red Jacket and the right to rule by Rupert Ross
32. Restoring the shattered confidence Re: Healing Circles.
33. [The] State, the community and restorative justice by Ron Schriml
34. [The] Seeds of a community healing process Re: Sentencing circles and procedure.
35. Seeing the world differently by Rupert Ross
36. Sentencing Circles Bibliographic List
37. Sentencing Circles : a general overview and guidelines
38. Teachings of the Seven Prophets by Elder William Commanda
39. Theory and Practice of Sentencing: Are they on the Same Wavelength? by the Honourable E.D. Bayda, Chief Justice of Saskatchewan
40. Throwing the baby eagle out of the nest by John Borrows.
41. Treaty Chiefs and Attorney Generals in Canada by Michelle Brass
42. Warriors of justice and healing

**Justice as Healing** is published by the Native Law Centre, at the University of Saskatchewan. We welcome and invite your readership as well as submissions, comments and ideas.

*Correspondence and submissions* can be submitted to Kathleen Makela via E-mail or on a computer disk accompanied by a double-spaced typed copy.

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**Native Law Centre of Canada**  
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e-mail: [makela@duke.usask.ca](mailto:makela@duke.usask.ca)

Issue by Volume number (this part is under construction).

Justice as Healing \* Spring 1995

- Exploring Justice as Healing
- Justice Minister's conference
- Aboriginal community healing in action : the Hollow Water approach by Rubert Ross
- Healing as Justice: the American Experience
- Evaluating the quality of justice by Russel L. Barsh.
- The energy with which it is done. by Marj Benson

Justice as Healing \* Fall 1995

- From the power to punish to the power to heal
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- Warriors of justice and healing

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- Red Jacket and the Right to Rule.
- International Day of the World's Indigenous People
- Addendum to the factum of the respondent in R. v. Rope
- The Rope Decision
- The Seeds of a Community Healing Process

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- Indian Justice: Our Vision

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- Aboriginal Legal Services of Winnipeg

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- Justice as Healing in a small Australian Town
- The Navajo Response to Crime

Justice as Healing: Vol. 3 No. 3 (Fall 1998)

- Implementation of Alternative Dispute Resolution by Larissa Behrendt

- Sentencing circle: a general overview and guidelines

Justice as Healing: Vol. 3 No. 4 (Winter 1998)

- Aboriginal People and the Canadian Justice System
- Minister's Reference on Institutional Child Abuse: Discussion Paper

Justice as Healing: Vol. 4 No. 1 (Spring 1999)

- Family Group Conferencing: the myth of Indigenous Empowerment in New Zealand
- Treaty making from an Indigenous perspective: a Ned'u'ten - Canada treaty model
- Aboriginal legal theory and restorative justice by James Guest.

**Appendix E: E-mail Permission for Reproducing Figure 3**

**From:** Lana Tiller  
**Date:** 01/04/99 7:27 AM  
**To:** [rfok@uaf.edu](mailto:rfok@uaf.edu)  
**Subject:**

Ske:no

I am working on my thesis and am organizing a section on Native metaphysics. While searching the net I came across your article [Yupiaq Education revisited](#). I liked the way you captured the Native view of reality in your diagram. Could I have your permission to use it in my thesis?

Lana Tiller

**From:** Oscar Kawagley  
**Date:** 01/04/99 3:36 PM  
**To:** Lana Tiller  
**Subject:** Re: Permission?

You certainly may as long as it is my particular diagram. I am glad that it does what I had hoped that it would accomplish. Thanks. aok