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Kihkipiw: A Cree Way 

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to our ancestors who sacrificed for us. To our current Indigenous Nations who carry on our important ways of knowing. Most importantly I dedicate this work to our children and those yet to come.

Akameyimohk!

Abstract

This study focuses on the context of the Cree intelligence. Entry into this context can only be made through the Cree language and utilizing the ancient processes found in the Cree intelligence of mind-body-spirit-heart connected. Cree intelligence operates in its fullest capacity when mind-body-spirit-heart are synchronously engaged. The four aspects of mind-body-heart-spirit provide the outward ways of Indigenous intelligence, our ways of being-seeing-relating-thinking.

The purpose of the study was to identify what members of a Cree First Nation understand to be the Cree way. The researcher asked four couples "What is the Cree way?" The data collected required further Indigenous analysis to begin to uncover the meaning found within the data. Lakota Elder Lionel Kinuwna's wisdom became the framework for this study. Four key aspects were required to fulfill this framework. First, the research process was approached as ceremony and proper protocols were adhered to. Second, thinking within the Cree context and Cree intelligence was paramount. Third, reliance on personal Cree knowledge and lived experience was constant. Lastly, incorporating and inviting Elders' teachings about Cree ways of knowing was essential. These four aspects enabled the researcher to articulate a theoretical model of Cree thinking and analysis.

Elder Lionel Kinunwa's loop to loop communication of hoops within hoops is presented as an Indigenous analysis process. Harmony, balance and chaos, circle and cyclicity are all qualities of an Indigenous analysis. Five steps of Indigenous analysis are presented as steps to work through the enfolded and implicate order of Indigenous ways of thinking-seeing-relating-being and the energy and movement of knowledge.

Embedded in the steps are many teachings of ceremony and intuitive processes that occur in synthesis, cyclicity and perpetuity. The major finding to this study is that the Cree way is based in an inductive style of learning. The Cree way is perpetual, relational, contextual and embedded in the language.

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"Knowledge can be used in anyway, knowledge used in a sacred manner becomes wisdom..." Sunbear

My entire being of mind-body-heart-spirit celebrates this work as a shared accomplishment with so many who helped me in this process. Firstly, I give thanks to the Creator, whom I always entrusted to guide me in this work. Second, I give thanks to my Cree ancestors who gift and guide me. I give thanks to the Saddle Lake Cree Nation and its members past, present and future. Thirdly, I give thanks to the many individuals not named here but acknowledged as my cultural teachers who planted gifts in me many years ago. Many of you are my aunts, uncles, grandparents, distant relatives, family friends. I thank you.

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To my nieces and nephews Jenna, Tamara, Sarah, Dallas and Brandon - Sahkihten.

To my children who are treasured gifts. You are beautiful beings who sacrificed so much. Together we will journey forward with these teachings.

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This work transformed me and thus is my life. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity to look closely at Nehiyaw pimatisiwin in the capacity of a graduate student. I learned so many important teachings that I will carry with me for my lifetime. Wisdom of Nehiyaw pimatisiwin lives in me, I embrace it and I am grateful for it.

Kinahsokomitin Kahikiyaw
Ay hiy

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Chapter 1

Iwawiyistaman Kamomoscike
Preparing in Ceremonial Prayer: Entering the Context

> "As I prepared to enter a sweat lodge ceremony in Minnesota, the leader of the sweat said, 'Eber, I know you can't pray in Indian, but pray in Indian in English.' So, as much as I am able, I have written in my vernacular hoping thus to speak person-to-person about what I care so deeply about. I hope you can join in the conversation and continue to do what you can to help Indian education."
> (Hampton, p. 6, 1995)

With gratitude, I open this work with words that Chickasaw scholar Eber Hampton used to frame his own study for an academic audience. Hampton's experience of being someone who is not privileged to use their Indigenous language and so must use English to pray "in Indian" parallels my own experience in this study. I use the English language to communicate but still formulate and express my thoughts with a Plains Cree mind and experience. From this place and position I make the necessary ceremonial preparation for this study.

Hampton's words provide direction about how a reader should approach his work. Many Indigenous scholars (Hanohano, 2001; Cardinal, 2001; Wilson, 2003; Martin, 2002) conceptualize the process(es) of Indigenous research as ceremony that must be conducted in specific ways if it is to generate authentic outcomes. Because we are conducting our research in areas that are "cared so deeply about", the protocols of our peoples, ceremonies and respect for the purity of the knowledge become the research process (Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Smith, 1999). As researchers, our work needs to satisfy many different people. Even so, like other Indigenous researchers, the first people I have considered in this research are my own people, past, present and future.

Hampton presents the notion of being "in Indian", a thinking space that is typically accessed through and by the Indigenous speaker's language. As the Lakota Elder Lionel Kinunwa observed that each time we use our Indigenous language "we are always praying through the use of words" (Kinunwa, 1998). [1] Similarly, Hampton situates his words in a sacred context of spiritual importance. The Elder asked Hampton to pray in Indian so that his thinking would match the sacred context and so that Hampton would be able to fully participate spiritually. The Elder permits him to spiritually participate in the sacred context. Elder Kinunwa extends that sacred context to our everyday by acknowledging the spiritual nature of words of our Indigenous languages (Kinunwa, 1998). He related to me that all words in our Indigenous language have some spiritual importance and that some words are especially sacred and spiritual. Our Indigenous language maintains access to this sacred context.

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[1] As a Cree researcher I must adhere to proper protocols in regards to referencing teachings and knowledge of Elders. It is imperative that humility be practiced for appropriate and specific reasons. Lightning (1991) explains:

> Elders, the forefathers, the ancients, were and are quoted this way: "This is what has been said." The acknowledgement of humility in the face of the power of the ethos reflects the natural tendency, automatically and unconsciously, to want to keep the teachings about the ethos in its pure state. The Elder once told me never to say that it was because of me that anything good happens. Even with that Elder it was important for him to try to remain in that one state of humility and humbleness. It is so important to stay there. They [Elders] want you to remain in that place, or state of mind." (p. 242)

This reveals the ideological clash of Cree ways and mainstream research practices. Claiming individual expertise or credit to oneself violates cultural protocol. Our human natures do get acknowledged as we engage in sharing the wisdom of the Elders however as we share the teachings proper respect is given.

> Elders realize...their own human nature, when they teach others they very often begin by quoting the authority of the Elders who have gone before. They do not state the authority as coming from themselves. They will say things like "This is what they used to say," or "This is what they said" (Ibid, p. 242)

In this work I must adhere to this traditional way. I am not an Elder. I must however pay proper respect to the protocols of the culture. Lightning (1992) explains that in this way we can see "the preciousness of it, we want to protect it..."(p.242). In the remainder of the document I will pay proper respect to both the Elders the integrity of Cree traditions.

Since the 1970s, there has been a formal movement to revitalize Indigenous languages (with varying levels of success) in both Canada and the United States. As Urion (1999) explains:

> The Elders and teachers who work in those programs know that the only way the language will survive is for people to "live" in it. Traditional knowledge has an obvious place here: young people, especially, who want to access to traditional knowledge have a strong motivation to learn the language of their tradition, and to 'live' in it for the basic part of their lives in which they learn their cultural traditions (p. 6).

Traditional knowledge resides in the language and must be learned in specific ways. Recovering traditional knowledge and reviving traditional languages go hand in hand. Ermine (cited in Aikenhead, 2006) points out that what Cree people learn as knowledge can best be described in English as "ways of living" and that the Cree term for learning can best be translated as "coming to know" (p. 394). Urion (1999) shares that "a prior step [in language revival], and the essential one, is probably to explore, in historical and spiritual terms, the precepts of the 'indigenous mind'" (p.7). The Indigenous mind is what I referred to as a sacred context.

The space of "what is behind our [Indigenous] language" is significant, fascinating and needs to be explored. (Altamirano in Alfred, 2005, p.143) In 1998, Elder Kinuwna told me "think Cree when you wake up". I now understand what he meant. He was not talking about the words specifically but rather behind the language and in the context of Cree. He and many other Elders say the word is a doorway. I discovered only recently they mean the doorway to the context. If we understand that the word is only the vehicle to the actual journey (Urion, 1999), the Elder's advice to Hampton to think in Cree using English makes complete sense.

This study will explore context. This context involves the Cree intelligence where mind-body-spirit-heart are synchronously engaged. The four aspects of mind-body-spirit-heart provide outward ways of our intelligence, our ways of being-seeing-relating-thinking. Aspects of harmony, balance and chaos, circle and cyclicity are qualities embedded in the Cree intelligence and will be explored in later chapters. Ideologies of Cree and Western thinking collide and challenge me as I look at the context of Cree intelligence. These issues are addressed so that the distinct intelligence of this Cree paradigm can be more clearly articulated. From my formal school experience I know Cree thinking is excluded therefore it must be understood I do not intend to discredit Western knowledge however attempt to bring light to the Cree intelligence and processes therein.

Articulating Cree knowledge in English can be challenging. Cree scholar LaRocque (1999) states,

> [We] may bring our oratorical backgrounds to our writing and not see it as a weakness. What is at work is the power struggle between the oral and the written, between the Native in us and the English. And even though we know English well, we may sometimes pay little attention to its logic – perhaps we will always feel a bit rebellious about it all. For, it must be said, that perhaps the height of cheekiness in a colonizer is to steal your language, withhold his from you as long as he can, then turn around and demand that you speak or write better than he does. And when you do, he accuses you of 'uppityness' or inauthenticity.
> (p. xx-xxi)

This echoes Elder Kinunwa's (personal communication, 1998) story that, as a student at Stanford, his academic papers were often returned to him filled with red marks and corrections on every page. I now recognize that entire lectures in the course taught to me by Elder Kinunwa were located in a sacred context. The Tongan Elder Emil Wolfgram refers to "tapu space," the place where our minds, bodies and spirits engage to experience

teachings (personal communication, January 2004). Both Elder Wolfgram and Hawaiian scholar Peter Hanohano have described traditional teachers' ability to speak in ways that draw listeners into that spiritual realm as "poetic visioning." (Indigenous Scholars Conference, University of Alberta, 2006). Elder Wolfgram teaches us that within "traditional poetic visioning" – that is, by learning from within an Indigenous paradigm - we can be released into a higher conceptual plane. We exist there because we are poetic (personal encounter, January, 2004). As Cree scholar Willie Ermine stated at the 2006 University of Alberta Indigenous Scholars Conference, "You won't find this in any library". This contextual sacred knowledge is found with and shared by our Elders.

The quotation from Hampton (1995) that opens this paper concludes with his hope that by writing in vernacular, he will be able to speak person to person with his readers. When Indigenous knowledge is written, it often "reads like talks" (Urion, 1999, p.4) or like a face to face interaction (Ibid). As LaRocque (1995) explains, this presents additional challenges:

> [T]he academic world may be the hardest nut to crack. Long-standing conventions hold that objectivity must necessarily entail the separation of the 'word' from the 'self'. As a scholar, I am expected to remain aloof from my words; I am expected to not speak in my own voice. But I am a Native woman writer/scholar engaged in this exciting evolution/revolution of Native thought and action. My primary socialization is rooted in the oral literatures of the Plains Cree Metis, which does not separate the word from the self and certainly knows the difference between *atowkehwin* (stories of legendary bent or sacred origin) and *achimowin* (factual and objective accounts). Further there is ample evidence in the study of justification literature for the argument that objectivity can be a self-serving tool of those accustomed to managing history.
>
> (p. xxi)

As Cree people, our knowledge systems and our ways of expressing ourselves and communicating share an understanding that we are connected and related. Elder

Wolfgram said to me that "when talking about culture you can't talk about self" (personal communication January, 2004). LaRocque (1995) continues:

> [I]t must be understood that Native writers have a dialectical relationship to the English (or French) language. Not only do we have to learn English, we must deal with its ideology. To a Native woman, English is like an ideological onion whose stinging layers of racism and sexism must be peeled away before it can be fully enjoyed. (p. xx)

Ross (1996) sees two significant differences between Aboriginal languages and English:

> [F]irst, I never realized how 'harsh' the English language is, or how judgmental and argumentative we become as we speak it. Second, I had no idea that people could - and do - live otherwise, without having to respond to everything around them in such combative and judgmental ways... [W]hen I first started to notice such things in speech, I became aware of something else as well: how seldom Aboriginal people expressed such judgments in their everyday conversations – even when speaking English. In fact, the expression of judgments seemed to be avoided, rather than expected. At the same time, there did not seem to be any loss of communication. (p. 102-103)

In essence, Ross is referring to differences between the culturally-specific contextual spaces (where thoughts are formulated) of English and Aboriginal languages. LaRocque (1995) states:

> Colonization works itself out in unpredictable ways. The fact is that English is the new Native language, literally and politically. English is the common language of Aboriginal peoples. It is English that is serving to raise the political consciousness in our community..." (p. xxvi)

English has also become our common language in academe. As Indigenous researchers, if we want to reflect and authentically locate our research in our own realities, we must first recognize the inherent ideological differences between English and our own Indigenous languages. Our necessary dependence, as academics, on English also presents challenges with respect to the terms available in that language to describe our identity.

Problems With the Term Indian

You're Not the Indian I had in Mind (King, 2003)

Under *The Indian Act of Canada*, I am entitled to be regarded as an Indian. *The Indian Act* defines who is – and who is not – legally considered an Indian. The term Indian, (like other generic English terms used to describe us, such as Aboriginal, First Nation, status or non-status and treaty or non-treaty) is a misnomer but it is one that we have made our own (Hernandez, p. 8). These terms are troublesome because they define who we are as Indigenous people in political terms:

> In many countries, the term "aboriginal" is seen as an inoffensive and innocuous substitute for more caustic words like "Indian," or "Native." Unpacked as a social, political, and intellectual construction, however, it is a highly offensive word. It reflects the prevailing colonial mentality in its redefinition of *Onkewhonwe* away from our original languages, because it fashions "the people" as a symbol and concept constructed one, and totally amenable to, colonialism. (Alfred, p. 126)

Terms like "Indian" represent colonial intent. They lump us together as though only one kind of Indian exists. This is an inappropriate and problematic generalization because within and across our broad identities as First Nation, Metis, Inuit and Aboriginal peoples, we have many other distinct identities. By contrast, embedded in the Cree words we use to describe ourselves collectively - *Nehiyaw* (person) and *Nehiyawk* (the people) - are the spiritual heritage and distinct ways of our people.

The term Indian evokes many stereotypes and negative connotations. Laroque (1993) describes the ongoing assault on our identity:

> ...the continuing dehumanization of Indians as grunting and bloodthirsty savages in the cowboy and Indian movies and comic books, both of which are amply available on late night shows, VCRs, or comic book stands...there are still teams called Washington Redskins, Cleveland Indians, Atlanta Braves (hasn't anyone seen their jerseys?), or Edmonton Eskimos? Then there are the archival materials protected as historical documents no matter what racist and inflammatory

> language they carry. And what could we ever do with the fathomless well of novels that qualify as hate literature but are also protected as classics in our libraries and schools? (p. xxv)

These stereotypes are so deeply enculturated in mainstream culture and popular media that it is no surprise that some Indian children cope by hiding their identity.

One outcome of these negative stereotypes is that, to varying extents, most and perhaps all Canadians have negative perceptions of Indian people. Thomas King (2003) asks:

> What is it about us you don't like?
> Maybe the answer to the question is simply that you don't think we deserve the things we have. You don't think we've worked for them. You don't think we've earned them. You think that all we did was to sign our names to some prehistoric treaty, and, ever since, we've been living in a semi-uncomfortable welfare state of trust land and periodic benefits. Maybe you believe we're lazy/drunk/belligerent/stupid. Unable to look after our own affairs. Maybe you think all we want to do is conjure up the past and crawl into it.
> People used to think these things, you know, and they used to say them out loud. Now they don't. Now they just think them.

These perceptions are part of every Indigenous person's experience and many of us have had them directly attributed or addressed to us. As Laroque (1993) points out:

> Misguided notions of Indian culture [are still prevalent today], notions that portray Indians having taken no direct control over their environment, their children, their urges, their resources, their art, their thoughts, or their knowledge. A presentation that blurs Indians with their landscape only serves to de-culturalize them. In fact, Indians were multifaceted and cultivated peoples who acknowledged and practiced a host of distinctions, yet maintained a functional connectedness between parts. And despite the disintegrative forces on Native cultures, many of us grew up with a holistic rather that an atomistic or discrete *Weltanschauung.* (Laroque, 1993, xx)

And, as King (2003) explains, it is very hard for some mainstream Canadians to let go of these stereotypes:

> [I]f we are successful in that middle-class or upper middle-class way, if we are able to, as middle North America likes to say, make something of ourselves, and here you can find any number of good Canadian examples...then you tell us we're

> a credit to our race, the implication being that the rest of our people are not. Or you divide us up into categories where those of us who have not been successful in that peculiar way that North America measures success are seen as authentic, while those of us who have become doctors and educators and artists and politicians and entrepreneurs are dismissed as counterfeit. (p. 147 – 148)

I have encountered this many times in my own life. For example, a few years ago, a white colleague of mine entered our newly purchased home and said "No one will ever believe Indians own this home." This statement insulted me both individually and in who I am collectively as an Indian. My people are entirely who I am and to suggest that I disconnect or elevate from that part of who I am because of a new home is ridiculous.

In spite of all the problems we encounter in the term Indian, it is a term that we, as Indians, are left dealing with. Indians are a real thing and not the unfortunate stereotypes of mainstream. In the mainstream perception King (2003) asks

> [H]ow can something that has never existed – the Indian – have form and power while something that is alive and kicking – Indians – are invisible?...In the end, there is no reason for the Indian to be real. The Indian simply has to exist in our imaginations. (p. 53-54)

The imagined Indian has had drastic effects on us as Indians, particularly with respect to the authenticity game we are forced to play either amongst one another or for the mainstream. King (2003) explains.

> [I]n the absence of visual confirmation, these "touchstones" – race , culture, language, blood – still form a kind of authenticity test, a racial-reality game that contemporary Native people are forced to play (p. 55).

The authenticity game exists in many forms within and outside of Indian tribes, measured, for example, in terms of things like language mastery (Wilson 2001). Regardless of how we play or keep score, the game is always a contest to see who is more authentically Indian. Ironically, the authenticity game does not fit with what our Elders tell us about what our identity means. Lionel Kinunwa said there is no check list to being

Cree and that we should not feel forced into being something that we are not comfortable with. We are born knowing, come equipped and will take part in ceremonies and knowledge as we are ready to learn from them. Lionel advises us not to use the word Indian to explain things because it has no rules to it. It is important to frame things in Cree ie: a Cree woman. Anybody can be Indian.

As King (2003) acknowledges, it is easy to get pulled into the Indian identity game:

> When I was going to university, there was an almost irresistible pull to become what Gerald Vizenor calls a "cultural ritualist," a kind of "pretend" Indian, an Indian who has to dress up like an Indian and act like an Indian in order to be recognized as an Indian...We dressed up as the "Indian" dressed. We dressed up in a manner to substantiate the cultural lie that had trapped us, and we did so with a passion. I have my own box of photographs. Pictures of me in my "Indian" outfits, pictures of me being "Indian," pictures of me in groups of other "Indians." (p. 45)

While dressing up as Indian can fulfill mainstream perceptions, it does nothing to establish our identity. The worst violation of the integrity of our identity is when non-Indians become and act out Indian stereotypes. I recall watching the story of Grey Owl, an Indian imposter, a few years ago. I asked my dad what he thought of the movie. He said he heard stories about the real Grey Owl. Among the Indians it was always known he was European and he was embraced for his desire to live the ways. The only people fooled were non-Indians. The mainstream continues to be fooled by both Indians and non-Indians. Lakota Elder Matthew King talks about Indians who misuse ceremonies to fulfill and sell stereotypical notions of Indians:

> ... some carnival chief who'll give them a sweat bath for $250, and then they think they know all about Indian religion. But you don't sell the religion of your people. Our ceremonies and our religion are not for sale. (Hall and Arden, 1990, p. 33)

Deloria, (2006) adds:

> Sweat lodges, conducted for $50, peyote meetings for $1,500, medicine drums for $300, weekend workshops and vision quests for $500, two do-it-yourself practitioners smothered in their own sweat lodge – the interest in American Indian spirituality only seems to grow and manifests itself in increasingly bizarre behavior – by both Indians and non-Indians. Manifestos have been issued, lists of people no longer welcome on reservations have been compiled, and biographies of proven fraudulent medicine men have been publicized. Yet nothing seems to stem the tide of abuse and misuse of Indian ceremonies. Indeed, some sweat lodges in the suburbs at times seem like the opening move in a scenario of seduction of naïve but beautiful women who are encouraged to play the role of "Mother Earth" in bogus ceremonies. (Deloria Jr., 2003, p. xvii)

These activities perpetuate stereotypes and affect the perceptions of Indians.

The term Indian and all rights attached to it will soon expire. Currently, Indians receive certain benefits that are outlined in Treaty Agreements. Unfortunately, the relationship between the Canadian government has not been fair and Indian people have been short changed on rights and promises. While the Treaty agreements protect rights for Indians, the Canadian Government has developed ways to extinguish Indians through the initial 1876 legislation of and subsequent amendments to the *Indian Act* of 1876. King, (2003) explains:

> It would be too torturous a journey to try to explicate the *Indian Act* at one sitting, for it is a magical piece of legislation that twists and slides through time, transforming itself and the lives of Native people at every turn. And sprinkled throughout the act, which, among other things, paternalistically defines who is an Indian and who is not, are amendments that can make Indians disappear in a twinkle. ...Duncan Campbell Scott, the deputy superintendent of Indian affairs (among other things), speaking candidly in 1920 of Canadian Indian policy said, "Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian department." Hocus-pocus! Indians. Now you see them. Now you don't. (p. 132-133)

The *Indian Act* actually lays out detailed rules that determine who is – and who is not – recognized as status Indian by the federal government. For example, through much of the

20th century, a status Indian could only complete higher education if they gave up their Indian status, along with all rights and benefits attached to status, including the right to live in their home reserve. This process was called enfranchisement. The *Indian Act* continues to determine who is and is not status Indian and entitled to rights and benefits based on the status of their parents and grandparents. In 1985, the *Indian Act* was amended by Bill C-31 to introduce the second-generation cutoff, a child with one parent or more and one grandparent or more who does not have status will, in turn, be denied status. In signing Treaties, our forefathers had ensured that our rights would last "for as long as the sun shines, rivers flow and the grass grows". The *Indian Act*'s second generation cut-off, however, means that at some point, the legislation may achieve its intention and, regardless of whether or not our rights exist, we will not be able to exercise them because there will be none among us whom the government recognizes as status Indians.

Maybe once there are no more Indians, we will be free to call ourselves Cree. Our forefathers attempted to protect our rights and ensure our recognition as the first peoples and were cheated. In spite of this, they gave us their own gifts in regards to our rights and knowledge as Cree people.

Who I am as Indigenous Researcher

In the winter of 2003 I was invited to spend a week in Hawaii as part of a group of a dozen Indigenous scholars and Elders from New Zealand, Hawaii, Alaska and parts of Canada. On our first evening we gathered for a welcoming protocol, led by a Maori Elder. He conducted the ceremony in his language and then translated parts of it into English. He began by acknowledging our lineal ancestors. He spoke of all the great

chiefs and other ancestors who are part of us and the thousands-of-years-old memory and wisdom contained in our lands. He acknowledged that each of us brought to the gathering the collectives of our land, memory and peoples and was happy for that. He was humbled to be amongst us and explained that because his people are younger than ours, he felt like a young child, privileged to be among a group with thousands of years of knowledge and wisdom. His words touched my inner core. I was deeply moved and overwhelmed by this notion of our greatness. He made me understand the need to acknowledge that I come from thousands of years of great chiefs and great people.

I was born to Genevieve and Walter Steinhauer of the Saddle Lake First Nation. My mother's parents were Madeline and Maurice Quinn of Saddle Lake. My grandfather on my mother's side was a descendent of Papaschase, who led a Cree band in the present-day Blackmud Creek area of Edmonton. A great leader, Papaschase was present at the Treaty 6 signing in 1876. My grandmother Madeline's people came from more northern parts of present day Alberta. Madeline died of tuberculosis when my mother was an infant and my mother was raised by her aunt, Harriet.

My father's parents, Sarah and Gus Steinhauer, are also from Saddle Lake. The family name Steinhauer dates to the 1800's and came from an Ojibway minister Henry Bird Steinhauer who had been adopted in name only by a German family. Many of my ancestors on my father's side were chiefs, gifted healers and government officials, including my grandfather Gus Steinhauer, who was Chief of Saddle Lake. My grandmother Sarah Pruden was raised in Saddle Lake but her people lived north of the Saddle Lake area.

These are my parents and grandparents. I have heard stories about some of my great grandparents and their grandparents. Oritz (1993) tells us the importance of our grandparents:

> My grandfather represented for me a link to the past that is important for me to hold in my memory because it is not only memory but knowledge that substantiates my present existence. He and my grandmothers and grandfathers before him thought about us as they lived, confirmed in their belief of a continuing life, and they brought our present beings into existence by the beliefs they held." (p. 32-33)

Our grandparents are very significant because they sacrificed and planned for us and shared with us Cree knowledge and ways of knowing. I am very privileged by the many things my parents and grandparents gave me.

My Experience: Post Secondary Educational Experiences

I have had a culturally rich life. My parents resided in my home community of Saddle Lake First Nation. I have always felt grateful for the many experiences they provided to me and my siblings. I enjoy a close connection with and relationship to my community and to traditional ways. I do not speak fluently however understand the Cree language. I respect life. These are things that my parents gave me. Over the course of my graduate studies, I have come to know the importance of their efforts and gifts.

After attending and completing high school at Onchaminahos, the reserve school, I reluctantly set off to pursue post secondary studies in Edmonton. I had visited Edmonton regularly throughout my childhood, but when I arrived this time I felt detached, lonely and uncertain. My mom tried to make the transition comfortable for me and booked a hotel room near the college for a two week stay. I did not feel happiness or a sense of achievement about starting college. I missed my home and the familiarity of

everything there. Worst of all, other people in my classes seemed to know the everyday details of their surroundings. I had a lot to learn but already knew I didn't belong.

Four years later, I had completed a Bachelor of Education degree, but the lonely disconnected feelings have persisted. My post-secondary experience has mainly been about surviving each course, each term, each year. I returned home whenever I could, sometimes every week. Being at home in my community and with my parents refueled me and carried me through to survive and complete my program. Convocation marked my survival and gave me my greatest reward – a teaching position that awaited me at the elementary school in my home community.

I grew a deep love and passion for teaching at home. I arrived in the beginning of May, just after my university final exams, to a classroom of 23 students. I took the place of a substitute teacher, who in turn was filling in for the actual teacher who had left four months earlier. I learned that the first teacher had left because the students in my group were particularly unruly. Thankfully I was young and excited to teach and from day one that group of students was a joy to be with. As a reward after school each day, in alphabetic order I rotated a group of four students, (the maximum my little Toyota Tercel could accommodate) to the nearby town for the evening family swim. I dropped them off each evening looking forward to my next teaching day. All students rotated through until the end of the year. No one missed their chance nor was it ever threatened to be taken away. The two months flew by quickly and I learned so much from the students about them and myself. I learned to dive with one of my young students as my patient teacher. My work was rewarding and happy and I missed the students and our experiences over the summer.

There was nothing more I wished to do than to be with the young people of my community. In those early years, my students knew me as Miss. Steinhauer. When I moved over to the new junior and senior high school to teach, Miss Steinhauer felt formal and awkward. It was an official title that commanded respect without earning it. This was especially evident outside of school. I decided I would be known and addressed in the same way I addressed the students. I was related to some of the students and often was called "aunty". Aunty was a much more appropriate title. Whether or not we are blood relatives, as I always told the students, we are related.

As part of my teaching duties at the junior high, I was asked to develop a program that served a special needs population in our community. I was grateful to be able to do this within a First Nation community context. With parents' support, I spent six years developing a program that incorporated community cultural values and focused on student purpose and relationship within. My focus was to create a social opportunity for each student so they could begin to create a purposeful role for themselves in the community. Students with special needs typically are ostracized to some degree but as the program developed, the student group was socially embraced by the larger student body. The students were challenged to develop the cultural, social and life skills they needed to become active in the larger community. My experiences in this program made me realize that school success cannot be measured by test scores and that individuals cannot be categorized and segregated. The students taught me that my purpose as teacher was to provide them with the opportunity to become consciously present, connected and respected as members of the larger community. I came to understand the importance of connecting my students to their community. The students were responsible to become

the best they could be and to find and establish their own roles and relationships within the community. This was critical as they entered their adulthood.

During those late teaching years, I began graduate school. As I enrolled in The First Nations Graduate Education Program, I was still plagued by feelings of not belonging and not being good enough. The program became an unexpected life changing experience. Instructors in the program challenged me beyond my limits and embraced me as they did so. By my third graduate course I felt planted. For the first time ever in my formal education, I was not only validated but embraced. My thoughts, experiences and intentions suddenly meant something. My learning, work and life were purposeful and my voice was the authentic me, a voice that could share the things I had learned from my parents and community, rather than the pseudo one I had been forced to use in my previous years of schooling.

I planned in my Masters to look at factors that affect First Nations youth and achievement. In the spring of 1999, I was ready to begin data collection and expected to finish soon thereafter. One afternoon, I was hit by a difficult realization. In one moment, I realized that the school system had failed the young First Nations people of my community and it had failed me. The saddest piece of this new understanding was that I was now a teacher who supported and perpetuated that system. For months, I cycled through pain and loss. I wondered why I had found so much satisfaction in teaching. I had learned in my teaching training that students could be measured with standardized test scores. This suddenly made little sense to me. What happens to students who are not academically strong? How valued do they feel? How valued are they? This was not fair to the student, the community or the knowledge system. I felt I had been tricked and

could not buy into it any longer. These feelings stayed with me an entire summer. As deadlines loomed, I wondered whether it was worth it to complete my work. After much thinking, I decided to make it worthwhile.

My thesis honoured and included Cree practices. My research findings identified systemic problems that affected students socially and which the school system had failed to acknowledge or address. For me, however, the most significant finding was that students carry within them inherent wisdom and knowledge. I was comforted by the words and knowledge of the adolescents who collaborated in the study and ecstatic that my own belief in ancient knowledge was reaffirmed. The knowledge they presented and the manner in which they spoke demonstrated their respect and understanding of Cree practices, values and beliefs. They lived and practiced the protocol, respect, and essence of *ekasis'pohtahk ininisiwin*[2].

After completing my Masters program, I felt ready to live the rest of my years at home. The First Nations Graduate Program had equipped me with all the tools I thought I needed to give back to the students. After two years, though, I was longing to look further into notions of *ekasis'pohtahk ininisiwin.* I began Doctoral studies at the same program. In my first year, I was passionate about Indigenous pedagogy and focused on ways of teaching and learning within a First Nations community. I soon realized that what I was interested in was not a separate pedagogy but ways of being. I wanted to explore how things are learned in the Cree way and to look at the knowledge system of my own people, the Plains Cree of Saddle Lake First Nation. I felt very overwhelmed. Once I advanced to candidacy, I needed to prepare for the enormous responsibility of effectively and respectfully articulating research about the Cree way.

[2] Wisdom is carried on, carried forward.

Meeting Elder Lionel Kinunwa

In 1998, I enrolled in a spring course titled "Revitalizing Indigenous Languages" taught by a visiting scholar, Lionel Kinunwa, a Lakota Elder with a Ph.D. from Stanford University. The course was compressed and over a two week period, we attended eight hours of lecture daily. I drove the two hours in from Saddle Lake on the first day, arrived ten minutes late and missed all the introductions. The other students appeared to be vigorously writing down what he spoke about, so I immediately began taking notes too. Lionel was speaking about Indigenous knowledge: "This course is about examining the context of Indigenous languages similar to an inductive style of learning. It is about those syllables... vibrations...that are usually not explained except in our cellular structure. We don't speak in lines. We speak in a circular motion thinking around that subject. Our sound system is a neural pathway to our memory... [that] we inherited through our cellular memory. Indigenous people learn through listening."

The following day, we reviewed our journal reflections about the lecture. Lionel explained that he had a certain sadness for us. He felt that he would need to change the direction of the course, because he wanted to "heal us up." He told us that we are important to our communities and that we would need to return there as strong individuals and share what we learned at school.

Lionel did heal me up. The eight days I spent with him changed my life forever. At the end of the course I tried to identify what it was that Lionel had taught us. He shared an incredible amount of knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing and did it by simply embracing us. The word for this is: sahkihtin, *love*.

Strength and Privilege: We Are All Related

I was able to see Lionel on two other occasions, including the last spring of his life. In 1999, our First Nations Graduate Education Program hosted the Indigenous Scholars Conference a gathering of Elders and speakers from the four directions. I was very excited that Lionel would be part of the gathering, especially because I had not seen him in a long time. On the eve of the conference, people from our program met with the invited Elders and speakers. I immediately went to Lionel. He was asked to open the evening's talking circle with a prayer and he spoke briefly, mentioning how happy he was to see his niece again. I thought, 'Wow - Lionel's niece is here!'. That seemed a tremendous privilege to me. Lionel referred to his niece a few more times in the circle and towards the end of the evening, I realized that he was gesturing towards me when he spoke of her. I was his niece. Warmness washed over me. I felt embraced. Lionel was reminding me that in this big Indigenous family, we are all related. Lionel continued to refer to me as his niece throughout the conference. Participants would ask if I was his niece and I happily responded "yes." I did not qualify my yes with "but in an Indigenous way". A simple "yes" was the proper answer to pay respect to Lionel and to the Indigenous ways of being that he taught us so well.

Lionel once said that when the right Elder teaches you ceremony, the energy goes to the right place. I later realized that Lionel was the right Elder for me. He brought me to that place and helped me to begin to learn and understand ceremony. This academic work reflects and includes Lionel's teachings. He has informed and guided the entire process. Lionel became the framework for this study.

Indian Research: Where is the Rigor?

This past winter I attended a presentation on Indigenous research. At the end of the question period someone asked: Where is the rigor? How would you know someone didn't just google this information and present it? Although many Indigenous students answered this question, at the end of all the discussion, the individual restated the same words: Where is the rigor?

This research has presented a two-fold challenge. I have had to meet the rigorous requirements of a doctoral research project and, at the same time, fulfill the even more rigorous requirements of respect and responsibility to my community and people. Proof of rigor with respect to conventional, mainstream research is not the same as proof of rigor with respect to relational accountability for researchers working with Indigenous communities. From an academic perspective, high standards for rigor are seen as a way to ensure that research is purposeful and meaningful. It is not unusual for Indigenous research to be challenged as non-rigorous. To some extent, this stems from the enculturation of stereotypical notions of "Indian" and colonial overlays on Indigenous ways of knowing. As discussed earlier, differences between the inherent ideologies in English and Cree (or other) languages present their own problems, which may also compound the effects of stereotypical thinking. In my educational experience, I have heard the work of Indians described as backwards, dumb, fluff, not rigorous and not worthy. In spite of this, as Lionel reminded us, we need to gather what we can from the academic world and bring back what we've learned to our home communities. These challenges, which may not be obvious or even fathomable to mainstream scholars, are immense for Indigenous scholars.

Lionel said we feel ineffective when we use Western thought. For this study, I must honour the fluidity and organic nature of the Cree knowledge system. This is a big task, one that is very different than mainstream processes of thinking and research. There is a story I know about Chief Smallboy being interviewed by a group of researchers. An interviewer asked Chief Smallboy a question. He did not respond. The interviewer asked the question once more and again Chief Smallboy did not respond. One of the researchers asked, "Do you understand the question?" Chief Smallboy was quiet for a moment and after some thought nodded, saying "Yes but I don't know if he'll understand the answer." I am in the same position. First, I must understand what my research means and then I have the even greater task of figuring out how to present it in an academic forum. It cannot be dumbed down for either my academic audience or my people and community.

Lionel had said that we need standards for Indigenous research. I learned this from my own experiences. An assignment in one of my last doctoral courses was to complete an action research project. I decided to take the risk of using Indigenous art to present my findings. I selected fifteen pieces of art work by Norval Morriseau to articulate concepts relating to Indigenous knowledge. I had not understood art this way before. Our assignment required that we present our projects in class. In my presentation, I talked about the dominant nature of western disciplines and used Morriseau's art work to share some of my understandings of Indigenous knowledge. I had put a lot of rigor, labour, time and cultural understanding into my analysis. I felt that I had done my work well, because, for me, each piece brought philosophical depth, completeness of thought and many teachings to both the assignment and to my life

overall. The student who followed me opened her presentation with these words: "Well, my presentation is more academic than the previous ones." I wanted to laugh, not because I was amused, but because I was shocked. I tried to think about what made my project less academic. Like her, I had included the necessary academic resources. In spite of this, this student deemed my work to be "dumb."

Calling for Indigenous Research Standards

1. A lot of libraries or classrooms have six pack and 12 pack versions of our knowledge and history that are not from an Indigenous perspective.

In our graduate course Lionel recalled that, when he was a child, university researchers would come every spring like ducks and geese with their clip boards and recorders to visit his reservation. At first, the old people shared openly with them, but eventually the old people would say we already told you. The university students continued to come each spring. After a while, the researchers began coming with six and twelve packs of beer to trade for information. Anyone would talk to them. Lionel said when researchers arrived people would check the amount of beer brought with them. Once they knew this, Lionel said, the stories were made up accordingly. In many universities today, these six pack and twelve pack stories are considered representative of who we are as Indigenous tribes. In truth, these stories are about the inconsiderate research standards of the university.

2) We are forced to pirate our material from another written source to be credible.

In a discussion of Indigenous intellectual property rights, Lionel pointed out that our knowledge has often become owned by someone else. We are left having to borrow or pirate this material. For example, a relative of mine told me about sharing his family's

unpublished material with a university researcher, who then published the material as a piece of academic work. According to university standards, the material now belongs to the researcher, rather than his family.

3) *We need to bypass the requirement of using only published materials.*

Because many of our resources are living Elders, the requirement to use only published materials is problematic for us. It must be recognized that Elders are the philosophers who establish the framework. In this work Elder Kinunwa is the framework. In academic research, what I refer to as western research, well known western philosphers such as Plato and Socrates are recognized for their knowledge. In regards to this work Elders are seen and recognized as the philosophers and theorists within this framework.

4) *When we go to university our community expects us to bring back what they need from their perspective.*

5) *In writing we have to become one-dimensional thinkers – problem of writing in incomplete sentences.*

6) *Need to develop an Indigenous methodology that fits with the language.*

Lionel reminded us that we are responsible to create a model for research. Our purpose in attending graduate studies is to revitalize the Indigenous context. To do this, we need a new model for research, one that goes beyond what currently exists and incorporates an enhanced methodology that meets the expectations of the First Nations people. Our methodology must have spirit so it can be felt and experienced. Stan Wilson also encouraged this approach. (Personal communication September 1997) He explained to my class of eleven Indigenous students that, as people chosen to be in a position where we would be able to establish and help ourselves, we needed to both address issues that are important to First Nations people and honour the university system. I acknowledge the words of both these Elders. I am excited by the opportunity in this study to go

beyond current methodologies and produce work that contains spirit and feeling and that can be taken back to my community and people.

As I have moved through this work and my life, the balance between what I know and what I practice has grown. As I take on a task, I think about ways to find a place for it, to store it, write about it, and study if further. Lionel advised that:

> *It is up to us to challenge ourselves. To have one foot in the world of academia while having the other foot in the sacred past of our people. To find balance, as we look down the road of today and walk in the present, while having one foot in the future and one foot firmly placed in the past.*

As noted earlier, there are many important implications and considerations to working as an Indigenous scholar/writer. As a researcher who uses English to speak about the Cree way, I must navigate carefully, be aware of the sacred context of my work and commit to think "in Indian" for both authentic research purposes and – more importantly - for cultural integrity.

Research Question

The central question in this research project has been: *What do Cree First Nations' community members perceive a traditional Cree way of being to be?* Other questions considered in the research are: *What do community members feel are necessary components of this Cree way? How has the Cree way evolved and adapted?*

Significance of the Study

This study will identify what one Cree community perceives a traditional Cree way to be. The significance is two fold. First, the research involves traditional practices within a traditional community. This approach has supported members to look authentically into the community and begin to seek their own answers. The study results describe what individuals believe the "Cree way" to be. Secondly, the findings from this study provide

the community with information and guidance that can be applied to a broad range of programming (from health and health education and education and curriculum) and support the development of culturally significant and relevant programs and services.

Rationale

Elder Lionel Kinunwa's teachings have been used throughout this project as a platform and framework for data interpretation and to validate the notion of a Cree context. In early analysis, it became apparent that the knowledge of an Elder was needed to provide context for and to explain and clarify data presented by study participants. In addition to Elder Kinunwa, many other Elders and scholars are cited to support notions of the contextual space and the processes therein. The intent of the study is to provide insight and awareness that, for all descendants of people who speak an Indigenous language, a specific contextual space has existed and will continue to exist, regardless of their upbringing, residence, community, blood quantum, skin tone or ability to speak the language themselves. Issues of authenticity and "respectfully" accessing Indigenous knowledge are also discussed.

Honouring Traditional Protocols of the Cree Way

This research project was designed so that traditional protocols around accessing knowledge would be honoured throughout the data collection phase. During analysis, it became clear that, to maintain the legitimacy in my research findings, I had to continue to honour these protocols and to access other traditional resources. I invited Elders to help me and made the decision at that point to bring Elder Kinuwna (with whom I had taken a class in the first year of my Masters program) and his teachings in as the traditional knowledge platform and framework in the study.

Delimitations and Limitations

The study is delimited to one First Nation community in Alberta.

The study is limited by the fact that I am not an authority on knowledge. I write from the perspective and position of my experiences as a Cree woman. Other Indigenous people's perspectives and positions may vary with, for example, language group differences, gender or age.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Aboriginal cultures have been under assault on all fronts for nearly five hundred years. It is difficult to sift through the consequences of this assault and find the basis for identity. Literature that looks at these effects is all too common. A significant body of literature exists on colonization, identity loss, suicide rates, dysfunctional behaviors, deplorable living conditions - the list goes on and on. A review of some of this literature reveals that underlying all the effects of colonization is something far stronger and far more powerful that cannot be erased by assault.

The colonization of First Nations peoples through education has affected the cultures and traditions of all First Nations people and communities throughout Canada. "Colonialism is reinforced in the manner we resist and comply, and it is supported by schools capitalism (Weenie, 2000, p.2). Battiste (1998) writes that:

> Aboriginal peoples have been subject to a combination of unquestionably powerful but profoundly debilitating forces of assimilation and colonization. Through various systems of board schools and educational institutions, the Aboriginal world views and the people who held them were attacked. Although instructed by Catholic and Protestant clerics in almost all of the boarding schools, Aboriginal children were subjected to powerlessness, exploitation, and cultural imperialism, only to become impoverished and devastated in the cognitive and physical aftermath of schooling.
>
> (p. 19)

Colonization and cultural genocide have had many devastating impacts on Aboriginal people. "The genocide of Native Americans is especially marked by silence regarding the suffering endured by Native peoples. Their demise is depicted and commemorated during many of America's celebrations marking its success at colonization" (Rivers-Norton in Bastian, 1999, p.9). American national holidays that celebrate and reinforce

colonization are confusing for Aboriginal children and people. The shame and loss associated with colonization for Aboriginal people is often silenced. As Antone (2000) noted in her study of the learning experiences of Aboriginal people, this silencing is effected, in part, by schooling. For Battiste (1998), it is particularly important that Aboriginal people resume control of education:

> The subjection, coercion, and exploitation continues as part of their survival. In their survival First Nations peoples must reclaim their rights to education and educational control. In the relentless cycles of renewal and reform, Aboriginal peoples are living in an extraordinary time. Aboriginal peoples throughout the world have survived five centuries of the horrors and harsh lessons of colonization. They are emerging with new consciousness and vision. In Canada the old colonial order and its preoccupation with assimilation of Aboriginal peoples to British ways has been replaced by a new constitutional order that respects Aboriginal rights.
>
> (p. 16)

First Nations people must now determine the pace and direction in regaining their educational control. The process must be driven by First Nations people without reinforcing colonial dependency on dominant society (Perley, 1993).

Indian Identity: A Sense of Community, A Sense of Place

First Nations people identify with a collective group and individual identity, in turn, evolves within that cultural group. "Because tribal people, in general, have a traditional outlook that emphasizes the collective rather than the individual they are regularly seen however ironically as un-American or un-Canadian with regard to the Western Creed of individualism" (Marker, 2000, p. 4) Similarly, Grimm (1996) suggests that individual identity is not necessarily applicable to Aboriginal peoples. "Native American identity has rarely been understood in its culture and social setting in mainstream America. Individualism and stereotypes of heroic warrior personalities have

been emphasized [by mainstream media] in a way that distorts the actual Native stress on individual identity in the context of the cultural community" (Grim, 1996, p.1).

First Nations people have a high regard for place. It is important to "understand the fundamental link between the Native community and place" (Grim, 1996, p. 2). "Aboriginal people have an identity that is profoundly connected to a sense of place; they have an interpretation of the history and meaning of that place that distinguishes them from all other ethnic minorities. For First Nations people 'location' is always a real place" (Marker, 2000, p.11). For Aboriginal people, place is a reminder of their roots and history. The differences between the ways Western and Aboriginal peoples identify have academic implications: "Critical scholars ground their vision in Western conceptions of democracy and justice that presume a "liberated' self, American Indian intellectuals ground their vision in conceptions of sovereignty that presume a sacred connection to place and land" (Grande, 2000, p. 12).

Identity and Effects of Colonial Education

Formal education within Canada has had destructive effects on identity. The "systemic destruction of Native culture and identity through the educational system has had a long history in Canada" (Dawson, 1988, p. 45). Hampton (1993) explains:

> Western education is hostile in its structure, its curriculum, its context, and its personnel. First, the context of Western educational is cultural. Whether we trace the beginning of schools to Greece or start with the Roman attempt to standardize orthography throughout the empire, schools have enjoyed a central place in the perpetuation of Western civilization. The contemporary American school is a political, social, and cultural institution that embodies and transmits the values, knowledge, and behaviors of Anglo culture. The call for higher standards in education is invariably a call for the standards of the Anglo. It is never a call for a more adequate presentation of the knowledge of devalued minorities, creative thinking about pressing social problems, higher standards of equity and respect, or recognition of institutional racism. (p.41)

The institutional racism Hampton refers to includes the requirement that Aboriginal peoples comply with Anglo standards that, for centuries, have devalued Aboriginal traditions. For example, aspects of the ways in which students were instructed in formal education systems contradicted Aboriginal traditional values.

> In the Westernized context of Shubenacadie (and other boarding schools), communal acts of writing were discouraged by the use of single desks, seating patterns designed to enforce each student's isolation, the labeling of cooperative writing efforts as 'copying' or 'cheating' and single student homework assignments. Bemuse it was taught through such practices, alphabetic literacy segregated individual Native students from their siblings, friends, and other members of their tribe. The enforced speaking of English through the suppression of Native languages reinforced this segregation...The individualist ideology of all these educational acts encourages ways of knowing that are potentially destructive to traditional aboriginal pedagogical systems. While every Native culture possesses its own system for transmitting knowledge, one can detect a general pattern in spite of these particularities.
>
> (Donaldson, 1998, p. 7)

Segregation and rigid patterns of instruction were very different than the traditional pedagogies familiar to Aboriginal students. The suppression of Native languages almost certainly made it even more difficult for students to negotiate these differences.

Identity and Language

Indigenous languages have been alive for thousands of years. They are "the product of hundreds or thousands of years of delicate, gradual accommodation between the primary and secondary discursive systems of particular human communities, living in a sustainable relationship with particular places and ecosystems" (Fettes, 1997, 305). Language plays a significant role in identity. "It is through discursive practices that selfhoods are constructed, identities are forged, and social processes are enacted. As a constitutive force, language shapes the shifting ethnoscapes and multiple identities that emerge from the interculturality of multiple knowledge bases" (Gonzales, 1999, p. 431).

All Indigenous languages include symbols with culturally-specific meanings. For example, in some Indigenous cultures, the concept of Quaternity refers to the Medicine Wheel and the need to maintain balance between "the four great powers" (St. Clair, 2000, p. 9). Familiarity with this concept provides people with a particularly Indigenous kind of literacy in the familiar relationship and applications of symbols. Donaldson (1998), cites Battiste, described symbolic literacy as an embodiment of tribal epistemologies that interacts with and depends upon a collective oral tradition: "Aboriginal texts such as winter counts, wampum, petroglyphs and pictographs use 'ideographic symbolization of concepts and ideas...Indians supplemented the oral tradition with ideological categories which helped to record and store valuable knowledge, information, and records on available natural materials such as birchbark, rocks, and shells" (p. 4) As St. Clair notes, oral cultures utilize visual metaphors that symbolize their beliefs.

> What is significant about oral cultures is that they make common use of visual metaphors. It is their way of symbolizing their beliefs about the world. It is their way of organizing knowledge. This way of knowing legitimized by the culture and expressed in a tradition of rich visual imagery. This legitimization of knowledge is commonly referred to as the way of the people...the Medicine Wheel is especially insightful in revealing and dealing with visual metaphors and bearers of cultural epistemology.
>
> (St. Clair, 2000, p. 8)

For Indigenous peoples, visual metaphors may play a significant role in sharing cultural epistemology and are shared in a rhetoric that is congruent with Indigenous ways of knowing. "Non-Western systems of rhetoric tend to use visual instead of verbal metaphors.. It is now concerned with epistemology as ways of knowing. The new rhetoric, it is argued, is used to discover and understand knowledge. Hence, it is epistemic knowledge seeking" (St. Clair, 2000, p. 85). This new rhetoric is appropriate and useful for Indigenous peoples.

Language Learning

Education is necessary for cultural survival.

> "The purpose of education is cultural survival...it has to do with our language, our philosophy, our relationship with the Creator, our attitudes, our beliefs and values. All human beings have a culture. There are many different ways of being human...we still educate our children for cultural survival" (Snow in Stairs, 1994, p. 75).

Language plays an important role in this survival because it carries the knowledge of peoples

> Fundamental to Aboriginal knowledge is the awareness that beyond the immediate sensible world of perception, memory, imagination, and feelings lies another world from which knowledge, power, or medicine is derived from which the Aboriginal peoples will survive and flourish. The complementary modes of knowing in the tribal world form the essence of tribal epistemology and have been continually transmitted through the oral tradition. Without Aboriginal languages, the lessons and knowledge would be lost to the people and their way of life gravely affected.
>
> (Battiste, 1998, p. 18)

Language is essential because it gives us access to a dimension where we learn or know certain things that help us to survive as a people.

Curriculum development for Aboriginal people is complex. "Because indigenous languages revitalization involves cultural change, language change, education, political and economic coalition building, and language planning, it cannot be viewed in a piecemeal fashion" (Henze & Davis, 1999, p. 8). Because the process engages with change, many aspects of language revitalization and learning must be taken into consideration. Applications must incorporate a holistic approach "that recognizes the interconnections among language culture, politics, economics, and education" (Davis, 1994 in Henze & Davis, 1999, p. 8).

It is difficult to generate changes in educational principles that are strongly influenced by Euro-western principles. Historically, the Aboriginal education system has encountered many difficulties, including the reinvention of Euro-western forms of education as a way to take control of Indian education. Hampton (1993) explains that "it is important to distinguish between so-called Indian education, which is really Anglo education applied to Indians, and true Indian education, which is Indian controlled education" (p. 25). He believes that the "lack of theory of Indian education not only hampers research, it also impedes the practice of Indian education. Currently, each Indian-controlled school, project, parent committee, or program adopts, or invents a model of education as it can" (p.12). If we want to influence the direction of Indian education, we need to recognize the difference between existing Indian educational systems that maintain Euro-western principles and those that are directed by the Aboriginal community. As always, language presents further educational challenges, as Greymorning (2000) explains:

> The question that kept emerging was: how does one teach Indian culture as expressed through language when the only medium of expression in the classroom is English?...it is revealed how speakers of this language could possess logical constructs that led them to perceive the work much differently from that of an English speaker. Some students were so far removed from seeing this connection that they chose instead to believe that the text merely represented an example of an individual who didn't know how to speak English very well (they had been informed that the translator was the speaker's son). (p. 6-7)

He observes that it continues to be difficult to create change:

> On those occasions when we find ourselves at a table of our own making within Anglo created institutions, there are times when we are subjected to people coming to our table only to walk away before our story has been fully told, which many times is due to finding Indigenous cultural paradigms too different from their own. (p.11)

The principle challenge ahead of us, then, may be to change the norms of Euro-based institutions so that that they become capable of honouring traditional values and incorporating an Indigenous worldview.

Indian Educational Reform

Colonial history permanently scarred education. Those of us who want to reform Indian education must first sift through what aspects of colonial schooling have been destructive and what components might complement traditional ways of learning in our contemporary times. "Indigenous educators are constantly challenged by the conflict and compromise associated with developing curriculum that reflects indigenous worldview while attending to those Western forms of knowledge that students may need for future economic survival" (Henze & Davis, 1999, p. 17). As one Inuit community member's comments suggest, we need to think carefully about how to do this: "Do not change and Inuitise the school" claiming this would confuse people. Instead the school should remain clearly "southern" (that is, Euroamerican) and non-Inuit, but should be smaller so that people have time for the rest of their lives. For example, they might want to join their families out on the land camping and hunting, in village caring for younger siblings, or even sporadic wage-earning employment (Stairs, 1994, p. 64). Another Inuit educational developer shares this story:

> My Inuit colleague was distressed, saw great danger in the new programme, but was having difficulty presenting her message to the consultants. 'They have it backwards' she said. Students must deal with who they are today and where they are going - 'future pictures' in her apt phrase. Without the present and future first, the traditional Inuit past was even more alienating school content for these students than was the foreign southern material. Once they began to deal with who they were and where they were going, asserted by colleague in relating stories of particular students, then they could and would want to listen to the elders.
>
> (Stairs, 1994, p. 64)

Aboriginal education must effectively negotiate the ideologies of two knowledge systems. Stairs (1994) explains that "indigenous schools serve as sites of negotiation between cultures in contact, and in the process become themselves unique 'third cultural realities'...unpredictable diversity of educational designs which repeatedly defy the theoretical and methodological packages of non-indigenous educators" (p. 64). This becomes even more complicated when Indigenous school systems house non-indigenous educators, who rely on their own understandings of educational practices. As Stairs note, "the 'authenticity' of indigenous educational development rests on visions of conscious and deep cultural negotiation" (1994, p. 73).

Complexity theorists have provided some insight into the relationship between Euro-western and Indigenous knowledge systems (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2001). Complexity theory 'is about identity, relationships, communication, mutual interactions' (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2001, p. 2, citing Stamps). Barnhardt and Kawagley (2001) claim that

> ...much of the Native knowledge systems, ways of knowing and world views remain intact and in practice, and there is a growing appreciation of the contributions that indigenous knowledge can make to our contemporary understanding in areas such as medicine, resource management, meteorology, biology, and in basic human behavior and educational practices (p. 1).

These knowledge systems make important contributions to education and empower Indigenous peoples. Historically, Indigenous knowledge has been incorporated into educational practices only at a superficial level, "with only token consideration given to the significance of those elements as integral parts of a larger complex adaptive cultural system that continues to imbue peoples lives with purpose and meaning outside the

school setting (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2001, p. 4). This form of tokenism enables only small applications and use outside the school setting.

"Educational reform is essentially a cultural transformation process that requires organizational learning to occur: changing teachers is necessary, but not sufficient. Changes to the organizational culture of the school or district is also necessary" (Gomez in Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2001, p. 4). To create change that suits community needs, we must take into consideration the complexity of the relationship between formal educational systems and Indigenous knowledge systems.

> With these considerations in mind, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative has sought to serve as a catalyst to promulgate reforms focusing on increasing the level of interconnectivity and complementarity between the formal education systems and the indigenous knowledge systems of the communities in which they are situated... In addition, the indigenous knowledge systems need to be documented, articulated, and validated, again with the main catalyst being standards-based curriculum grounded in the local culture. If we are to abide by the principles of complexity theory and seek to foster the emergent properties of self-organization that can produce the systemic integration indicated above, then it is essential that we work through and within the existing systems. The challenge is to identify the units of change that will produce the most results with the least effort.
>
> (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2001, p.4-5)

The careful work described above can provide direction and framework to negotiate an educational system that is applicable for Indigenous students. "In practical terms, the most important intended outcome is an increased recognition of the complementary nature of Native and western knowledge, so both can be more effectively utilized as a foundation for the school curriculum and integrated in the way we think about learning and teaching" (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2001, p. 6).

Cultural Transmission

Understanding cultural transmission is an important consideration for the future of Indian education and Indian educational reform:

> [The] transmission of 'culture' is transmission of an individual 'mapping' of behaviors associated ideas, and interpretations of those behaviors and ideas. Transmission is made knowingly and unknowingly, in specific contexts for specific purposes. But transmissions are made to individuals whose environments, from birth, differ from those of the sender." (Miller, 1984, p. 324)

Transmission relies on the environments of Indigenous peoples and the exchange occurs naturally within. Environment and culture provide continuous learning. Spindler (1984) explains

> We have come to think of culture as a continuing dialogue that revolves around pivotal areas of explicit and obvious to the tacit and sometimes very hidden. Further, we see that aspect of cultural transmission in which we are most interested - education in the broad sense, schooling in the narrower sense (including initiations, rites of passage) – as a calculated intervention in the learning process. (p.331).

Conceptualizing Indigenous culture as a continuous dialogue implies that there is a natural component found in all Indigenous knowledge systems.

I have read and written about the devastating effects and conditions brought by colonization. I know, however, that underlying the damage is a culture, a worldview and a way of life that is very different from mainstream Euro-Canadian culture. From experience, I know that there is a Cree way of being, a way of life that respects life, that honours place, and that connects all living creatures. Without this, we would have been extinguished by the assaults. I now need to dig deep to unmask the effects and understand what is real. What is the core that keeps us alive? What is this Cree way that has allowed us to survive?

Chapter 3

Omisi Iwitohtmahk Ninehiyawinahk
Cree Methodology

As a form of inquiry, Indigenous research is growing and finding its place(s) within the western academy. An Indigenous research methodology involves a paradigm grounded in Indigenous intelligence. "Indigenous intelligence is the wise and conscientious embodiment of exemplary knowledge and the use of this knowledge in a good, beneficial and meaningful way" (Dumont, 2005, p. 2). Research that comes from an Indigenous paradigm must sometimes struggle to be understood within the academy. Dumont (2005) shares,

> [T]he prevailing and dominating worldview that surrounds us today and to which we are compelled to respond is one that is narrow in its vision, exclusive and detached in relating to the total environment, analytical and deductive in its perception and thinking, linear in its doing, and, hierarchical and competitive in its management of the field of activity. (p. 2)

It can be difficult to create and articulate Indigenous research. The colonial legacy of education and research is based on a frame that "ignores multiple ways of knowing, appropriates and repackages what is considered suitable for its purposes, and makes universal claims on knowledge" (Estrada, 2005, p. 48). As Indigenous researchers we must realize that research is still a western practice (Martin, 2003). Our challenge is to create mutually respectful research frameworks and to identify and understand from the onset of any research where any imbalance exists (Estrada, 2005). An Indigenous methodology, one that honours our Indigenous intelligence, enables us, as Indigenous researchers, to effectively contribute to academia. Friedel (1999) explains:

> Science has failed in its endeavor to measure Indigenous knowledge; it has not been able to capture our emotions; it has not been able to understand the essence of our spirits; and it has no way of doing justice to our experiences. Although

> qualitative methods have experienced greater success in trying to explain certain phenomena, it may be that an Indigenous methodology is the only true way of doing research involving Aboriginal people. (p. 147)

This methodology challenges one to search for the essence, the means of honouring our people and their knowledge system.

Articulating an Indigenous Framework

An understanding of Indigenous methodology begins with an understanding of what Indigenous means. Cardinal, (1999) explains;

> "Indigenous has to be understood; first of all, what does it mean? In Latin it means "born of the land" or "springs from the land," which is a context. We can take that to mean 'born of its context,' born of that environment. When you create something from an Indigenous perspective, therefore, you create it from that environment, from that land in which it sits. Indigenous peoples, with their traditions and customs are shaped by the environment, by the land. They have a spiritual, emotional, physical relationship; to that land. It speaks to them; it gives them their responsibility for stewardship; and it sets out a relationship." (p. 180)

The relationships Indigenous peoples have to one another are through the understanding they are born of the land and shaped by their environment and acknowledge the commonalities in their foundational traditions. Hernandez (1993) shares:

> [M]y own grandfather Ukshanat (Thomas Andrew) used to say that at one time we were all one people, from the north to the south of this hemisphere, which is not to say that we all spoke the same language or practiced exactly the same 'culture.' What he meant was that we were (and I would say we are still) all related in our *relationship* to this land base that has always been our homeland. Each distinct 'culture' learned (learns) its form and expression from the particular sacred places or land base that its people are from. (p. 9 – 10)

It is particularly important to understand that Indigenous peoples are born of the land and this notion is what sets them apart from other ethnic minorities (Swisher, 1996; Marker, 2000).

Indigenous knowledge "exists nowhere else at all but in the minds, bodies, feelings, and spirits of the traditional teachers of First Nations culture" (Urion, 1999, p.

3). For those custodial holders, the validity of this knowledge is delimited to its geographical and ecological space; it is considered "place based" knowledge (Aikenhead, 2006, Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Dei, 2000; Kawagley, 1995, Hampton, 1995). Battiste offers a definition:

> Indigenous knowledge thus embodies a web of relationships within a specific ecological context; contains linguistic categories, rules and relationships unique to each knowledge system; has localized content and meaning; has established customs with respect to acquiring and sharing of knowledge (not all Indigenous peoples equally recognize their responsibilities); and implies responsibilities for possessing various kinds of knowledge. (Battiste, 2002, p. 14)

Dei (2000) elaborates on what constitutes Indigenous knowledge:

> [T]his knowledge refers to traditional norms and social values, as well as to mental constructs that guide, organize, and regulate the people's way of living and making sense of their world. It is the sum of the experience and knowledge of a given social group, and forms the basis of decision making in the face of challenges both familiar and unfamiliar. For millennia, many indigenous cultures were guided by a world view based on the following: seeing the individual as part of nature; respecting and reviving the wisdom of the elders; giving consideration to the living, the dead, and future generations; sharing responsibility, wealth, and resources within the community; and embracing spiritual values, traditions, and practices reflecting connections to a higher order. (p. 6)

No single individual or entity 'owns' Indigenous knowledge. Rather, it is in the custodial keeping of traditional teachers who have authority over it. Urion (1999) explains:

> [I]t is a relationship of 'ownership' but it does not mean exclusive proprietary interest in the knowledge: ownership of knowledge is a custodial relationship. Ownership of knowledge involves knowing the conditions under which it is appropriate to share it. The responsibility for maintaining a custodial relationship with certain knowledge may come about because of a person's unique position in a family. (p. 15)

Within any given community, knowledge may be in the custody of several different teachers. Each traditional teacher may be responsible for keeping knowledge that is unique to their position in the community, determined, in part, by considerations such as gender or inherited obligation.

Exploring an Indigenous Paradigm

As Wilson (2001) says, Indigenous research comes from uniquely Indigenous understandings and experiences of the world:

> Ontology, epistemology, axiology and our methodology are fundamentally different...Indigenous research needs to reflect Indigenous contexts and worldviews; that is, they must come from an Indigenous paradigm rather than an Indigenous perspective.
>
> One major difference between the dominant paradigms and an Indigenous paradigm is that dominant paradigms build on the foundational belief that knowledge is an individual entity: the researcher is an individual in search of knowledge, knowledge is something that is gained, and therefore knowledge may be owned by an individual. (p. 176)

This notion of individualism is not part of an Indigenous paradigm.

> An indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all of creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, not just with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge. It goes beyond the idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge (Wilson, 1999, 176-177).

Our relationships to all living forms are a central concept of an Indigenous paradigm.

To better understand Indigenous research, I first looked at the Indigenous mind and, more specifically, Indigenous intelligence. Urion (1999) offers this description of the Indigenous mind:

> [It] is a presupposition that humans have been created with the essential property of continuously realizing compassionate connection with other living things, and the 'indigenous mind' then refers to the mind that all humans were created with, and the mind we were created to develop. First Nations traditions are based on the cultivation of the 'indigenous mind' (Urion, 1999, p. 7)

Dumont's succinct description of Indigenous intelligence as "the wise and conscientious embodiment of exemplary knowledge and the use of this knowledge in a good, beneficial and meaningful way" (2005, p. 2) bears repetition here. He elaborates further:

> We cannot talk about being an intelligent person without knowledge of and access to all the levels of our intelligence capacity – i.e., the intelligence of the body, the mind, heart and spirit. The intelligence of the mind, for instance, does not operate to its fullest creative, discriminating, and encompassing potential without its active partnership with the intelligence of the heart (p. 2).

Dumont's assertion that Indigenous intelligence integrates the mind, body, heart and spirit has been seconded by other Indigenous scholars (Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Martin 2002; Ermine, 1995). As Urion (1999) points out:

> We are not composites of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects – those areas are useful as semantic domains, but there is nothing about us – nothing at all – that is entirely physical, or mental, or emotional, or spiritual. (p. 7)"

The 'four domains' engage synchronously at all times and as we carry out Indigenous research we must understand that everything is part of everything. Urion (1999) explains that all knowledge is always spiritual and all knowledge is emotional. In Indigenous intelligence, feelings are not simply dismissed as 'emotions':

> [They are an] important way of being 'connected' physically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually, to specific locales, specific to other people, and to all creation. Feelings are experienced in all four dimensions of experience, not just in 'affect' or 'emotion' (Urion, 1999, p. 7).

Defining Indigenous Intelligence – A Unique Way of Being

Because Indigenous intelligence and knowledge systems exist in a relational context, it is not easy to define them. Dumont (2005), however, points out that if "we make a start at it, perhaps we can put our collective intelligence to work and build a description of Indigenous intelligence that embraces the total breadth and depth of our way of being." (p.3). Towards this, he has identified six concepts:

> The concept of ***Indigenous centeredness*** means being centered securely, comfortably, and confidently, within the Indigenous worldview, knowingly and intentionally embracing the Indigenous perspective and the Indigenous way of life. Acting from Indigenous centeredness means that one affirms, asserts and

advances seeing, relating, thinking and doing as being inherent and central to the Indigenous ways of knowing.

The concept of ***Indigenous consciousness*** affirms and is motivated by the primary and encompassing nature of Indigenous awareness, thought, knowledge and conceptualization in all aspects of seeing, feeling, knowing, and doing. Very simply, it means being totally consciousness at all levels of conscious sensing, knowing and experiencing – from a place of Indigenous identity, Indigenous thinking, Indigenous knowledge base, and Indigenous way of being.

The concept of ***Indigenous capacity for total responsiveness*** recognizes that we function from all the levels of our being – spirit, heart, mind and body. The ability to do so is an indication of a high degree intelligence. The Indigenous unique competence and intelligent expression, mastery, and creative aptitude is a multi-faculty response from all levels of being.

The concept of ***connectedness to the collective whole*** means collective consciousness – but recognizes that this is a cultural predisposition based in a value system that places connectedness and responsiveness to the collective whole at a high place in the priority of values. Individual learning, creativity and innovative achievement are intelligent accomplishments when they benefit and advance the collective whole.

The concept of ***connected to the total environment*** places the human person in direct and complete relationship to the total environment – relationship that is all-inclusive, personal and reciprocal, individual learning, creativity, innovative achievement, survivability, and attainment of quality of being are intelligent accomplishments when they are responsive to, respect, benefit and advance the total environment.

The concept of ***Indigenous value-based seeing, relating, knowing and doing*** means the intelligent Indigenous person operates from out of the core psychology or values system of Kindness, Honesty, Sharing, Strength, Respect, Wisdom, and Harmony. (p. 3)

Embedded in all concepts are notions of connections and relationships that encompass ways of being, relating, thinking and seeing. These relationships are centered in a consciousness that experiences and responds according to a distinct value system. For Dumont, (2005), our "responsibility within that all-inclusive relationship is an act of intelligence" (p. 5). Within this context, responsibility involves accountability both to oneself and to a larger web of relations.

These concepts, which describe how we, as Indigenous people, act, think or exist intelligently, have helped me to orient my research process. It must be acknowledged these concepts are a starting place, not an exhaustive or complete conceptual explanation of Indigenous intelligence (Dumont, 2005).

Indigenous Intelligence and the Academy

What does all this mean to the academy? Denzin and Lincoln (2000) write "a paradigm encompasses four concepts: ethics (axiology), epistemology, ontology, and methodology" (p. 157). Wilson (1999, 2003) explains that within the relational aspect of an Indigenous paradigm, epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology exist together in a circular pattern, Dumont sees a similar circular pattern in the concurrence of our mind, body, spirit and heart in Indigenous intelligence and in our Indigenous centeredness.

What do epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology become within an Indigenous paradigm? Wilson (2001) offers the following explanation:

Epistemology:

> ... where the relationship with something (a person, object or idea) is more important than the thing itself. Inherent in this concept is the recognition that this person, object or idea may have different relationships with someone or something else....We can extend this thinking – of viewing objects as the relationships we share with them – on to how we see concepts and ideas. The concepts or ideas are not as important as the relationships that went into forming them. Again, an Indigenous epistemology has systems of knowledge built upon relationships between things, rather than on the things themselves. (p. 141-142)

Ontology:

> Relationships come to you from the past, from the present, and from your future. This is what surrounds us, and what forms us, our world, our cosmos and our reality. We could not be without being in relationship with everything that surrounds us and is within us. Our reality, our ontology is the relationships. (p. 148)

Axiology:

> An Indigenous axiology is built upon the concept of relational accountability. Right or wrong; validity; statistically significant; worthy or unworthy; value judgments lose their meaning. What is more important and meaningful is fulfilling a role and obligations in the research relationship – that is, being accountable to your relations. The researcher is therefore a part of his or her research and inseparable from the subject of that research. (p. 149)

Methodology:

> An Indigenous methodology must be a process that adheres to relational accountability. Respect, reciprocity, and responsibility are key features of any healthy relationship, and must be included in an Indigenous methodology....(p. 150)

As I attempted to understand each part of Wilson's paradigm, I drew on Dumont's (2005) and Urion's (1999) discussions. Initially, I tried to fit Indigenous intelligence into a western paradigm and assign each component of the paradigm to one of Dumont's intelligence aspects, equating, for example, Indigenous consciousness with epistemology. I had taken on the impossible task of applying linear and categorical concepts to something that wasn't. What I needed to recognize was that Indigenous intelligence has its own paradigm. As I looked more closely at the concepts, I realized that each of the six aspects of Indigenous intelligence tells us about our own Indigenous epistemology, ontology and axiology and, in this way, offers the guidance we need to develop a formal Indigenous methodology. Dumont, (2005) writes "[O]pting for a worldview that closes the avenues to the counsel and wisdom of the heart and the spirit is to choose a paradigm that deliberately retards the total capacity of the human intelligence" (p. 2). Indigenous intelligence, on the other hand, values spirit and heart, embraces all things and engages with them as a whole

What does this mean for methodology? It means we must honour our intelligence. We must respect our thinking, honour the traditional processes that we have come to know and utilize a methodology that can understand our intelligence.

> And of course Indigenous minds have a vastness of rationality to draw from. Our thinking is distinct. We know this. Of course this affects how we do research because how we view, how we think, how we witness the world is born from sustained consciousness. It is still present in what and how we think. Don't doubt this! It is critical at this time to dig deeper into the wellspring of our own subjectivity. We are not 'dumbing down' methodology when we wish to sit and listen - for years. It is a process and the subtle category of mind development is all about respecting this process. Of course we must educate those around us in our institutions. Remember most researchers will have no idea of what we are talking about. We must persevere on our path and that will often take us into the teaching role with our own committees. (Manu Meyer, 2003, p.65)

Our sustained consciousness, our centering place of mind, body, heart and spirit, must be our starting point. It is only from there we can honour our distinct intelligence. Cardinal (2001) adds:

> I think that as Indigenous or Aboriginal scholars, we need to dialogue: exactly what is it that we are talking about, how big is it, how dimensional is it? And as we continue this dialogue, we are not professing that there is only one way, but we are sharing our relationship to what we are seeing, feeling, or knowing. It is true that we have many different depths in our relationship to knowledge. These include our environment, our land, and our ancestors. This is a very, very important aspect. (p. 181)

Embedded in Indigenous research methodology is the great responsibility of respect. In Cree the Elders describe this responsibility as *kihceyihtowin*. Weber-Pillwax says "embedded in the meaning of the term is the *sacredness of being* and a recognition of that *sacredness of the Other* with whom one is in relationship (personal encounter, March 12, 2008). This respectful relationship is grounded in spirituality and encompasses all living things across the past, present and future. When we use an Indigenous methodology, we

do not dismiss other theories (Steinhauer, 2007). Rather, what we are doing is developing a mutual framework.

An Indigenous Research Methodology

Our Indigenous intelligence and systems of knowledge are built upon relationships and the interconnections between all living things. Wilson (1999) describes an Indigenous methodology:

> To me an Indigenous methodology means talking about relational accountability. As a researcher you are answering to all your relations when you are doing research. You are not answering questions of validity or reliability or making judgments of better or worse. Instead you should be fulfilling your relationships with the world around you. So your methodology has to ask different questions; rather than asking about validity or reliability, you are asking how am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? What are my obligations in this relationship? The axiology or morals need to be an integral part of the methodology so that when I am gaining knowledge, I am not just gaining in some abstract pursuit; I am gaining knowledge in order to fulfill my end of the research relationship. This becomes my methodology, an indigenous methodology, by looking at relational accountability or being accountable to all my relations. (p. 177)

The notion presented in regards to validity and/or reliability is overridden by the larger aspect of obligations to relationship. The relationship is fluid. The Indigenous researcher must be aware of this fluid relationship and remain accountable to the community. Weber-Pillwax, (1999) explains:

> One significant reason is that we have to maintain consistently a sense of relationality and accountability to our communities in order to maintain our own integrity as researchers. ...Not only would we not be using the same language of deconstruction, more significant to my point is that in the community it is not 'a discourse about deconstruction,' it is deconstruction. Out there in the community, they are deconstructing, and they don't need the language of deconstruction to do it." (p. 170)

Wilson and Wilson (1999) support the notion of relationship and responsibility explaining "there is the added dimension of respect for and taking care of 'all our relations.' Individual responsibility for actions must be in relation to all living

organisms" (p. 157). For each of these scholars, Indigenous methodology is based on the concept of relationality.

Why Research? Who Does it Benefit?

Over the last century, Indigenous peoples and communities have been thoroughly researched. This research has been carried out on white terms and has not told the whole stories of our Indigenous communities (Wilson, 1995, Smith, 1999). These conditions make it even more important that, as Indigenous researchers, our research starts with meaning not only for ourselves but also for our community. Weber-Pillwax (2001) explains:

> "[I]f my work as an Indigenous scholar cannot or does not lead to action, it is useless to me or anyone else. I cannot be involved in research and scholarly discourse unless I know that such work will lead to some change out there in that community, in my community." (p. 169)

Manu Meyer (2003) describes a similar urgency about ensuring our research is meaningful:

> I believe we need to begin with the idea of need, or how best to be of service to our community. What are the needs we must address within ourselves, our family, our community, and within our distinct and evolving cultures? What, truly, are the issues we need to understand?...Research for us is not simply about asking 'burning questions' we want resolved, but rather, we are answering a call to be of use. We must develop the right orientation to ourselves and our place first. The very idea of knowledge is now in question across all nations, and as we develop a deeper experience of our own epistemology, do you see where we're heading? We're heading into our own radical remembering of our future. This is where I live now: in a fully lucid present that experiences the 'deeper significance of all things seen' (p. 60).

When we prepare for research, we must ensure that we are correctly oriented to self, place and all living things in the cosmos and also that we have taken our own communities into account. Uhlik (2006) describes community from the perspective of a researcher:

> In the context of Aboriginal research [community] constitutes a structure of support mechanisms that includes the personal responsibility for the collective and reciprocally, the collective concern for the individual existence. Importantly, Aboriginal conceptions of community often encompass relationships in a very broad sense, including relationships of human, ecological and spiritual origin. (p. 5)

At an individual level our research is situated in our collective self, engaging our mind, body and spirit.

Preparing for the Research

Elder Kinunwa reminds us that "everything is in the preparation; the ceremony is like the period at the end of an English sentence. The ceremony is the confirmation that all the preparation is complete." The preparation for this research was long. After completing my candidacy exam, four years passed before I picked up this work again. During those four years I became more familiar with the topic and considered what it really meant. I was also married during that time, had two children, worked with the provincial government and lived at home in my community for a year. In retrospect, I see that all those experiences were preparing me for this work. When I started this research, I did not feel fully prepared. I did, however, know it was time to begin.

As I now prepare to share this research, I need to present it authentically, truthfully and with all the complexity I faced as I worked through thoughts that came solely from my experience as a Plains Cree woman from Saddle Lake. I often discredit what I know and I am periodically reminded by others that "you need to trust that you know and believe that you know" (John Crier, personal encounter October, 28, 2007) Elder Crier relates that it makes him sad to hear about Indigenous graduate students feeling unsure of themselves. He states that the Elders in our home communities want us to believe we know. This past year, an Elder of my community told me that because I

had honoured Cree protocols, the information I was seeking for this work would be authentic. I would also be guided by the grandmothers and grandfathers. Even while I knew this task was mine to complete, my feelings of unsureness persisted.

As I began to prepare, I realized I needed to take Elder Kinunwa's advice and "go back to the origins, go back to my people." If I didn't do this, I would be researching in a void. For mainstream researchers this may sometimes be a starting point but in my case I needed to return to that physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellspring. At the Indigenous Scholars Conference in 2006, Willie Ermine observed that "we are spiritual beings trying to be human." This teaching and the teachings of Elder Kinunwa and others remind me that in my humanness and from my gender specific and life cycle position, I can expect obstacles in my journey.

Akameyimow[3]

In spite of the obstacles and challenges ahead, there are many reasons I must go forward. I am reassured by the words of the Tongan Elder Emil Wolfgram. At the Indigenous scholars gathering in Hawaii, he likened our mind-body-heart-spirit to a computer system, observing that we have the Indigenous hardware and just need to acquire the cultural software. This includes the traditional processes of our knowledge system and language, the operating system that enables us to access other cultural software. Since enrolling in graduate school ten years ago, I have been on an incredible journey to acquire this cultural software and to learn to navigate that way of thinking. Elder Kinuwna echoed Elder Wolfgram's analogy with the observation that we physiologically inherit the context of our knowledge system. We can never lose the

[3] To be determined and to keep going forward, keep trying. My late Mosom Joe P. Cardinal would say this virtue to me. It encompasses an element of support and belief from the speaker.

context as it is in every part of our bodies. Ultimately, I need to trust I know and fully embrace the task of research.

Considerations of Indigenous Data Methods

Utilizing an Indigenous methodology requires a specific set of methods that honours the embedded values and beliefs inherent in the Indigenous worldview (Wilson, 2001; Weber-Pillwax, 2003; Martin, 2003). As researchers we must consider data collection methods that adhere to the principles and processes of traditional knowledge. Wilson (2001) describes his approach:

> Some questions do need to be asked when evaluating research methods. One is: What is my role as a researcher, and what are my obligations? You then have to ask yourself: Does this method allow me to fulfill my obligations in my role? Further, does this method help to build a relationship between myself as a researcher and my research topic? Does it build respectful relationships with the other participants in the research? Relationships with the idea or topic, as well as with the people or mice or trees or whatever you are working with, have to be considered. (p. 178)

The responsibility of orientating and positioning myself in this research process can be overwhelming. Like Wilson (2001), I need to be clear in my approach and rely on my intuitive learning. Cardinal (2001), commenting on his experiences with "Elders [who] used methods I had not seen elsewhere" (p. 181), points out that "[a] whole base of research tools and methods for Indigenous people have yet to be realized and incorporated into the hunt for truth, the hunt for knowledge" (p. 180), In the meantime, Indigenous researchers must adapt tools from qualitative methods. Wilson (2001) describes one method used by many Indigenous researchers: "We have all dabbled with using talking circles (often justified by calling them focus group discussions) as a method because it coincides with the Indigenous epistemological importance of relationships" (p. 178). Participatory action research, talking circles, narratives and storytelling can all

serve an Indigenous paradigm. These methods are effective because they provide opportunity for personal relationship and connection between participants and researchers.

Terms of Indigenous Protocol

Indigenous protocols are acts that are carried out to maintain balance and affirm our connectedness and identity with the environment. Urion, (1999) describes protocol as "a specific act that we do to affirm and maintain our connection with others and with Creation. It is part of learning." (p. 16) He continues:

> Protocol operates in the learning of many aspects of traditional knowledge. When we perform a protocol in that context we have to find out
>
> a) what is the appropriate physical form of protocol;
> b) what is the process of it;
> c) when, or how often, is it appropriate to perform it;
> d) what are the consequences of (1) getting it wrong; (2) not doing it;
> e) who else, if anyone, is involved; and
> f) are the location, time and season, or physical setting important.
>
> (Urion, 1999, p. 17)

Protocols are sometimes presented in the form of a gift. Each time a protocol is done, it is a new experience and to serve each unique physical entity and time, the right protocol must always be performed (Urion, 1999).

Research Circles

In this project, I used three sharing circles to gather information from participants. This method felt respectful. The sharing or talking circle is used within some traditional cultures as a means to come together, collaborate and share ideas. Graveline (2000) describes the talking circle:

> Traditionally a Sacred ceremony
> a gift from the Ancestors
> A physical reality
> a Metaphysical experience.

An egalitarian structure
each voice acknowledged
heard in turn.
To choose words with care and thoughtfulness
is to speak in a Sacred manner...
In Circle all participants are encouraged to Be
Self-reflective
Culturally located.
To listen Respectfully to Others
Provides another lens to view our own Reality (p. 365)

The Community

Saddle Lake is a Cree community located in north eastern Alberta. Approximately 5,000 of Saddle Lake's 8000 members reside in the First Nation. Saddle Lake is one of the larger First Nations in Alberta, with roughly sixty percent of the population under the age of thirty.

Saddle Lake is governed by a Chief and eight Councilors, all of whom are elected in accordance with local tribal customs and rules of the Indian Act. Elections for Chief and Council are held every three years. Chief and Council are the recognized governing body of the community and oversee all programming and operations of the community including education. Chief and Council utilize a democratic decision-making process, but the Chief retains veto power.

Currently, Saddle Lake has two schools, Onchaminahos Elementary School (Kindergarten-5) and Kihew Asiniy Education Centre (Grades 6-12). Saddle Lake Cree Nation assumed local control of education in 1980. Both schools are governed by a school board appointed by the Chief and Council. Cultural and Cree Language programming are part of programming at both schools.

Saddle Lake is plagued with issues related to housing, low employment, and social problems related to addictions. These are long term issues that continue to

intensify. Housing is in very short supply. Unemployment rates are high because there are very few employment opportunities available within the reserve. Drug and gambling addictions are rampant in the community.

In spite of the problems, Saddle Lake is a tightly knit community. Social events and social programming bring residents together for an annual pow-wow, the Ininiwak Traditional Healing and Medicine Gathering and other gatherings. Community members' attendance at wakes and funerals is one indication of the way that community members actively support each other. Residents believe that the community can heal and deal with social issues through education and communication.

Entering the Community

Saddle Lake is very familiar to me. I was raised there. As a member of the community, I am aware of its protocols. I wrote a detailed letter to the Chief and Council outlining the purpose and plans of my research study. Once I was granted permission to conduct my research I began meeting with individuals and couples, establishing and reestablishing relationships.

Participant Selection

When we are seeking knowledge, it is important to sit with and learn from both men and women (Lionel Kinunwa, personal communication). To bring this balance into the knowledge gathered here, I sought couples as participants in this research project. The four couples who participated in this research represented a four decade age range. The youngest couple was in their mid 30s, the second in their 40s, the third in their 50s and the fourth in their late 60s. In total, eight adults (four women and four men) participated in the research.

Once I had identified couples who would share their life experiences, I began to speak with them about the research topic and questions. I attempted to organize one large talking circle so that everyone could meet each other but unfortunately each attempt to do so failed. In the end three talking circles were held, the first with two couples (one Elder and the other the younger of the middle-aged couples) and the second and third each with one couple (the second with a middle aged couple who are also considered Elders in the community and the third with a young couple who practices Cree traditions). Before each circle I contacted all individuals to explain the process and confirm their interest and participation in the study.

Participants

Priscilla and Leo

Priscilla and Leo are the youngest couple participants of this study. They have resided in Saddle Lake their entire lives and have three children. Priscilla and Leo live and practice Cree ways and together provide counseling and support through traditional Cree ceremonies. Priscilla is also fulfilling the final requirements for a Masters of Psychology program.

Erin and Robert

Erin is a mother of four. She was born to a traditional family in the reserve community and was raised with traditional Cree teachings. She holds a Bachelor of Education and Masters of Education, both from the University of Alberta. Throughout her lifetime Erin has been very involved with the community as both a member and teacher.

Robert was born to a traditional family in Saddle Lake. He completed a Bachelors degree at the University of Athabasca and is currently employed by the First Nation.

Florence and Carl

Florence and Carl are my aunt and uncle. I regard them highly for their Cree knowledge and wisdom. They have lived the majority of their lives in the community, both serving in many capacities. They contribute much of their time to young people, nurturing them in many ways. They are both humble and loving.

Education is important to both of them. My aunt is currently the principal of Onchaminahos School. My uncle is a gifted knowledge keeper, leader, musician and Cree language instructor. They both have bachelor degrees (in education and social work) and my aunt has a masters degree in education. Cree language instruction has become an important focus for them. They speak Cree to their children and grandchildren so they can gain wisdom and Cree knowledge.

Alice and Gordon

Alice and Gordon are respected Elders in the community of Saddle Lake, where they have resided their entire lives. They have six children and fourteen grandchildren. They have worked in various capacities within the reserve community, including several manual labour jobs.

As children, Alice and Gordon attended residential school. To them, education is very important because it is a means to compete in the mainstream. The Cree language and understanding Cree ways is critical for them and they place much effort on instilling this knowledge in their children and grandchildren.

Lakota Elder Lionel Kinunwa, Ph.D.

Elder Lionel Kinunwa had an immense impact on my life. From the time I met him, he has influenced my everyday life and is in my thoughts especially when I seek help in

regards to Indigenous ways of being. Lionel awakened me to many things I thought I didn't know. As a group of students, in 1998, we didn't know much about Lionel but were very grateful to him for sharing his wisdom so freely. Lionel was a very humble man. He spoke about completing a PhD program at Stanford a few years before we met in 1998. Lionel's deep understanding of and respect for Indigenous knowledge was a model from which I learned much. I have included his words as an Elder as a central resource in this study because it is the only way I can legitimately complete this work. I have always relied on Lionel for guidance and inspiration. He once said "Don't listen to the dead words of the living" and in his absence I still hear his living words. He continues to teach me even today and I trust for many, many tomorrows. Lionel did not publish his important teachings and this may have been his intent - to honour the oral tradition in face to face exchanges. I have felt a strong sense of security since meeting Lionel and I am forever indebted to him for this.

Data Collection Process

The process of data collection for this study involved cultural protocols. Wilson (2003) and Hanohano (2001) acknowledge protocols as a necessary part of data collection in Indigenous research. I began data collection by establishing contact with the participants and preparing materials for the necessary protocols. After scheduling a circle, I would phone a few days prior to confirm. The talking circles were held at locations chosen by participants. Before the circles began, I provided them with consent forms to sign and a letter outlining my research and contact information. After each circle, I wrote notes about the circle, the location and significant occurrences.

Three talking circles took place for the data collection process. At the onset of each circle I would review the purpose of the study and go over any questions anyone had. I offered each participant tobacco for the knowledge they shared in the circle. All participants understood the sacredness of this protocol and offering. I then asked participants for permission to audiotape the circle, explaining that the tape would be kept confidential. Each participant was advised that they had the opportunity to withdraw from the interview at anytime and that their anonymity would be protected by, for example, using vignettes to describe them. In Evelyn Steinhauer's study (2007) she shares that anonymity does not appear to be an issue for participants citing other scholars who use participants real names (Hanohano, 2001; Lightning 1992; Makokis, 2001; Meyer, 1998; Wilson, 2003) Hanohano (2001) explains the honour embedded in using real identities:

> For me to remove their names from their stories and teachings is disrespectful and presumptuous, and gives the appearance that the words are now mine. This would destroy the trust and respect of our relationship, is misappropriation of the common kind, and totally out of keeping with proper protocol and etiquette. (p. 82)

In her study, Noella Steinhauer (2007) explains that traditional Cree people are willing to share information, especially if proper protocols are followed. She quotes Mary Cardinal-Collins who states "traditional Cree people don't go where they don't know." (Ibid, p. 45) In this study some participants are identified with their real identities. I protected some participants anonymity through the use of pseudonyms. I shared this understanding with participants and made them aware of my position of presenting identities and the honour embedded in their words and teachings. I then turned on the

tape recorder and began the circle. Our discussion was guided by the following questions:

What do Cree First Nations' community members perceive a traditional Cree way of being to be?

What do community members feel are necessary components of this Cree way?

How has the Cree way evolved and adapted?

The circles were three to four hours in length. As is customary, we included time to visit and share about each other, our families and lives. Once the circles were completed, the tapes were immediately transcribed. Where needed, participants were contacted either by phone or in person for clarification of things shared in the circles. In Evelyn Steinhauer's study (2007) she established validation techniques that she found culturally appropriate to her Cree worldview. The two validation techniques were member checks and peer debriefing. I found these techniques most helpful in confirming data findings. As the data unfolded into inviting Elders and Cree teachings these techiques were most useful. I found I colloraborated with family members, community members, Elders, my supervisors and committee members and fellow Indigenous graduate students. Prayers, ceremonies and protocol played important parts to this process.

Data Analysis

Indigenous intelligence is multidimensional and interconnected. This understanding means that, in my analysis, I have to remain open to the relational connectiveness of the participant data. Tafoya (1995) explains:

> [T]here has been a history of people being told to amputate a part of themselves to be able to fit something that's rigid and not built for them in the first place. Amputate your sexuality, amputate your gender, amputate your language, your

> spirituality...With the idea of realizing you mean I did not have to cut a part of myself off in the first place, the answer is yes. You really can be whole. (p. 27)

From my masters study I learned that it is necessary to pay deep respect to connection in my role as learner and listener. Tafoya (1995) explains further "it helps if you listen in circles, because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you're lost you start to open up and listen" (p.11-12). In my own practice of learning I understand the need to listen and not question and instead think about the knowledge being shared, process it whether or not we know the reason for it, and make the connections. I analyzed the data by making connections between ideas and finding relationships between thoughts, ideas and applications of knowledge. This was part of fulfilling my obligation to relational responsibility. Analysis involves notions inherent in Indigenous intelligence. Ways of being, knowing, seeing and thinking grounded in the circularity of Indigenous intelligence have guided the analysis.

Chapter 4

Enitotowakihk Kihteyayahk Kikwaya Kamamiskotakihk Osam Enohte Nistotowakihk

We hear our people say something we need to translate it into what it means (Lionel Kinunwa, 1998)

Data presentation is a highly subjective experience. My interpretation of the data comes through my experiences and ways of knowing as a Plains Cree researcher. From the onset of the study I was continually aware of my need to honour my Cree knowledge and experience and carefully absorb and understand what participants said. Taylor (1995) quotes Edward Hall's concept of high context cultures.

> A high context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message...High-context culture tends to rely less on the spoken word and more on the context or on existing non-verbal information. A great deal is left unsaid and situational factors deliver the greater part of an intended meaning. (p. 233)

Indigenous communities are considered high context cultures. For this study it was important I approached each circle with this in mind. Things like non-verbal expressions, humour, tone of voice or the use of Cree were all important. Pauses, sighs and laughter helped me to understand and interpret participants' intended meaning.

Early in the process it became apparent the data would be difficult to interpret and translate into a meaningful product that honoured the Cree way. After much searching I revisited my class notes from Lionel Kinunwa's course. As I began reading, I could see a way to articulate the high contextual meaning of the participants communications. I began to formulate a process in which Lionel's words would be incorporated into the participants' data. Referring to his own graduate school experience, Lionel had once told us that he had learned nothing but was able to tell what the old people said. It is our old

people, our grandmothers and grandfathers, that provide wisdom, create meaning and make experiences.

Two sets of data are presented here; data collected from participants and my notes from a course Lionel Kinunwa taught. The two data sets are from two separate contexts. The participant data relates to the research question for this study. Lionel's data is from a graduate course I took in the spring of 1998 titled *Revitalizing Indigenous Languages*. I transcribed both sets of data. After completing a thematic analysis on both sets, I began to align quotes about similar themes. After many failed attempts to align and engage the two data sets, I chose to present both but not address Lionel's teachings directly. There were many teachings in my notes from Lionel's lectures and I included those that were applicable. Including Lionel's teachings enabled me to better articulate meaning and understanding of the participants' words.

Elder Lionel Kinunwa's words helped to frame, substantiate, validate and provide a platform for the participant data. His teachings are distinguished by formatting in *italicized Bodoni text*. They are presented as a background platform, included before, after, and within data quotes and my interpretation, but do not directly interact with the participants' data. Because I respect Lionel's words as teachings and because I hope that his teachings can be applied in other work, I have left his words as they were origirnally written. His words guide my data interpretation and provide deeper insights far beyond my knowledge and experience. In this way the data presentation and analysis in this project, are subjective, honouring and relying on my Plains Cree experience and knowledge.

Addressing the Research Question: What is the Cree Way?

All participants wandered about the question, "What is the Cree way?" Priscilla said, "If you ask me, I don't know what the Cree way is." Erin said, "We can't define it, we can't always define." I was asking for a direct and defined response and, as is the Cree way, I have come to learn that there is no one way to answer that question. The participants all responded kindly to the research question and provided the data below, but I began to see that asking and expecting direct answers was not a suitable process. Instead, I needed to listen closely and from there begin addressing the topic of the Cree way. The data herein is rich with the ways of being, ways of thinking, ways of relating and ways of seeing.

Reading the Data Presentation

The following data presentation is intended to be read two or more times. The small *italicized bodoni text* represents Elder Lionel Kinunwa's teachings. Elder Kinunwa's teachings should not be read until the second and subsequent reads. As his teachings are ignored by the reader in the first reading the data presentation resembles a traditional academic data presentation. For the second and subsequent readings the reader will have established and heard the data presentation from the first reading and then can begin applying Elder Kinunwa's teachings by including them within the following reading(s).

Cree: The Importance it Plays in the Cree Way

Wisdom is in the context of the language.

Cree knowledge and ways of being are found in the language. Knowing the language, being able to speak and/or understand it guides individuals to Cree ways of being. Priscilla said "I was just thinking of when he [her husband] was talking about the

Cree way. For me it's the way we live or the way we choose to live. [pause] It's really about the language. [pause] When I think about the language I think that it's a big big part of it."

The language tells you how to be Lakota – we are in a continuous process of becoming.

Erin adds "I think...things are embedded in the language. Even if you don't really understand the language you know the principles behind it." This implies that these embedded principles are known even to non-speakers. Language plays an integral role in cultural and traditional sustenance.

Our language is like the whiteman's library, we need to build a structure for it, instead of just translating from English language. We need to listen to resource material. We need to stop minimizing our languages.

Cree: Why We Need It

Language is a ceremony and we are preparing to go there. We will travel there in spirit.

Like many young people in the community Priscilla cannot speak the language fluently. Still, she believes that the Cree language is the most appropriate way to respect sacred ways of ceremony. She said:

> I was brought up with the language. I don't speak it fluently but I understand it. When I hear the language spoken like when I am in the sweat, I can hear the language spoken it just creates this energy...
>
> *Energy is in between the syllables, it's in silent prefixes. In Indigenous language there are many spiritual meanings embodied in the syllables.*
>
> this totally different energy that even when I speak English in the sweat it doesn't feel right...
>
> *Context of our language is lost when we translate it. What does it mean? Can't be said in English...won't mean the same thing.*
>
> but it's the only language I can speak and I'll try to create as much as I can but I think it's because I heard it and it's part of me...

Inside of you is the knowledge even if the language is lost. We retain this knowledge through our cells. DNA identifies 13 areas where that type of intelligence exists.
Your people's knowledge is in you – it's been encoded from the beginning of time. I'ts in you, it's in your cellular structure; you inherited it from your parents.

It's like a process and an energy. It's that language I think that's what it is.

Spirit comes in many forms; energy in physical being is quantified. Each cell has an aura (standard force) 4 billion cells in the body.

To Priscilla, the Cree language embodies something more - a more natural and more appropriate process.

Concerns for Non Cree Speakers

All participants emphasized the importance of maintaining the Cree language and the participants who do not speak the language expressed the most concern about whether or not it would be passed on to their children. Priscilla asks "If we don't have the language what is going to happen to our kids? How are they are going to live the Cree way..."

Language is the transfer of wisdom

"If we're not speaking the language how are they going to understand what that's all about? Cause it seems to be all in the language." For Priscilla, it is imperative that her children learn Cree because the Cree way is all about language. She realizes that as a Cree parent much of the onus to teach her children the language is upon her.

Duty to interpret the language to the next generation...wisdom exists in the language.

For parents who do not speak Cree, but want their children to learn the language, it becomes a matter of priority and time. Priscilla says

I tell myself I got to hurry up and finish what I am doing because I need to engross myself in learning to speak it before I die or [at the very least I] want my..

In order to teach your children the language they need to learn the context of the language. Therefore, it is important to have appropriate teachers of the language. It's important to learn from one who can teach you.

daughter to learn all these things. I wish I spoke it fluently but I guess that's my choice I have to try do it myself not just complain I don't speak it but do something about it.

Your elders will tell you inside of you is the knowledge...its already in our being...you just need access

As part of her current efforts Priscilla has committed to make Cree language part of her daily life. She says:

Everyday when I wake up when I do something that language is a part of me, of what I am doing…

Each morning when you wake up think Cree.

say even when I am at work and I think I am tired and in my head I think I am tired but then I have that Cree part that says *nestohsin*, I am tired. It adds an energy.

Spiritual, breath life, there are different quantifiable energy forces of language.

Speaking Cree is very important to Priscilla. She makes every effort possible to practice the language.

Can Cree Be Effectively Translated?

Translating Cree into English is challenging and sometimes impossible. Florence states that "Cree can never be translated into English…

How can we make our language mean something in English? When it has no spirit? When context is absent it doesn't mean the same thing.

as a Cree person who uses Cree as a first language its just so much a part of you. [pause] to be able to make a Cree comment in Cree [is a gift]." Florence does mean to say "Cree comment in Cree" as opposed to Cree comment translated into English. The Cree

comment or thought expressed in that language provides the exact meaning the Cree speaker intends.

> *What kind of system can we think along with? How can we find a way to what our language means...what would it take?*
> *Domesticated animals don't have the same meaning as an animal in the wild. It is important not to lose the context and become domesticated.*

Florence spoke about her adult son's efforts to learn the language. She understands that tones in the language are a key part and observes that "My son's not a Cree speaker, but he is now just turning to those intonations…

> *Keeping the pitch and tone of language is sacred and important to the next generation. It's embodied in the scope and dimension of our language. Understand to deliver information in the most relevant way.*

you can't get that…

> *How language is taught makes some people feel inadequate...requires redevelopment of inner ear to recognize Indigenous sounds. Enunciation – hearing – pronunciation – speaking. Physiologically Indigenous people have been tuned up over thousands of years.... You can't lose it you have to lose your body.*
> *We lose wisdom if we don't pay attention to inflections. Enunciation has to be set up by your people.*

so they have to be taught and we just teach him everyday, almost everyday"

> *Language must be applied and practiced*
> *Our language system is the recipe, but we need a human being to take part...we are the tool of our language. If we lose context we lose underlying factors of the language. We must hear the processes.*

As Florence points out, part of what we learn from the Cree language is embodied in tones that we learn by listening to and talking with other Cree speakers.

Other participants also identified the importance of learning Cree. Carl believes it is necessary to enunciate words exactly. He spoke about the words "*ihtoh tah yan*" and "*ihtoh tah yen.*" He said both communicate the same concept but the enunciation is different. He wondered how Cree knowledge then becomes affected by these changes in

enunciation. Would it change the knowledge greatly? Has our language had subtle changes in meaning because of enunciation? This is an important consideration. There is a whole body of knowledge within the language that is accessed through tones and direct daily immersion of the language. Florence adds:

> What does this mean? There's just a whole world out there that needs to be uncovered for him [her son] because he's a first language English speaker, he's on the way but there's still so much more...
>
> *What does it mean? Can't be said in English won't mean the same thing. Context wise it doesn't mean the same thing.*
>
> I guess in structure, black and white there are words he can learn...
>
> *A lot of Indigenous languages have gravitated to only the conversational style, we have left behind the Indigenous context. This is because we are trying to relate it to western ways of thinking. We lose a lot when we try to reinterpret it into western thinking.*
>
> but beneath those words are the embedded ways of the Cree people...
>
> *Our language embeds value...resp...ect in every silent prefix that a student uses. There is a silent meaning being recognized.*
>
> but he can't uncover until he becomes a fluent speaker...
>
> *One theme in Indigenous language has in common is everything has meaning...interconnection. Using one-dimensional learning makes it difficult.*
>
> so within in the language its like the floor and then on the bottom there's even...
>
> *There are dimensions in meaning; these are foundational building blocks.*
>
> more and then there's even more there and when you think about... it's wow...We're lucky to be able to have some of it still intact...
>
> *Language reminds us our grandmothers and grandfathers are here.*
>
> and that we have the desire the motivation to become that way again.
>
> *The information embodied in Indigenous languages deals with every possible situation and conditions over many, many years...relates to survivability as a people.*

Embedded meaning is there to be discovered for the fluent speaker. Florence believes that to learn about the Cree way it is important to learn Cree. She feels that…

> *Language isn't just talking it's understanding*

we are fortunate Cree has survived so we can understand the Cree way.

The Way We Learn in Cree

> *Sanctity of Indigenous language is so sacred it is in every word...the sanctity of life is in every form*

Within the Cree language all words have important purpose. Erin believes that some words, especially the original words, are particularly significant. She says,

> *Certain words have spiritual value, numerical value that can trigger certain emotion 1 – 10 some as high as 12.*

The Cree language is a finished language. Lionel used to say all Aboriginal languages are finished, that they already say what they need to say.

> *Indigenous knowledge systems come from linguistically finished societies, our Elders have met all conditions. Language incorporates all our physical and spiritual up to now*

and now that means more to me than ever because all the important words are

> *Our language comes from a different time and place.*

there. You can tell the difference between old words. Lionel used to say if you breakdown those words you'll know the history of what those words are and understand what they mean.

> *Our language is aged i.e. "chin kala" is a sacred age. All words have an age.*

The new words are just descriptors and the old words are spiritual words. We have to take the time to think about what they mean because they evoke emotion in us… and, in turn, you feel emotion when we say those words.

> *Vibrations are the natural knowledge set up and are passed on by our ancestors. Our sound system is a neural pathway to our memory. There is special vibrations in our language. You physically heal. Language is a healing device.*

Remember Lionel would say the tones in the words when the language is spoken because they evoke different kinds of emotions. Everything we need to survive is in the words that make up our language.

> *We can't control our language; it's a recording of events through the years.*

All our history...everything. They all have a life of their own they don't need descriptors. *Mistatim* is a new word. It's a horse but it means big dog. *Nohkom*, an older word that we use to say grandmother, means to be surrounded by children and loved ones. It also incorporates notions of having wisdom and experience and being humble. There are important concepts embedded in words. It could take a day or more for someone to explain what a word actually means.

> *Crossover words – interface – its that place where words open a doorway into other words.*

I remember how Lionel used to say it's going to take two or three days to explain what that means.

> *Our language passes on knowledge through an oral transfer system. In oral transfer systems, we need to know the spiritual dimension.*

Erin spoke of the complex and deep meanings in the Cree language. She says that words are spiritual and evoke emotions. With this understanding, it is difficult to define words in an English context. Erin speaks of another Elder who explained the complexity of concepts and the complexity of one particular sacred word. She compares the concept of sin in both Cree and English.

> One point in time remember we were talking about just a simple concept. Like we talk about sin. In Cree we say *pahstahowin* but that's not the same thing. *Kikway pastamun* that means you are going over, you've stepped over the line and you can feel really remorseful about it but you know you have all these people behind you who serve the consequence or are responsible for what you've done as opposed to sin 'Oh yeah I'm a good Catholic person this Sunday I will go to church and it's done it's gone, but that's a different concept in terms of responsibility and some of the people have lost that.

As Erin notes, in a Catholic context sin implies a wrong that can be forgiven. In the Cree language the meaning of sin is complex and involves others who are forced to serve your consequence, sometimes spanning generations.

It will always be there... our system is purer than others. English is made up of many languages. Our language passes on knowledge oral transfer system. In oral transfer systems we need to know spiritual dimension

Erin feels that young people who don't speak the language can understand the conceptual aspects of the word:

> Even if they didn't speak the language...
>
> *Young people say with sadness that they don't speak the language. I told them you must love your parents for that. They suffered the abuses...they don't want to speak your language so you will not suffer.*
>
> and they would teach them basic things but when they get into those more complex words you need the language because it requires more understanding to explain them. I guess those must be the more spiritual words in the language. It takes many years to understand what those things mean...
>
> *Syntax words are a doorway to information. Some of the syntax words are doorways to the past. We lose a lot when we try to reinterpret it into western thinking.*
>
> I still learn about Cree words and their meaning. Those are things that really are about the way people understand.

Erin believes that young Cree children understand concepts found in the language: "Even if kids don't understand the language they understand the concepts. They do...like especially if they have been exposed to people that live that way."

Also gender and inflection are missing in the language. This just means we have to go back to an earlier age..baby stage.
Each stage of the language requires a different stage.

Although language is necessary, young people of the language group can begin to relate the deeper meaning of words that are impossible to translate.

A Value Based Language: Respectful Ways of Relating

We need the values in our language to teach our culture, our morals.

The Cree language contains knowledge and the process of Cree. It is respectful of all things. Priscilla shares:

Indigenous knowledge is not a belief, it's knowledge, don't refer to it as a belief. That's another system.

Cree or being native or being a *Nehiyaw* really involves how you speak to people. And because I wasn't brought up in [Cree] culture and traditions I wasn't brought up in a way that taught me to respect his thinking. So I didn't respect my husband by saying bad things about sweats so what I learned about that it really switched my whole way of thinking about [pause] I have to watch what I say because in our beliefs and going to ceremonies it teaches you to be humble. He showed me humbleness by not arguing against me he just let me say it and later on he'd say one day you'll understand he would say it to himself. Um and then I do understand now because now I don't see myself condemning anybody's way I am not condemning Christianity with what I was taught. It was just what I was taught, I respect that religion because that's what I grew up. However there's a difference because *Nehiyaw* way is like humbleness those seven teachings truth honesty kindness love and to speak in those ways. So it's taught me how to think about what to say and how to say it and not hurt anybody's spirit.

Our people recognize we deal with feelings...respect...being Indigenous knowing...we have duties to each other... make comfortable.

She believes that this open non-judgmental viewing of the world is taught by the language and the way it teaches you to speak to others.

Sanctity of Indigenous language is so sacred it is every word...the sanctity of life is in every form

The Cree language operates with a notion of inclusiveness and recognizes and embraces all beings in its structure. Erin discusses the language for "determined":

The word is not a word it's a meaning.

One of the elders said *kakamaymocik*, we could say it means "to be determined" but it means more than that, it means a whole lot more. It means the community already, that word *kakmaymocik* is inclusive. It's an inclusive word. It means to be determined but it also denotes a responsibility not only to yourself but to others in the web of relationships. So determination is a similar word but a speaker naturally knows the connotations and responsibilities in it.

Silent prefix – it is a type of energy sound you make within self. Wa/ la/ko/ta. I ask self to be included

The word *kakamaymocik* has complex meaning that explains relationships and responsibilities and/or processes and evokes feelings of inclusiveness. The Cree language has a way of including and embracing in an unconditional and respectful way. Priscilla concludes:

The right tool, our language directs, guides us to those strengths

> When we speak of the Cree language and the English language there's a total difference. When we speak Cree it's from the "I". It's from the heart. I speak from here. Whereas the English language speaks outside of you. It's out there it's not in you and it's more critical. It's more judgmental. It labels more. Whereas the Cree language doesn't hold labels or judgments because when we speak we speak from "I," I saw this or I feel this, those words are enmeshed with the heart. So, that's the big thing I think that when you say that is the Cree way I was really thinking about it because I was brought up in the language and that's the big thing about the Cree way I guess it's just [pause] it's from the heart and "me" perspective. How you think things. How you look at things. How you treat things.
>
> *If we just speak our language in communication rather than in context we will have to go look to find the meaning.*

The Cree language is more than just a functional communication tool. Because of this, for the participants, it is important to speak, listen and remain as close as possible to the language.

Chapter 5

Ikimikosiyahk Nehiyaw Mamitonehicikan Ispihk Kakinihtawikiyahk
We are born and gifted with a Cree mind
Cree Thinking: Cree Analysis

This chapter outlines the elements of Indigenous Analysis, an integral part of an Indigenous methodology and presents my analysis of findings using this approach. Lionel's teachings made me realize that it is possible to articulate and apply an Indigenous analysis. His teachings and those of other Indigenous scholars form the basis of my understanding and application of Indigenous analysis. Because this is a relatively new area in Indigenous research, I will also (as appropriate) relate the approach to the conventional western research framework.

An Indigenous analysis is part of an Indigenous methodology that develops within an Indigenous intelligence and paradigm. At the centre of this paradigm is the understanding that mind, body, spirit and heart are engaged at all times. Like all paradigms, the Indigenous paradigm must address some critical issues.

> All paradigms must confront seven basic, critical issues: axiology (ethics and values), accommodation and commensurability (can paradigms be fitted into one another?), action (what the researcher does in the world), control (who initiates inquiry, who asks questions), foundations of truth (foundationalism versus anti-constructionist criteria), and voice, reflexivity, and postmodern representation (single-voice versus multivoiced representation). (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, citing Lincoln and Guba, p. 158)

An Indigenous intelligence acknowledges the connection between all things and the teachings of respect, reverence, responsibility and reciprocity (Kirkness and Barnhardt, 1991). The practice of these teachings and values is relational accountability. Indigenous inquiry is inclusive, holistic and continually seeks balance within a relational context. This commitment to relational balance naturally and fully addresses the critical issues of

axiology, accommodation and commensurability, action, control, foundations of truth and voice, reflexivity and postmodern representation. Relational balance also positions Indigenous methodology at the cutting edge of recent research trends:

> We may also be entering an age of greater spirituality within research efforts. The emphasis on inquiry that reflects ecological values, on inquiry that respects communal forms of living that are not Western, on inquiry involving intense reflexivity regarding how our inquiries are shaped by our own historical and gendered locations and on inquiry in 'human flourishing,' as Heron and Reason (1997) call it, may yet reintegrate the sacred with the secular in ways that promote freedom and self-determination. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 185)

As Indigenous inquiry evolves, it is establishing a presence within the academy. The territory shared by the academy and Indigenous ways of knowing is what Ermine in Smylie (2006) calls ethical space:

> The space of meeting and dialogue, referenced as the ethical space, is necessary because two entities with different backgrounds, worldviews, and knowledge systems may have different intentions and understandings regarding issues of mutual concern. Dialogue in the ethical space will create a field of human possibility, a sacred space of knowing where exchanges and understandings between communities take form. (p. 34)

My intent in this Indigenous research analysis is to honour Indigenous intelligence and to present its meaning (in both an Indigenous and academic context) in an ethical space of understanding.

A Cree Knowing to a Western Question:
Coming to Realize the Need for an Indigenous Analysis
to Honour the Indigenous Intelligence

How do you know what Lionel is saying is true?

To begin the discussion in this analysis I must tell a story. When sharing my research ideas with my supervisors, I was asked about the process I would use to present the study and I explained my plan to integrate Lionel's words for analysis. In response, one of my supervisors asked, "How do you know what Lionel's saying is true?" I know

that we spoke about other things that afternoon but this question, "*How do you know* what Lionel is saying is *true*" stuck in my head for days after. I did not question whether or not Lionel was telling the truth. I know he spoke the truth. What I was struggling with was how to respond. I had never been asked that question before. Lionel's words were a sacred and living part of me and had come to me from a sacred space, a space I understood as *Kihkipiw*.[4] I needed to situate myself in this space and try my best to answer it from that place.

Science: Notions of Power and Control

Western science is founded on the notion of power and control over the natural world. Cajete (2000) explains:

> Western science is committed to increasing human mastery over nature, to go conquering until everything natural is under absolute human control. In this vision, when we have fusion power, when we farm the oceans, when we can turn weather on and off, when all things natural can be controlled, everything will be just fine. Western science and technology are viewed as the great panacea and as the ultimate means for human survival. (p. 16)

Similarly, Ermine (1995) observes that "the Western world has capitulated to a dogmatic fixation on power and control at the expense of authentic insights into the nature and origin of knowledge as truth." (p. 102) Western science's quest for power and control over the natural world creates a mechanistic and false sense of our environment. How can we think nature could be controlled? Why do we need to?

In the Cree way, power and truth do not mean attaining full power and control. Feit (2007) explains notions of power and control in the context of hunting.

> The meaning of power in the Cree perspective, therefore, differs in important ways... We typically think of power as the ability to control others and/or the world. For the Cree it is more complex. Human knowledge is always incomplete,

[2] *Kihkipiw* is the title of my art project in my doctoral course. My Uncle suggested this beautiful word, which sitting with something sacred, a ceremony space, sitting in a sacred circle.

> and there is often a gap between what humans think and what actually happens. In hunting, for example, a hunter will frequently dream of an animal he will be given before he begins to look for it. He may then go out hunting and find signs of that animal that confirm his expectation. When the things he thinks about actually come to be, when he is given the animal, that is an indicator of power. But humans never find that all they anticipate comes to be. The power is a coincidence between an internal state of being (thought) and the configuration of the world (event), a congruence anticipated by the inner state and that this anticipation helps to actualize. Both the thought and the event are social processes. Power is not an individual possession, it is a gift, and a person cannot in this view bring his thought to actuality by individually manipulating the world to conform to his desires. And, at each phase of happenings in the world, humans, spirit beings, and other beings must sensitively interpret and respond to the communications and actions of the other beings around them. "Power" is a relationship in thought and action among many beings, whereby potentiality becomes actuality. Hunting is an occasion of power in this sense, and the expression of this is that animals are gifts, with many givers. Power in this Cree sense may have analogies to our concept of truth, i.e., thought that comes to be. We might say that power is truth unfolding, rather than that power is control.
>
> (p. 6)

In the Cree mind, power is a gift of truth unfolding rather than something that is used to control or manipulate nature. Castellano (2000) considers this personal knowledge a characteristic of Indigenous knowledge, one that challenges Western science's claim to objectified universal truth. She relates the story of an Elder encountering the English meaning of truth.

> At the hearings considering an injunction to stop the first James Bay Hydro-electric power development in Northern Quebec, an elder from one of the northern Cree communities that might be affected by the development was brought into testify about Cree lifeways and the environment. When asked to swear that he would tell the truth, he asked the translator for an explanation of the word. However, truth was translated for him, as something that holds for all people, or something that is valid regardless of the rapporteur, the elder responded: I can't promise to tell you the truth; I can only tell you what I know. Aboriginal knowledge is rooted in personal experience and lays no claim to universality. (2000, p. 25)

Personal knowledge holds its truth only in the context of a given individual's experience. It does not seek power or control over other beliefs or knowledge. Deloria Jr. (2006) explains the spiritual context of this understanding:

> Every Indian tribe has a spiritual heritage that distinguishes them from all other people. Indeed, in the past, recognizing their unique relationship to the world and its creatures, most tribes described themselves as unique, they rigorously followed the commands of the spirits as they had experienced them over uncounted generations and recognized that other peoples had the same rights and status as themselves. So, the idea of quarrelling over the traditions by which they lived was felt to be absurd. Religious wars, then, were inconceivable, and while they may have fought ferociously over hunting and fishing grounds or launched hostilities in vengeance, the closest they came to combat over beliefs and practices was to find medicines – powers – that could negate the medicine power possessed by other people. (p. xxiii)

Respect for other peoples' beliefs and religions and understanding that our distinctness is what makes each of us "the people" is part of relational accountability.

Truth: Reliability and Validity

In a Cree traditional way of knowing, processes of validity and reliability are part of the social order. Archibald (2008) quotes Basil Johnston about traditional reverence for speech and its connection to truth:

> Words are medicine that can heal or injure...To instill respect for language the old counseled youth, "Don't talk too much,"...for they saw a kinship between language and truth. The expression is not without its facetious aspect but in the broader application it was intended to convey to youth other notions implicit in the expression "Don't talk too much," for the injunction also meant "Don't talk too often...Don't talk too long...Don't talk about those matters that you know nothing about." Were a person to restrict his discourse, and measure his speech, and govern his talk by what he knew, he would earn the trust and respect of his [or her] listeners...people would want to hear the speaker again and by so doing bestow upon the speaker the opportunity to speak, for ultimately it is the people who confer the right of speech by their audience (p. 19)

As Lionel said, don't listen to dead words of living people. Talking simply for the sake of talking devalues language and the knowledge embedded in it. According to Johnston

(Archibald, 2008), those who abuse language and speech with contempt and ridicule diminish the social collective's confidence in the truth of what they might be saying. Those who "rambled on and on, who let his tongue range over every subject or warp the truth" essentially spoke about nothing (Johnston in Archibald, 2008, p. 19), Social rules and demonstrated respect for language were and are held in high regard. Lionel told us that the old people say "If you can't explain it, don't. You don't own it yet. In time you might. Then you can give it away. Sometimes it is too big for your mouth." For our people, the validity of knowledge originates in its personal context and, at the same time, its social context. Speaking is a social engagement in which personal knowledge becomes known and given meaning within the social collective.

In an Indigenous way of being, validity and reliability are arrived at through a collective, social process. Castellano (2000) explains this complex and respectful process:

> The degree to which you can trust what is being said is tied up with the integrity and perceptiveness of the speaker. If Joseph X reports that he saw signs of moose in a given direction, the information will be weighted in light of what is known of Joseph X, how often in the past his observations have proven accurate, what is known about this part of the territory, and the habits of moose. His observations would not necessarily be accepted uncritically, nor would they be contradicted or dismissed. Rather they would be put into context.
>
> The personal nature of knowledge means that disparate and even contradictory perceptions can be accepted as valid because they are unique to the person. In a council or talking circle of elders you will not find arguments as to whose perception is more valid and therefore whose judgment should prevail. In other words, people do not contest with one another to establish who is correct – who has the 'truth.' Aboriginal societies make a distinction between perceptions, that are personal, and wisdom that has social validity and can serve as a basis for common action. Knowledge is validated through collective analysis and consensus building. (p. 25)

Truth in the Indigenous context is one that is respectful and personal. My mother recalled the process of meetings she had attended as a community education board

member: "Everyone no matter if they are wrong must be heard. It put things together. It was worth listening to everyone share their thoughts... I used to like it that way." (Personal communication, April 13, 2008). The process she describes reflects Indigenous ways of relating and thinking. In these meetings all voices were heard, opinions and thoughts analyzed collectively and validity assessed through a social process. Marsden (2004) calls this relational validity, where research emphasizes relationships and sources of knowledge can come from multiple domains of being, including intuitive sources, such as dreams. Cardinal (2001) describes an Elders' council that used a similar process:

> They [Elders] would come into dialogue about a policy, for example, whatever policy was coming down from the Indian Act or Department of Indian Affairs at the time. They would argue for or against, and they would go around the circle each speaking in turn. They practiced exquisite listening skills, where they would even paraphrase what the previous Elder had said to make sure the information was correct. And then they would come to a point perhaps where they could not decide what they were going to do or what recommendations they would make. They would then say, 'Lets sleep on it,' ...They would then have their personal ceremonies, maybe go to a sweat lodge, or a pipe ceremony. [The next morning] The Elders would talk about their dreams. They would say something like, "I saw this bear walking around the mountain and I was standing there and he took me by surprise," and so forth. The other Elders would listen closely, trying to understand what this could mean. Then they compared information from their dream and vision work. They realized that the various symbols were dictated to them from a different part of their being. And suddenly they would come up with an answer. (p. 181)

In this process all perspectives are valued, using a process that includes multiple ways of being and assesses reliability and validity in the context of our relational accountability and responsibility to all things natural, including our ancestors, current communities and unborn. This complex social process is inclusive and spiritual and honours Indigenous intelligence. Unfortunately, some do not acknowledge the validity of the process. Cardinal (2001) writes that "[all that] the bureaucrats from Indian Affairs saw...[were] some old people talking about their dreams."

Elder as Traditional Knowledge Teacher

> *Eldership does not refer to age. It comes when you find your information is relevant to your people. Only Elders have understanding of context.*

Lakota Elder Matthew King said "In our way of life the Elders give spiritual direction. The wisdom of thousands of years flows through their lips" (Hall and Arden, 1991, p. 33). As an Indigenous Elder and teacher Lionel faced a great responsibility. Lightning (1992) explains this responsibility Elders have to learners and reasons they are held as authorities:

> The transfer of authority comes with responsibility. It may take a person until he or she is at an advanced age to master the ability to assess others who are in pursuit of authority, to have "paid their dues," so to speak, through life experience and observation. Perhaps that is why authority lies with the Elders. (p. 251)

As Urion (1999) explains, a teacher is vulnerable because he or she has a responsibility to both the person who requests learning and to a sacred body of knowledge. This vulnerability is especially acute when teaching about spiritual or ceremonial things. Lionel's words were spiritual and taught in a sacred context. They were filled with so much meaning that it would take days, months or sometimes years to absorb and experience what he had said. His words remain alive inside me and continue to gain meaning as I cycle through my life. Greg Sarris (1993) speaks about the Elder and teacher Mabel:

> Mabel once said: 'Don't ask me what it means, the story. Life will teach you about it, the way it teaches you about life.' It is important that I remember my life, my presence and history, as I attempt to understand Mabel. As I learn more about Mabel, I learn more about myself. In this way, using much of what Mabel has taught me...." (p. 5)

Like Sarris, as I cycle through my life, Lionel's teachings remain alive inside me and continue to gain meaning and help me learn more about myself. The participant Priscilla

said the Cree way is really self discovery. This process is personal and unique to each individual. Cajete (1994) explains that through "story we explain and come to understand ourselves" (p. 68). Stories and teachings from Elders are one way this self-discovery occurs.

The traditional teacher teaches and transfers knowledge in a distinct way. Urion (1995) explains that this does not happen as a straightforward transfer of canonical knowledge.

> It is difficult to think of traditional knowledge as canonical, though it surely has canonical aspects. It is not as though there were large body of orthodox knowledge that can exist independent of the people who know it. Perhaps the best way to describe this is to say that traditional knowledge is 'living' knowledge. If the knowledge is expressed as a codified canon of what [is] known, that quality of 'life' is missing. The canonical aspect is that there are standard or given metaphors, or mnemonics, for the knowledge, and there are canonical principles that can be expressed. And of course there is an immeasurable body of specific knowledge. (Urion, 1999, p. 11)

Indigenous learning is spiritual because it honours the 'life' and spirit of knowledge.

Indigenous teaching methods give consideration to the particular relationship of learner and teacher. Knowledge transfer is "tailored to the individuals involved and to the context in which the learning takes place. The way that knowledge is passed on, then is unique to each situation of teacher-inquirer. It is certainly 'individualized learning" (Urion, 1999, p.11). This is what Lionel offered us as learners. He had us write a daily journal and from there established a spiritual forum.

Interconnection is embedded in the Indigenous teaching style. Urion (1995) cites Walter Lightning, who noted that one of his traditional teachers "set up the circumstances for 'truth to happen'." Urion describes the relationship between teacher and inquirer as "compassionate connection":

> That means that there is a mutual vulnerability between the teacher and the inquirer. It means that the two (or more) attempt to 'think mutually'-that is, to have a felt and manifest meeting of minds. The term 'compassionate' does not mean that the teaching is not sometimes characterized by gruffness or challenge. Elders may teach in a way that does not feel very pleasant to an inquirer, and may not be pleasant for the teacher. (p. 11)

Archibald (2008) also cites Lightning, who described a compassionate mind: "The compassionate mind combines physical, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual learning with humility, truth and love" (p. 2). The compassionate mind (whether it belongs to the teacher or learner) embraces all teaching situations, pleasant or unpleasant.

In teaching, knowledge transfer is not always successful:

> If a teacher misrepresents or controverts the teaching – gets it wrong, or tells it inappropriately – he or she brings damage and disrepute upon both himself or herself and the person who is inquiring: the important thing to remember is that the legitimacy of the teaching is not compromised. (Urion, 1999, p. 11)

Urion, citing Walter Lightning again, states that "The ethos protects itself" (p. 11, 1999). The teacher's responsibility is to ensure that the learner learns:

> The teacher is also vulnerable if the inquirer does not get the teaching right. The teacher is vulnerable in that what is being taught is expected to be continuously tested empirically for validity. The teacher has to use teaching methods that ensure the learner 'gets it right' (Ibid)

As I share Lionel's words in this work I understand my reciprocal responsibility to both Lionel and the knowledge to "get it right". For me this process has been a learning experience like no other. I honour this and do my best to honour Lionel, the knowledge and the Indigenous community.

Indigenous Teaching: Metaphor and Language

Most Indigenous teaching is done by talking or recreating stories (Urion, 1999). This process may be straightforward where, for example, an Elder passes on specific things to be learned. It is more common, however, to teach and speak using:

> ... imbricated systems of metaphor, and in complex systems of implicature. The teaching 'unfolds' to different levels of meaning as the learner thinks about the teaching and applies it in life practice... An Elder's even apparently "off topic" remarks can be recalled years later when the inquirer sees what the elder was trying to get across in metaphor. (Urion, 1999, p. 12)

Indigenous teachers' words remain alive and are realized through experience and application, I know this. Lionel's teachings were sometimes straightforward and sometimes filled with metaphor and implicature. He expected his teachings to be useful for contemporary people and to outlive him. Traditional knowledge is not an artifact. It is alive and serves purpose for the present and future (Urion, 1999; Battiste and Henderson, 2000). Lightning (1992) explains that Elders use metaphors so that their words can cross barriers of time and remain alive and applicable. Lionel said that our task in the academy is double loop communication, that is, to convert what the university says to Elders' analogies; to collect Elders' analogies and convert them to written text and then to understand how these bodies of knowledge connect. Cajete (2000) suggests that our languages are verb-based because we are metaphoric. Our language is organic and the knowledge embedded in it is living

Indigenous Language and Knowledge

When we hunt for resources, the greatest wisdom is in language. Elders direct you there.

Six Nations Clan mother and language teacher Kawinehta, in Alfred (2005) states "[b]efore anything else, you have to have the language...I think language is the whole thing: it's beliefs, it's culture, it's custom, it's what's important" (p. 252). In the same text, Gailhohwakohn adds: "Language is very important; it is the core of who we are. Without it we won't exist no more" (p. 253). Our teachers are reminding us that

language helps to create the context and space for Indigenous intelligence. I ask Lionel to share some teachings about language.

Indigenous language is like the whiteman's library;
We don't speak in straight lines, circular motion around a subject
we need to build a structure for language instead of just translating from English language

the language
tells you how to be Lakota. We
are in a continuous process of becoming. Language
is a transfer of wisdom – cellular. Language isn't just talking it is
understanding. Language is like a building block of knowledge. One theme in
Indigenous language has in common is everything has meaning- interconnection.
Using one-dimensional learning makes it difficult. Wisdom is in the context of the
language Context is what is important. Our old people left us instructions in within
the language. To use these instructions and traditions we need to keep our
Culture strong. All things in our world have a purpose and a reason Inter
connected. We speak with a knowledge of our environment. Our
language embeds value. Language gives you reason and
value to who you are This wisdom is in the language
We need to go back to a context in
the language

Our languages gravitate to certain places.
We left behind Indigenous context and use western thought to access it.

Language is a gift from our ancestors. Embedded in our language is wisdom and knowledge of our intelligence: way thinking, way of being, way of seeing, way of relating. Language is our knowledge compass. It provides all the instructions for Indigenous intelligence. King (2003), citing Armstrong, reminds us that the voices of our grandparents are raised each time our languages are spoken:

> Through my language I understand I am being spoken to, I'm not the one speaking. The words are coming from many tongues and mouths of Okanagan people and the land around them. I am a listener to the language's stories, and when my words form I am merely retelling the same stores in different patterns. (p.2)

Similarly, Lionel said that when we use our language our grandmothers and grandfathers are here speaking and teaching us. Their guidance ensures that the Indigenous knowledge embedded in our language will remain alive. We speak our languages with *the knowing of relationship* and *knowledge of the environment,* of all things valued and related. Urion (1999) explains that learning through this relationship involves the creation of mental images: "Learning may be (partly) a word-mediated process, but it does not seem to be primarily a word-centered process" (p. 13). Gailhohwakohn (cited in Alfred, 2005) relates that:

> As a teacher, I ask the people who are learning to speak our language, 'So tell me, what do you see?' They should see pictures, because that's what we should see when we use the languages. We should see the connectedness of everything – how we talk, our relationships, and everything. (p. 253)

This linguistic context of interconnectedness and interdependence between all things is a way of thinking and seeing that is integral to the remaining discussion.

Can the Notion of Truth be Possible in Cree?

After being asked by my supervisor how I knew what Lionel said was true, I turned to my relatives, looking for a word that means truth. My parents, my aunt and uncle, another aunt and my sister all attempted to give me that word. In the western context, truth relates to reality construction, a sifting through facts to build an artificial knowledge (Battiste and Henderson, 2000). Recognizing this, there can be no word in the western language that means truth, only one that describes a pretend truth. In our family discussions, we decided that *tapowakeyihtamowin* was the word that came closest to meaning truth. Its meaning is based in a spiritual context and so is best explained with the example of sacred and spiritual things. My aunt said the meaning is about believing in a process or understanding a Sun Dance and what it stands for. *Tapowakeyihtamowin*

is "the believing" in it, a spiritual path of life. Connections are part of defining Cree words and these explanations are best understood when they are visualized and experienced. The notion of truth in English is something totally different and disconnected.

What does this mean for analysis? Lionel cautioned us repeatedly that "Our methodology cannot be reality based." Lionel took into account that "reality based" implies Western reality and how truths are arrived at and created within a Western perspective. From Lionel's other work it is obvious that our methodology must be based in what we, as Indigenous people, understand and experience as reality. As this work unfolded, I realized my struggles were about having to prove the truth of something outside of the context in which it belongs. How can my methodology and analysis be "reality based"? Can I truly honour our knowledge system, ancestors, people and those unborn if I use a western system of analysis? As a Cree person, I understand that my ceremonies, dreams, visions and other ways in which I connect with the spirit world are as real, substantial and meaningful as my experiences in the physical world. These spiritual experiences, then, may be an important part of data gathering, analysis and other aspects of an Indigenous methodology. As a Cree person, I understand that relational accountability extends across time and to all living things. This, again, has implications for how data gathering and analysis and how the validity of findings might be assessed in an Indigenous methodology.

For this work, I use English and that is the greatest challenge. Still, I rely on my Indigenous intelligence and intuitive knowing and engage my mind-body-heart-spirit to think as much as possible in a Cree context. Couture (2006) said

> There is a real thing such as oral tradition and it is possible to become oral literate. That brings us to the world of symbology, metaphor, pictorial thinking. The world of visualizing, intuitive knowing. What is wrong with the western system of education? They do nothing about becoming an intuitive knower. Indians have lots to say about both sides of the brain. There is such a thing as Indian English. If you move around the prairie provinces, over time you pick up more than one kind of Indian English. You have to be attentive to that and use it when it is appropriate. And use outrageous humor. There is a sensitivity to perception, to learn about Indian ways of thinking. It isn't exclusive to Natives, this capacity to think with the heart. The toughest journey in your life...is going to be from the head to the heart. (p. 16-17)

Intuitive knowing requires Indigenous ways of thinking. Although, as Lionel says, English has no spirit of its own, it acquires some spirit when it is used as "Indian English." This is the English used in my home community. It has its own patterning and visualizing. My parents raised me within the language, using both Cree and Indian English in our home. Both languages nurtured a pattern of connection and interdependence. Each community seems to have its own distinct version of "Indian English" (indicated by slang terms), but the more general "Indian English" described by Elder Couture surfaces when Indigenous thinkers communicate, regardless of their Indigenous language. For analysis, I will rely on Indian English's patterns of thinking and visualization. This will help ensure that the analysis remains grounded in an Indigenous context. It has taken me a lifetime to recognize and honour the importance of an Indigenous context. Indigenous thinking was never acknowledged in my early school experiences. Fortunately, I lived in a Cree community and my parents were excellent teachers of Indigenous thinking. Greg Sarris (2005) faced similar experiences sharing his experience in a presentation at Sonoma State University in California:

> I began to understand something very important and it was the start of me really for the first time learning anything and that is that in school a story is something that is considered something separate from you it's in a book it has a beginning middle and end and your job is to analyze it. Fix it and then put it aside. At home

> a story is not something separate from you, it's living, it's a part of you. It does not have a beginning middle and end therefore and your job is not to fix it or to *anal-ize* it. But to have a dialogue with it. As one of my aunties said when us Indians hear a story we wonder about it. We think about it. Because it's going to live with us. We want to know about its genealogy its stories. She says 'we know we don't know' she says 'the white man is different he don't want to know he don't know'...And I began to think again about this chasm and though I couldn't articulate it. I understood that who and what I was and my own experiences as a human being had been put way on the back burner in school and that how I knew and understood things was not allowed in the classroom had no place there at a very fundamental level.
>
> You young people in particular, you must follow your voice and your experience is what counts and makes the difference ultimately. (March 24, 2005)

The act of anal-izing, as Sarris' aunties know, fractures stories and knowledge and shuts down and shuts out Indigenous intelligence. This is something that happened to many of us in our first year of school. The process essentially amputates the spirit and flattens our thinking into a linear way.

Indigenous Data in a Linear System: *Anal-ize Knowledge Through English*

We Don't See Connections in English

> *We don't speak in straight lines, circular motion around subject.*

The western linear paradigm often categorizes things in polar opposites and discrete parts with little or no emphasis on the relationships of the parts. Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol (2006) explain:

> The Eurocentric linear paradigm often categorizes things in terms of opposites and discrete parts with little or no emphasis on the relationship of parts. This perspective is rooted in the historical development of Cartesian philosophy, which makes up the knowledge base of most western-centered education systems across the world. Indeed western culture follows the lead of western science. If Cartesian philosophy is the foundation of much western science, then this philosophical outlook filters into the culture, structuring the perceptions of the average person at a tacit and unrecognized level. (p. 4)

This philosophical outlook is expressed through and reflected in the English language and other Latin-based languages. As Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol (2006) point out:

> [The] grammatical organization of English is largely noun-based, and lends itself to linear thinking as well as to oppositional concepts such as polarity. Indigenous languages, on the other hand, are largely verb-based and relationally organized. (p. 4)

Battiste and Henderson (2000) assert that in Eurocentric philosophies, language creates separateness from and supremacy over the natural world. In this system, rules of inference and reason are immanent

> In Eurocentric thought, the idea that languages are conventional codes is reflected in the rules of inference used for arriving at truths about the natural world. The Eurocentric mind is understood to be a machine that analyzes sensations and combines them into categories. This process of analysis and combination produces ideas, but it does not affect the natural world, which is oblivious to the workings of the human intellect. As categories are not fixed in anything that exists independently of the human mind, these ideas can be broken down again into their elementary sensations and recombined into new categories. (p. 26)

The ideologies of languages are different but, as Lionel said, we don't need to buy into this. For authentic analysis, we must honour the thinking and context of Indigenous intelligence.

Truth as Seen by Indigenous Elders

What is truth? How is it viewed by Indigenous Elders? Willie Ermine said that in the Western context "truth is when one hundred scholars agree it becomes truth" (Indigenous Scholars Conference, University of Alberta, 2006). The word "truth" applies differently in the academy than it does in the Indigenous context. In the Indigenous context, our relational responsibility is far greater than simple agreement. It includes accountability to everything living. Ermine explained that in our communities truth means that the ecology agrees. The sacred ceremonies, not only humanity it has to be supernatural. Validity and reliability are not gauged by humanity alone. Validity and reliability naturally occur when all living things, including spirit, collectively agree.

Lionel said truth is surrounded by a bodyguard of distorted destruction. Prompted by a TV show that appraises individuals antiques, my husband and I once talked through the afternoon about the notion of truth from our Indigenous experiences. We first talked about how antiques were valued and I recalled an episode featuring a Navajo Elder who had brought her prized family possessions, passed down from generations. They were deemed virtually worthless according to the appraiser, who told the woman that the items had more personal value to her. Her response that she was "just checking to see how much they were of value." In this particular episode, some old letter written by an unknown Lord in early 1900s was valued at well over ten thousand dollars. I found this frustrating and insulting. My husband and I talked about the perceptions of history we had been given in our western schooling – not the truth, but the bodyguard of distorted destruction. Whose story has more capitalistic value? Whose truth is it? And if, as Lionel said, its processes do not fit the thinking of our language then why should we feel forced to fit into it?

> If modern Eurocentric thought, in seeking to understand the natural world and human nature, employs linguistic concepts that do not correspond to an independent natural order and that are justified by questionable standards of inference, is it unreasonable to think that even those ideas that are well supported do not accurately describe the natural world and human nature? If this is the case, what are the implications of imposing Eurocentric models on Indigenous peoples? Why should we be forced to assimilate to an artificial reality? (Battiste and Henderson, 2000, p. 29)

The western paradigm of power and control over nature does not make any sense in the context of Indigenous intelligence or our Cree ways. The paradigm's willingness to manipulate and disregard relational and natural ways is leading to ecological disaster (Battiste and Henderson, 2000; Cajete, 2000). Lionel said that we come from systems that are preventive, which we can call traditionally minded and a state of being. Our way

is to consider "the water of life and the breath of the human spirit that animates knowledge toward meaning and ecological consciousness" (Cajete, 2000, p. 284)

Lionel said there is much to Indigenous knowledge but we are not allowed to say anything unless we go back to the origins and language. Everything is interconnected and has a role to play. This is the basis of our communication system. As we look back to the origins we need to think about the important role that language plays in methodology. As Lionel says:

> *The Indigenous context is like a builder's blueprint, only the architect and builder can understand it. The town or city have a say in it. Our people left the blueprint. We are within the guidance of our people. The builder is not the architect but must understand it. We are the builders and we must observe the builder codes of our language. There are physical and spiritual dimensions embodied within the prefix and suffix sounds. There are meaning dimensions that are within the standard.*

As I connect this to finding meaning and understanding for purposes of Indigenous analysis I listen to Lionel's statement that there is not much meaning in the "defined structures" of language. I must maintain my focus beneath these structures and within the *thinking of* structure and meaning and rely on my reflexivity as builder to understand this blueprint. Lionel taught us that we have to know the context of our system:

> *Structure must go both ways. It must enhance methodology but in a version of meeting expectations of your people. When we talk about structure we need spirit so we could feel it...we need to break protocol to do this and bring it back from multidimensional system. The simplistic bottom line...our people have been here for thousands of years. These research processes are from 4000 years ago. Our job is to understand and not invent them. You will be called on to write that structure. [As we think about the structure we must realize it is] difficult to talk about oral transfer system and analyzing and re analyzing. We respond in creating a model for it. The reason our purpose was in the area of revitalization is it has to fit the department we are in...at the same time being prepared in what is going on.*
>
> *Revitalization means we lost the context.*

As I continue analysis, I work to find a structure that provides meaning and understanding and honours context. The structure will be one that includes spirit, one that is living and one that has survived thousands of years.

Moving Further Towards Indigenous Analysis: Loop to Loop Communication

Indigenous Intelligence engages mind-body-heart-spirit synchronously. Ermine (1995) explains that to understand this reality, Indigenous people turn inward:

> This inner space is that universe of being within each person that is synonymous with the soul, the spirit, the self or the being. This priceless core within each of us and the process of touching the essence is what Kierkegaard (1965) called 'inwardness'. Aboriginal people found wholeness that permeated inwardness and that also extended into the outer space. Their fundamental insight was that all existence was connected and that the whole enmeshed the being in its inclusiveness. (p. 103)

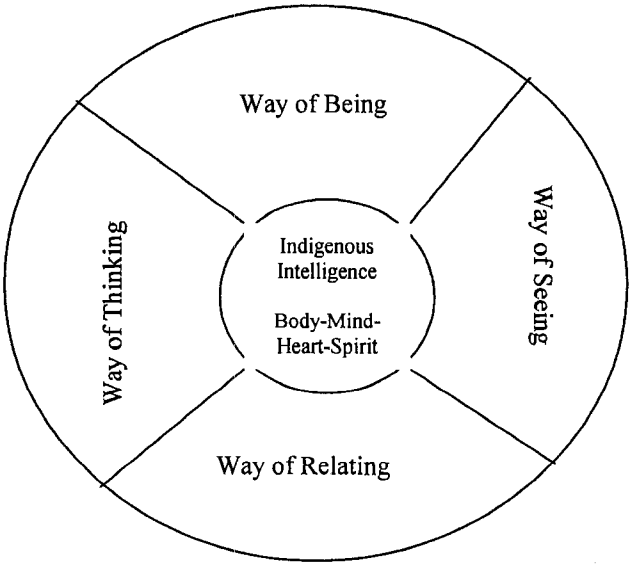
This inner space is where meaning is made and understood in relation to the outer world.

> In the Aboriginal mind, therefore, an immanence is present that gives meaning to existence and forms...It is a mysterious force that connects the totality of existence – the forms, energies, or concepts that constitute the outer and inner worlds. (Ibid, p. 103)

Ermine (1995) provides an example of this force with the notion of *mamatowisowin*:

> The Cree word *mamatowisowin*...describes the capability of tapping into the 'life force' as a means of procreation. This Cree concept describes a capacity to be or do anything, to be creative. *Mamatowisowin* is a capacity to tap the creative force of the inner space by the use of all faculties that constitute our being – it is to exercise inwardness...For the Cree, the phenomenon of *mamatowan* refers not just to the self but to the being in connection with happenings. It also recognizes that other life forms manifest the creative force in the context of the knower. It is an experience in context, a subjective experience that, for the knower, becomes knowledge in itself. The experience is knowledge. (p. 104)

Knowledge is experiential and originates in "inwardness" and in seeing all things connected. Dumont, (2005) identifies that inner space as Indigenous Intelligence of mind-body-spirit-heart. The 'happenings' occur through a distinct a way of being, way of seeing, way of relating, and way of thinking. Dumont (2005) illustrates the relationships between inner space and our outer ways in the following diagram:



(p. 4)

Dumont also offers definitions of each of the Indigenous ways:

Indigenous way of being

> Is the total response of the total person with the total environment. It is a way of doing that activates the whole person –body, mind, heart and spirit. This way of being and doing generates the finest creative expression and the highest quality of experience of the individual person within the whole family of being and the total environment.

Indigenous way of seeing

> Is Spirit-centered. It is a total way of seeing. The Indigenous person has the capacity for 'total-vision' which encompasses the whole reality, considers all levels of knowing, is informed by all the senses (physical, emotional, intuitive and spiritual) and maintains the interdependent, interconnected and holistic experience and integrity of the total environment.

The Indigenous way of relating

> Is an all-encompassing way of relating to the world that is personal, caring, responsive and sharing. It is inclusive in all beings: human and other-than-human. This way of relating is respectful of the individual and responsive to the integrity of the collective whole.

The Indigenous way of thinking

> Uses the totality of the mind in its intellectual, intuitive and spiritual capacity as well as sensory and emotional motivation. The Indigenous way of knowing involves total-faculty learning and calls on total responsiveness of the total person. It is a way of knowing that is inspired from the heart as well as generated from the mind's intelligence.
>
> (Dumont, 2005, p. 5)

Each of these ways of being, seeing, relating and thinking are all inclusive. They constitute a way of responding and engaging as a respectful inter-relational totality. Ermine (1995) describes the communal nature and continual totality and life of cultural knowledge.

> Ancestral explorers of the inner space encoded their findings in community praxis as a way of synthesizing knowledge derived from introspection. The Old Ones had experienced totality, a wholeness, inwardness, and effectively created a physical manifestation of the life force by creating community. In doing so, they empowered the people to become the 'culture' of accumulated knowledge. The community became paramount by virtue of its role as repository and incubator of total tribal knowledge in the form of custom and culture. Each part of the community became an integral part of the whole flowing movement and was modeled on the inward wholeness and harmony. (Ermine, p. 104-105)

Inwardness and *mamatowisowin* provide meaning in our Indigenous Intelligence. Ermine (2007) adds that Elders have a significant role in helping us to understand the meaning of existence:

> The Elders and spiritual people of the Cree meditate about the meaning of existence and about the relationship between human inner space, the natural world, and the mysterious life force that permeates creation. This practice of Cree metaphysics provides insight into the origin; this spiritual understanding and connectedness is the foundational principle of the Cree ethos. The earth, plants, animals, elements and everything in nature exhibit an intelligence that is perceptible and responsive to human endeavour. Within this perspective, dividing the universe into living and non-living things has no meaning: animate and inanimate matter is separably interwoven, and human life is also enfolded in the totality of the universe. The attitude of a personal relationship with the spiritual and natural worlds is molded into a systemic code of conduct and behavior and includes agreements with the spirits of creation. (p. 1)

To learn, it is necessary to include the counsel of Elders. In this research project, Lionel's guidance was a natural process that unfolded as it was needed.

Harmony and Balance

Within Indigenous intelligence, harmony and balance are essential components of communal interdependence. Cajete (2000) claims that for the Navajo the purpose of life is to live in harmony with all forces, entities, and beings. They perceive an order to the universe and people act in ways that will maintain harmony and balance. Dumont (2005) describes what harmony means in an Indigenous context:

> Harmony is a central value of the Native worldview that presupposes that all of life consciously cares for one another and, while respecting individual autonomy, strives to achieve and maintain an interrelationship that assures quality of life for the collective whole. (p. 7)

This awareness and consideration of the interdependence of everything influences our understanding of individual autonomy:

> The Cree community is a microcosm and representation of the entire Cree nation. The whole system of relationships includes not only the family and extended family, but also the alliances with natural and supernatural entities. These relationships extend to the participation level, where everything in the world takes part in the experience that the spirit of things is all one. The community is a structure of support mechanisms that emphasizes reciprocity: not only is the collective upheld, respected and protected, but conversely the nature of personhood is to be honoured and clearly defined. The community is the primary expression of a natural context and environment where personhood can aspire and achieve what it is meant to be: movement within this community context allows individuals to discover all there is to discover of one's self. (Ermine, 2007, p. 1)

He adds:

> No one could dictate a path that must be followed. There was the recognition that every individual had the capacity to make headway into knowledge through the inner world. Ultimately, the knowledge that comes from the inner space in the individual gives rise to a subjective world-view out onto the external world. (Ermine, 1995, p. 108)

Within a Cree understanding of community, our autonomy as individuals is interdependent.

Harmony is ecological relationality, the understanding that everything, including our spiritual relations, is part of everything. Tewa Tesuque Pueblo Elder Vickie Downey states:

> You may say the non-Indian's religion came from outside, like God being out in the sky somewhere with His kingdom and the people being down here trying to work their way up to heaven. Whereas in the Indian sense, God is you, in you, part of you. (Wall, 1993, p. 18)

Lightning (1992) puts it very simply: "We can speak of nature as being us." (p. 247) adding "you are I and I am you. It has to do with unity and indivisibility as a principle. That can apply to unity and indivisibility amongst people" (p. 246) This knowledge of connection is embedded in our languages. However, as White Deer of Autumn points out, the English language cannot adequately translate or capture the meaning of Indian spirituality:

> Terms now commonly used such as *God, Creator*, and *Great Spirit* are not adequate names for *Sakoiatisan, Wakan Tanka, Taiowa,* and *Kitche Manitou...God* is a term that connotes an anthropomorphic being who dwells outside of humans and nature. *Creator* is a term that also assigns a male gender to the First Cause and does not take into consideration that there were other creators which sprang forth, such as *Sotuknang* of the Hopi creation account. These supernatural beings – who could – create worlds and other forms of life – could be male or female. *Taiowa* and *Wakan Tanka* are not male deities. These names represent the sum total of all things. It is what Black Elk describes as the spirits of all things living together as one, but even *spirit* has its limitations in English. The English term *Great Spirit* attempts to define what is in comprehensible...we must understand that these terms – *God, Creator*, and *Great Spirit* – have been used to convey the concept that all things are interrelated and an equal part of the whole: that we are like drops of rain which will one day return to the ocean, that we are like candles lit by the fire of the sun, forever part of it. (Wall and Arden, 1990, p. 4-5)

Lionel also told us that we cannot put words into the multidimensional context because in English, multidimensional words are turned into one dimensional words. As researchers,

we must pay attention throughout this process, recognize when this happens and, as Lionel said, keep it in Indigenous context for spiritual meaning.

Balance

> Balance is a fundamental value within the Native view of reality which fosters a view where the dynamic character of the environment and relationship is such that it always strives to maintain an equilibrium and symmetry in all aspects of total economy of its ecology.
>
> (Dumont, 2005, p. 7)

In the Indigenous context, balance is valued based on the understanding that the nature of the world is dynamic. Western science, on the other hand, is based on prediction and control. To live in terms of balance generates a different engagement with the world. Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol (2006) state:

> One way to simplify or personalize the interdependent relationship of balance is in terms of the human walking process. In order to create and maintain the necessary central balance inherent in the human walking process, one needs to use a left leg and right leg in continuous succession. This example may seem simplistic, but it points to a profound cosmic natural law. Such balancing of opposites is harmonic, a dynamic gift of life. (p. 7)

This explanation brings me closer to understanding harmony and balance in the Indigenous context. In this balance, polar opposites, considered opposites in linear Eurocentric thought, naturally disappear to become complementary in this dynamic movement. Maryboy, Begay and Nicol (2006) observe that Navajo traditionalists identify the relationship between two polarities as a continuous manifestation of dynamic balance. One "opposite" cannot exist without the other.

Willie Ermine warns that as we engage in academic research we must be careful about where we position ourselves (Indigenous Scholars Conference, University of Alberta, 2006). Those words imply that our foundation can change and shift. Maryboy,

Begay and Nicol (2006) discussion of "teaching from the stick" gives me a better understanding of Ermine's warning:

> A...graphic example is the dynamic energy required to balance an upright stick, in the palm of the hand. This energy is expressed in Navajo as *yee as'aa naaghai* (the means by which dynamic movement manifests and maintains, allowing a continuous cyclical motion). The complex sensitivities and feelings required for this movement can be fully understood by *actually getting a stick* and performing this activity. The stick should be 3 to 4 feet in length (about 1 meter), with the diameter approximately like that of a broom stick. Once the stick is vertically balanced in the palm of the hand, the final step is to move around in a fairly large area and maintain the balance of the stick in the palm. The point of this exercise is to feel the teachings and the principles inherent in the concepts of dynamic balance...This exercise is so direct that for many people it will demonstrate more about *yee as'aa naaghai* than could any written work. (p. 8)

This way of getting to truth is radically different from Western concepts of prediction and control. Dynamic movement and balance are inseparable in this exercise and each time it is carried out, it is a unique experience. As Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol (2006) ask "What kind of mind, whether it is individual or collective, can accommodate a world in which time and space is never the same twice?" (p. 8)

Chaos Theory

According to Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol (2006), what western science refers to as chaotic order is understood by Indigenous cultures as precise order. Western methodologies facilely exclude information in order to narrow parameters of a problem. They sometimes suggest that the spectrum of information that Indigenous traditions take into account is too broad. Cajete (2000) explains the relationship between chaos and truth:

> Chaos is embodied in the human mind and body, allowing humans the ability to creatively respond to constant changes in the environment. Our instinctual ability to 'flow' with the stream of chaos and creativity leads us metaphorically to the 'vortices' of individual and collective truth. What is true from this viewpoint is

> the experience of the moment of balance inherent in chaos, like that point at which water, not quite boiling, forms vortices.
>
> This moment when truth comes to be intuitively known is like the still point in the eye of a hurricane; it is that point when a connection is made to a natural principle manifesting itself in the unfolding of a natural process. Like the birth of a child or a bolt of lightning connecting sky and Earth for a moment in time, these are the infinite moments of both chaos and order. This is a precept of Native science, for truth is not a fixed point, but rather an ever-evolving point of balance, perpetually created and perpetually new.
>
> Native science at its highest levels of expression is a system of pathways for reaching this perpetually moving truth or 'spirit'. (p. 128)

Little Bear, cited in Cajete (2000), tells us that change is the constant.

> The Native American mind is in constant search for meaning and reality in the constant flux, not only of the Earth, but of the cosmos. Nothing is certain unless it can be referred to as a regular pattern after long-term observation. But for the Native American, even regularities are subject to change. Native Americans never claim regularities as laws, or as finalities. The only constant is change. (p. xi)

Cajete (2000) claims Native science is subtle. It is *mamatowsiwin* that creates and affects the order of the natural world.

> Herein lies the true power of individual and collective creativity and its subtle power to influence the entire world. This is the basis of the precept of Native science that a single individual's vision may transform a society, or that a rain dance done properly with one mind, can bring rain. Hence, Native science is a reflection of creative participation, a dance with chaos and her child, the creative spirit. (Ibid, p.19)

Chaos theory fits with Indigenous concepts of holistic balance and order. Our challenge is to articulate this order:

> In our view, there is a precisely ordered relationship between the problem-solving mind and the more expansive holistic mind, an order which is rarely recognized and even less often articulated. But the articulation, of this order is essential if the educational contexts of indigenous students are to evolve with the creative dynamism which is inherent in their traditions. (Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol, 2006, p. 10)

Circle: Lionel's Teachings Before Anything Further

Notions of circularity and cyclicity are embedded in the Indigenous intelligence of mind-body-spirit-heart and ways of being, seeing, thinking and relating. Battiste and Henderson (2006) write:

> [I]n the Indigenous worldview, the world operates according to a dynamic, circular flux in which human beings participate directly. Life is to be lived not according to universal, abstract theories about the way things work but as an interactive relationship in a particular time and place. (Battiste, p. 27)

Lionel said the purpose of life is to look for harmony of the circle. Lionel's teachings about circle are important, so I share my notes about them here:

> *The purpose of life is to look for the perfect harmony circle. The circle – motion – perfect circle represents harmony.*
> *The word hoop represents a circle and a primary theme of movement. Within this structure there is a reminder of interconnectedness and order, it demonstrates codependence. As we follow our traditions, we didn't invent these either.*
> *All things must travel in a circle – things that are sacred – are circular like our stories – tree rings. Circular fashion we know where we are going...it appears many people use a symbol to speak physical and spiritual. Everything is round or trying to get round.*
> *Hoop of life symbol...it is a symbol that people use to verbalize philosophy. It is a philosophical base...this is the symbol we use to teach children. We have to understand philosophical process it represents thought process.*
> *The hoop suggests primary theme of energy movement. In principle its common in Indigenous groups...reminds us of connected and orderly thought process. All things are going where they came from the past is going to the future. Demonstrates codependency in all things harmonious whole. Take to next level. Hoops within hoops. Its the great protection with this we find ourselves center of the universe the sacred center. Of our being that send up...our inner being. That is the protection of the inner being. Becomes a visual protection.*
> *Hoop of life is inside us...We can understand fears inside ourselves. Exterior compass of harmony in a relationship. We should model harmony of the relationship.*

Energy, movement and dynamic balance are embedded in Lionel's words. They are gifts and when they are understood in their sacred context, it is difficult to not experience the energy. Still, Lionel warns that the circle is the most pirated symbol by many institutions. It is important to understand that what matters about the circle is not the symbol itself but knowledge of the system within the circle.

Indigenous Analysis: Synthesis and Perpetual Circle Energy Movement: Cyclicity

Through this work, I have come to understand that the circle is not a rigid categorization of separateness. It is a model that encompasses all things in dynamic, interdependent and synchronous movement, flux and chaos. No part of the circle can be separated or fragmented from any other part or from its context. Castellano (2000) explains:

> The holistic quality of knowledge implies that isolating pieces of experience and trying to make sense of them apart from the environment that gave rise to them flies in the face of reality and is bound to lead to frustration. This does not mean that analysis of parts of the circle of life is to be dismissed; it simply means that analysis must be balanced with synthesis – placing the part that we have come to know by close analysis in the context of all its relations, which will continually impact on that which we thought we knew, and thereby transform it. (p. 30)

When we attempt to translate this kind of knowledge, we risk loss of meaning. Lionel said we don't speak in straight lines, we do circular thinking around the subject. Our language and thinking are both structured in this way. Leroy Little Bear (1986) describes this as cylical thinking:

> Native people think in terms of cyclicity. Time is not a straight line. It is a circle. Every day is not a new day, but the same day repeating itself. There is no need to give each day a different name. Only one name is needed: 'day.' This philosophy is a result of a direct relationship to the macrocosm. The sun is round; the moon is round; a day is a cycle (day followed by night); the seasons follow the same cycle year after year. A characteristic of cyclic thinking is that it is holistic, in the same way that a circle is whole. A cyclical philosophy does not lend itself readily to dichotomies or categorization, nor to fragmentation or polarizations; conversely, linear thinking lends itself to all of these, and to singularity. For example, in linear thinking there is only one 'great spirit,' only one 'true rule,' only one 'true answer.' These philosophical ramifications of Western habitual thought result in misunderstanding holistic concepts, as westerners relate themselves to only one aspect of the whole at a time. (p. 245)

Linear systems cannot accommodate cyclicity. Cyclical processes are very much part of nature. According to Bopp, Bopp, Brown and Lane (1994), cyclic thinking helps us to

understand ourselves because we see the universe, in all of its splendor and complexity, reflected within our own being. Weber-Pillwax (2001) wrote that:

> When we are based in Indigenous reality and Indigenous ways of thinking, we start out in synthesis. We look at the world from a position of synthesis. This includes our intellectual and cognitive processes. We start out with synthesis, and as we move through the university system, we end up in deconstruction. Many Indigenous scholars are pushing the deconstruction approach to analysis, suggesting that we need to deconstruct all or most systems that affect our lives, and ultimately to deconstruct a particular way of looking at the world...we [must] choose our thoughts, words, and actions carefully and deliberately, because we do not want to end up there.
> As Indigenous scholars, we want to end up and stay in synthesis. (p. 169)

Lionel said the most harmful things is when we are taken apart. We are pulled apart by linear systems. Analysis that objectifies, categorizes, and fragments human experience creates struggle and is avoided by many Indigenous scholars (Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol, 2006; McKinley Brayboy and Dehhle, 2000; Cajete, 2000; Hampton, 1995). As Cajete observes, these "methodologies often forget to recontextualize data bits, or to recycle that knowledge into meaningful expression for human life and human situations. Indigenous science is a process of thinking and relating that refuses to decontextualize" (2000, p. 285).

Having to adapt a very personal spiritual and intellectual reality to contemporary research and scholarship is an everyday task for Indigenous scholars (Weber-Pillwax, 2001). When we exclude spirit in deference to western standards of analysis, we lose part of ourselves with it, along with any opportunity to articulate what our people mean to say and then to translate that into something meaningful for others. Weber-Pillwax describes the process of "knowledge-creation" as "what gives me life and sustains me in my work. It includes the 'intuitive stuff' and having a vision that empowers the unfolding of the process" (2001, p. 173). Meyer (2003) advises Indigenous scholars that:

> It is not that spirituality collapses into a physics explanation, it is rather the starting point from which to engage the multi-faceted experience of our specific indigenous epistemology. With regard to research, the gross part of knowing something is collecting the data, the 'hard' facts, the descriptions, what you notice. It has become infinitely clear that you will notice differently if you come from a distinct cultural background. This is a good thing! Never apologize for what you bring to the table. It does not matter how famous your M.A. or Ph.D. advisor is. It is no longer appropriate to belittle our own interpretation of the world. The truth is, it never was. It was most likely our way of adapting. Even at this beginning stage, our data will differ, because we experience the world differently...Honor this difference with clear descriptions of what you or your people are experiencing. If appropriate, bring in the richness of how you can discuss an object, an idea, a moment. It is precisely here, at the center of what experience means, where we must be clear. (p. 63)

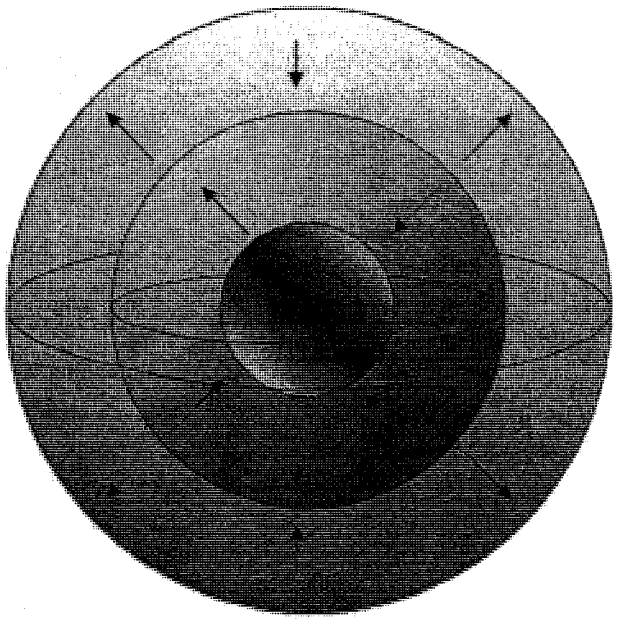
Battiste and Henderson (2006) reminds us that Eurocentric theoretical analysis is a way of looking at the world; it is not knowledge of how the world is. As Indigenous scholars, we serve an ecological consciousness that is holistic, interconnected and interdependent.

Enfoldment and Implicate Order: Loop to Loop Communication

Indigenous knowledge exists within spheres that have an implicate order. Ermine in Smylie (2006) states that:

> There is knowledge out there. How do we arrive at that knowledge? It is enfolded, hidden. It is an implicit knowledge. Knowledge is enfolded somewhere. The Elders talked about how we arrive at that enfolded knowledge. They made friends with the land. Within the land, the creatures, entities in nature, they studied the energy and how to unfold nature or wherever knowledge could be. How can you unfold knowledge to other human beings? With Elders, their study of life: They talked about children, family, relationships in family, and how within that family structure, within children, within the future, how knowledge is enfolded there...It is not abstract. It is right here, with the old people. How they work with the land work with the family, work with the relationships. The active humanity that they do, that is Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is not in a book or somewhere else. It is alive and it has to be practiced. (p.23)

Maryboy, Begay and Nicol (2006) provide a diagram and explanation of the Enfolding and Unfolding Spheres of Indigenous Knowledge:

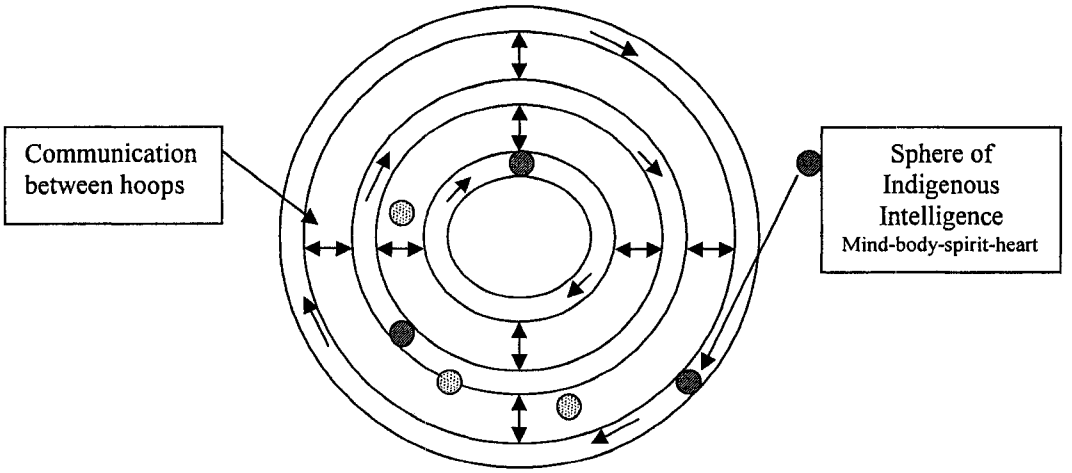


Enfolding and Unfolding Spheres

> The largest (outermost) of the three spheres indicates the entirety – the wholeness – of traditional. The middle sphere illustrates the fullness of the traditional knowledge being somewhat narrowed down but still retaining the dynamic flexibility of the outer sphere. The innermost sphere represents highly specific applied knowledge (polarity-based) that is nonetheless governed by the outer and middle spheres. The largest sphere has the most value to Indigenous peoples because it holds the greatest wisdom, intelligence and knowledge. To attribute this level of knowledge, as is often done in western cultures, to only the smaller inner sphere of specific applied knowledge, is breaking the natural holistic order and turning it upside down. (Please remember – these are not three concentric circles, they are three-dimensional spheres nested within one another). When the relationship between these various levels of knowing is functioning coherently, each level is continually communicating with the other, from "higher" to "lower" and "lower" to "higher." This movement of information is similar to what physicist David Bohm describes as a process of *enfoldment* and *unfoldment.* (p. 6)

As I bring together Ermine's explanation of enfolded knowledge with Maryboy, Begay and Nicol's (2006) illustration of enfolding and unfolding spheres, Lionel's teaching of double loop and triple loop communication becomes clearer. Some confusion develops, however as I try to apply Lionel's teachings of hoops within hoops to Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol's (2006) spheres. After much thinking and later visiting Bohm's text *Implicate*

Order and Wholeness (1980), I began to adapt Maryboy, Begay and Nicol's (2006) illustration. I considered Bohm's (1980) description of holomovement, movement that occurs in an undivided wholeness of flux and synthesis. Still, I wanted to articulate Lionel's teachings of hoops within hoops with the teaching that energy moves cyclically, a concept not included in Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol's illustration. As I thought more about this the spheres' contents were not clear to me. I then began to visualize my own illustration. The sphere would represent the synthesis of Indigenous Intelligence; mind-body-heart-spirit connected. Hoops would then become the enfolding and unfolding aspects of three levels of knowledge as described by Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol (2006). Similarly, all of the hoops within hoops occur together in connection and communication. The sphere of mind-body-heart-spirit cycle moves freely between all levels of the hoops. The following diagram presents one possible cycle of the sphere of Indigenous intelligence.



Double Loop and Triple Loop Communication

It is now clear to me what Lionel meant by loop to loop communication. Of this complex multidimensional understanding of order, Lionel says:

Can a one dimensional system facilitate a multidimensional system
We have to go back to our Indigenous way of thinking.
The only way to understand ourselves is to go back into the thinking in our own language.
We should not include linear or one dimensional thinking when examining Indigenous languages.
It is dimension and meaning that are the standard. Our language comes from a different time and place.

Enfolded knowledge is multidimensional and something bigger than ourselves. Battiste in Smylie (2006) explains:

> It is that order that exists beyond us, beyond our knowing, beyond our birth, beyond our death. It is something else. It is something else and it is the implicate order. Some of us can touch that implicate order in ceremony, in our dreams, sometimes in inspirational moments when we call on the Creator and ask for help where we are. We get this. We touch that implicate order. And when we do, it gives us enlightenment, the true enlightenment. (p. 23)

Lightning (1992) explains "the individual will *feel* it. A person will feel what might be called a divine presence in the joining of the mind and the heart as one" (p. 246). Taken together, notions of *mamatowsiwin* (Ermine, 1995), Indigenous intelligence of mind-body-spirit-heart and way of being, seeing, relating and thinking (Dumont, 2005), balance as "taught through the stick" (Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol, 2006) and chaos theory (Cajete, 2000) bring light to illuminate Lionel's implicate order of loop to loop communication. This thing is within us, we feel it, it is spiritual in nature. We must be attuned to it.

We must understand there are multiple ways to know in this way. Battiste in Smylie (2006) explains that however we come to know in this way comes "from our experience and also come from something else. Some of us are able to tap into it and some of us are not. Some of us grow into it and some of us never see it. This is the spiritual way of knowing" (Battiste, 2006, p. 23).

We follow patterns and spiritualize words.

The Indigenous Analysis As Shared By Lionel

Lionel shared a process for analysis that encompasses the many sources of Indigenous knowledge and multiple ways of knowing therein. Lionel asked us, whether, when we go to work, we think in Cree or English? We need to confirm what our grandparents are saying. If we want our work to mean anything for Cree, we need to think in Cree about the wholeness of implicate order, enfoldment, with harmony and balance as our ideal and focus. Lionel said wisdom is when one question is answered and another begins. Our ever evolving thinking reveals the energy and movement of knowledge.

Lionel shared five steps to analysis. These steps became my analytic process for this project:

1) Saturation – Saturate with as much information. The brain is like a computer. Our memory will select aspects and compare to our peoples knowledge. Mind can't start working without saturation
2) Incubation – Rearranges information until it takes shape – keep doing this, begin understanding tribal characteristics – there are some common themes of the Indigenous peoples…takes pattern in a tribal way. We are sacred beings – time is needed in doing this.
3) Analysis – After arranging our memory will do an analysis on the information
4) Illumination – Our ideas come to us. Bubble on the head idea.
5) Adaptation – Go through process of testing and adapting…Once ideas have germinated and been adjusted to the situation it is now at a point of how material will be reformed and adapted.

Lionel's steps are the natural steps in Indigenous thinking, embracing the concepts of enfoldment and the implicate order of Indigenous ways of thinking, seeing, relating and being, what Lionel called loop to loop communication of hoops within hoops. Embedded in the steps are the many teachings of ceremony and intuitive processes that occur in

synthesis, cyclicity, and perpetuity. At the beginnings of this work I struggled to articulate the meaning of participants' words and the meaning of this work. Lionel said that when we hear our people say something we need to translate it into what it means. To be able to do this in this project, I must hear, experience, feel, relate to and understand what is said. My analysis must honour all the components of Indigenous intelligence. Lionel said that if structure does not include spirit it will not work. Sometimes we have to break protocol to do this.

My Story: Indigenous Data Analysis

> "Stories have the power to make our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits work together." (Archibald, 2008, p. 12)

The data for this study cycled through five levels of analysis.

Level one: Thematic analysis: Encountering layers beneath the themes

The data had begun to fall into a natural order of themes. At the same time, large gaps were emerging, with a large separation between colonial affects and cultural knowledge and language. A large part of the data focused on negative affects of the colonial experience. In spite of this, participants spoke with hope for a positive future and with influence from, knowledge of and respect for the past and the need to maintain the integrity of culture and language. The present was discussed in the context of the future and the past. I began to understand that was why the discussion focused on concerns. My analysis needed to present all of these understandings.

Level two: Dreaming the analysis

I recall feeling excited as I completed the final circle. The themes described above had continued to appear, particularly the voice of past, present and future. I was

restless that evening because I wanted to complete the final transcript. In my dreams that night, a message came to me. I do not recall ever receiving a clearer message in a dream. I was standing with others observing a ceremony. The ceremony was not familiar to me. I was observing two men. They were brown skinned and wore skirt-like coverings, similar to those of a south American tribe. They squatted painting circle dots on long gourds with white paint. I turned slightly to the person next to me and asked quietly about what they were doing. He responded "It's a naming ceremony" and then, after a short pause, said "You're looking for Morningstar, not the name but the meaning." I continued to watch the ceremony and then suddenly awoke.

I realized I had received an important message. My immediate thoughts were about my coming child. I thought, 'Oh my goodness! I am having a baby girl and her name is not Morningstar but has a meaning similar to Morningstar.' I had not known the gender of my coming child and was happy to learn this. I quickly got out of bed. I wanted to know the meaning of Morningstar right away. I was pleased and believed that I had been given a name for my child. It was three a.m. and the only resource available to me was my computer. I looked up meanings, even though I knew I would not find a culturally appropriate one. I googled Morningstar and got a number of responses. The first one I checked related to how English words are defined and seemed too limited. I would have to wait and ask someone who knew the Cree meaning of Morningstar. I continued to go through the Google results, looking next at a painting by the Dene artist Alex Janvier, housed in the Museum of Man in Ottawa. I had been able to see it a few years previous. It was a circular piece housed in a dome at the museum and I had been awed by it. I knew nothing more about it back then, but that night I learned that the name

of the painting was Morningstar. I read some of the explanation provided by Janvier and then closed the site. I was so excited to finding out the painting shared my child's name. Eventually, I shut off my computer and went back to sleep. The next days were dedicated to transcribing and analyzing my data. I became fully engrossed in it. Here is the email I sent off to my advisor Peggy that following week when the dream came to fruition.

Quoting pjs1@ualberta.ca:

[Hide Quoted Text]
Hi Peggy,

Well, I don't know how to start to tell you and share in my excitement. But, let me try to capture it...
As you know I interviewed that young couple in Saddle Lake. That interview really helped in explaining and filling in my current data. I soon found I was becoming very down as I felt I was floundering and felt extremely weak in my data collection. I also felt that there has been much more meaningful data that has already been done in what it was I already had and what I felt I wanted to say. Thankfully, the young couple brought it all home to me.

So, now as I am analyzing the data I am finding it does fall into themes. However the themes are too connected and cannot be separated nor discussed without the other. So, I thought back to my proposal and of course I need to rely on the notion of the circle to guide the research. and I waited and did not want to force anything. In fact Rebecca dropped by yesterday and said yes it all comes when you do it in an Indigenous way. I fully trust that and recall the words of my uncle when I collected data from him and my aunt last month. He said trust myself, because of my offering and essentially the nature and guidance of the spirits I will be guided and I must trust that. Of course he spoke only in Cree.

Anyway, as I started to analyze on Monday. I found it very very focused hopeful and especially thankful that I can see the relation to what everyone was saying. I should mention to you that the young couple, the husband, gave me sweetgrass, song for my research and in the past has guided me in the protocols in asking for help. He has been instrumental in having me feel the guidance I do and was there singing at my proposal exam.

So, it was only natural that I smudge each time I engaged in this work. The work to me is much bigger than me and I feel so little qualified in carrying it out. Yet I feel that there is a space I can be guided in, in presenting this work as especially now find I am not defining the Cree way. As I unfolded the data I found that there are philosophical things I can presented but because I have the specific experiences and gender/age I can only speak from that voice and interface through that. (I am using my reflection notes that's why I

am writing too much but I want to offer you the idea)

So, in knowing what it is I know and have been taught throughout my life I find I have been prepared as much as where I am at to discuss this topic of a Cree way. And what it is I offer will be put into this context, in this time of what it is that I have to share.

Anyway, as my data analysis started out I used post it notes because I had this pile of pages of data to capture the main main themes. I finished a network of ideas and came up with this real distinct separation of two worlds: colonial affects and issues and Cree philosophical aspects. (Hard to explain that but it was things like ceremony, language, way of life.) I left for the day excited knowing that I need to find guidance by this circle. So, yesterday I came in, and yes I smudge, I am thinking I have to move to Noella's office area, where an office space has since become available and have already asked her if they can smudge there. I just know it can be problematic here and I don't want to create that problem as they have gone out of their way here for me already. So, anyway I spent all day yesterday analyzing and focusing more closely on the actual quotes I need and pasting them on the wall. It continued into this morning. I was not feeling as optimistic yesterday about it cause I felt I was floundering again. I needed something to help present all the data I have.

So, after almost finishing my quotes up on the wall. Bang I got it. I was sitting here thinking I can't separate my notions of Cree and present them without each other nor can I present the negative affects without talking about the Cree way. Its all connected more less in a pattern of time and evolution. So, I am sitting here staring and staring and staring....and then I thought what was that dream I had, the one I shared with you and Stan that evening at dinner. Because as I recall it, a entity not a person but it seemed like a male I didn't know or a male entity came to me in that dream and was explaining to me at this elaborate naming ceremony I wasn't familiar with and said your looking for morningstar, not the name but the meaning. So, although my dream was short I interpreted it as though it was for my coming baby. as opposed to what was told to me I am looking for morningstar and it was made clear to me it's the meaning of it not the name and that was it. Earlier I was dreaming of what was shared to me about camouflage and notions of cultural adaptation and colonial influence in a discussion and I would wake up and fall back to sleep. Then a final dream was this morningstar one.

So, to finally end this story, I got out of bed because I was excited about morningstar and finding the meaning not the name. I got on my computer at 3 am to search Cree meaning of Morningstar or name or something to that affect. I got the painting of Alex Janvier that he and his son painted at the museum of man. I have had the opportunity to see this painting when I was completing my coursework. It's a beautiful piece. Yet, I never ever took the time to read about the meaning. WELL!! At 3 am I am reading how he talks the one section presents how the way was affected by colonization. I read some more but closed the page as I was in pursuit of a baby name. Now that gets me to right now. I am here thinking I either have to superimpose the data as a collective. With a Cree way underlying the circle. But that's not fitting for me. So I look and stare as I said and thought there is a fourth component missing here and it is basically colonial affects and breakdown, but there is still so much more that needs to be said if I speak about that way. I need to discuss and present that

flux that re awakening, that notion of survival...and I thought of Alex Janvier and the dream I had last week and recalled yeah...yes yes he talks about it in that way. In this travel of time and presenting how things have affected the way of his people, and it continues to explain the evolution of hope and what is coming for us. His picture helps explain my research. He even talks about 4's. His picture is called Morningstar, and it's not the name I am looking for but the meaning in his picture.

http://www.civilization.ca/tresors/treasure/283eng.html

Have a look. As you look it will help in seeing the difficulty it would be to try explain that in and configure that complex of explanation.

Anyway, I will let you go for now. I am very excited right now. Each day I write that I can see the end. I do, I still say that I see the end of this work.

Next email

Hi Peggy,

I must apologize for the previous rushed email. Of course you can see that I hadn't fixed anything and in some cases made little sense. Still, I think you got the general idea.

I went back to the web page just a bit ago to look more closely at the explanation and the meaning

The title Morning Star refers to the morning star as a guide or a means of finding direction. Janvier explains:
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"My people had used the morning star as a guide light in the early mornings of the winter hours. They would leave camp... maybe 4 o'clock in the morning and head in some direction... According to the stars in the sky, and especially that one, they pretty well have an idea the direction that they are going to."
Janvier similarly views his painting as a guiding light.

Features included in the painting reflect common aboriginal values and philosophies. The circle motif represents the circle of life: spiritual and physical, human and natural. Human life, for example, is believed to make a complete circle; a person dies and then life starts again. Likewise, the colours used are meaningful. Among the Chipewyan for example, white, yellow, blue and red are significant colours, seen more frequently than others. Among Native groups generally, these colours are often seen in regalia. In addition, the creation of four distinct areas of colour is important. The number four is significant for Native Peoples: 4 seasons, 4 cardinal points, 4 directions. Janvier refers to these as "natural indicators".

The painting is a commentary on the clash of cultures that took place after Europeans arrived in North America and encountered Native peoples. This is one of the major themes addressed in the Museum's

permanent exhibitions.....
That ring, representing the Native value system, is juxtaposed with a ring of more organic forms, representing the appearance of European ideas and beliefs. The juxtaposition of geometric and organic symbolizes the struggle between the two value systems.
Each of the four distinct areas of colour in the outside ring represents a period in Native history.
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Now, it is so so so amazing and emotional. I really feel gifted by this because this is the framework and I can explain the data using it as the means to explain that native value system that remains throughout the entire time and present those struggles that are here now and remain. Yet as he speaks about the notion of Morning Star, its a guide or a means of finding direction. Wow!!

It's really neat. I am going to get back to work while I am feeling it.

I'll keep you updated,

Patsy

In the next days, I felt very gifted and that I was getting closer to completing my work. This would not be the case. Although I now had a way to present the complex nature of the data, but I discovered it was challenging to speak about that data once articulated in this artwork.

Level Three: Articulating the dream

One foot in the past, one foot in the future looking down the red road of the present

Lionel related this statement a few times and it came to mind again as I was working with the data. I had recognized early on that participants spoke in this space of past, present and future, regardless of the topic. I started to wonder about Lionel's words and that perhaps some of his work would articulate the picture and the data. Morningstar was an amazing find but I faced problems working on this alone. Urion (1999) explains that "Knowledge connects us to others and other living things. It is always the consequence of some process or interaction involving ourselves and others – even the

knowledge we come up with thinking. We do not 'think' entirely alone. We do nothing entirely alone" (p. 8). I needed to find a way to understand the data and then articulate its meaning. At this point, I recognized that it was only natural to turn to Lionel for help thinking about knowledge and the analysis process.

Five days later it would come

quoting pjs1@ualberta.ca:
Hi Peggy,

Well I am retyping a really long email I lost my screen. Perhaps I will be more concise in this attempt.

I trust you and Stan had a relaxing long weekend.

Well, the last time I wrote I shared with you this great revelation of the painting. The next day, Thursday, proved that was only part of the task. Now I needed to find the means, the contextual setting of gaining entry to that circle. So in an easy state I tried. Although I wanted to begin writing I needed something to help in entering that circle. My knowledge is limited and I am like I said so under qualified in the way in which I would like to talk about my data. After thinking about how Lionel's course talked about this topic for our current time. (after surviving colonial times) He covers everything with such amazing skill. He provides the foundation of every context of everything that was said. From the colonial trauma to cultural adaptation. He gives excellent definition (although that's not the word perhaps explanation and meaning/context.) Anyway, one of his statements of to talk about Indigenous knowledge need to go back to the language. He gives such excellent insight to language that is not explained but implied by the informants. Almost like its a known but not explained and Lionel explains it. Like my aunt spoke about two forms of language. He explains it so so so well. There are many more examples I can give you but my page could close again..haha.

So, as I think it out a bit more. I think I'm going to have Lionel be my Elder/guide in explaining the notions. Like he says Indigenous knowledge is not religion, it doesn't have beliefs it's knowledge. Beliefs you ponder, some things you don't ponder. That's an excellent explanation. He speaks about ceremony and the necessity for preparation. A statement he makes over and over and makes clear. He provides the depth that I couldn't. He also makes excellent statements like (in short, he says it much better) when we ask questions we wont get a direct answer. Rather the response will be something that directs us to a space where we can have sacred thoughts. We are directed and guided there to do our thinking of the topic. He makes such excellent points about language and the contextual cultural nature of language. He speaks and defines tradition, culture, ceremony, roles...so many fundamental things that he shares so willingly and easily. Therefore I need to have him guide me in the analysis as his words do it. As a result it comes out exactly as I wanted I am not going to define a Cree way rather provide notions of processes that are in context.

That's the best way I can tell it right now. It wont be content based to explain, because as Lionel said if you don't know it you can't say it you're not ready, which I am not, yet Lionel provides me the process to access content. The process, the ceremony is what he provides.

So somehow I will include him as the guide the elder. I will think it through more. I will get back to you once that happens.

Talk to you soon, (Alana wants me....just me right now)

Patsy

It was now apparent to me that I needed to use Lionel's work. The process would require another thematic analysis of his work. I looked again at the method for general analysis that Lionel had shared.

Indigenous Analysis

1) Saturation
2) Incubation
3) Analysis
4) Illumination
5) Adaptation

Lionel's work was filled with so much meaning. I needed time to absorb and understand what he said. I would work on this for the remainder of the spring, then summer and eventually fall and early winter.

Round 4: Indigenous Analysis

> *Our Elders speak in analogies and we need to understand...interpret...then put it into academic text – double loop communication.*

After four rounds of data analysis, I realized that this cycling process honours Indigenous knowledge and processes. Data presentation and data analysis are not two separate processes that occur in separate spaces. Indigenous knowledge and processes embrace and give meaning to data. The processes of enfoldment and loop to loop communication fill in the gaps that occur in linear analysis. Knowledge is within, as Lionel said, hoops

within hoops. I had always wondered about those words, but in the context of circle and enfoldment they gained meaning. It is difficult to process or analyze data in the linear space claimed by Western thinking. We need to honour the circular thinking and speaking of Indigenous peoples in our analysis. Practices such as loop to loop communication support our intentions as Indigenous researchers to provide positive and meaningful analysis. In this project, the data is presented on the foundation of Lionel's guidance and in the context of Indigenous knowledge. There is a symbiotic relationship between the data and Lionel's work and their simultaneous participation legitimates the framework. This has been the work: to find that space, that context of Indigenous knowledge. Loop to loop thinking and learning *is* analysis. Thankfully, Lionel brought me here.

Round 5: Language and Relating: Engaging two sets of Data

Now that I had a plan, I was anxious to begin writing. I was certain that my data would fit neatly and easily into the thematic framework of Lionel's work. This did not happen. The focus of the study was the participants' data. Lionel's words might provide foundation and context and help me to articulate the participants' data, but it was not an easy embrace. It did not make sense to me. I felt very drained and took time away to think. I prayed and carried out protocols to ask for guidance.

I realized that, on its own, Lionel's work is a dissertation – or perhaps many. I needed to find a way to engage my data with his work. I talked this through with my husband, telling him that I felt so close, but it was not fitting together like I expected. There were important concepts like cellular memory that seemed to belong but that participants had not spoken about and there were other concepts that had appeared but did

not fit. I was tired and so was my husband. He had our little ones day and night so I could work in a hotel room with little disruption. I was mentally exhausted. He asked, "Well isn't it about the language? Isn't cellular knowledge about language?" I responded, "But that theme doesn't fit in with the themes of my participants!" Then it occurred to me - the illumination step of this analysis - that of course it is about the language. Because I had expected that during saturation the two data sets would simply fit together, I had tried to arrange both sets of data into themes. In a sense, I had tried to force my end results. At that moment of illumination, I realized that the data would fit together - but not in the ways I had planned it would. I needed to listen very closely to Lionel. I had been reviewing his notes and knew that the Cree way, our wisdom and ways of knowing are housed in the language. It came to me then that the overarching theme was language. Language tells us about our connection and relations and was fundamental in Lionel's work. I had thought this all along, but without recognizing that my work needed to be heard from a Plains Cree language thinking context. This seemed like commonsense now, but I wondered whether I could have understood this in the beginning or had I needed the process of this work to come to this understanding? Lionel had asked us where in the academy you can learn about context? He was right. I learned about context through him and through the process of this work. In the past, I may have called something Indigenous context, but now I had a meaning to attach to that term - it refers to thinking space, the contextual space of language.

Lionel once said that:

> *You cannot lose the context of your language. You can lose the ability to speak it but because you come from thousands of years of inheritance in your cellular knowledge it's embodied in you. So you cannot lose the feeling of Cree that there is thousands of years in your cellular system that awakens by the vibrations of*

your Cree language and all the other languages you speak so you can lose the verbal part of it.

It made sense then and is even clearer now. I have not lost that context and neither will my children. I am not a fluent speaker but what Cree I do know has made me aware of that context he talks about.

Lionel often related that we should not be hard on ourselves because it wasn't our fault to have not learned about things and our language in particular. He told us we should love our parents for not exposing us to the hurts they endured. His words remind me that I should not feel badly about what I do not know. Instead, I am grateful that I cycled through this process. I am grateful that, whether or not I recognized, from the beginning I was listening from an Indigenous context. I had been using prescribed data analysis tools and they were inappropriate. This was why I struggled so much with both sets of data. It had been quite the process to complete one theme analysis and then another before identifying that only in the context of language could both data sets give each other meaning. When I first started to analyze the participant data, I had not recognized or known that the Cree language was the overarching theme and everything was a relational theme within it. I had sorted the data into topics and simply seen language as one of them, alone and disconnected from the others. A similar thing had happened with Lionel's work. Now, with the thinking context of the language or the Cree way as the encompassing circle, the topics were another circle within that. This gave the topics meaning. My data presentation and analysis were now clear. I would talk about the Cree way, centered and housed in the language, the context and thinking behind the language. Rather than sorting the participants' thoughts into discrete themes, I needed to return to the data and view it as part of a full living circle in the context of

language. This was Lionel's double loop communication. Lionel's work had brought me to the understanding that the encompassing context of Indigenous analysis is our language where ancient knowledges continue to live.

> *The Elders speak in analogies and we need to understand – interpret them - then put it into academic text. Its double loop communication*

Balance in "Mid-Step": Past-Present-Future

All participants spoke with concern and consideration for the past, present and future. Lionel spoke about this consciousness of past, present and future as perpetually cycling multidimensional thinking or synthesis. Maryboy, Begay, and Nicol (2006) explained that balance is movement. When I read Elder Janvier's description of the organic nature of the circle, I did not yet understand that balance is dynamic and includes the fluid movement of cyclicity. Together, these explanations helped me to see the meaning of Morningstar. Lionel talks of one foot in the sacred past, one foot in the future looking down the red road of the present. In this way of seeing, the past-present-future connect and engage with the Indigenous intelligence of mind-body-spirit-heart.

> *All things must travel in a circle – things that are sacred – are circular like our stories – tree rings. Circular fashion we know where we are going...it appears many people use a symbol to speak physical and spiritual.*

Like a Morningstar, our ancient ways live with the new ways. Our ancestors are right here with us. This is what our Elders call holism. Urion (1999) writes that within holism there is an obligation to consider how something, one thing or one system, is connected to or part of the larger whole. Lionel said that to achieve balance you cannot live in the past, the old people didn't mean for us to live in the past. I understand this as a reminder that our knowledge should not be stagnant or kept in the past. It needs to have life and spiritual breath, so that it can adapt and change. The participant Carl wondered

about this adaptation and how knowledge is affected when we change the enunciation and inflections of words. Lionel said inflections are important, they are like the key to knowledge. He said our Elders come from…inflections of words physical experiences… We need spiritual and physical structure.

> *The hoop suggests primary theme of energy movement. In principle its common in Indigenous groups...reminds us of connected and orderly thought process. All things are going where they came from the past is going to the future.*

The past-present-future are connected in perpetuity. This is what keeps our language living. This recognition helps me to understand Indigenous intelligence and sources of knowledge. Our knowledge is ancient but at the same time it is perpetually recreated by and alive in the people who live and think it. We can engage in our ancestors' thinking and pass it directly to our young.

Lionel shared that our grandmothers and grandfathers met all physical and spiritual conditions to maintain the knowledge through language. Lumbee Elder Vernon Cooper claims that "People aren't living, They're only existing. They're growing away from their spiritual realities. These days people seek knowledge, not wisdom. Knowledge is of the past; wisdom is of the future" (cited in Wall and Arden, 1990, p. 63). This differentiation of wisdom and knowledge reminds us that we must recognize the difference between what knowledge is living and what isn't. Western science is "freeze-dried". It halts the movement of knowledge (Cajete, 2000; Maryboy, Begay, Nicol, 2006). Similarly, Lionel said that we lose the spirit when we think using Western thought. The loop to loop communication of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous wisdom, on the other hand, keeps us connected to our spiritual realities and spiritual reverence.

The purpose of life is to look for the perfect harmony circle. The circle – motion – perfect circle represents harmony. Everything is round or trying to get round.

Ceremony

The reason for ceremony...is like the end of an English sentence.
It's the preparation that is the most important part.
Preparation is the first concept in trying to understand.

If the preparation is not properly done, there is no ceremony.
It would only be cultural novelty.

We should return to the context of the ceremony – don't practice other's ceremonies.

The ceremony is the confirmation that everything has been done then our ceremonies will be seen as the sacred healing things they are.

From the beginning, I recognized a sacred element in this work. In this analysis phase, I also recognized the ceremonial nature of the work. Wilson (2003) quotes Hanohano:

> That's the spiritual part of it. If you talk about research as a ceremony, that's the climax of the ceremony, when it all comes together and all those connections are made. Cause that's what ceremony is about, is strengthening those connections. So maybe when research as a ceremony comes together, when the ceremony is reaching its climax, is when those ideas all come together. Those connections are made. (p. 171)

In the connections within ceremony the collective is important. Lightning (1992) explains:

> Traditionionally, many of the ceremonies that they used to hold were conducted by a large group of people. There was a requirement for unity in having to perform a ceremony in a collective way. The Elders would always say that it is much easier that way, rather than doing it oneself. The mutual help in the performance of the ceremony is a manifestation of unity, an acknowledgement that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. When one looks at Cree culture in terms of individuality and unity, one of the things that is particularly impressive is the idea and practice of connectedenss, the "belonging" nature of the culture. Individuality and unity are not opposites. (p. 247)

As I worked through this analysis, I realized that to explain something like the Indigenous intelligence of mind-body-spirit-heart, I must connect with physical and spiritual dimensional aspects. Alfred (2005) said:

> Ceremony keeps people connected to their past it preserves memory... The wisest among our elders and spiritual teachers tells us that there is a connection between all of our peoples and that each ceremony possesses part of the knowledge we need to survive. The ceremonies do more than connect us to a particular tradition or community, they connect us to the earth and to our true, natural existences as human beings... (p. 249-251)

Analysis as ceremonial process creates sacred connections. Cajete describes this learning path: "[It] begins with appropriate orientation, acknowledging relationships, setting intentions, seeking, creating, understanding, sharing, and then celebrating one's vision with reference to a place of centering" (1994, p. 69). The many rituals and processes involved in my orientation and preparation for this research have created spiritual connections. Lionel said ceremonies are not instant, that if you look at potatoes, you have to grow the potato first. Lionel shared with us that ceremony marks the point of connection, that moment of arriving to and coming to understanding. Like Cardinal (2001) and Wilson (2003), I now understand Indigenous research is a ceremony.

Intuitive Knowing: Memory

Lionel often spoke about cellular memory. He explained it as a physiological understanding in which our bodies contain Indigenous knowledge in every cell. This knowledge is awakened by vibrations. Macleod (2007) shares that through processes of oral tradition and storytelling, our bodies are houses of ancient sounds. Alfred's (2005) observation that our memory responds to songs, pictures, ceremonies and many art and cultural forms extends this notion. Our cellular structure experiences the energies of sacred places. Stan Wilson (1995) related that once, while traveling, he had experienced

tremendous energy and sadness for reasons that he had not understood at the time. Lionel later identified his experience as a greeting from relatives who had been in that place thousands of years ago.

> *Knowledge is not only on a neural level but also cellular.*
> *Inside of you is the knowledge even if the language is lost. We retain this knowledge through our cells. DNA identifies 13 areas where that type of intelligence exists.*
> *Language leads us back to the primordial sense of being through our nervous system. Vibration is one of the recognized ways of beginning the physical healing process. E.g. chants drum. etc*
> *I'ts in you ...its in your cellular structure you inherited it from your parents.*
> *Our sound system is a neural pathway to our memory.*
> *Middle ear...physiologically you have been tuned up for years...enunciation has been set up by your people...you can' t lose it you have to lose your body.*

Ten years have passed since I first heard those words but they have always been with me since then. Only recently did I fully understand vibrations of speech. During a session with my daughter's speech therapist, the therapist described the anatomy and process of speech, explaining that it originates in our diaphragm near our stomach. When she said this, I heard Lionel's words about everything originating from that place in our bodies. The speech therapist also spoke about the vocal fold, a sheet of skin that waves and causes vibrations for every sound we make. She told me to cup my hand on my throat covering my larynx and say the word nine and then say ninety. I finally understood in an anatomical sense what Lionel meant about vibrations. The participant Priscilla had talked about feeling tired and thinking the word in Cree. She says or thinks *nestohsin* instead of "I'm tired" because saying or thinking it in Cree "brings another energy to it." I tried placing my hand against my larynx and repeated *nestohosin* over and over. I was fascinated! The energy Priscilla spoke about was experienced on a cellular level. Lionel said there are many spiritual meanings embodied in the syllables of our words. He

recognized that spiritual knowledge resides in those vibrations, that those vibrations awaken our cellular memory and that, in turn, informs our Indigenous intelligence.

> *Vibrations are the natural knowledge set up and passed on by our ancestors.*
> *Our memories can take us back beyond birth. Through our cellular memory.*
>
> *Your people – its been encoded from the beginning of time.*
>
> *Indigenous peoples learn through listening and vibrations not through their eyes.*
>
> *When you hear certain vibrations your cellular memory is being awakened.*

Cajete (2000) explains that our landscapes are metaphorically an extension of our bodies. Hernandez quotes Momaday, "Spirit informs memory and the memory is of the land." (1995, p. 9). Memory plays a significant role in intuitive knowing. We recognize our ancestors' knowledge and memory is gifted to us in this spiritual and cellular way. Ortiz (1993) speaks about memory and the importance of language:

> What would I be without my language? My existence has been determined by language, not only the spoken but the unspoken, the language of speech and the language of motion. I can't remember a world without memory. Memory immediate and far away in the past, something in the sinew, blood, ageless cell. Although I don't recall the exact moment I spoke or tried to speak, I know the feeling of something tugging at the core of the mind, something unutterable uttered into existence. It is language that brings us into being in order to know life. (p. 29)

Wilson's (1995) ten thousand year old experience is a good example of how knowledge occurs all the time in sacred moments of connection.

> You get knowledge through ceremony, dream, while you're driving down the road and something comes into your mind. There are Indigenous places. We live on Indigenous land. Our ancestors have lived, experienced, and left behind their imprints in the rocks and the trees and the ideas we get. The imprints are when we walk through a particular place and we say, 'that is a painful spot.' You know because there are memories in those particular places. We acknowledge, when we try to bring knowledge to others, that we are bringing multiple layers of knowing and learning. (Battiste, 2006, p. 7)

Lionel said your mind is a wonderful thing you will get insight that he called light. You will say 'hey I can use this at home'. He said that as we are moving around...we experience energies. From them we are able to set up our cellular structure. Energy is in sacred places. When relatives die they leave their wisdom or energy on earth. This is where we find our sacred places. If their energy goes into us, we can find wisdom. Our Elders know to leave the wisdom behind.

Language Teaches Us Value in a Relational Complexity

Notions of relational responsibility and accountability as related to truth are embedded within Cree words. In the data, Erin spoke about *pahstahowin*, the notion of sin. She explained to me that if someone were to say to me 'you sinned,' it would mean that I had done wrong and must find ways to be forgiven and cleared of the sin. The notion of *pahstahowin* refers to a far greater and more complex violation than the notion of sin. Gordon described *pahstahowin* as "breaking a sacred law, the natural law". Relational accountability comes into play. As Gordon explains, we are responsible for ourselves and are accountable for our actions; it is up to us to determine what that accountability and responsibility means. Lightning has taught us that the ethos protect itself and we understand that consequence is an individual reprimand within natural law.

Onondaga Elder Oren Lyons asks:

> 'What law are you living under? United States government law? That's mans law. You break Man's law you pay a fine or go to jail – maybe. You can break it and still get around it. Maybe you won't get punished at all. Happens all the time. People figure they can get away with anything and half the time they do. But they forget there's another law, the Creator's law. We call it Natural Law...Natural law prevails every where. It supersedes Man's law. If you violate it, you get hit. There's no judge and jury, there's no lawyers or courts, you can't buy or dodge or beg your way out of it. If you violate this Natural law you're going to get hit and get hit hard. (Wall and Arden, 1991, p. 66)

As Cajete (2000) says, we have no authority over the natural world.

> *It's no mystery it's natural law.*
> *We would be egotistical to think we invented natural law. We didn't. There is a natural law relationship between the trees...air...four-legged..the tradition is understanding that system. You are in harmony.*
> *Our relationships must be of knowing not general understanding.*

Language is Spiritual Engagement

> *We are always praying through the use of words.*

Experiencing the words and their meanings and coming to know the language in a spiritual context is important. If one does not think in the context of the Cree way then it is difficult to understand and sometimes to respect the spiritual nature therein. Priscilla said "They [the old people] say watch what you say, because you're talking to the spirit, we're all spirit first."

> *Language turns on emotions. Sounds connect to words using word it is spiritual.*

Experiencing the language simply by listening to it is a physical experience for people of the Cree language group. These experiences come in the form of energy.

> *Everything is made of energy, even steel energy can be placed in between. Energy in your physical being is quantifiable.*
> *One dimensional or linear ways of doing things helps to destroy our children. It is like trying to put everything through a coned filter.*

Priscilla shared that as we think in Cree we experience the energy and meaning of the word. This energy relates to the spiritual nature the word as it is thought of and used in a context where it has meaning. According to Urion (1999), our Indigenous knowledge system differs in this way:

> A person's feelings are given credibility. Feelings are not just 'emotions' but it is possible to discuss feelings as being an important way of being 'connected' physically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually, to specific locales, specific other people, and to all creation. Feelings are experienced in all four dimensions of experience, not just in "affect' or 'emotion'. (p. 7)

Feelings are important within Indigenous knowledge as they reveal the energy and the spiritual nature of our language and knowledge system.

Inductive Learning: Our Way of Thinking and Understanding

My major discovery in this analysis was that inductive learning is the Cree way.

> *Inductive style is the preparation you go back to visit the people inside you. The language is a good way in...it has to be a natural process. Your mind can go through that experience. It's experiential.*
>
> *Previous knowledge is the foundation to inductive learning. Indigenous languages have a common theme – doesn't give answers, just enough information to stimulate thought. Thought is sacred – it protects individuality.*
>
> *Inductive learning...it's always under the conditions of something. We must recognize pain of life. ..we are aware our great mother grass...analogy of birth time..our preparations are to recognize that it's occurring in our environment. Old people say, be aware of all situations around you only way you can connect yourself. Circular fashion..we know where we are going...*
>
> *In inductive style you go back to visit yourself at earlier steps.*

I intentionally interviewed couples that included both men and women. Priscilla listened as her husband spoke. For them and other couples, each time one spoke, they built on the thoughts of the other. There was no competition about who had the better or more universal truth. Rather, the participants spoke from personal experience in the context of kinship, the past-present-future and an ecological consciousness. I looked for and found a balance of female and male perspectives. This process unfolded as Lionel's loop to loop communication.

English usage in a Cree context presents great difficulties. It is often difficult to translate Cree into English. Florence made an even stronger statement: "Cree can never be translated into English." Lionel cautioned that when we translate, we need to ask what does it mean, that it can't be said in English or won't mean the same thing context wise. Our language connects us to the ways of being, ways of seeing, ways of thinking and ways of relating that draw the past into our current time. Florence understands that once

her son can speak Cree fluently, he will then begin to see "the embeddedness", the meaning beneath. The depth of what is beneath increases throughout one's life and Florence's son and other Cree speakers will perpetually and continually uncover more and more of the meaning embedded in their language.

Lionel tells us all words contain a spiritual value. Erin identified older words as 'original' and claimed that we can know the age of words because newer words are descriptors. Erin stated that "I still learn about [from] Cree words and their meaning. Those are things that really are about the way people understand. We also learn about greater meaning of the words as we get older and are ready to learn them." This is important to understand; that learning in the Cree way is perpetual and it is inductive. To learn and understand knowledge in the Cree way, we need to continually focus our thinking within the context of the language. This process and the commitment of Cree thinkers and speakers maintain the key understandings of our ways of being-seeing-relating-thinking with mind-body-heart-spirit connected. Lionel said we have a millionaire thinking mode - we just need to realize it.

Chapter 6

Incimohci Nehiyawewin Pimatan Ekwa Mina Kakike Kapimatan

Traditional Cree wisdom and knowledge have survived thousands of years. Although colonialism has affected access to Cree ways of knowing for many Cree young people today, the knowledge system remains. As Indigenous scholars we are forced to revisit this sad time of our history as we articulate our story and identity. If we go even further back in time and reposition the light on our ancient ways of thinking, we realize we are in an auspicious time. This study has included applications and processes of ancient Cree wisdom and knowledge. To accessing this, I have situated my thinking within the ancient and living knowledge resource of our Indigenous language. This process has tested every aspect of my Cree experience, Cree intelligence and mind-body-heart-spirit. This study required that four key aspects work together from beginning to end. First, I needed to respectfully approach the work as ceremony and adhere to proper protocol. Second, I had a responsibility to think within a Plains Cree context as I looked at a Cree way. Third, I needed to heavily rely on my lifetime accumulation of Plains Cree knowledge and intelligence. Lastly, I needed to meld that experience with Elders' teachings. These four essential aspects of my Plains Cree knowledge enabled me to introduce and articulate a theoretical model of thinking.

The purpose of the study was to identify what members of a Cree First Nations community understand to be the Cree way. Selected couples, with an age range of four decades, were interviewed in talking circles about their perspectives on a Cree way. In total, eight people participated in the research. It was imperative that couples participated together because, as Elder Kinuwna explained, it was important to have a female and

male perspective. Participants were selected in part because of their involvement in the community education system as parents, teachers, administrators and school board members.

Data were gathered using an Indigenous methodology. Three talking circles, each with two or four participants, were conducted. Traditional community protocol of tobacco offerings were adhered to. All circles were audio-taped and transcripts were transcribed verbatim. Initial attempts to carryout a thematic data analysis continually failed because that method was not compatible with the relational wholeness of the data. Lecture notes from a course taught by Elder Lionel Kinunwa were then included to provide a context in which I could authentically hear and translate the words of the participants. Initially, I attempted to code and theme Dr. Kinunwa's course notes however, as with the other data set, this western application and context was not successful. While an Indigenous methodology had addressed the holistic nature of data gathering, analysis became problematic because I could not find enough previous work on Indigenous analysis. Utilizing teachings from Dr. Kinunwa and other Indigenous scholars', my collective learning from both my Plains Cree experience and my experiences within the First Nations Graduate Education Program, I begin to formulate a theoretical model of Indigenous analysis. My own process of analysis unfolded in five rounds. The final round brought together an understanding of the inductive nature and analytic process of the Indigenous mind.

Indigenous analysis is built on the notion of relationality. Unlike western analysis, which typically 'breaks down' data, Indigenous analysis requires researchers to investigate data in relational synthesis. Fundamental elements of Indigenous knowledge

such as Elders' teachings, language and metaphor, language and visualization and language and knowledge are critical parts of the process.

Indigenous analysis requires that researchers rely on their Indigenous intelligence. Indigenous intelligence operates in its fullest capacity when mind-body-spirit-heart synchronously engage. The Cree concept of *mamatowisowin*, the capacity to be or do anything to be creative, is part of Indigenous intelligence. The four aspects of mind-body-heart-spirit provide the outward ways of our intelligence, our ways of being-seeing-relating-thinking. Harmony, balance and chaos, circle and cyclicity are all qualities of an Indigenous analysis.

Double loop and triple loop communication are Indigenous analytic processes. Indigenous knowledge is enfolded. Maryboy, Begay and Nicol (2006) use enfolding and unfolding spheres to illustrate Indigenous knowledge. Loop to loop communication occurs between these spheres. The center sphere is best understood as notions that are presented as polar opposites in western science but here are joined at each end to create a circle. The next spheres represent higher levels of Indigenous knowledge. Because Maryboy, Begay and Nicol's model does not include the movement patterns of Indigenous intelligence discussed by Elder Kinunwna and other Indigenous scholars, the illustration was adapted to incorporate them. In this new diagram, hoops within hoops are introduced to represent the enfolding aspects of knowledge and a small sphere represents Indigenous intelligence. The sphere cycles within the hoops, as it does within the Indigenous analysis process. To understand this implicate order of Indigenous analysis, it is critical to first understand the elements of Indigenous knowledge: the circle, cyclicity, harmony, balance and chaos theory.

Lionel provided steps of Indigenous Analysis, which I applied in this work: saturation, incubation, analysis, illumination and adaptation. These steps are natural steps to work through enfoldment, the implicate order of Indigenous ways of thinking-seeing-relating–being and the energy and movement of knowledge. Embedded in the steps are many teachings of ceremony and intuitive processes that occur in synthesis, cyclicity and perpetuity. I trusted these steps to find the Cree way. There is no one right way for any given level of this analysis and in my case, ceremony, dreams and epiphanies were part of the process.

Summary of Findings

The dream I had after completing my last data circle provided a foundation and guide to articulating the findings. In my dream I was directed to Morningstar - *not the name but the meaning*. I located a story painting by Alex Janvier entitled Morningstar that offered teachings about harmony, balance, chaos, cyclicity and perpetuity. This is where I found the start of a new organizational structure for my analysis.

Participants in this research project identified language as the fundamental aspect of the Cree way. Applying Lionel's teachings to the participants' data revealed the importance of context and thinking within the language. Lionel's foundational teachings gave meaning and understanding to the participants' words.

Balance in Mid-Step – Past-Present-Future

The concept of balance in mid-step along with past-present-future connected was an important finding. Participants often spoke about this past-present-future connection, particularly around their concerns for their children about Cree culture. Participants also gave thanks and acknowledgement to the old people, both living and non-living. Elder

Kinunwa's teaching of having one foot in the sacred past, one foot in the sacred future, and looking down the red road helped to ground the participants' thoughts. Elder Janvier's painting further articulated the notion of movement and past-present-future connected into one whole. These Elders' teachings helped me to understand the multidimensionality of thinking. The idea of walking, one foot and then the other, supported Elder Kinunwa's notion of energy and motion. Leroy Littlebear (1986) explained this perpetual motion as cyclical. Everything in nature follows cyclical patterns. Balance within this cyclical pattern is understood as constant change. Metaphorically, balance occurs mid-step when the past-present-future are connected in motion. To understand balance in this way it is important to stay connected to our spiritual realities.

Ceremony

Lionel said:

> *We should return to the context of the ceremony. The ceremony is the confirmation that everything has been done. Our ceremonies will be seen as the sacred healing things they are. The first concept is preparation. If the preparations are not done – there is no ceremony – it would only be cultural novelty.*

I held to these words throughout this study process. I carried out many protocols and rituals of ceremony. Through Lionel's teachings I understood that the many epiphanies I experienced were also ceremonial aspects of this research. Hanohano (in Wilson, 2003) describes this climactic process of connections as essentially arriving at or to ceremony. Lionel's explanation of ceremony being like the end of an English sentence now makes perfect sense. This work has encompassed ceremony. Although the process appeared to involve my own mind I fully understand through Lionel's teachings that my grandparents, the ancestors, wisdom was at work through this ceremonial process.

Cellular Memory and Intuitive Knowing

Cellular knowledge and memory is a key teaching of Elder Kinunwa. Contained in our cellular structure is ancient Cree wisdom passed down physiologically over thousands of years. Our cellular memory recalls the Cree context of our language. Priscilla spoke about how meaningful words are when expressed in Cree. Cree words provide an energy. Through Lionel's teachings, I understood that Priscilla was speaking about the vibrations within the words that connect to cellular knowledge. Vibrations within language, songs, ceremonies and visual art awaken and strengthen the cellular knowledge contained within each of us. Participants acknowledged the importance of traditional lands. Lionel has explained that the energy contained in our sacred places strengthens and sets up our cellular memory structure. Lionel's teachings about cellular knowledge and memory provide context and meaning to the participants' affinity for their lands, ceremonies, songs and language.

Natural Law

Teachings of and respect for natural law are embedded in the Cree language. Natural law is a higher order social law that governs all of nature. Lionel has said that natural law was here before us we did not invent it. Natural law teaches us relationality and responsibility. Lionel explains that "when a child goes to find a place to enter into the realm of the spiritual the responsibility is theirs." From an early age, we can become aware of relationality and responsibility in natural law. Spirituality is paramount and must be understood in the context of our language. Participants acknowledged natural law as part of the Cree way.

Language is Spiritual Engagement

Lionel's teaching that we are always praying through the use of words is significant. When we speak or use Cree, the energy encompassed in our words creates a spiritual forum. This supports what Priscilla was taught: " [The old people] say watch what you say because you're talking to spirit, we are all spirit first." The context of language encourages us to engage as spiritual beings.

Inductive Learning: Our Way of Thinking and Understanding

The most critical finding was the inductive nature of learning within the Cree way. Lionel said:

> *Inductive style is the preparation you go back to visit the people inside you. The language is a good way in...it has to be a natural process. Your mind can go through that experience. Its experiential. Previous knowledge is the foundation to inductive learning. Indigenous languages have a common theme – don't give answers, just enough information to stimulate thought. Thought is sacred – it protects individuality.*

Although I struggled initially to understand this notion of inductive learning, once I applied it to participants' words it became clearer. It was fascinating to uncover the perpetual nature of learning within the language. As Lionel said, this learning is understood in an individual context and is not prescriptive in anyway. Learning therefore is unique for everyone.

Participants spoke about the embedded knowledge within language. Florence claimed it was impossible to translate the embedded meanings of Cree into English. She shared that these embedded meanings perpetually deepen as we cycle through life. There is continual discovery of meaning for fluent speakers. Erin identified this perpetuity as the way we learn and understand the Cree way. Lionel's teachings of inductive learning also refer to the ceremonial, spiritual and deeper meaning granted within the Cree word. Maintaining language within the spiritual context reveals the Cree way.

Mosom Joe P. Cardinal's Teaching: Perpetual Healing is in Us

My mosom Joe P. Cardinal has left this world. It was my intent to have him and my kokom Jenny Cardinal participate in this work. Unfortunately this was not the case. My mosom Joe P. Cardinal was one of my last living grandparents and I held him in high regard. He spoke about love, *sahkihtin*, at many community gatherings. His love and respect for the Cree ways were reflected in his teachings and embrace of our entire community. Many other communities, provincially and nationally, have experienced his teachings of sacred spiritual connection. His teaching of *sahkihtin,* will remain with many of us.

Study the wisdom of the hoop in a natural way

My dream of Morningstar has come full circle. A circle has no end Lightning (1992) shares we cannot call something a "conclusion" or end as it violates the principles of Cree ways. Lightning shares the "interpretation is never concluded" (p. 240) I know that within the painting of Morningstar there are deeper meanings related to interconnection, cyclicity, perpetuity, enfoldment and implicate order, chaos and balance. I will continue to learn in the structure of the hoop and the circle. Elder Janvier's Morningstar painting brought me much insight and philosophical understanding and helped me find the meaning of the participants' words. The participants spoke with hope and desire of Cree and Cree ways. Some talked about the colonial effects that still plague our people and communities. Elder Janvier's painting tells us that we cycled through colonial experiences. We need to bring our memory back to our context. We must know we live in a bicultural world. My Mosom Joe P. said "We are bicultural, because we accepted so much from the whiteman. I have a hot-water system, but that doesn't mean I

can't follow the ways of my grandfather, too" (Meili, 1991, p. 256). We must know we can still follow the ways of our beloved grandmothers and grandfathers.

An aunt, Gloria Half, dropped by my work space as I was completing my analysis. We had the chance to discuss Cree concepts of truth. She started to speak about our Mosom Joe P. She told me about her final visit with him at the hospital. He had told her culture is embedded in the language and gave her these examples:

Iyinow; person, a Cree person

Iyinowak; all Cree people

*Iyinihakisi*w; people who heal themselves.

As a Cree instructor, she said the derivative of that word is from the meaning that Cree people are self healers. They have the knowledge of herbs. botany and ecological consciousness. I was humbled and very grateful, that my Mosom Joe P. came into this work in the end. In Makokis' study (2001), Skywoman provides a further explanation of this teaching:

> We are called *iyiniwak*. That is the foundation of who we are, our identity. We are supposed to heal ourselves and others and *iyiniwaskamkaw*, that is our relationship to our land, our connection here. *Nehiyaw* is the four directions, *newoyak*. There are four parts, and those are our four directions, and that is in our language. Additionally, '*Newoyak ehoci pikisweyan.*' I speak from the four directions, so you are always honouring your four directions. That is the philosophy of it. The four directions are, we have to be caring, sharing, we have to be honest, and we have to pray daily for our strength. Continued strength. Continued strength of our people and our land – our very existence. Yes, we are part of the land. This is how our connection is to the land, we *iyiniwak*. *Iyiniwaskamkohk*, you hear those terms when the Elders speak to all of you. It means it is a healing land, the land itself, they call Turtle Island and the turtle is part of healing. That is all [encompassing], it is almost like spiritual direction, you are honouring that direction. (p. 90)

Makokis adds: "*Iyiniwak* means healing people and is the term Cree First Nations people use to refer to themselves to distinguish themselves from others (all life forms) to convey

a sense of identity and purpose" (p. 191). In this teaching I understood healing. I recall the words spoken to me by my Mosom Joe P. a few years ago at a sweat ceremony: "We have the power to heal ourselves through ceremony." These words have such deep meaning in the context of Cree thinking. Cree thinking is spiritual, sacred and ceremonial. In regards to this study all thoughts were formulated in a Plains Cree context. This study has been ceremonial. I recognize it as this:

Research = Ceremony = Balance = Healing = Memory = Research

Healing is about becoming balanced or harmonious in terms of our energy.
Only when looked at from a western way do these things become mysterious

Healing in a Cree context is not about fixing something that is lesser than or not to standard or broken. Rather, it is balance. Our Indigenous intelligence tells us that within us is the completeness of mind-body-spirit-heart. Healing is about perpetually seeking balance of mind-body-spirit-heart and harmonious energy. This balance extends to our relations and connection to nature. Our Cree intelligence tells us that change is the constant and that within this change we seek balance to maintain the Cree way. In Lionel's teachings he talked a lot about healing and balance. He said:

It's good to go back to our people to get the information – as opposed to western thought.

I still believe our vibrational preparations are the healing. We go home to our people we hear vibrations and we heal...we rid the loneliness.

Among Lakota there are no medicine man unless you watch Hollywood. We are born helpers...we all are. All of us are medicine people because we can heal ourselves.

Our language plays a key role in the sustenance of the Cree way. As we worry about our language dying Lionel reminds us:

Our language doesn't hinge on individuals...it will never be lost...we can feel vibrations in our cellular structure...we feel the healing of our people inside us. Our healing process depends on it.

On the last day near the end of the class Lionel spoke to each of us about our concerns and regrets we had shared with him through our journals. In my case I shared with Lionel how regretful I was to not take opportunities to learn the great gifts of my grandmother while she was alive and well. Lionel spent the closing minutes of our class speaking to each one of us. When he spoke to me he said:

> *Ask relatives...they were told...before you go...make sure to leave the wisdom...it is in the bushes...four-legged it is an energy...to go on your journey. Remember don't take it with you leave it in the trails...the energies are there they come in. Sacred places are sacred places for a reason. The energies are there. Ask grandma tell her whatever she could give you... If someone has the pitch similar to our grandmother then it can help to heal though cellular structure, knowledge inherited from our people. There is a natural process of healing through the traditions of our people.*

In that moment I felt such deeply emotional. As I looked around the room I saw that Lionel embraced us all at a spiritual level. He wished us love and success as we returned home to our people. In his lectures, returning home was important. He felt going home to be with our own people would continue our learning and as a Lakota he felt he could only take us to a certain point. He told us we need to be near the vibrational sounds of our people. This would take us the rest of the way of our journey.

> *In order for us to be a whole person its good to go back to your people. If only Lakota is presented...its taking something away... Go back to your people not books. Look for familiar vibrational sounds.*

When I go home after this work, I intend to learn more within the context of my people and our Cree thinking. Lionel said: "We are dreaming of you to come home to help us." What he might not have known is that I too dream of going home to be helped in my journey of the Cree way. Lionel said "We learn by living not everything is language." I recognize the Cree way is more than just language alone. To learn and live in the Cree way requires me to be with my people on the sacred lands of our ancestors and to live within the context of the language. Lionel explains that it is a process: "Lakota is a

process of becoming a certain being." The process of the Cree context is inductive learning, which is unique and sacred for each individual. As I look at the teachings of Elder Janvier's painting, I understand that we are coming to a place of balance. We are self healers. Our Cree intelligence knows instinctually at a cellular level about harmony and balance.

For The Children

My uncle Carl has said that what we do is for the children - not only our own children but all children the world over. I thought about this throughout this work. I know my duties as a Cree parent are immense in regards to living in the context of the language and being amongst my people. I then recognized that Cree is a gift to the world. Housed within Cree are many teachings useful to all cultures. As I commit to the Cree way, I realize I am creating a better tomorrow for my children, other Cree children and all children who benefit from teachings of the Cree way. I would like to close with a letter to my children who are Cree and Inupiat and to all students I had the opportunity to teach and learn from.

To: Alana Star, Keyano Quinn and all my current and former students of Kihew Asiniy, Onchaminahoes, Kitaskinaw and Amiskwaciy Academy:

The Creator has gifted us to be together in our Indigenous journeys even if for some it was limited to a short time. This work has made me search far and deep as I could. Many times I felt overwhelmed in trying to understand the teachings contained in this work. Many times I faced emotional struggle as I wanted to understand right then. As I struggled through difficult times I held all of you in my mind as the reason to finish. I wanted this work to be meaningful for others but mainly for you and all others yet to come.

I feel a deep sense of gratitude to your/our grandparents, great grandparents, great-great-grandparents and those ancestors we never met but carry within us. Like all other young Cree and Indigenous children you are truly gifted beings with thousands of years of knowledge and wisdom. Embrace this! Always know your grandparents are with you. Our late Lakota Uncle Lionel Kinunwa said "ask the Elders to send their wisdom into your mind." I saved these words as my gift to you. They help me and I know they will help you. Always know our beloved grandparents and ancestors are willing and can help you in so many ways. Understand they lived their lives for you.

All of my little ones I am very fortunate to be or have been with you. As you journey life, rely on your Indigenous intelligence of mind-body-spirit-heart connected. Nurture it in the best way you know how. Know that the Cree way is embodied in you. Our grandparents have taught me that we must live with the knowing of the past-present-future connected. Our late Uncle Lionel shared this with me and I pass this on to you: Go forward my children with one foot in the sacred past, one foot in the sacred future, looking down the red road of the present with pride and strength in the Cree way. As I close my eyes to take a rest from this work I visualize and hear our beloved Mosom Joe P. Cardinal lovingly share these sacred virtues:

Kisahkihtin, Sahkihtohk (I love you, love each other)

Akameyimohk!

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