

**Ojibwe Elders' Experiences of Peace:
To Teach Our Well-Being with the Earth**

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Abstract

This research focuses on exploring the *Anishinaabek/Ojibwe* worldview founded upon the spiritual relationship with Mother Earth as the *Anishinaabek* view of peace to teach our well-being with earth. This research explores the experiences of four 21st century traditional *Anishinaabek* elders through describing their ways of knowing and of being as it relates to the *Anishinaabek* worldview of respect and peace with nature. This respect for Mother Earth and respecting earth's way—*akii-bimaadizi* is articulated and shared regarding elders' experiences of teaching our well-being with earth—*Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa* and is based upon *Anishinaabek* spirituality. This research details the *Anishinaabek* worldview from the elders' shared experiences of earth as teacher and elder. Ten themes emerged from the data. These themes included (a) going back to our original gifts and instructions/building your sacred bundle/sharing your sacred bundle, (b) wisdom—*nbwaakaawin*: connecting the dots/original instructions/medicine—*mshkiki*/environmental consciousness, (c) sacred teachings/learning from the elders, (d) relationships/honoring elders/eldership, (e) political experiences and awareness, (f) a way of being in *Anishinaabek* research, (g) survival, (h) peace is our worldview demonstrated, (i) be aware of colonialistic thinking, (j) *Akinomaage*: earth as context. The researcher also shares her reflections as a researcher and as an *Anishinaabekwe*: *Ojibwe* woman.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mother: Evelyn Goulais Lafleur, and to

Gzhe-manidoo, Shkagamik-kwe, all grandmothers and grandfathers, and to future generations who are inspired to learn and pass on the traditional *Anishinaabek* teachings.

Chi-miigwech.

Ktaningkwe, Nipissing, Mink Clan.

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Chi-miigwech, Gzhe-mnidoo—the Great Mystery.

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Anishinaabek/Ojibwe people have always had an interdependent relationship with the earth, a spiritual relationship with the natural world, essentially a blueprint of respect and care that nurtures Mother Earth. The relevance of the *Anishinaabek* worldview and indigenous spirituality as it relates to peace perspectives transcends any particular religious or cultural context. The *Anishinaabek* worldview is a distinctive worldview which can best be conceptualized as a presupposition of a peace foundation rather than as part of the normally understood term of “religion.” The *Anishinaabek* (good beings) worldview of this spiritual relationship is one of the sustainability of all life that is connected to Mother Earth—*Shkagamik-kwe*. This connection to *Shkagamik-kwe* is the *Anishinaabek* worldview of respecting Earth’s way of life: Earth’s way—*akii-bimaadizi*.

***Anishinaabek* Traditional Worldview**

The concept of “worldview” is central to this study. As explained by Redfield: World view attends especially to the way a man [woman and child], in particular society, sees himself [and herself] in relation to all else. It is the properties of existence as distinguished from and related to the self. It is, in short, a man’s [and woman’s and child’s] idea of the universe. It is that organization of ideas which answers to a man [to a woman and to a child] the questions: Where am I? Among what do I move? What are my relations to these things? (1952, p. 30)

In each culture, worldview is different. Early ethnographers who studied languages of the indigenous people of North America: American Indians, first recognized that Indian culture had a different way of understanding the world in comparison to their own (Callicott & Nelson, 2004). Language oriented the indigenous

to see the world in a complex fashion which embraced and transcended Euro-centric notions of persons and the world they live in (Diamond, 1981). Language is now recognized to unconsciously influence thought and perception. As explained by Edward Sapir (1929/1964, p. 69, as cited in Callicott and Nelson (2004, p. 20):

The worlds that different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

A culture's ethics is also part of their worldview. Morality and the quality of what is valued in a culture, in addition to a culture's cognitive orientations to the world, can all be seen as contributing to a culture's worldview. Figures 1 and 2, Dream Catcher and The Medicine Wheel, both represent visual examples of the *Anishinaabek* worldview (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988; Gifford & Cook, 1992, p. 47; Neihardt, 1932).

The Web of Life



Figure 1 Dream Catcher

All things are connected.
We did not weave the
web of life. We are but a
strand in it. Whatever
befalls the earth befalls
the people of the earth.

-Chief Seattle

Figure 1. Dream catcher.



Figure 2 Medicine Wheel

Figure 2. Medicine wheel.

The Circle of Life

The Circle is a part of the Medicine Wheel. This wheel is also known as the Wheel of Life, and/or the Circle of Life, and can represent the four directions, the four races, the four seasons, the four aspects of our nature (mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical) and many other relationships based on the set of four. The Medicine Wheel helps us to see and/or understand the intangible and the nature of relationships. It is based upon Indigenous ways of knowing and of being in the world. It helps us understand the relationships of the earth, ourselves and our relationships with others.

It is an image which symbolizes the interconnection of ourselves with creation. The power of nature is in a form of a circle: the earth, the sun, and the moon are all in the form of a circle. To respect the power of Creation, The Circle of Life should be respected, understood, and supported by all Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988).

Symbolically, these two images capture central elements of the *Anishinaabek* worldview. These cultural symbols (i.e., the dream catcher and the medicine wheel) and the oral tradition (the *Ojibwe/Anishinaabek* language, songs, sacred traditional stories, and ceremonies) are meant to preserve the distinctive spiritual foundation for current and future generations. The web of life and the medicine wheel are both representative of the circular nature of *Anishinaabek* values-orientation, of creation and the world, and our journey throughout life. Both demonstrate the continuity of life and the interconnection and interdependency between man and the natural world of both human beings and nature. We can see this in the *Anishinaabek* word for “having consideration”, expressed as *waawekewin*, meaning “to make it round.”

The *Anishinaabek* worldview includes the values behind the oral traditional teachings of the sacred stories, the ceremonies, the songs, and the *Ojibwe* language. Contemporary elders, who support the *Anishinaabek* traditional ways of knowing and of being, need to share their experiences in creating an understanding of today’s *Anishinaabek* traditional worldview (Atleo & Fitznor, 2010). Through this understanding, a meaning of a respect and peace with the natural world can be explored. Intergenerational communication in learning about these experiences (cultural transmission and its survival) will continue to exist if we honour the desire to remain as distinct people, with distinct gifts, as given to us by the Creator.

The research reported in this dissertation explores the meanings of the lived experiences of 21st century traditional *Anishinaabek* elders. The study was conducted in order to share the way in which their experiences framed and informed their appreciation of the *Anishinaabek* worldview. This exploration investigated the elders’ experiences to

reveal their contemporary perspectives of respect and peace with nature to express a meaningful worldview predicated upon a cultural definition of peace and harmony and a well-being with the earth—*mino akii-ayaa* (see Appendix A for a list of English translations of *Anishinaabemowin* terms used in this thesis). The *Anishinaabek* worldview promotes a way of being in harmony and balance with ourselves and our planet. This worldview supports a way of life that teaches our well-being with the earth—*Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa* for present and future generations founded on respect for the earth.

The Indigenous concept of peace is a “respectful coexistence--restoration of harmony to the network of relationships” (Alfred, 1999, p. 42). Respect of *Anishinaabek* survival, non-*Anishinaabek* survival, and Mother Earth’s survival is tantamount to knowing earth’s way and teaches our well-being with the earth. The concept of respect in this regard means “showing regard for the worth of someone or something. It takes three major forms: respect for oneself, respect for other people, and respect for all forms of life and the environment that sustains them” (Lickona, 1991, p. 1). The *Anishinaabek* worldview as it relates to Mother Earth and earth’s way presupposes a harmonious survival of self, society, and our planet as a way of life. In this study, I explore what constitutes a 21st century *Anishinaabek* perspective of this way of knowing as described by the meanings in the lived experiences of four traditional elders.

This study is based on the *Anishinaabek* traditional worldview and elders’ experiences as revealed through the teachings of our ancestors, *Anishinaabek* symbols, *Anishinaabek* oral education, the medicine wheel, *Ojibwe* language, and traditional sacred stories—*Aadizookaanag*. This worldview is the foundation of the conversations

with the elders. All of these elements embrace the *Anishinaabek* worldview of teaching us how to be well with the earth. This study, therefore, explores how this worldview could be shared with present and future generations, both *Anishinaabek* and non-*Anishinaabek*, to create an understanding of having a peaceful relationship with the planet.

The respect for continuing this valued knowledge has indigenized a values-orientation for this study by enabling the honouring of the gifts and teachings shared by these elders, thereby respecting *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing and of being. These teachings were used in discussion with the elders to elicit their understanding of the *Anishinaabek* worldview. In the Western tradition, “worldview” invites notions of worldview, epistemology, and ontology, but in this dissertation, I will use “worldview” to capture *Anishinaabek* perceptions of our respect for Mother Earth (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006).

Tensions: I Am *Anishinaabek* and I Am Also of European Origin

My identity as a member of the *Anishinaabek* community supported this orientation through my understanding and experiences as an *Ojibwe* woman-*Anishinaabekwe* who values the traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview. I found that learning the traditional ways of my ancestors gave me the teachings of respect for life, respect for the planet, and respect for others and myself. I am bicultural and, through these teachings, I have learned to respect both sides of myself: my *Anishinaabek* self and my European self. Learning to support any harmony that can exist between these two identities is imperative for me and for anyone who wants to live a life that has more meaning. Knowing the “truths” of two realities, from my experiencing two cultural

worlds in this life, has led me to pursue *Anishinaabek* traditional knowledge. Because we, as a society, need to exist in harmony together, we need to support harmony within and between ourselves, and this is taught by our Mother, the planet. All life has been created to function together in order to survive as a whole. The *Anishinaabek* worldview has taught me how to live better with these tensions and, because of this, I have been encouraged to share these teachings to inspire others to do the same.

I have spent many years learning about the *Anishinaabek* worldview as an antidote to the stereotypical violent depictions of the *Anishinaabek* people, as described within the Euro-centric worldview, and have replaced these with the wisdom of the elders of earth's way as shared by the elders. Throughout my life, I have experienced the substantial differences between the *Anishinaabek* worldview and the Euro-centric worldview as largely political and spiritual. It is political, because the *Anishinaabek* have historically struggled with being an oppressed and colonized people. Furthermore, our worldview has been oppressed, suppressed, rejected, maligned, extinguished, and misunderstood by mainstream society. It has struggled to exist and continues to do so. And it is spiritual, because our traditional way of life is guided by the spiritual principles of oneness with Mother Earth—*Shkagamik-kwe*. And these too have been historically oppressed, suppressed, rejected, maligned, extinguished, and misunderstood. These differences have created awkward tensions for me: mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically, throughout my entire life, because I am also of European descent. My experiences in learning the *Anishinaabek* traditional worldview have changed my life in the best ways, because it has helped me balance my intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical self. As a result, I choose to represent the *Anishinaabek* voice within a Euro-

centric academic realm. I have spent most of my time in schooling in the mainstream system. In this system, I choose to represent a silenced voice, a silenced people who are beautiful with a beautiful worldview to share for all of our survival. I choose to explore a worldview about which most people know little. I choose to be seen as sharing the gifts of our *Anishinaabek* ancestors as much as possible throughout the writing of this thesis. Most people do not realize that the *Anishinaabek* worldview exists, or that other worldviews exist for that matter. What is more, because I am caught in the middle of the concepts of the Western worldview and the Aboriginal worldview, I prefer to use *Anishinaabek* worldview instead of Western worldview, because it enables me to capture the *Anishinaabek* practices which speak to our perceptions of peace. In this, I will take my responsibility in respecting our *Anishinaabek* voices and our worldview. I take this responsibility as a member and as a descendant of the original people of Turtle Island (North America) in respecting our gift in being the ancient people of this place.

Because I am *Anishinaabek* and also of European descent, I feel accountable to both groups of ancestors. The *Anishinaabek* relationship of respect for earth's way supports a respect for all life. This respect translates in conveying the substantial differences as an individual who can see two ways of being and knowing life through experiencing both *Anishinaabek* and Euro-centric worldviews. Invariably, because all *Anishinaabek* live in mainstream society, this research inevitably grounds tensions that exist because of these differences through the words of the elders and of me as the researcher.

Different cultural worldviews challenge us to experience knowing the world in ways other than those with which we are familiar. One primary difference between

cultures is in communication and learning. Although a Euro-centric worldview supports the explication of knowledge, theory, interpretation, and findings conveyed in research, I invite the readers to come to your own understanding of what is being shared, within your own time and experiences. It is my hope that you will receive a deeper understanding of another worldview that exists on Turtle Island from time immemorial. This is of prime importance in respecting *Anishinaabek* worldview. Implication, the dominant mode of learning and communicating for Aboriginal people, is to be respected. It is an invitation to share and respect where someone is situated on her or his learning journey, without imposition. It does not assume that you are able or not yet there in your understanding. Respecting where you are situated in learning about what is being shared is left with you for reflection to learn more about who you are and for future reflection. Therefore, I invite you to engage in an interdependent relationship with the experiences presented here and encourage your reflection on what is being said so you may come to your own understanding at this given point in time. My premise is that you will revisit this sharing experience through continued reflection over the entirety of your learning journey called life. This is the only way that understanding can be attained within the tradition of the *Anishinaabek* perspective and worldview.

Experiential Influences

During my years in the PhD program, I have engaged in a variety of learning experiences: academic, cultural, and community based, in order to prepare for the development of my research. In the fall 2001, I joined the local Native Friendship Centre's Three Fires Restorative Justice Program, since my initial research interest for this study was to evaluate this community program for my research topic. I worked

serving on a variety of Community Justice Circles for a period of 2 years with the local urban Native community. The Three Fires Program served young offenders aged 16 to 18, and adults 18 and over, with a postcharge diversion process (alternative sentencing) for nonviolent offences. During this time, I attended workshops put on by the Centre (i.e., mediation, nonverbal communication/body language, active interviewing/listening, and Native cultural traditional teachings). All of the workshops were attended in the Native community, and community relationships were established and nurtured. Also, in the fall 2001, I participated in an Alternative Dispute Resolution Training program with an *Anishinaabek* Education Institute so I could become part of a pool of Native mediators. This program supported a training module in Winnipeg, with an additional 6-month practicum. I participated in hearings with the Three Fires Community Justice Program and worked throughout this process in fulfilling the practicum component for the certificate that I received in the Mediation Skill Development and Practice course.

During my coursework, I developed a proposal to explore, develop, pilot, and evaluate an Aboriginal Community Mediation Medium for high school Aboriginal youth. Through my experiences with the Restorative Justice Program and Aboriginal mediation, I began to realize, systematically, that Native peoples and youth were reacting to difficult challenges that they did not create (i.e., legislated loss of identity, assimilative education, and residential school experiences), and I wanted to find a proactive method of mediation based on *Anishinaabek* traditions, values, and worldview. Eventually, this turned into a quest to understand and preserve a traditional way of mediation using *Anishinaabek* traditional teachings. I wanted to focus on looking for a solution in preventing such challenges for Aboriginal youth instead of relying on exclusively creating a reactive

symptomology to the problems that they face. A reactive symptomology such as reworked mainstream approaches based on Aboriginal models was important, but I wanted to reclaim and formalize an *Anishinaabek* worldview which could be shared with all *Anishinaabek* people, as well as non-*Anishinaabek* people, to support the *Anishinaabek* reclamation of identity and of traditional *Anishinaabek* knowledge.

Current mediation programs were accessed only after the individual had already gotten into trouble with the law and/or required a process of intervention. The concept of a preventative and proactive approach which included *Anishinaabek* identity and worldview, one that would facilitate a cultural-mediation process, was realized through my participation in a community based postcharge diversion program. Through this realization, I started to conceptualize the mediation process as *mino akii-ayaa*: the well-being with the earth as a way of knowing peace, in which the traditional teachings of the *Anishinaabek* could be taught to promote and develop our traditional ways of knowing and being. This approach would result in the healthy development of a peaceful perspective of self, others, and the world in which we live in, through learning the traditional teachings that have always been shared by our *Anishinaabek* traditional elders.

While at Lakehead University for a summer course, I became interested in exploring the *Anishinaabek* worldview of nature's way—*akii-bimaadizi* as a way to be and live well with the earth—*mino akii-ayaa*. This led me to this research as a way to explore the *Anishinaabek* worldview as a way to teach our well-being with earth—*Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*. I wanted to investigate the *Anishinaabek* worldview of this Indigenous peace perspective. As an Indigenous scholar, the research experience becomes more than the interdependence of one's mental processes with this experience, but also

includes one's spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions of self, society, world, and earth that we live in. This interdependence, therefore, resulted in a holistic, inclusive, and relational research process founded upon the interplay of learning with self, society, and planet, thus allowing for an understanding that is nurturing and honoring of the *Anishinaabek* worldview. This understanding supported a desire to understand a traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview of earth's way as one of well-being with the earth as taught by the elders and *Anishinaabek* values of teaching our well-being with the earth. I discovered that the *Anishinaabek* worldview embraced Mother Earth in all that the *Anishinaabek* value; therefore, a worldview of well-being with the earth was seen as, foundationally, one of peace. Through other academic and personal experiences, I was also encouraged to nurture a reclaiming of my own cultural integrity and respect for my *Anishinaabek* self through a spiritual focus and power. This focus was to formally learn and understand the *Anishinaabek* traditional spiritual teachings and worldview as knowing peace from the elders, which I have found personally powerful in my own experiences and in my own *Anishinaabek* identity development; it has supported my positive approach to resolve reactive and inner conflicts with the *Anishinaabek* experiences with colonialism.

Throughout my university experiences, I have always attended *Anishinaabek* gatherings and Pow Wows which have taught traditional *Anishinaabek* values through ceremony and stories that community people share. In the past, I have always attended *Ojibwe–Anishinaabemowin* language classes at the local Native Community Friendship Centres, wherever I am living, to reclaim my language as an *Ojibwe* woman. I have had many traditional *Anishinaabek* teachers who have generously shared their traditional

teachings, values, and traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview. All of my academic and experiential learning experiences have supported an understanding of the relevance of the intergenerational traditional teachings of our *Anishinaabek* ancestors and of Mother Earth. These teachings are particularly relevant to the peaceful future of our youth and for all peoples. It is my hope that this knowledge and worldview can be preserved for the peaceful future of the next generations as we head into the 21st century, before they are lost.

Research Context

The *Anishinaabek* population dwindled significantly when non-Indian settlers came to the new world bringing with them serious epidemics of smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, and cholera. “The Ojibwas, whom early observers described as healthy, became increasingly disease-ridden ... village life, change in clothing, housing, and foods all contributed to deteriorating health” (Vecsey, 1983, p. 155). In addition to disease, the *Anishinaabek* population dwindled from protecting our lands, from dislocation from our traditional lands and territories, and restricted, legislative access to our sustenance, to today’s poverty, genocide, and cultural genocide (Peacock & Wisuri, 2002).

***Anishinaabek* Population**

Currently, according to Statistics Canada’s (2006) Census, there are 158,395 North American Indians living in Ontario. Under population by mother tongue, by province and territory, *Ojibwe* is not listed. The Cree and the Inuit are the only Indigenous populations listed in Ontario: Cree people have 3,495 speakers, and the Inuit have 390 speakers (Statistics Canada, 2006). We do not know how many *Anishinaabek*

speakers there are in Ontario, according to the 2006 Census. The present day estimated population for the *Anishinaabek* in Ontario is 80,552 who are registered out of the 89 Ontario *Anishinaabek* First Nation Bands (Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 2007). Therefore, the Ontario *Anishinaabek* are .7% of the Ontario population, and .3% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2006). All status Indians/treaty Indians or Indians who currently have some access to limited treaty rights from all of the Canadian First Nations, make up 2% of the Canadian population (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2006; Statistics Canada, 2006). The number of traditional *Anishinaabek* people in Ontario are few, as there are few speakers of *Anishinaabemowin*, and few *Anishinaabek* who know the traditional teachings and traditional values due to the assimilative policies of the Indian Act which outlawed traditional practices and created a vehicle for the theft and annihilation of the *Anishinaabek* language and pride through the residential schools and cultural genocide. Canadian legislation and The Indian Act were created by the Canadian government to exterminate the *Anishinaabek* population (genocide); exterminate access to our traditional worldview, traditional lands, and health of lands; and exterminate self and community sufficiency by outlawing economic development in reserve communities, thereby creating today's poverty and unemployment (Vecsey & Venables, 1980).

This research is very important in understanding the experiences of present-day traditional *Anishinaabek* elders. Academically, there is a scarcity of the contemporary traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview recorded and researched. In this study, the contemporary traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview can demonstrate what is valued and respected by the *Ojibwe* traditional people in the 21st century. It can serve to provide the

foundation for exploring the *Anishinaabek* worldview of respecting earth's way of life as the *Anishinaabek* view of peace. *Anishinaabek* and Indigenous ways of knowing are based upon relationships. S. Wilson (2008) explains that "reality is relationships or sets of relationships ... [that] there is no one definite reality but rather different sets of relationships" (p. 73). *Anishinaabek* worldview is also related to an interdependent relationship with Mother Earth. The importance of the *Anishinaabek* worldview will be further explained and demonstrated throughout Chapter Two, supported by discussions of contemporary theory for cultural worldview and discussions of *Anishinaabek* traditional worldview, values, and ideology that exist in the literature. Next, I outline the context to support the importance of this research study through the discussion of Indigenous (politically known as Fourth World) experiences and our consciousness of Fourth World conflict, colonialism, and survival.

Synott (1996) argues that the Indigenous worldview should be centrally represented when discussing concepts of peace, specifically, in ways of knowing that include spirituality and worldview as peace. Globally, Indigenous people have, indeed, shared similar experiences of conflict with colonization, and this conflict also includes our awareness of the colonization of our planet: Mother Earth. This experience consists of struggles for survival of person, community, language, and culture, and the natural world, struggles that have demonstrated the power and perception of Indigenous people in our inherent rights to maintain a relationship with ancestral lands and Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Native people have historically defended this knowledge and relationship to the earth.

Furthermore, Synott (1996) shares that the experience of Indigenous peoples worldwide with the conflicts emanating from colonialism can provide a foundation and insight into understanding what Native people are trying to preserve and defend. Serious discussions of the *Anishinaabek* worldview as peace will promote the voices and perspectives of traditional Indigenous peoples. Our voices and worldview must be shared to overcome the current marginalization and omission of First Peoples' perspectives within the larger, global community. This exploration of an *Anishinaabek* worldview of respecting earth's way and of teaching our well-being with earth provides the foundation for a respect for Indigenous peoples' experiences as ancient peoples.

Indigenous worldviews should be included as implying and embracing Indigenous ways of knowing and being for peace. This is important, because the Indigenous worldview supports traditional teachings for peace with our planet. This type of awareness has been discussed as Indigenous cultural and spiritual perspectives that support the *Anishinaabek* worldview of sustainability and survival. In other words, Indigenous spiritual perspectives are based upon cultural and community values which are earthcentred (Grinde & Johansen, 1995). *Ojibwe* identity and culture are founded upon a worldview of the spirituality of respect and oneness with the natural world: a natural theology. This means that Native spirituality is connected to the land and its ecology (Grinde & Johansen, 1995). Indigenous presence on the earth is "as part of the circle of life and time, as [a] part of Mother Earth. It is also a spiritual place. And, it encompasses all of Turtle Island [North America]" (McNab, 1998, p. 325). Traditional consciousness is founded upon "nature and power," which means that the land is to be used "in ways that respect indigenous notions of [peace and] justice, not simply for the

short-sighted generation of wealth for others” (Alfred, 1999, p. 162), but to the seventh generation.

An *Anishinaabek* worldview of peace can be seen in Indigenous thought as nature and spirit (a faith in creation) as being the foundation of power. Peace “was the product of a spiritually conscious society using its abilities at reason which resulted in a healthy society. The Power to enact Peace ... was conceived to be both spiritual and political” (Akwesasne Notes, 1981, p. 12). The law of a peaceful society was founded upon the “Natural Law” developed through looking to Nature as a teacher who demonstrated to the people how to live in harmony together (Akwesasne Notes, 1981).

Purpose Statement

The focus of the research is to explore the traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview of respecting earth’s way in identifying ways to teach our well-being with earth through the eyes of contemporary *Anishinaabek* elders in the beginning of the 21st century. This worldview of peace includes the historical to present-day relationship with Mother Earth as a means to promote a oneness with self, community, planet, and universe. Since these relationships are built on respect and harmony, *Anishinaabek* values can be explained through the sharing of the experiences of contemporary elders to explore and delineate a traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview of peace and respecting earth’s way. Through formalizing this worldview, this study explored, described, and interpreted *Anishinaabek* elders’ contemporary perspectives for an *Anishinaabek* worldview as peace.

I used the European tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology, a form of interpretive inquiry, to explore elders’ perceptions of a well-being with the earth—*mino akii-ayaa*. It is important to the understanding of everyone on the planet to include the

Anishinaabek worldview of respecting earth's way—*akii-bimaadizi* within an *Anishinaabek* worldview peace perspective, to teach our well-being with earth—*Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*.

Research Questions

1. What is the traditional *Ojibwe/Anishinaabek* relationship with our planet, Mother Earth, and how can this assist us in developing harmonious relationships with the earth, ourselves, and each other?
2. How can the traditional *Ojibwe/Anishinaabek* elders' experiences be used to articulate and create an understanding for a spiritual harmony and balance with the earth?
3. How can such an understanding support and embrace a worldview of living peacefully with nature, ourselves, and our communities?

Delimitations of Study

This research is not an exhaustive study regarding peace and worldview. The explicit focus of this study is to explore an *Anishinaabek* perspective of well-being with the earth—*mino akii-ayaa* and the elders' experiences of teaching our well-being with the earth—*Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*. Through sharing the lived experiences of elders, the *Anishinaabek* worldview of respecting earth's way—*akii-bimaadizi* can be articulated and shared. The lessons of the elders in teaching our well-being with the earth are important to include in a variety of different disciplines because our worldview and traditional knowledge are marginalized, if not omitted, within academic disciplines. *Anishinaabek* experiences of peace in respecting earth's way can be seen as an emancipatory vehicle for respecting and including *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing and being.

This dissertation focuses on exploring the *Anishinaabek* worldview as one of peace. It does not directly relate to the corpus of work in peace education developed in the European tradition. It is intended to make a contribution to our understanding of the *Anishinaabek* worldview and the role of peace as it relates to our relationship with Mother Earth in that view.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter One has introduced and provided an outline for the background to the research questions to be investigated in this study. Chapter Two presents my background knowledge as well as the contextual influences for an *Anishinaabek* worldview as peace while acknowledging that unanticipated insights may further be revealed through the study itself. Chapter Three describes a methodology of interpretive inquiry, specifically a research design employing hermeneutic phenomenology. Within Chapter Four, the findings and analysis of the conversations with the coresearchers are shared. Finally, Chapter Five presents the interpretations, conclusions, implications, and further questions to be studied.

Following next, in Chapter Two, we see the importance of the elders' transgenerational teachings necessary to enable the passing down of the values which support moral obligations to maintain Mother Earth's sustainability and ultimately our own sustainability. It delineates my background experiences within the *Anishinaabek* worldview as peaceful, and the theories and concepts that provide a framework for this study.

CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES

This chapter provides the interpretive frameworks influencing this study. Here I share my personal experiences with the *Anishinaabek* worldview and my revelation to explore earth's way—*akii-bimaadizi* as an *Anishinaabek* view of peace, with contemporary elders. I present my basic call to this peace consciousness founded upon the *Anishinaabek* worldview. I also present the contextual influences for exploring the *Anishinaabek* elders' worldview within the traditional teachings and experiences which support our ways of knowing and of being. These promote our ways, our well-being with earth, and our teaching of such. “At its core, it [peace] is inherently spiritual; it speaks to the connectedness of all things; it focuses on achieving unity, harmony, on balancing the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical dimensions of a community of people” (Le Resche, 1996, p. 40).

Journey to My Well-Being with the Earth—*Mino Akii-ayaa*

As an *Anishinaabek* and European person, I had to make efforts in connecting with *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing and of being. I sought out many experiences with traditional persons and participated in *Ojibwe* language opportunities to learn more about my *Anishinaabek* self. This discovery was motivated and supported by the awareness that, purposefully, little information existed in my schooling and mainstream life education that respected the *Anishinaabek* people.

I have spent many years learning about the importance of my relationship with Mother Earth, developing my spirituality through learning from elders, and participating in *Anishinaabek* gatherings and ceremonies. Honouring Mother Earth was a way to honour my spiritual being and promote respect of self and others. Through these

experiences, I became no longer a media victim, exposed to the violent stereotypical images of propaganda that had portrayed me negatively, as a blood-thirsty, savage, lazy, alcoholic terrorist or enemy of the Canadian public. I saw the beauty of our culture and connection to our well-being with Earth and learned of the beauty of our people and myself. This was never taught to me or to others that I knew anywhere in the mainstream school system.

The Medicine Wheel teachings assisted my reflection within the four aspects of my human nature. All aspects of my nature: the mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical, were encouraged to be developed in balance through my volition in developing my gifts. Our elders help us develop a vision for our future through encouraging us to develop our volition towards a righteous vision: one which assists our community, honours *Anishinaabek* knowledge, and supports an understanding of the importance of all life as sacred. “The medicine wheel is a symbolic tool that helps us to see that interconnectedness of our being with the rest of creation” (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988, p. 41). Keeping balance along my journey around the medicine wheel has helped me use my volition in developing the potential for myself in healthy ways. “It cannot be said that a person has totally learned in a whole and balanced manner unless all four dimensions of her being have been involved in the process” (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988, p. 29). Therefore, this includes learning more about my *Anishinaabek* self as situated within the *Anishinaabek* worldview as one of peace.

Throughout this learning, it was important to honour elder teachings. I needed to include the *Anishinaabek* worldview and language within my own academic experiences. I researched the area of Indigenous traditional teachings and spirituality as relating to an

Anishinaabek view of peace, because I recognized the *Anishinaabek* worldview as a peace worldview. This search revealed only one academic article in this area which supported the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' ways of knowing in living peacefully with our planet (Synott, 1996).

Synott (1996) shared the importance of including the indigenous worldview in understanding our relationship with peace and planet:

It is my contention, however, that the knowledge constructions of peace educators and the peace movement generally need to place indigenous epistemology [ways of knowing] within the central understandings and representations of our discourse. Omission and silence are strategies of oppression as much as active oppression, as well the feminist movement has shown us. It is my assertion that the paradigms of peace education need to be inclusive of indigenous perspectives on the nature of the world and appropriate human actions within it, if they are to achieve the truly global currency they seek. (p. 87)

Synott (1996) describes the Aboriginal constructions of belongingness as the interrelationship and reciprocity of an obligation to respect the land as well as the land respecting and providing for the people. "The Aboriginal view is dominated by an understanding of the continuity of the world: The emphasis is not on the creation but the process of shaping and the practice of maintaining the world" (p. 89)

Few academic works exist on traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview written by Native authors (Bastien, 2004; Rheault, 1999). Therefore, I saw the need to share, learn, and research, as an *Anishinaabek* scholar, the teachings of the elders within *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing and being.

I became immersed in the *Anishinaabek* worldview through reclaiming my traditional teachings and personal experiences as well as reading large amounts of traditional knowledge contained in the literature concerning the teachings of the elders. I recognized the *Anishinaabek* teachings and worldview for peace with our planet was based upon political and spiritual elements. I wanted to explore *Anishinaabek* elders' worldview and their perceptions of our well-being with the earth. The reason for this exploration was to find a way to come to understand our peace perspective founded upon the *Anishinaabek* worldview and our ways of knowing and of being as seen by the elders. The importance of our well-being with the earth comes to life in our responsibility to pass on this ancient wisdom to future generations. It is part of our way to take our responsibility of passing on traditional knowledge and to do so to the seventh generation. Prepared with this experience, I made a commitment to learn and write about the traditional *Anishinaabek* way of life in the 21st century. Through learning more about the *Anishinaabek* worldview, I became familiar with our spiritual connection to Mother Earth and that my well-being was connected to her. The ancestral teachings provided me with a harmonious connection to *Shkagamik-kwe*, and I needed to learn what the elders experienced in their lives and on their journey towards this.

Through reviewing Bowers's cultural intelligence theory; Elders and Grandfathers; The Seven Grandfathers Teachings and the foundation of respect; The Medicine Wheel; *Anishinaabek* Oral Tradition: Oral Education; and the traditional sacred stories—*Aadizookaanag*, and Reflections on How the *Anishinaabek* Got Fire; *Ojibwa* Environmental Ethics; and The *Anishinaabek* Worldview as a View of Peace; a start in developing a foundation in understanding our worldview is presented. These are

elements of my attempt to help the reader come to learn more about the *Anishinaabek* worldview based upon our spirituality for peace and harmony.

Cultural Intelligence Theory

Cultural intelligence theory will be detailed to understand the political contexts within differing cultural worldviews. Cultural intelligence theory was developed by Bowers to support the concepts of the “ecological and social dimensions of human experience” within intelligence theory (Bowers, 1999, p. 24). This theory supports teaching towards an understanding of a culture’s “metaphorical constructions” (i.e., the identification of cultural assumptions, values, language, etc.) in one’s “natural attitude toward cultural patterns ... [to the] way the cultural metaphorical constructions of the past continue to influence how we think and behave” (Bowers, 1995, p. 126). Bowers’s theory of cultural intelligence was motivated by his environmental and social concerns. He outlines the metaphorical constructions of Western culture as being based upon a “mechanistic view of humans and the world, change as linear and progressive, patriarchy, anthropocentrism, and the autonomous individual” (Bowers, 1999, p. 33). These cultural metaphorical constructions (root metaphors) are viewed by Bowers as negligent in the preservation of the natural world and its social community.

Western assumptions also support an anthropocentric (man-centered) evolutionary progress in the developments of science and technology: a concept included in the Western cultural schemata (frame of mind). Through these Western cultural schemata, we can see the importance of science and technology, because if one questions or rejects science and technology, she or he might be seen as “unpatriotic and immoral” (Fowles, 1987, p. 247). Bowers (1999) mentions the impact of neo-social Darwinist

thought towards non-Western and nontechnical cultures as a part of this metaphorical construction of Western culture. Neo-social Darwinism views the disappearance of Indigenous cultures as “an inevitable consequence of the process of evolution” (Bowers, 1999, p. 27).

Bowers (1999) hopes that the understanding of the theory of cultural intelligence will lead to an understanding of cultural worldview. His goal is to promote and include the understanding for “a more adequate root metaphor [that] must take into account the way the individual is nested in the symbolic systems of culture and the culture is nested in ecosystems” (p. 34). Bowers (1999) hopes that the understanding of the theory of cultural intelligence will lead to an understanding of how schemata from differing cultural worldviews can influence cultures’ ways of knowing. There is a relationship between cultural worldview, schema theory and different ways of knowing that are culturally based, especially in how they relate to nature. Schema theory and the way cultures define their ways of knowing are vital in understanding a nation's cultural worldview in this regard.

Bowers (1997) mentions mythopoetic narratives (another example of a root metaphor) as being distinct to earth-centered cultures. Mythopoesis renews ancient stories by repositioning them into a symbolic meaning. Members of the community were brought together through the sharing of myths and rituals.

For the primitive, the myth is an everpresent, live actuality ... a statement of a bigger reality still practically alive ... in that its precedent, its law, its moral still rule the social life of the natives ... a vital ingredient of human civilization” (Slochower, 1970, p. 332).

Generally, in non-earth-centered cultures (i.e. Western society), man feels independent from nature and takes for granted that which sustains life. “Nature manuals may teach you how and what to look for, what to question in external nature; but never in your own nature” (Fowles, 1987, p. 247). Unfortunately, moral reciprocity and relationship patterns in today’s community and environment have become entrenched in the marketplace through the commodification of goods (Bethoud, 1992, as cited in Bowers, 2001). And the contemporary perspective on caring for the planet has been framed within an “empiricist environmentalism” (Synott, 1996, p. 87).

Bowers (1993; 1995; 1997; 1999; 2001) also discusses the importance of language and the role of language in cultural transmission. Language is seen as nonneutral; as an organization for thought and cultural patterns of recognition; as a means of processing analogical (metaphorical) thinking; as an encoder for the development of schemata of social reality; and is a necessity for communicating one’s culture from the past to present generations. From this, we can see the importance of the transmission and retention of distinct languages and the transgenerational teachings that are necessary for passing down the cultural values which support moral obligations. Maintaining languages, especially of earth-centered cultures, is extremely important to our sustainability (Bowers, 1997). Indigenous cultures have a unique tradition of respect towards elders in the community, because it is through the maintenance of respecting the oral tradition and the importance of language that earth-centered spiritual knowledge for survival was and is transmitted. This sharing facilitates a community value for a just and earthly sustainable culture and society for future generations.

Elders and Grandfathers

Traditional knowledge is currently being reclaimed and shared by Indigenous academic scholars for future generations. Alfred (2005) explains the commonalities in the worldview of the Indigenous and the importance of the natural world and of elders:

The most evident element is that indigenous peoples have a strong relationship with their land and territories; they see them as the social space where they recreate themselves, so land and territory are not only commodities. To indigenous peoples, religion and culture are linked to their natural contexts. It is not rare to find animal representations being linked to human beings. (p. 142)

The role of elder is something shared among indigenous peoples too. Elders are seen as those who have accumulated knowledge, who have answers, or who know how to do things according to tradition.

Traditional elders have always shared the *Anishinaabek* traditional teachings with future generations so that all can have a good life—*mino bimaadziwin* and have a good relationship with the earth. These teachings have always been shared through the *Anishinaabek* oral tradition. Elders in the *Anishinaabek* tradition serve as the culturally significant individuals who preserve and share the *Anishinaabek* traditional teachings for current and future generations so that all will have a good life and well-being.

Hallowell, an anthropologist who participated in extensive field work with the *Ojibwe*, talks about the *Anishinaabek* worldview and elders within that worldview: “World view” [he says] differs from culture, ethos, mode of thought ... [there are] implicit and explicit dogmas regarding the ‘causes’ of events ... the action of persons provides the major key to their worldview” (Diamond, 1981, pp. 19–21).

Hallowell goes on to explain the significance of “grandfather”:

It is not only applied to human persons but to spiritual beings who are persons of a category other than human. In fact, when the collective plural “our grandfathers” is used, the reference is primarily to persons of this latter class.

(Diamond, 1981, pp. 21–22)

Hallowell further explains that there is no difference between our biological relations of grandfather, male elders in the community, and the spiritual connotations of grandfathers “as other-than-human person[s].” In other words, grandfathers can also be spirits and spirit persons made of earth, rock, sun, and universe. They are the four winds and the four directions. They have understanding and self-awareness and can be communicated with. They also have “a vital part which is enduring and an outward appearance that may be transformed under certain conditions ... [and have] personal identity, autonomy, and volition” (Diamond, 1981, p. 43). Our grandfathers are just as much our relations and our elders as our biological grandfathers. Spiritually, this is of utmost importance, because “grandfathers are sources of power to human beings through the ‘blessings’ they bestow, i.e., a sharing of their power which enhances the ‘power’ of human beings” (Diamond, 1981, p. 22)

Hallowell also understood the importance of *bimaadziwin* in the *Anishinaabek* worldview and wrote about the principle of implied reciprocity of maintaining “approved standards of personal and social conduct” as a crucial element in having a “long and good life” [*bimaadziwin*] (Diamond, 1981, p. 46). Moral conduct and moral values such as hunting in a proper manner and sharing of “a balance, a sense of proportion” are examples in demonstrating these approved standards (Diamond, 1981, p. 47).

Seven Grandfather Teachings: Foundation of Respect

The seven grandfather teachings refer to virtues that have been passed down by the elders. These grandfather teachings are: courage, truth, respect, love, honesty, wisdom, and humility (Buswa & Shawana, 1992; McNally, 2009; Simpson, 2011). Because of the complexity of these virtues in the context of the *Anishinaabek* worldview, I will elaborate on only one—the most important of the foundational virtues: respect, especially respect for elders.

Traditionally, grandparents held the responsibility to model and teach moral education. Elders are seen as “spiritual directors [or] mentors” (McNally, 2009, p. 135). The elders taught practical and spiritual guidelines for survival and the meaning of life. The link between these elements is respect—*manaajitowin*. The importance of respect is served by elders through role-modeling, stories, and admonitions. As shared by a Cree elder in McNally (2009):

A young woman listened most carefully to the things her grandmother, especially, warned her about. Of course the ‘old woman’ ... had come to be experienced in always treating everything with respect. That is what she used to pass on to her grandchildren, how the children and grandchildren would have peace of mind, so they would be given peace of mind. (p. 136)

Respect is learned by example. The “pedagogy of example” was of utmost importance, and the old ones taught and teach by example more than by words. The younger ones learn “by absorption rather than direct instruction” (McNally, 2009, p. 137). Therefore, respect is modeled and taught by elders for the youth to become aware from observing, listening, and learning from the old ones.

The Medicine Wheel

Anishinaabek symbols are a large part of our values-orientation, teachings, and spiritual worldview. The circular nature of life, *waawiyeyaa*, is preserved in the *Anishinaabek* intergenerational teachings. The medicine wheel is a symbolic teaching tool which acts as a mirror to teach and shows reflective elements of one's journey in life. As explained by the Four Worlds Development Project (1984, p. 6):

Just like a mirror can be used to see things not normally visible (e.g. behind us or around a corner), the medicine wheel can be used to help us “see” or understand things we can't see with our physical eyes because they are ideas and not physical objects.

The teachings of the Medicine Wheel also demonstrate the potential of what could possibly be realized. “Everything of Creation is represented in the Medicine Wheel. In all of Creation there is cause and effect. The Medicine Wheel depicts how these things of Creation interact” (Buswa & Shawana, 1992, p.4). The Circle represents the Medicine Wheel—*Mshkiki Detibisenh*. This is also known as the Wheel of Life and/or the Circle of Life and can represent the four directions, the four races, the four seasons, the four aspects of our nature (mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual), and many other relationships based on the set of four (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988). The Medicine Wheel helps us to see and/or understand the intangible, the nature of relationships, and it is based upon Indigenous epistemology and worldview: ways of seeing and knowing the world, and the relationships of the world to and within ourselves. It is an image which symbolizes the interconnection of our being with creation. It is an important symbol which promotes harmonious action, since the circle represents creation.

The Medicine Wheel—*Mshkiki Detibisenh* has teachings in the Four Directions—*Niiwin Nikeying*. All things begin in the East—*Waabnong*, which is symbolic of the mind: *Nendamowin*. Thought strongly influences our lives and impacts the other aspects of the wheel. New things are learned in this direction. All experiences, those learned and relearned, result in a deeper understanding. Clarity, concentration, renewal, and leadership in helping others are gifts of the East (Buswa & Shawana, 1992; Four Worlds Development Project, 1988). Mindful identity and purpose are also in the East. Vecsey (1980) defines religion in his chapter on American Indian environmental religions as “the conception of, attitudes toward, and relations with the ultimate source of life” (p. 1). This definition includes worldview: conceptions or doctrines, and relations (Vecsey, 1980). I see the concepts of worldview as belonging to the East.

The next direction of the *Mshkiki Detibisenh* is the teachings of the South—*Zhaawnong*, because the wheel moves in the clockwise direction for the *Anishinaabek* peoples. The Physical (body)—*Wiiwyng* is in the South, and symbolically it is the time for future preparation. The gifts of the South are determination, idealism, passion, compassion, and physical discipline (Buswa & Shawana, 1992). Vecsey’s (1980) definition of religion as defined in his chapter on Indian environmental religion also includes actions: relations or praxis. Therefore, I see actions as belonging to the South.

The next direction of the *Mshkiki Detibisenh* is the teachings of the West—*Epngishmok*. The emotions (feelings)—*Enmaanjwaang* are in the West. The gifts of the West are meditation, deep reflection, perseverance, vision, clear self-knowledge, and sacrifice (Buswa & Shawana, 1992). Vecsey’s (1980) definition of religion as

defined in his chapter on Indian environmental religion also includes emotion: attitudes or piety, and I see these as including values and relations belonging to the West.

The last direction of the *Mshkiki Detibisenh* is the North–*Giiwednong*, which represents the Spirit–*Jiibaam*. Spiritual identity and purpose are in the North. The gifts of the North are strength, survival, elders, wisdom, interpretation, balance, justice, intuition made conscious, and completion (Buswa & Shawana, 1992). Vecsey’s (1980) definition of religion as defined in his chapter on Indian environmental religion includes a relationship to the ultimate source of life as involving both human and nonhuman elements: a geopietic relationship, a reverence to the earth. The spirit is the relationship to all things human and nonhuman. I see this as including all relationships with creation, its sustenance and essence of well-being.

The Four Directions have also been called the Four Grandfathers–*Mishoomaag*, and they are “the Spiritual Guardians of the four directions. We receive spiritual and physical strength from the Mishoomaag” (Buswa & Shawana, 1992, p. 38). All of the four grandfathers are related as part of the Medicine Wheel, and all work together to teach us about “the many different ways in which all things are interconnected” (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988, p. 32). The Medicine Wheel, psychologically, physically, emotionally, and spiritually embraces and connects all that there is. I see one of the most important teachings within the Medicine Wheel context as the interconnectivity of each generation with the others. The four grandfathers symbolize the interconnectivity of all of the Medicine Wheel teachings and the concept of the intergenerational nature of the grandfathers as a basis for respecting all of those that have

come before us: our ancestors, as well as those who will come after us: to the seventh generation.

***Anishinaabek* Oral Tradition: Oral Education**

The oral tradition, with a variety of meanings and intents, has served to pass down ancient stories from the past as a means of cultural continuity (Beardy & Coutts, 1996). The *Anishinaabek* used the oral tradition as the primary means of communication to ensure cultural survival by sharing stories containing cultural knowledge (A. C. Wilson, 1998). These stories are “dream circles, visual images and oratorical gestures showing the meaning between the present and the past: word cinemas ... between the conscious and unconscious worlds of the people” (Vizenor, 1981, pp. 11, 15).

Unfortunately, the experience of residential schools did disrupt and interrupt this cultural intergenerational transmission. The *Anishinaabek*, in addition to all other Indian nations in Canada, had their children forcibly taken away from their communities in order to attend boarding and/or industrial schools. These schools punished and denied *Anishinaabek* children their culture, traditions, and language and imposed the acquisition of Christianity and English and French cultures and languages (Henderson, 1999). As well, children in residential schools suffered neglect of basic needs, and sexual, physical, emotional, and mental abuses: a dislocation of self, spirit, and community connections. The negative colonial transgenerational effects from these experiences have seriously damaged subsequent generations of First Nations peoples (Ing, 1991).

Alex Skead, an *Ojibwe* from Rat Portage First Nation, says this in regards to his residential school experience:

The residential schools are the reason why we are lost right now. They tried to make us one nationality, one people, but they cannot do that because it goes against God's will. Residential schools throw off the balance. Parents can no longer teach their children, some grandparents cannot either. They have lost their way of life. In residential school, I didn't pray to live. I used to pray to die so I could go to heaven. We do not teach that way in our Native way, we pray to live. God put us here to live, to work, to respect, to love yourself. (Kulchyski, McCaskill, & Newhouse, 1999, p. 192)

Today, some *Anishinaabek* peoples are attempting to reclaim our culture, language, and worldview as a means for reclaiming a survival with purpose and quality; a purpose with harmony, balance, unity, and a well-being with earth. In reclaiming our culture, language, and dignity as First Nations peoples, it is of utmost importance that the traditional sacred stories of the *Anishinaabek–Aadizookaanag*, the ceremonies, the worldview, and values be preserved, shared, interpreted, and taught to today's and tomorrow's generations. Such symbols are metaphors for the *Anishinaabek* worldview and, ultimately, both our and our planet's survival. Oral tradition honors the teachings of the elders because it supports listening and paying respect and attention to those who are wise.

Traditional Sacred Stories–*Aadizookaanag*

As previously discussed, Bowers (1997) explains the importance of mythopoetic narratives in oral-based cultures in his cultural intelligence theory. Mythopoesis renews ancient stories by repositioning them into a symbolic meaning. According to Peacock and Wisuri (2002): "In traditional times, stories were the way in which the world was

explained to *Ojibwe* children, with a great variety of stories revolving around many important themes for quality of life and survival” (p. 28).

As we have come to see, the oral tradition of passing on the traditional teachings and the *Anishinaabek* language are all important aspects of the *Anishinaabek* worldview. Today, although there is limited research regarding *Anishinaabek* worldview, some literature exists that is researched and written by Indigenous scholars delineating this worldview. This is best expressed through research that has been done on the *Anishinaabek Ojibwe* traditional sacred stories—*Aadizookaanag*. “The messages in the tales provided the major source of education and moral teachings for members of each band of *Ojibwe*, and for the tribe as a whole” (Ghezzi, 1990, p. 36). The narratives teach and reflect the importance of the relationships between human and incorporeal (cosmic) persons, plants, animals, and minerals (Overholt & Callicott, 1982). The sacred stories guided the people towards

socially responsible behaviour in every-day life ... in order that both oneself and others (family, friends & neighbours) may achieve *Bimaadziwin* [which is the way of the good life] the foundation of *Ojibwa* moral theory. (Overholt & Callicott, 1982, p. 153)

Bimaadziwin is the foundational worldview of the narratives which supports the importance of having a good life. As explained by Overholt and Callicott (1982), “[*Bimaadziwin*] is to have life in the fullest sense, life in the sense of longevity, health and freedom from misfortune” (p. 151).

Dr. William Jones (1871–1909) was the first Indian to receive a PhD in Anthropology. He was an American Fox Indian who collected and translated the oral

narratives from the *Anishinaabek* of northern Ontario between 1903 and 1905 (Ghezzi, 1990, 1994). Dr. Jones's notes regarding the collections were that the narratives were "taken largely as an attempt to get at the religious ideas of a people from their own point of view" (Michelson, 1917, p. Xi). Dr. Jones is one of the few Indian researchers to collect *Aadizookaanag* from several informants. Most studies were done by non-Indian anthropologists who spoke mainly to one informant and largely misunderstood and stereotypically interpreted the traditional teachings of the *Anishinaabek* (i.e., Paul Radin's *Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*, 1920, and *The Trickster*, 1956). Dr. Jones spoke *Anishinaabemowin* and spoke to several *Anishinaabek* elders. He recorded and translated the elders' stories from five *Anishinaabek* speakers who lived near Lake Superior.

In the *Aadizookaanag*, *Nanabush* is the central entity. *Nanabush* is a teacher whose experiences teach the *Anishinaabek* how to respect, learn, and be peaceful with themselves, each other, and Mother Earth. "*Nanabush* is a complex and critical aspect of *Ojibwe* oral tradition, central to the tribe's worldview" (Ghezzi, 1994, p. 444). *Nanabush* can be seen as a cultural hero, trickster, and as instrumental in helping to create that which is necessary for survival. *Nanabush* showed the *Anishinaabek* what behaviours should be performed and those behaviours that should be avoided. He was "both the giver of medicine—the gift of life—and a bumbler at the same time" (i.e., laughter as medicine; Rajnovich, 1994, p. 22). The trickster, *Nanabush*, is also seen "as a mediator within mythology ... the trickster is a mediator. Since his mediating function occupies a position halfway between two polar terms, he must retain something of that

duality—namely an ambiguous and equivocal character (Messer, 1980, p. 5). As shared by Clark (1960):

To the Indians of the past, Nanabozho myths had religious significance. But in most of the Chippewa tales recorded in this century, Nanabozho is not the benefactor of mankind, the culture-hero and does not have a spiritual meaning. Instead, by some incongruity which Chippewas of today cannot explain, he is often identified with a trickster and with the Great Hare. (p. 6)

What is also interesting to note is that contemporary postmodern and fictional literature accounts of *Nanabush* tend to focus on *Nanabush* as trickster (i.e., Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*, 1993).

In the past, the messages in the traditional stories were told to educate the band (tribe) with moral teachings (Ghezzi, 1990, 1994). *Nanabush* is a powerful spirit, “capable of great benevolence [While] a teacher of noble values, he also had failings” (Campbell, 2000, p. 18). Thus, *Nanabush* stories provided a foundation for teaching respect and humility: for nature, for others, for self, and the respect and awareness of the interdependent nature of these relationships. Within the *Anishinaabek*, numerous stories of *Nanabush* abound. Traditional stories were told from October to late spring. “By going backwards, we move forwards. Each time the stories were told, one's place in the world was held up for re-examination and reaffirmation” (Ghezzi, 1994, p. 443). Most importantly, scholars have distinguished the *Nanabush* stories: *Nanabush* as Trickster, and *Nanabush* as Culture-Hero (Vecsey, 1983).

Nanabush as culture hero has been described as the following by Kurath, Prokosch, and Ettawageshik (1955) and Densmore (1929), as cited in Vecsey (1983, pp. 85–86):

[He] created the present world and its orderly patterns, its landscape in all its particulars. He called all the persons of the world his relatives and helped join humans to the rest of the living world ... in the mind of the old Indian was the master of life—the source and impersonation of the lives of all sentient things, human, faunal, and floral. He endowed these with life and taught each its peculiar ruse for deceiving its enemies and prolonging its life.

Since there are numerous *Nanabush* stories, scholars have categorized “eight primary episodes” or eight *Nanabush* stories, now defined as belonging to the *Anishinaabek*’s Creation myth (Vecsey, 1983, p. 89). The most recent contemporary traditional *Anishinaabek* version of one of these traditional sacred stories has been written by Black River First Nation (2005):

How the Anishinaabe Got Fire

Once many years ago Nanabush asked his grandmother, Nokomis, why the people had to freeze all winter long, in the cold northern weather. He wanted to know if there was not some way in which the people could manage to stay warm and cozy through the long winter. Nokomis answered that it was rumoured that in a far off land an old man had the gift of fire. However, he was a selfish person and refused to give it to anyone else. Instead, he kept it hidden to be used only by himself and his daughters.

Nanabush told Nokomis that he wanted to journey to this land in order to get some of this fire from the old man. Nokomis didn't want Nanabush to travel so far, but she knew that he would go anyway once his mind was set. So she wished him well as he set off. As Nanabush left their camp he told his grandmother to be ready with the kindling when he returned. When Nanabush came close to the camp of the old man he decided to stop and think of a plan for getting inside. He decided to disguise himself as a rabbit hoping that one of the man's daughters would feel sorry for him and carry him inside away from the cold. Nanabush's plan worked just as he had expected. The younger daughter, seeing him shivering in the cold, tucked him under her shawl and carried him inside.

The old man, however, was very angry about this. He did not allow any strange beings in his lodge; not even a rabbit. Growing drowsy from the fire's warmth, the old man fell asleep and didn't think of the rabbit again. The girls put the rabbit near the fire to warm and left him to prepare their father's dinner. No sooner had the girls turned their backs when Nanabush caught a spark of the fire on his back and ran off. When the girls realized that they had been fooled there was quite a commotion but by then there was nothing that they could do about it.

Nanabush ran and ran. As he neared the camp he called out to Nokomis to have the kindling ready. Of course, she did. She took the spark of fire from the rabbit's back and soon had the fire burning in their lodge. By now, Nanabush had changed back into himself. He went outside

and called to the people to come and take a spark from the fire. He told them that in that manner they would be able to keep themselves and their children warm throughout the long, cold winter months.

The *Anishinaabek* symbolic teachings contained in this *Nanabush* story provide a vehicle for teaching the next generation of the importance of a respect for the interdependency of all life and our well-being with earth. These teachings provide an *Anishinaabek* awareness for our ways of knowing and of being which is motivated by earth, spirituality, and community concern and survival. The teachings in the story encourage an understanding of behavioural consequences and those which lead to *Bimaadziwin*.

Reflection on How the Anishinaabe Got Fire

In addition to other sources, I have written a reflection piece on How the Anishinaabe Got Fire to show the relevancy in connecting this story to understanding the *Anishinaabek* worldview. An understanding of the culture and the morals in the story are easier to understand when it is reflected upon by someone who is familiar with the *Anishinaabek* culture. Through discussing the teachings imbedded within the story, I can attempt to demonstrate *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing to become familiar with the *Anishinaabek* worldview.

Indigenous cultural themes which have been interpreted within the story under discussion, How the Anishinaabe Got Fire, can be seen to include: (a) the importance, power, and respect of nature (as sustenance and as spiritual); (b) nature/*Nanabush* as teacher, wisdom of elders, and interdependency; (c) importance of humility and preparedness; and (d) community as author (continuous and inconclusive interpretations

and developments of self in story). All of these themes can be seen as characterizing the elements of the *Anishinaabek* worldview.

The Importance, Power, and Respect of Nature

Humankind's survival is totally based upon the survival of nature. The stories "were the major means of keeping the tribe alive" (Ghezzi, 1994, p. 445). Today, this awareness is more important than ever to our Mother Earth's survival. Nature, animals, and nonhuman beings are to be revered and respected. In the story, *How the Anishinaabe Got Fire*, the old man works hard at his nets every day; he demonstrates the importance of sustenance (Black River First Nation, 2005). Knowing how to make a net would determine whether you would live or die. Without the respect and understanding of our connection to Mother Earth, the web of life, we will have no chance for survival. The power of nature is a spiritual connection (one that gives us life) and one that educates us to the different aspects of ourselves, as reflected in the teachings of the natural world as elder.

Nature (animals, plants, minerals, elements, etc.) in the oral narratives is respected, since nonhuman beings are seen as a vital part of the existence of humans. As explained by Overholt and Callicott (1982, p. 155) in their description of the *Nanabush* stories and respect:

Ojibwa complex of attitudes and behavioral rules in relation to non-human beings deserves, therefore, to be called an environmental *ethic*, even if we insist upon the most rigorous criterion for an ethic, *viz.*, that it transcend enlightened self-interest and involve such selfless sentiments as respect, affection, and admiration.

Respect is demonstrated in the story through the importance of *Nanabush* as rabbit.

Although he could be considered a lowly animal, he has great powers that should not be underestimated. Animals are not seen as lesser than, in our Anishinabek worldview, but are respected, and even revered, as they have the power to bless humans with essential gifts and sustenance.

Also, *Nanabush* has transformative powers—the power to change shape (as a *Manitou*). A “Manitou may be considered as a synonym for a person of the other-than-human class ... [and that this is, fundamentally,] that of a power inherent in the objects of nature which is more potent than the natural powers of man” (Tooker, 1979, pp. 28, 16). Selwyn Dewdney (1975, p. 37) elaborates on the challenges of defining the word *Manitou* [*manito*] in English while doing his studies:

It became more and more obvious to me that the word *manito* cannot be translated into English ... Renderings such as “spirit” or even “god” reduce seriously the combination of substance, power and reality that the native word can express. For in the *manito* world, accessible only through the doorway of dreams, were vested all the powers that determined whether the hunter and his family would survive or perish. To enter this world was to step into, not out of, the real world.

Humankind alone does not have the quality of power (influence). When we do, it is because the Creator influences his/her energy flows towards us (Boatman, 1992). Power has also been identified as “some intangible inner essence ... [with a] certain spiritual quality,” that is interdependent with the natural world (Overholt & Callicott, 1982, p. 142). Sustenance, survival skills, the understanding and respect of power and

spirit, based upon a relationship with the natural world, are further elements of the *Anishinaabek* worldview.

Nature as Teacher (Balance)

We, the Anishinabek, perceive all forms of life to have equity in life importance. All life has an important role to play in the plans of the Great Spirit. For a human being not to recognize that other beings in the universe deserve the same respect, regardless of perceived shortcomings or smallness, denies an essential truth of creation (Boatman, 1992, p. 26). Nature offers us the concept of balance in the understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of us all. Anishinabek worldview has as its foundation, respect. This respect includes all living things in nature: “a logic which looked to nature for its rules” (Akwasasne Notes, 1981, p. 12).

Animals were to be free (not owned) and were to be respected. To domesticate a wild animal as a pet would be to disrespect nature’s laws and our role within the “sacred web of life” (Akwasasne Notes, 1981; Johnson, 2006). *Nanabush* stories taught appropriate social behavior and respect towards animals, in that the power relations between man and animal are not hierarchical. “Interspecies social relations” can be said to be deliberately taught in the stories (Overholt & Callicott, 1982, p. 154). This can be seen as a mechanism in preventing man from thinking that he is superior to animals. The hare is a vulnerable animal, although it has its strengths (i.e., camouflage, beauty, swiftness) and perceived weaknesses (small, gentle, fragile, etc.), but things that appear vulnerable are not always so. Appearances can be deceptive. The old man reminds the daughters to be aware of deception, and asks them, “Have you not heard of the Manitous how they were born? Perhaps this might be one of them.” This reminds us that all in

nature is to be respected, no matter how we perceive them as big or small, powerful and/or weak, and that our perceptions may not always be accurate (and may be, in fact, limited).

In the story, the rabbit was taken as a pet (the daughter disobeyed her father and lacked self-control), and this had its consequences: The fire was taken away from the old man and his daughters. However, the hare also had consequences: He was burned, and he has learned to fear humans. All *Nanabush* stories give “instructions [as] the predominant context for speaking about obedience. Often the instructions are disobeyed and the offender suffers negative consequences” (Overholt & Callicott, 1982, p. 145). This demonstrates the concept of balance which all things must endure and that there are consequences for all action. Sometimes, there are permanent consequences that result. Both positive and negative forces exist, but we strive for balance (Boatman, 1992). The *Nanabush* stories teach us that animals are powerful to our understanding of the world. As explained by George (1991, p. 9):

Nature has many ways of creating balance and harmony. All living things have their place in the spectrum of life, and all living things have their own roles and functions ... it is a never-ending source of wonder to observers to see how well the creatures of the forest and other environments cohabit and contribute to the well-being of their worlds.

Today, we will remember the story and *Nanabush*'s teachings when we see the brown hare in the summertime. Mother Earth, nature, and animals are our elders and teachers. Also, when we see rabbit tracks, this will remind us of the power and presence

of the spirit of Mother Nature and *Nanabush*, Earth as alive, of our interdependent nature with creation; and ourselves as being creative.

These types of recognition and reflection are necessary in order to continue our spiritual development and sustainability of our earth/universe community. This sustainability will allow everyone to live together in order to maintain survival and continuance of life. In earth-based cultures, peace is often defined as being in harmony and balance. As shared by Tadodaho Chief Leon Shenandoah, “follow The Instructions and live in peace” (Wall, 2001, p. 29).

Last, only the old man and his two daughters possessed fire; others in the community did not have this gift. The old man was hoarding the fire and, because of this, was afraid of the *Manitous*. The story demonstrates that there are consequences when things go out of balance, and greed is “clearly out of harmony with the values of the [Anishinaabek] culture: greed is frowned upon” (Overholt & Callicott, 1982, p. 145). Respect for all creatures and respect for things we don’t always see or know (i.e., *Manitous*); that consequences exist for disobedience and disrespect and that rewards exist for obedience, are important elements of the *Anishinaabek* worldview. Failings, what not to do, are also seen as part of the teachings. Balance in nature achieves harmony, since our peace and harmony are dependent on our relationship to Mother Earth. Of utmost importance to this concept, sharing our gifts with others is crucial for survival.

Wisdom of Elders and Interdependency

Nanabush stories are the vehicle for delivering the teachings of the Elders. The *Nanabush* stories have been around for thousands of years. Images of *Nanabush* have

been identified on rock paintings: pictographs, and in picture writing on birchbark scrolls of the Midewiwin: “Society of good hearted ones” (Rajnovich, 1994, p. 28).

Nanabush is also known as Nanaboozhoo (Rabbit Man), Michabous (Great Hare), and Weesakejock (Campbell, 2000; Rajnovich, 1994). Therefore, the teachings which involve the rabbit as *Manitou* have been supported by the elders of the *Ojibwe* and Cree nations for thousands of years. This is evidence of the importance of *Nanabush* to the *Anishinaabek*.

Figure 3 illustrates the longevity of *Nanabush* at Lake Mazinaw. These symbols support the *Anishinaabek*'s connection to the teachings as a cultural collective. There are other stories and pictographs located elsewhere (i.e., Rainy Lake, Ontario; Mackinac, Michigan, etc.) which illustrate and convey the elder teachings of *Nanabush* as hare (Rajnovich, 1994). Moreover, different versions of these stories, also exist. Some have subtle changes and some have not. These differences can occur due to personal expression, characteristics of the storyteller and the community, and may also be dependent upon the qualities of the listener (Vecsey, 1988).

In the story, elders keep a watchful eye on their relations and share important teachings—elders as teachers. *Nokomis* (grandmother) warns *Nanabush* about the old man. The old man warns his daughters about the *manitous*, tells his daughters to return the rabbit where they got it, and scolds them. When questioned by his daughter, he asks (rhetorically), “Do you not behold me, how far in years I am?” Both *Nanabush* and the daughters did not heed the warnings of their elders. Keeping the fire depended upon the daughters heeding their father's words, while not respecting their father's wishes resulted in the loss of their fire. The story demonstrates the wisdom of the elders and that it is

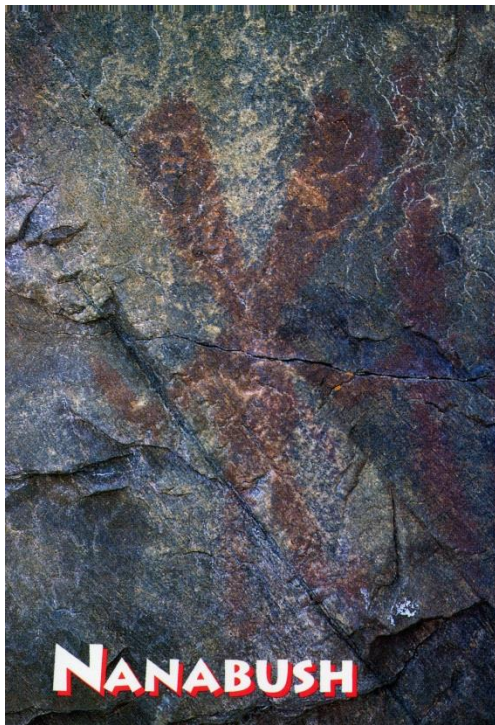


Figure 3. Nanabush pictograph from Bon Echo Provincial Park (Friends of Bon Echo Park, 2000) and The Sacred Colours by David A. Johnson of Curve Lake (Johnson, 2006, p.2).

useful and important to listen to their advice. The teachings of the elders provide protection and serve as constant reminders as to how to conduct ourselves. Stories of *Nanabush* have been the ultimate vehicle for delivering the teachings of the elders to the next generations.

The intergenerational transmission of culture through storytelling demonstrates the continuity between generations and within ourselves. “It helps us to learn how to look at ourselves from the center of the medicine wheel. From that center, we will be able to see how we fit together with everything else” (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988, p. 67). Past, present and future generations are honored:

All things are interrelated. Everything in the universe is a part of a single whole. Everything is connected in some way to everything else. It is therefore possible to understand something only if we can understand how it is connected to everything else. (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988, p. 26)

Anishinaabek worldview honors this, and the children of tomorrow, by protecting the earth for the next seven generations to come. As Oren Lyons, a faith-keeper of today, explains, “We have to think now in real terms for that seventh generation and we have to move in concert [together, as all nations], we’ve got to get back the spiritual law if we are to survive,” (McCarthy, 1991) and this can be done by keeping alive the stories for all people. The intergenerational transmission of this knowledge, through passing down the stories to the younger generations, is imperative in preserving traditional knowledge and the teachings of survival and respect. Harmony and balance are dependent upon respect for survival, and the flow of interconnectedness between ourselves and Mother Earth.

Elder as teacher, elder as wisdom, and the respect and obedience in listening to our elders, are all elements in the *Anishinaabek* worldview.

The Gift of Fire (and the Elements)

With the *Anishinaabek*, fire and all elements are highly valued and revered.

Benton-Banai wrote:

Every time you use fire you should remember that this is the same fire with which the Creator made the Sun [and] put at the heart of your Mother Earth Use this fire to communicate with the Creator Use it to burn tobacco and let its smoke carry your prayers to Gitchi Manitou [the creator]. (Boatman, 1992, p. 30)

Elders teach us that all four elements: fire, earth, water, and air, must be cared for, respected, and properly used; otherwise, all of these gifts may be lost and/or result in negative consequences. In the story, fire was stolen from the old man and his daughters, because they were deceived. As stated by Boatman, “Often the task of the Elders is to help us remember things we may already know, but have somehow forgotten.” (1992, p. 1). Respect and care for nature and the power in the creator’s gifts goes along with the caution not to be deceived.

Importance of Humility, Preparedness, and Power of Thought

Humility and preparedness are values which remain important to the *Anishinaabek* today. Humility is a large component of respect. Without humility, it would be very difficult to acknowledge that something may need to be shared with you (i.e., for the sake of enlightenment) and/or that others may know something that is important for you to learn. Listening to your elders requires humility. This concept is so important that it is one of the seven grandfather teachings. Humility would also involve

knowing your weaknesses and/or vulnerabilities. In the story, the daughter was vulnerable to the beauty of the rabbit, took it as a pet, and therefore was deceived.

The importance of will and wishing are demonstrated when *Nanabush* “wills” himself to become a rabbit. He does this for a number of reasons. First, he wants to present himself as vulnerable and beautiful, but in the end, is deceitful. *Nanabush* knows the daughter’s weakness, since he said in the story, “I wish she would take me for a plaything.” Second, he prepared for his return to his *Nokomis*’s (grandmother’s) house. He was able to run across the thin ice, whilst the old man could neither use his canoe nor go across the thin ice by foot. Previously, *Nanabush* wills that the sea shall freeze “as thick as the birch-bark covering of the lodge,” and had spoken to his grandmother to “be prepared if perchance I truly happen to fetch the fire.” His grandmother rubs the fire from him, so *Nanabush* does not get hurt, which also demonstrates the importance of having the help and support of our elders.

Last, the influence of the power of thought is further demonstrated in the story. *Nanabush* as rabbit wishes “that for water some woman would come,” and wishes she would take him as a pet. He also wishes that a spark would fall on him. All of these things come to pass and demonstrate how one’s thinking has the power to influence outcomes if we have the blessings of the *manitous*. Humility, preparedness, awareness of self, help and support of elders, will and wishing, and utilizing the power of thought all contribute to an understanding of the teachings in this story.

Community as Author–Nature as Community

Private property and individual ownership (of community items) are not traditional concepts (values) for First Peoples. The land is our Mother, and so, the stories

and teachings are expressions of the community which are to be shared. As Boatman (1992) states:

No man can own his mother. This principle extends even to the future. The unborn are entitled to the largesse of the Earth...during life a man [woman] is but a trustee of his [her] portion of the land and must pass on to his [her] children what he [she] inherited from his [her] mother. At death...[one is to take] nothing with them but a memory and [leave] a place for others still to come...no man[woman] can possess his [her] mother; no man [woman] can own the Earth.
(p. 30)

The community as a whole is the web, and the stories are interdependent parts of the whole. All listeners eventually become storytellers in an effort to maintain cultural continuity.

Basil Johnston, as cited in Rajnovich (1994, p. 21), explains the interpretative process of the listener: “The stories too are not to be read literally; there are four degrees in the operation of the mind, and listeners are expected to draw their own inferences, conclusions, and meanings according to their capacities.” As Rajnovich (1994, p. 21) writes about rock art, the birchbark scrolls, and hence, the *Nanabush* stories, “Go ahead. Try to understand the [rock] paintings. But once you’ve found one meaning, go back and find more. Thus the paintings, like the scrolls, are living things that continue to challenge us.” The stories are alive, have foundational morals, and may be somewhat varied, depending upon the interpreter. There are multiple messages, interpretations, with no correct and/or incorrect interpretations. It can be said, however, that awareness of the *Anishinaabek* worldview, our ways of knowing and of being, is the primary context

which enables a holistic understanding of Indigenous stories and their teachings (Swann, 1994). The sacred web of life is to be honored and preserved for others, teachings in the stories are alive, and *Nanabush* is a vehicle for intergenerational teachings which preserve our relationship with the natural world, to ourselves, and to each other.

The variety of principles discussed throughout the synthesis of this segment are founded on the story as shared by Black River First Nation and also as transcribed and interpreted by Jones in Michelson (1917), *The Theft of Fire*. The lessons in the story are the importance, power, and respect of nature; nature as teacher and elder of balance; wisdom of elders and interdependency, the creator's (and *Nanabush*'s) gift of fire (and the elements), the importance of humility, preparedness, and the power of thought; and community as author—nature as community. Through the discussions of these principles, they can provide a contribution in understanding the importance of the traditional sacred stories to the *Anishinaabek* worldview. There are numerous *Nanabush* tales. As stated by Overholt and Callicott (1982), “the tales themselves are employed to settle disputes and are used as a basis for interpreting current events” (p. 10). This concept is further developed by Knudtson and Suzuki (1992):

Viewed in the context of “spiral time,” traditional Native tales ... mythic heroics and follies, might be seen in a new and more respectful light ... many of these wise and “timeless” tales are applicable to all humankind and are capable of helping us mesh the ticking of our modern mechanical clocks with the simultaneous spin of nature's seasons. While they cannot precisely predict recurrent human crises and dilemmas, these cross-cultural stories often contain revelatory insights into human nature and the

natural world that can help to awaken the possibility that familiar patterns of the past—great cycles of growth and decline, birth and death, ecological devastation and renewal—can, perhaps will, re-emerge. (p. 145)

The importance of explaining *How the Anishinaabe Got Fire* and learning and sharing other *Nanabush* stories, along with discussions from elders, can enable a more comprehensive *Anishinaabek* worldview in how we can come to understand an *Anishinaabek* view for peace.

Ojibwa Environmental Ethics

Callicott and Nelson (2004) analyzed *Ojibwe* narratives to “enter another worldview in imagination and [to] try to understand it on its own terms” (p. 12). The analysis of these traditional sacred stories – *Aadizookaanag* shared the awareness of the Ojibwa’s strong environmental ethic: “The Ojibwa ethos, embedded in the Ojibwa worldview, seems much more oriented to setting out the proper way that people should treat other-than-human persons—including animal and plant persons, as well as manitous” (p. 117). From this, the *Anishinaabek*’s worldview of having a morally ethical relationship with Mother Earth support the foundation for the importance of revering *Shkagamik-kwe* (Mother Earth) as elder as a teacher who supports our well-being with earth, spiritually and peacefully.

***Anishinaabek* Worldview as a View for Peace**

A worldview for peace of a well-being with earth is the basis for *Anishinaabek* traditional thought of respecting earth’s relationships and the spirituality with the earth. This thought has been further developed as seen in the *Anishinaabek* News (2006),

Not just about understanding the landscape within [which] they exist by the actual interaction with their landscape on a daily basis. Tied to this is the spiritual recognition that the actual interaction is the realization that we are not greater than Mother Earth but recognition that we have relationships with Mother Earth and that our well-being is inseparable (p.20).

From this, we can see that the health of Mother Earth (ME) is intricately interdependent with and determines our own health: mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. In other words, our well-being with the earth determines our well-being with self and others.

Other indigenous nations of Turtle Island support the importance of a peaceful society based upon teaching a well-being with earth. *Basic Call to Consciousness* (Akwesasne Notes, 1981) presents position papers from the Native delegates of the Haudenosaunee confederacy (also known as Iroquois) who attended the United Nations in Geneva in 1977. They discussed their “strong democratic and spiritual Way of Life,” (Akwesasne Notes, 1981, p. 1). The political structure of the Haudenosaunee included a foundation of spirituality with earth:

All of ... [our] ... political activity is set in the roots of an ancient tradition of the spirituality of our peoples. This cosmology places the Haudenosaunee in a balanced familial relationship with the Universe and the Earth. In our languages, the Earth is our Mother Earth, the sun our Eldest Brother, the moon our Grandmother and so on. It is the belief of our people that all elements of the Natural World were created for the benefit of all living things and that we, as

humans, are one of the weakest of the whole Creation, since we are totally dependent on the whole Creation for our survival. (Akwesasne Notes, 1981, p. 2)

Government was organized to cultivate spiritual health and a peaceful society. Peace was seen as active and included political and spiritual (earth and universal) elements. Spiritualism was seen as the “highest form of political consciousness.” (p. 71). A peaceful society was based upon the “Natural Law,” which was “the law ... to an impressive degree [based] on a logic which looked to Nature for its rules.” (Akwesasne Notes, 1981, p. 12).

Conclusion

Chapter Two has provided the contextual influences for this research study. My personal journey to my well-being with the earth was detailed. Academic discussions regarding the importance of including the indigenous worldview in discussions of peace and cultural intelligence were described. Traditional teachings; the role of elders and grandfathers; the medicine wheel; the traditional sacred stories, and the story and interpretations of *How the Anishinabe Got Fire*; and *Ojibwe* environmental ethics were all delineated to give the reader an understanding of the *Anishinaabek* worldview. Chapter Two concludes with connecting the *Anishinaabek* worldview as a view for peace. Next, in Chapter Three, the interpretive inquiry methodology and hermeneutic phenomenology as qualitative research method are detailed based upon the works of van Manen (1990).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This research study used an interpretive inquiry methodology and hermeneutic phenomenology qualitative research method. As described by Schram (2003, p. 33):

As an interpretivist researcher, your aim is to understand this complex and constructed reality from the point of view of those who live it. Necessarily, then, you are focused on particular people, in particular places at particular times situating people's meanings and constructs within and amid specific social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and other contextual factors.

Interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenology is based on a practice of worldview to describe phenomena in one's lived experience (Moran, 2000, p.4). Benner and Wrubel (1989, as cited in Chan, Brykczynski, Malone, & Benner, 2010) further explain the importance of recognizing context in the making of meaning in one's lived experience:

Human beings ... are always situated (in a culture, a historical time, and lodged in particular social relationships), and most of a person's being occurs in this engaged activity. Interpretive phenomenology is interested in illuminating the kind of knowing that occurs when one is involved in a particular world and social situation rather than standing outside of it as an onlooker. (p. xx)

Intentionality, another important aspect of phenomenology, expresses the unity of mind and body, and intentionality reveals this unity by examining consciousness in the world that we live in, known as the life world (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000). According to Vandenberg (1997, as cited in Groenewald, 2004), Edmund Husserl is "the fountainhead of phenomenology in the twentieth century" (p. 3). Husserl saw the life world as a:

layer to be inserted between the world of nature and the world of culture (or spirit). The life-world is the world of pre-theoretical experience which is also that which allows us to interact with nature and to develop our own cultural forms. (Moran, 2000, p. 181)

According to Palmer (1969), Heidegger, a protégé of Edmund Husserl, further identifies phenomenology as both hermeneutical and as the essence of being, “showing or bringing to appearance of something as it is, in its manifestness ... for it gives itself to be seen” (p. 128). The researcher allows the phenomena to do the revealing. “It implies that interpretation is not grounded in human consciousness and human categories but in the manifestness of the thing encountered, the reality that comes to meet us” (Palmer, 1969, pp. 128–129). Heidegger saw that “ontology must, as phenomenology of being, become a ‘hermeneutic’ of existence (Palmer, 1969, p. 129). The method of phenomenology has also embraced the worldview of including “an ecology that situates humanity, places humanity, within the life-world” (Karrow, 2006, p. 50). Also, because phenomenology is philosophical; embraces intuition; acknowledges the unity in mind and body; and sees “emotions [as] central to perception,” this method is best suited in supporting the experiences and interpretations of today’s traditional *Anishinaabek* elders in sharing their lived experiences in this study (Chan et al., 2010, p. 127).

To further embrace phenomenology as a qualitative research method, I used my own hybrid of phenomenology by also including qualitative research methods for coding and analysis. This was done to further operationalize the methods for qualitative analysis for this study. These methods, along with the operationalization of van Manen’s (1990) method for phenomenological analysis, are detailed later in this chapter.

Participants in this study were individuals who have had and are experiencing colonialism and globalization, along with our planet. I, as the researcher, have connected myself to a contextual position that I hold historically and culturally, a distinct position as a 21st century traditional *Anishinaabekwe: Ojibwe* woman. Personally, I have chosen to develop my own experiences and awareness of my Indigenous/*Anishinaabek* consciousness.

Through interpretive inquiry, this research explores the meaning of the lived experiences of contemporary traditional *Anishinaabek* elders. The *Anishinaabek* elders in this research are also called coresearchers. These coresearchers are living within the same contextual factors of our present-day colonialism and globalization. Alongside these experiences exist the mediating cultural quests for peace of self, others, and Mother Earth through the *Anishinaabek* teachings and values of our ancestors. Through interpreting the experiences of present day traditional *Anishinaabek*, we can become aware of *Anishinaabek* consciousness in the 21st century. As stated by Thompson (1981, p. 212), “Ricoeur is thus right to insist that consciousness, like truth, is not a given but a task, namely ‘the task of becoming—consciousness’”. This includes “becoming” conscious of the *Anishinaabek* worldview as a living entity and the development of its inclusion into mainstream consciousness.

It is through embracing Ricoeur’s approach to hermeneutic phenomenology that this research includes both understanding and explanation to the interpretation of the experiences of the Elders. Ricoeur saw distancing and “the distortions effected by the exercise of power, [as] ... elucidated only by means of an explanatory technique” (Thompson, 1981, p. 214). Furthermore, Ricoeur’s model included “an understanding

[of] how critically informed, historically rooted convictions can [exist and] coexist” (Uggla, 2010, p. 83). It is through this historical time that a connection or mediation can exist between lived time: the finite, and universal time or cosmic time: the infinite. This concept of historical time is very important to “reflective and speculative thought,” and it is through the connecting of calendar time (i.e., living in the 21st century), and intergenerational succession (from the transgenerational and intergenerational teachings of the *Anishinaabek* from past to present to future generations), that the context for the elders’ experiences can be understood (Uggla, 2010, p. 45).

There have been many ideas regarding the issue of ways of knowing in the area of hermeneutic phenomenology by a variety of scholars. Basically, hermeneutic /interpretive ways of knowing have been described as looking to social practices, social interactions and interactive human behaviour so that human action can be “given meaning by interpretive schemes or frameworks” (Scott & Usher, 1996, p. 18). Interpretive frameworks are also “perspectival and partial ... and are always circular ... knowledge-formation is therefore conceived as circular, iterative, spiral” (Scott & Usher, 2003, p. 19). This is seen in the process of reflective thought which has occurred throughout this research process, because it has enabled development of further meaning through the process of data explicitation.

In this research study, inviting the reader to learn through implication is highly encouraged. There exist in this study cognitive tensions between indigenous ways of knowing and learning through implication and the Eurocentric ways of knowing and learning through explication. *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing are characterized by inference as communication. In addition, *Anishinaabek* ways of being are based on the

implicitness of our spiritual and political selves, because these are the foundations for our being in connection to all that is around us.

Also, it is through language that a “shift of ways of epistemologies” (van Manen, 1990, p. 38) from experience to “lived experience is soaked through language” (p. 38) and that things appear through language because “language speaks man [woman and child]” (Moran, 2000, p. 405). Therefore, it is necessary that this study has included *Anishinaabemowin* (the *Ojibwe* language) as much as possible. It is Ricoeur (1981) who created the metaphor that:

experience and (un)consciousness are structured like a language ... [And] if all the world is like a text then everyone becomes a reader (and an author). The question arises [regarding] whose reading, whose interpretation, is the correct one ... the idea of text [through Ricoeur] introduces the notion of multiple, or even conflicting, interpretations. (van Manen, 1990, p. 39)

Furthermore, Thompson (1981) introduces the idea of including self-reflection in the hermeneutic phenomenological method. He sees self-reflection as promoting a thoughtful, rational account of one’s experiences, and one that can provide a rational consensus with others. Therefore, this research also includes the principle of self-reflection in the sharing of *Anishinaabek* elders’ cultural thought and worldview in the description of their experiences.

Through discussions with today’s traditional *Anishinaabek* elders, this research has explored the *Anishinaabek* expressions of a meaningful *Anishinaabek* worldview of peace—as our well-being with the earth, through our worldview which supports teaching a way of life: *Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*—to educate our well-being with the earth for

present and future generations. *Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa* is described in this study as an *Anishinaabek* view of peace founded on the respect of earth's way. Elder experiences will help us to understand the traditional *Anishinaabek* respect and peace for our Earth Mother in the 21st century.

Indigenizing a Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology is open to the interpretive dimension of the phenomenological and its ways of knowing. I chose phenomenology because I wanted to describe the phenomenon of 21st century traditional elders who still listen to and share the vision and voices of our ancestors. I was concerned with sharing the lived experiences of elders at the beginning of a new millennium. Since the focus of phenomenology is to “understand the social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved,” I chose to utilize a methodology of interpretive inquiry and hermeneutic phenomenology as method to respect the elders’ sharing of their experiences (Welman & Kruger (1999, as cited in Groenewald, 2004, p. 5). I did hope that this type of inquiry would support the sharing of our ancestral voices which have occurred from time immemorial. Furthermore, the ability for the expansion and inclusion within hermeneutic/interpretive ways of knowing may support the awareness of an Indigenous values-orientation and the *Anishinaabek* worldview which are inherent in this research study. Meyer (2001, as cited in S. Wilson, 2008, p. 91) explains:

Within an Indigenous research...[ways of knowing and of being]... are the recognition that research and thinking need to be (and are) culturally based. Of course all worldview is based upon a culture, a time, a place. It is impossible for knowledge to be acultural.

Knowledge-formation within the *Anishinaabek* worldview, as well as within an overall Indigenous worldview, is founded upon circular, repetitive, and spiral elements as seen through the importance of the symbols inherent in the teachings of the *Anishinaabek* (i.e., the circle: The Medicine Wheel).

Indigenous is described as the original inhabitants of a Nation, and an Indigenous worldview is described by S. Wilson (2008) as follows:

The circle is found throughout Indigenous societies and their architecture and how they make governmental decisions. The circle is like a foundational platform ... foundations of the Indigenous worldview. It's egalitarian, it's relational, it's a structure that supports an inclusion, a wholeness ... we utilize the same foundations within our traditions. We see that with, I could say, with all Indigenous peoples in the world today. (p. 92)

The exploration, awareness, inclusion, and expansion of an Indigenous consciousness, which uses Indigenous ways of knowing and of being are hermeneutical foundations developed within this research study. To further support this inclusion, the *Anishinaabek* language was used to elaborate and support the voices within this research study and the research study itself. I was fortunate to get the assistance of an *Anishinaabek* speaker, whom I knew well, to help me with the translation process.

Data Gathering Methods

Data were collected using three methods: demographic questionnaires, co-researcher interviews, and follow-up/final interviews. Coresearcher is a term that is used in phenomenological studies and I used this term within this research study, interchangeably with the terms participant and coinvestigator (Cohen, et al., 2000;

Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). The coresearchers' final interviews were used to provide member-checking of elders' transcriptions and to provide an opportunity for any reflections they wanted to share regarding their transcripts and research experience. A demographic questionnaire was developed to obtain background information on all of the coresearchers. (Please see Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire). The demographic questionnaire was given to the coresearchers to fill out before the interviews began. The questionnaire was reviewed together by the researcher along with the coresearcher in the follow-up interview (member checking) to finalize the data for inclusion/exclusion in the study. The questionnaire provided coresearcher background information and important details of the elders regarding their identities.

Coresearcher interviews were conducted "based on open ended questions" (Mason, 1996, p. 39), which served as guide items for discussion and supported an "open-ended interview method" (van Manen, 1990, p. 66; see Appendix C: Interview Questions). As explained by Janesick (1998, p. 30):

Interviewing is a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic.

My ways of being and ways of knowing position as an *Anishinaabekwe*, in having an in-depth understanding of the traditional *Anishinaabek* culture and worldview, is the reason why I chose to interview traditional elders. As an Indigenous scholar, the research experience became more than the interdependence of my mental processes with this experience, but also included my spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions of self. This included the interdependence with the coresearchers, our culture, our earth and the

sharing of our lifeworld experiences throughout this research process. This interdependence, therefore, results in a holistic, inclusive, and relational research experience. This interdependence and interplay of learning with all aspects of self, tradition, culture, world, and planet allow for the nurturing and honoring of the *Anishinaabek* worldview. Orality (and conversation) are the best methods for the *Anishinaabek* to share our teachings, as oral education continues to be a constant in preserving the *Anishinaabek* traditional worldview (Callicott & Nelson, 2004; Vansina, 1985). I spoke with the coresearchers within a respectful framework, as I have done throughout my entire life while learning from the elders. This similarity in cultural backgrounds presented a positive working relationship and experience with the coresearchers (Holloway, 2005). More discussion regarding the influence of culture, on this note, will be shared during the introduction of the coinvestigators involved in this study.

Since an important skill for interviewers “is the ability to reflect upon themselves as part of the research process” (Holloway, 2005, p. 45), I kept a reflexive research journal to record insights, patterns, and perceptions received through my sensory abilities and experiences when collecting the data and throughout the research process (Groenewald, 2004; van Manen, 1990). I also recorded self-reflective thoughts on my personal experiences within this research project, since “a hermeneuticist sees his [and her] culture and self as the product of a tradition that he [and she are] ... both perpetuating and changing through the act of interpretation and experiences” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 109). I was also aware and reflected upon the sociopolitical nature of my experience as a researcher and as a traditional *Anishinaabekwe*. I saw this empowerment as

consciousness-raising and as a method of taking action to change myself: transformation. This transformation enabled the promotion of “freedom, justice and democracy” (Usher, 1996, p. 22). Therefore, this research defined hermeneutics within a self-reflected emancipation which involved self-realization and consciousness-raising for me as well as for those participants who shared their reflective experiences within this study. “All serious and original thinking [was] ultimately revolutionary ... phenomenology is a worldview of action in a personal and situated sense” (van Manen, 1990, p. 155). The coresearchers were advised to keep an awareness of their thoughts and self-reflections throughout the research project (i.e. a reflexive journal was suggested) which they could share, at their discretion, during member-checking and during the follow-up interview with the researcher.

The interview questions served as a guideline for discussions in that flexibility in sequence, elaborations by participants, change to questions, and respect and reciprocity in conversation were all addressed throughout the interview process (Holloway, 2005). I also maintained my reflexive research journal after the interviews to note items for follow-up conversations and reworking of guideline questions during the entire research process.

The interview questions were developed through the synthesis of the contextual influences and theoretical orientations previously discussed (i.e., Bowers, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, etc.) and through extensive readings of *Anishinaabek* traditional educational experiences, sharing of the Indigenous worldview, and my own personal traditional *Anishinaabek* education, relationships, awareness, and experiences. Following are a list of the authors who assisted in this process to prepare questions to

address the values in the *Anishinaabek* worldview: Angel (2002); Buswa and Shawana (1992); Boatman (1992); Callicott & Nelson (2004); Dewdney (1975); Ghezzi (1990); Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (n.d.); Michelson (1917); Overholt and Callicott (1982); L. T. Smith, (1990); Steiger (1984); Tooker (1979); Vecsey (1980, 1983, 1988); and Vecsey and Venables (1980); (Please see Appendix C: Interview Questions).

Polkinghorne (1989, as cited in Creswell, 1998) describes this preparation well:

Methods regarding phenomenological research are based on phenomenological principles ... [and] function as general guidelines or outlines, and researchers are expected to develop plans of study suited to understanding the particular experiential phenomenon that is the object of their study. (p. 54)

After the interviews, the researcher encouraged the coresearchers to keep a reflexive journal to organize their thoughts to share at the talking circle or group discussion: final interview, at their discretion, to submit to the researcher for review to include in the study. Therefore, after the individual interviews were concluded, the researcher had planned to utilize a focus group interview process by having coresearchers participate in a talking circle approach to member-checking and sharing of self-reflections of their experiences in this research. Indigenous researchers have supported this approach and have explained and utilized the talking circle as a form of focus group discussion (S. Wilson, 2008).

As further explained by Wilson and Wilson (2000, as cited in S. Wilson, 2008):

Typically, group members sit in a circle that represents the holism of Mother Earth [ME] and the equality of all members. In some circles an eagle feather or other sacred object is passed around, following the direction of the sun The

holder of the object speaks “from the heart” and the group listens silently and non-judgementally until the speaker is finished. Each member is given a chance to speak. A common rule of circle work is that members must not speak out of turn. In most instances, a complete talking circle comprises four rounds, although time restraints, rules and norms vary with each group. Most important is that group members feel ownership of these rules. (p. 41)

Unfortunately, due to elders’ schedules, the talking circle did not take place. This prevented the elders from having a traditional opportunity to share together. The elders did not have an opportunity to honour the research experience with a spiritual closing of a sharing circle. This would have been important in honouring the research results and experience and in honoring *Shkagamik-kwe*. It also created a lag in the momentum of energy which had developed, and this affected the spiritual energy of the researcher. It also brought light to the difficulties we now face as traditional *Anishinaabek* in that it emphasized the challenges that we consistently face in honouring our traditional selves in our world’s ever evolving and fast-paced nature called the 21st century. To counteract these effects, each elder had an opportunity to speak to me “from the heart” while I listened silently and nonjudgementally until each was finished during the final interview. All members of the research study were given a chance to speak to comment on their transcripts and research experience.

Coresearcher initial interviews lasted 2 to 3 hours in duration and took place in the early fall. They were conducted at a place of convenience to the coinvestigator. All elders were given traditional tobacco (handgrown, organic tobacco) which I cultivated and prepared for each participant in this study as a respectful protocol in asking them to

share their experiences within an *Anishinaabek* values-orientation. *Niswi* (three) of the elders' interviews were done in person, while *Bezbig* (one) elder interview was done by phone.

I completed the interview transcripts throughout the winter term and then sent them via email to the elders for member-checking. Again, the elders were reminded that they could record their reflections, if they so desired, as I had planned to ask them to share any thoughts on their research experience and any thoughts that they might have had on the information in their transcripts during a final interview. I mentioned that any reflections and feelings of insight they experienced from participating in the research study and any other such reflections and insights they experienced from reading their transcripts were desired during the final interview. I contacted participants throughout the winter term to arrange interview times to have the final interviews. All elders participated and completed final interviews in early spring. Conversations were tape-recorded, and hand-notes were taken during the final interviews.

Final interviews lasted one-half to one hour in duration and were conducted at the convenience of the elders. *Niizh* (two) elders were interviewed, separately, one by phone and the other in person. And, the last *Niizh* (two) elders were interviewed via Skype, separately, to conclude their participation in this research study. Again, to be respectful, I gave all elders a hand-beaded gift to say *chi-miigwech* for their participation in this research study and for sharing their personal and professional experiences and stories for future generations.

Sample and Population/Site and Coresearcher Selection

This research study used criterion sampling to select the coresearchers. “Criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon. All individuals [met] this criterion” (Creswell, 1998, p. 118). The first criterion for the sample included: identity as an *Anishinaabek* who has experience with *Anishinaabemowin*: understands the worldview within the language (i.e., has studied *Anishinaabemowin* and/or is a speaker of *Anishinaabemowin*). The second criterion included being an *Anishinaabek* person who has an awareness and experience of the traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview and understands the importance of eldership. The third criterion included being an *Anishinaabek* who has worked within *Anishinaabek* education and is dedicated to preserving the traditional teachings and worldview for future generations. The fourth criterion included being an *Anishinaabek* who has been successful in bicultural development and intercultural competence: can shift well between world views of Indian and non-Indian and has an understanding and efficacy in the dualities of this experience. And, the last criterion included being an *Anishinaabek* who represents one of the four directions of the Medicine Wheel in the *Anishinaabek* territory (of Ontario): East, South, West, and North, with one representative for each direction representing their home community. The desire to have multiple locations was to portray a balanced representation of the *Anishinaabek* in Ontario. Therefore, there was a total of four coresearchers participating in this study.

With this said, it was important that the coresearchers had an established relationship with the researcher and a relationship with the *Anishinaabek* traditional education community. To restate, “the epistemology [of this research was] based upon

relationships” (S.Wilson, 2008, p. 73). Therefore, I located three traditional *Anishinaabek* elders, with whom I had previous relationships in *Anishinaabek* education, and who I knew well. The fourth coresearcher was referred to me through another participant in this study. We knew each other as acquaintances but did not have a previous well-established relationship as I did with the other three participants. All participants supported the elements of the criterion sampling. I had knowledge of the coinvestigators’ demographics, and these details were not common knowledge. Participants also knew my demographics. I knew three of the four participants quite well as mentors and colleagues in *Anishinaabek* education for many years. From this, both I and all of the coresearchers were privy to the general personal demographics of one another as required for this study and study sample. Even though there was an attempt to obtain elders in the Eastern, Southern, Western, and Northern directions (doorways) in Ontario, three of the four coresearchers originated from central Ontario, while one co-researcher came from northern Ontario.

Growth and Awareness in Data Collection

One elder became very frustrated and annoyed during the final interview process due to the contradiction in values-orientation between *Anishinaabek: Ojibwe* and *Zhaaganosh: Non-Native* worldviews during this interview process. He was frustrated that he had to further discuss the initial interview and felt that this final interview was redundant. He expressed his frustration in discussing himself from another worldview: the research process. He was skeptical about the reason for doing the research, the approach, and the purpose. He was worried about being portrayed like other research in the past, conducted with a “frozen in the past” mentality, and being portrayed as if we

were a dying culture. He suggested that the process be led via the *Anishinaabek* way of doing things, from an *Anishinaabek* worldview perspective. He did not appreciate discussing his views within a Western or *Zhaaganosh* perspective. He believed that he was being asked to talk about our traditions via the perspective that this was the end of our traditions, the last of our traditional people. He thought we were in a desperate way if our educated people were doing things in this fashion. He tended to distrust the research process and graduate research because it was not our way of doing things. I assured him that the purpose of the research was to explore our traditional perspectives of our relationship with Mother Earth in current times so we could share this perspective. Even though the process was culturally sensitive, it was still being discussed within a mainstream, Western worldview. From this experience, I realized that mainstream research will elicit this distrust with the *Anishinaabek* unless we maintain our *Anishinaabek* language and worldview to tell and present our stories within our own worldview.

There has always existed a distrust of the mainstream education system amongst Indigenous peoples. This is why it is best if our knowledge is shared via relationship-based conversations. As an *Anishinaabekwe*, I understand the cognitive tensions that are present in this study. Because we, as *Anishinaabek*, teach and learn by inference in order to be respectful to others, the research experience can be seen as an imposition. Because I had a well-established relationship with three participants, this research experience went well. I was challenged by the elder that I did not know as well, which was not surprising. All of the other participants understood that I was motivated in sharing an *Anishinaabek* worldview, based upon respect, in all of the conversations. Because this coresearcher

did not know me as well, and did not participate in any previous research studies, he was somewhat suspect of the intentions of those who were in the academy. And, he felt this way, I believe, understandably so. All of the other coresearchers had had other research study participation in the past. This participant was the one participant with whom I did not have a firm, established relationship. I also realized that the goal of this research was to utilize a mainstream methodology to explore the stories and experiences of elders within an *Anishinaabek* value-orientation, as best as possible. Researching our worldview in graduate education will always be limited by the priorities of the academic research process and framework. As another *Anishinaabek* colleague expressed it, “the PhD and the *Anishinaabek* worldview are totally opposing to one another.” It is evident from this research that integrating multiple worldviews is challenging but that it is possible to be done with respectful relationships. However, it is the researcher’s belief that doing research with the *Anishinaabek*, especially when it comes to traditional knowledge and experiences, is best done by someone who is *Anishinaabek*, because being *Anishinaabek* is important to the recognition and respect of the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional tensions that exist. It is important that the researcher does understand this experience firsthand.

Foreshadowed Tensions

Because this research was being conducted in order to respect and share the *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing, the concept of “too much explanation or background detailing could be seen as disrespectful of the intelligence of the listener” (S. Wilson, 2008, p. 7). Therefore, I, as an *Anishinaabekwe*, in respecting my *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing and sharing to “respect the intelligence of the listener,” I will embrace my

cultural style of communication through implication. Because this research is motivated to share the *Anishinaabek* language and worldview, I understand that cognitive tensions will arise due to the communication style based upon such a premise. This tension is something that occurs through conducting Aboriginal research in the academy due to the differences in communication styles that are based on a different language, different ways of knowing, and different ways of seeing and of being in the world.

As explained by Edward Sapir (1929/1964, as cited in Callicott & Nelson, 2004, p. 20):

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the “real world” is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

As further explained by Kluckhohn and Leighton (1946/1962, as cited in Callicott & Nelson, 2004, p. 21), “there are as many different worlds upon the earth as there are languages.” Because of this, cognitive tensions have existed for me as

researcher, and are anticipated to exist for readers. You are encouraged to be open to learn of the *Anishinaabek* worldview of *Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*: teaching for our well-being with Earth, throughout this thesis. *Chi-miigwech* (thank you very much).

Explication of the Data

Explication (analysis) of the data investigated the necessary components of the phenomenon while making a holistic phenomenological perspective or holistic sense of the data (Groenewald, 2004). Understanding the whole provided a foundation for a “dialectical examination of [the] parts” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 72). Phenomenological data analysis or explication, is seen by Coffey and Atkinson (1996, as cited in Groenewald, 2004) as “the systematic procedures to identify essential features and relationships” (p. 17) in order to transform the data to interpretation.

Inquiry was guided by the *hermeneutic circle*, a term created by Gadamer (1975/1996) which was a metaphor for the process of interpretation and analysis (Cohen et al., 2000; Holloway, 2005). As described by Holloway (2005, p. 130), “with no beginning nor end, top nor bottom, interpretation is revealed as a process of circular movement – a continuum.” Heidegger speaks to the circle as involving “relatedness backward or forward” in first defining the essence of an entity’s being and then questioning this definition (Heidegger 1962, as cited in Moran, 2000, p. 237). What is more, interviews of the coresearchers were studied in relation to the largesse of the meaning of the whole. Statements by coresearchers were understood “in terms of the largest cultural contexts” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 73).

Thus, analysis began during the interview process. As explained by van Manen (1990), “the conversation has a hermeneutic thrust: it is oriented to sense-making and

interpreting of the notion that drives or stimulates the conversation” (p. 98). Again, the *hermeneutic circle* encouraged me in the guidance of my understanding, explicitation and interpretation of the experiences of the coresearchers. Geertz (1975, as cited in Holloway, 2005) further explains the process of explicitation, “remarking that parts of texts and whole texts are independent of each other, but by moving between them, the researcher seeks to turn them into explicitations of each other” (p. 135).

As further explained by Cohen, et al. (2000, p. 73):

The hermeneutic circle metaphor also leads the researcher’s analysis outside the context of the individual interview as well as the context of the individual participant ... the smallest statements must be understood in terms of the largest cultural contexts.

Throughout the interviews, I included analysis with the elders regarding “possible labels for ... meaning of what [was] being said,” and of the possible meanings which were beginning to be constructed (Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 76). To understand the essence of the phenomenon under study, I utilized van Manen’s (1990) thematic analysis. van Manen’s (1990) approach asks:

Are there any phrases that stand out? Can we select some sentences or part-sentences that seem to be thematic of the elder experiences of the contemporary traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview of *Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*? What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described? (pp. 93–94)

To further embrace phenomenology as a qualitative research method, I used a hybrid of phenomenology by also including Bailey’s (2007) and Saldana’s (2009)

insights for operational definitions for qualitative analysis in addition to van Manen (1990) and Moustakas (1994). Through using Bailey's qualitative research method, I also observed "recurring patterns, topics, viewpoints, emotions, concepts, events ... that the researcher heard over and over" (Bailey, 2007, p. 153).

Operationalizing van Manen's interpretive approach includes four stages (Holloway, 2005, p. 135):

1. Searching for 'structures of experience.'

What are the "experiential structures that make up that experience"? (van Manen, 1990, p. 79).

2. Describing how structures are thematic of the phenomenon.

What are the meanings out of these structures through the identification of themes of these experiences? (van Manen, 1990).

3. Searching for essential and incidental themes.

What qualities are essential that make this phenomenon exist? Are these qualities unique to this experience? (van Manen, 1990).

Searching for essential themes involved "imaginative variation," which used creative awareness, insight, and intuition to seek meaning. I also used my background as an *Anishinaabekwe* to connect to the conversations and meanings to extract and develop the themes that the elders brought out in our conversations. Moustakas (1994) in his book, *Phenomenological Research Methods*, explains the task of imaginative variation as:

using imagination and intuition to allow the researcher to change how she or he sees the experience by seeing the opposite, the reverse, and to see the phenomenon from different perspectives, roles, and purposes. Imaginative

variation asks, “How did the experience of the phenomenon come to be what it is?” (p. 98)

As further explained by Husserl (1931, as cited in Moustakas, 1994), “We find in fantasy the potential meaning of something that makes the invisible visible” (p. 98).

4. Explaining and interpreting essential and incidental themes, van Manen (1990) describes “phenomenological themes ... metaphorically speaking ... like knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes” (p. 90).

Collaborative analysis was anticipated through elders’ participation in a focus group discussion: a talking circle approach through encouraging coresearchers to reflect and share meanings contained within their interviews and their interview experience (van Manen, 1990). But because the focus group: talking circle discussion did not take place due to participant schedules, final interviews were conducted with elders independently. Collaboration did take place within our final interviews with me and the co-investigators individually, regarding their self-reflections and member checking. Elders were encouraged to share their self-reflections on their experiences within the research experience and any written entries or comments that they wished to share from their reflections/journals during their final interviews. These experiences were also reflected upon by the researcher as part of her reflexive journal and included in follow-up interview discussions with the coresearchers where relevant.

Quality in data collection and analysis occurred through obtaining good phenomenological descriptions and intersubjectivity. Good phenomenological description “resonates with our sense of lived life ... [the] description is collected by lived

experience and it validates lived experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 27). Intersubjectivity validates the described phenomenon and considers a “plurality of subjectivities” through the sharing of this phenomenon with others (Cohen, et al., 2000 p. 7).

Trustworthiness: Coding and Memoing

First coding occurred throughout each of the interviews through initial coding. During and after transcriptions, I summarized the participants’ stories through making point-form notes, topics and potential themes regarding the conversations (Bailey, 2007). Analysis through this method reduced the data into manageable segments (Saldana, 2009). I repeatedly read the data and coded them line by line, seeking whatever concepts that could be useful for explicitation. I also listened to the audio-taped interviews repeatedly to get the largesse of what the participants were conveying. Throughout this process I wrote memos to myself regarding critical and self-reflections, and insights and ideas relating to the explicitation during the coding process. “Memoing is writing reflective commentaries on some aspect of data, as a basis for deeper understanding” (Bailey, 2007, p. 134). I transcribed and coded participant conversations by question item (question number) to establish a consistent approach. Such a coding example follows next.

Mskokii Kwe, Red Earth Woman, Question Item #1: This study focuses on how Anishinaabek traditional teachings support respect for Mother Earth and the cosmos.

How do you see your survival tied to Mother Earth’s survival?

“I think, like I mentioned when I was having my upbringing, like with my original family ... I didn’t feel like I had all the information that I needed. And, so, for me, it was like setting out and searching for more understanding. And, so that’s why when I was [a

young adult], I made the decision to leave my community and my immediate family and I was in search of something.”

Codes that came out of this conversation were: *self-awareness and identity search*. I looked for these codes throughout all of this participant’s responses and then throughout all of the conversations with elders.

The data were then developed into larger categories through focused coding; “focused coding also involves hunting for specific topics” (Bailey, 2007, p. 129). I then categorized these codes into themes for each participant and tried to include the participant’s verbatim conversation for the theme.

Mskokii Kwe, Question Item #2: Can the worldview in the Anishinaabek language and culture be used to show our respect for nature (for example, insects are known as little spirits)?

“And, then you’d just leave it. But, you pick that up and you carry it and that’s what your bundle is. That’s how you develop your bundle. *Your sacred bundle*. It’s not necessarily something tangible.

And, so that’s when I think about when I was a young woman, and I decided to leave. I *was building my bundle ...* I must have felt some kind of a void, or a need. I’m not sure, but when I look back on it, the things that I picked up along the way, now help me to see that a lot of that, I already had it. Like, I didn’t have to go anywhere, okay.”

The coding of *self-awareness and identity: ninayaawin* (my being) led to the theme of *Building Your Sacred Bundle*.

Intersubjectivity was achieved through looking at other participant comments which were also coded under *Building Your Sacred Bundle* and initial codes of *self-awareness and identity search*:

Adik Giizhik, Caribou Sky, Question Item #8: How do you balance between contemporary and *Anishinaabek* traditional values or ways of thinking?

“Because in the work that we do, sometimes we do not do all of what we were supposed to do, okay? So, we put things aside, okay? So, in our stories, for example, when we left the creator, *Anishinaabe* people, when you leave the creator, you are given four gifts. And, the four gifts are very ... like, the first one is your name, what are you known as *Adik Giizhik* intigo, it is, I am told ... *Adik Giizhik*, I am told I am *Adik Giizhik*. So, the second one is your clan, okay? And again, it tells creation who you are. *Adik dodem* ... But the next one is our language, that’s the third gift. And, our fourth one is the one that really gets us in trouble, its freewill. So some of us choose to leave something aside for a while. So what, we need to do is to go back to our *original gifts and instructions*, pick up what we need, to what we were to carry, and *language* is one.”

Language has also been identified as part of our bundle and our original gifts and instructions.

Therefore, *Mskokii Kwe*’s theme of *Building Your Sacred Bundle* is supported further through *Adik Giizhik*’s related theme/concept of *Going back to our original gifts and instructions* which includes language as an incidental theme to the essential theme of *Building Your Sacred Bundle* through intersubjectivity. This intersubjectivity is further developed through another phenomenological description of lived experience.

Mskokii Kwe, Red Earth Woman, Question Item #2:

In talking about participating in a sweat lodge ceremony, she further validates the importance of language in her experiences of self-awareness in connecting to the grandfathers: *Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle*.

“But, when the rocks are being brought in to the lodge, they’re all heated up. As they enter the doorway, and they’re coming in, everybody would say, tansi, and over here, we always would say boozhoo, aanii mishomis [hello grandfathers]. And, greet them, and it was like a really happy sound. Everybody in unison would acknowledge that they’re coming in to help us, so we’re already in that place, right off the bat, by the words that we use.”

The importance of language in “*Going Back*” and “*Building Your Sacred Bundle*” is further affirmed. Because I am an *Anishinaabekwe*, I identified largely with *Mskokii Kwe, Red Earth Woman* and developed more detailed coding and themes which flowed easiest from working on her transcript. Although I started with *Makade Nimkii, Black Thunderbird*, it helped the momentum of the coding and analysis through working on *Mskokii Kwe*’s transcript to uncover themes with the other participants. I was much more creative and open in my explicitation when reviewing the other participants’ transcripts for coding after I worked through *Mskokii Kwe*’s story.

To summarize, the process of data explicitation ensured that I maintained and conveyed a freshness in my perspective on the shared meanings of the lived experience of the elders. It was through honouring the Eastern Doorway where new things are learned and relearned, that a deeper understanding occurred. The process of explicitation and the writing of such enabled me to move towards recording the perspective of the participant

and the intersubjectivity of elders. I used the hermeneutic circle to move between the parts and the whole of texts for deeper meaning as well as van Manen's (1990) interpretive approach for thematic analysis. This hybrid of phenomenology for analysis based on the works of phenomenologists and qualitative researchers was used to uncover the meanings of the lived experiences of the elders. Their experiences in this study explored the contemporary traditional *Anishinaabek* elders' perspectives of *Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*: to educate for our well-being with earth.

Ethical Considerations

After receiving clearance from the Brock University Research Ethics Board (REB), all coresearchers were contacted via email and/or telephone to invite their participation in the study (REB certificate #11-006-Manley-Casimir-Lafleur). I informed the coresearchers that I would be sending them a letter of invitation and a consent form. The letter of invitation explained the details of the study and informed the coinvestigators that I would again be reviewing the consent form with them at the beginning of the interview. The consent form outlined that the participation was voluntary and guaranteed their identity was to remain anonymous. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and/or through the participant's spirit name upon consent. Interviews took place at a location which was convenient and confidential for the coresearchers. At the beginning of the interviews and follow-up discussion, coinvestigators were told that they could decline to respond at any time without consequence. Their consent also confirmed that they understood that they were freely participating in this study but could withdraw from the study if they wished at any time. Coresearchers had my contact information and access to the information that I had collected from them. Participants

had the opportunity to review their transcripts to ensure accuracy and confidentiality. Because the coresearchers shared their own personal experiences and reflections, this research was not based upon a specific Aboriginal community/First Nation. All of the coinvestigators had been identified by me as *Anishinaabek* traditional contemporary elders as defined by the relationships that I have had with the coresearchers through my working with them or knowing of them in the area of *Anishinaabek* education. Pseudonyms were used to protect coresearcher identities in this study.

Conclusion

Chapter Three has outlined the methodology for this research study as an interpretive inquiry methodology using hermeneutic phenomenology as research method. Multiple phenomenologists as well as qualitative researchers were discussed. This study used van Manen's (1990) method for phenomenological analysis as well as including methods of qualitative research analysis outlined by Bailey (2007) and Saldana (2009) to assist with coding and analysis. Insights using the hermeneutic circle (Cohen et al., 2000; Holloway, 2005; Moran, 2000) and imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994) were also used. Throughout the remainder of the chapter, the following elements of method were discussed: indigenizing a hermeneutic phenomenology, data gathering methods, sample and population/site and coresearcher selection, growth and awareness in data collection, foreshadowed tensions, explicitation of the data, coding and memoing. Chapter Three concluded with ethical considerations.

Next, in Chapter Four, explicitation (analysis) of the experiences of the elders is revealed. The elders share their peace experiences with the researcher to create a meaning for teaching our well-being with earth based upon respect for earth's way.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXPLICITATION (ANALYSIS) OF THE EXPERIENCES OF THE ELDERS

Four elders took part in this study. I used a hybrid of hermeneutic phenomenology which included qualitative research methods for analysis based on the works of phenomenologists: Moustakas (1994) and van Manen (1990) and qualitative researchers: Bailey (2007) and Saldana (2009) to uncover the meanings of the lived experiences of elder. The foundations of the hermeneutic circle to move between the parts and the whole of texts for deeper meaning as well as van Manen's interpretive approach for thematic analysis were used. The experiences in this study explored the contemporary traditional *Anishinaabek* elders' perspectives of *Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*: to educate for our well-being with earth.

In this chapter, I introduce the coresearchers and describe who they are from the data obtained in the demographic questionnaires. In discussions with the coresearchers, I share parts of their conversations containing their lived experiences for each of the themes obtained from the data.

Elders' Experiences

The *Anishinaabek* elders comprised *Bezhig Chi Anishinaabek Akinomaagekwe miinawaa Niswi Chi Anishinaabek Akinomaageninniwuk*, that is, one *Ojibwe* woman who is an elder and three *Ojibwe* men who are elders. *Niizh Chi Anishinaabek Akinomaageninniwuk*: two of the *Ojibwe* men who are elders attended residential school when they were young.

Mskokii Kwe: Red Earth Woman

In her 50s, she is from a First Nation in central Ontario. She is part of the Loon Clan: *Maang*. She received her spirit name in a ceremony during a spring fast. She has a Bachelor of Science degree, a professional designation degree, and a graduate degree. She also belongs to a professional association for her specialization. *Anishinaabemowin* was not her first language, but she learned the language from a family of which she was a part. She has worked for a variety of First Nation education communities, both on and off reserve, in central Ontario. She has worked as an educator for over 25 years. She uses *Anishinaabekwe* to identify herself as an *Anishinaabe*. I have known *Mskokii Kwe* for the past few years.

Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle

When *Mskokii Kwe* was a teenager, some people came to her community to work with the youth club to share traditional teachings. She recalls the time when they had a pipe ceremony:

And that was my first experience with anything ceremonial or anything Indian of that nature ... and from that time I thought, oh, there's something really special about me that I know nothing of, right? ... It planted the seed that became like a yearning and I started to really want to know what that was.

Mskokii Kwe went out west to learn more about the traditional culture of being an *Anishinaabe*. She decided to “just go there and I thought, you know, I’m going to have a good chance to meet some people that are going to know a lot about that.” She connected with people who lived in a large urban area out west, but the traditional people that she met would return to their traditional homeland, which was approximately 3 to 5 hours

away. She was able to experience various kinds of ceremony with these traditional people. While there, she saw them demonstrate their respect for the land and all of the gifts of the land.

She explained that the family that became her adopted family were Cree. She said that her Cree *sister* had a dad who was a trapper. They lived on the land, but “because they were residential school survivors as well, just like all of us, and so that ceremony part was still underground to some extent.” She further elaborated on this by explaining that her adopted family went to medicine people for healing instead of a doctor and would go to sun dances as visitors, not as participants. She explained that her relationship with her adopted traditional family was “like, here’s this young woman from the east. She’s here on her own, so they were kind of like taking me under their wing.”

She shared her experience of her *awakening* with how she wanted to pursue more about her identity as an *Anishinaabekwe*:

And then you’d just leave it. But, you pick that up and you carry it, and that’s what your bundle is. That’s how you develop your bundle, your sacred bundle. It’s not necessarily something tangible. And so that’s, I think, when I think about when I was a young woman and I decided to leave. I was building my bundle ... I didn’t know that at the time. But now when I reflect on it all, I knew I had to go and start working on that bundle. I must have felt some kind of a void or a need. I’m not sure, but when I look back on it, the things that I picked up along the way now help me to see that a lot of that, I already had it. Like, I didn’t have to go anywhere, okay?

She saw her journey in building her bundle as “the awakening ... picking up the tools and applying them.”

Mskokii Kwe shares how building your sacred bundle is a lifelong journey. When she returned home 7 years later from out west, she “built a little camp” back in her home territory in Ontario. She said “that special place is there and I go there and feed my spirit.” She saw this as important to her survival. She said that she was able to live and work in the city, because now she had a place where she was grounded and “wasn’t torn” between leaving her community (home) and working elsewhere. She said, “I knew just from my journey, up to that point. It’s what my spirit needed. I needed to be able to have a place.”

We talked about the cycle of life and returning back to the earth after our life cycle was over. She said:

Ya. The cycle Otherwise it would be like disrupting that natural order of things, and why do we need to disrupt it? Like, just go with it. We’ve always done that. Let’s continue to do that Like, we’re an ancient people. And so now, I think ... it all makes sense.

Mskokii Kwe made a few references to *Anishinaabemowin* (the *Ojibwe* language) and its importance to *Anishinaabek Yaayang: Our Being*:

But when the rocks are being brought in to the lodge, they’re all heated up. As they enter the doorway and they’re coming in, everybody would say, *Tansi*, and over here, we always would say *boozhoo, aanii mishomis* [hello grandfathers].

And greet them, and it was like a really happy sound. Everybody in unison would

acknowledge that they're coming in to help us, so we're already in that place, right off the bat, by the words that we use.

She also referred to the “people who are keepers of the language” and the importance of having them available to go to for help. She saw the *Ojibwe* language as part of the tools and traditional teachings that would help her in her “contemporary-times life.”

Wisdom-Nbwaakaawin/Connecting the Dots

Mskokii Kwe spoke of the ability of making connections as part of *Nbwaakaawin* (wisdom), “‘cause things don't just happen randomly. Everything has a reason and a purpose in your life. And, then, to be able to look back and to connect the dots.” She never heard the term *medicine power* before, but expressed that she saw it through ceremony. She also spoke of medicine wheel teachings as the seven grandfather teachings:

And, when I first started to learn about this was more in a workshop format in the, I'd say, in the '90s. It became really commonplace to have workshops on the seven grandfather teachings. And so all the language is there.

She spoke of learning about these teachings when she was working in education in a First Nation community. She explained:

Different guest speakers would come into the community. It was part of the healing movement too, plus education. And one of the teachings in there that I think really helped me a lot was talking about honesty. The honest part really hit home with me, because I was a parent at the time So I wanted to have a very honest life and be able to make good choices and feel good about who I was and

be true to myself, so that the kids would have that demonstrated to them. Kind of like to live the good life so I had to really do some critical work on myself.

She talked about another medicine teaching that helped her a great deal to understand life stages. She believed that “we all come back, and we all have that enlightenment and that wisdom of it all, at some point.” She said that she understood life stages and “how things are all a circle.” She spoke of the concept of eldership being “the spirit of that person and their life experience as to when they’re going to be at that stage, eh? Some people have an old spirit, little kids.”

She went further on to explain her understanding of the medicine wheel teachings:

Well, the other thing about it is ... those [medicine wheel teachings] are very, very, old instructions that we were given as *Anishinaabe*. And the fact that now, we’re saying medicine wheel teachings, it’s just the contemporary label or the way to state what it is that you’re talking about. But, it’s not; they’re not of themselves medicine wheel teachings.

She explained that the medicine wheel was a tool to “visualize and conceptualize [the *Anishinaabek* worldview], nothing else.” She said that she was very careful when sharing this with teachers as to not have it misunderstood as a “doctrine” or a “manual [of] a packaged deal.” She said that some of the elders did not hear of medicine wheel teachings growing up and, because they went through residential schools, may see it as “foreign” or “something that was invented.”

She shared that the workshops that happened in the ‘70s came out of the west, because that’s where people always had a really strong traditional base:

And in working with elders, people created these visuals. And then they started putting them on flip charts. And so that became the medicine wheel teachings ... it was all part of that healing movement But now when we say medicine wheel teachings, it's just packaged ... well, it's kind of like maybe the theory in contemporary times, how you share and talk about it, I guess.

She spoke about how important it was to do ceremony and have the experience with it to learn the teachings of honesty when she went on a fast. "So, I get that part now. Better than I did when I just heard it."

Sacred Teachings/Learning From the Elders

Mskokii Kwe spoke of how indigenous knowledge and worldview is "rooted in ceremony." She spoke of the concept of secrecy and that ceremony tends to be preserved and protected. She said, "A lot of these things have to be sought after It's not just going to drop out of the sky because you are *Anishinaabe*." She talked about seeking out ways to find out more about yourself as a devotion to who you are:

It's a commitment to living that good life. And how are you going to live that good life unless you seek it out, and make good choices along the way? It's not necessarily a God-given thing.

She shared many traditional experiences that she had. She spoke of the importance of returning the belly button back to the earth after it falls off, because:

When they [your children] start to exert their own independence ... and, what's the most important thing? Making sure that they stay connected to that land ... so, that's going to carry them through their life, and they're going to know who they are, where they belong.

She said that returning their belly button back to the earth where they were born provided a security of who they were and a connection to their land and their people. They were “grounded.”

She spoke, again, of the “grandfathers” and her experience of humility and thankfulness during a sweat lodge ceremony:

And you know just how old they [the grandfathers] are. They are so ancient, and we are just like a speck in time. You just feel that real humble place ... [and] you're just in the moment ... It's like a wave of peace, contentment, no stress whatsoever ... we say thank you for the sacred circle, thank you for this lodge, thank you, Mother Earth. Thank you, Grandfather rocks. Thank you *nbiish*, like for the water.

She spoke of ceremony as acknowledging that “we're all part of creation and it's all our truth. Like, this is our truth, this is who we are. This is what we do now.” She conveyed that ceremony, the sweat lodge, is

what [the] creator gave us as *Anishinaabek* people. And, that's what truth is, to me ... you know that it's old, old, old, ancient stuff. And you get the feeling that you are an ancient spirit. You come together with all of that to that place, that's what our truth is.

She spoke of the experience as everyone coming together. “It's like a synergy of all this energy and stuff happening.” She shared that there was a consensus and a respect for the protocol of how ceremony was to be conducted among traditional people.

Mskokii Kwe also shared her experience of doing a 4-day fast. When she became a parent, she decided to “do some critical work on myself.” She said that going for her fast was part of the healing process and a quest for balance:

‘Cause that’s the healing process, right? Like, you have to recognize that there’s some things that need to change here. There are some problems here. So that’s your critical reflection is to make up your mind that you’re going to come to terms with that. And you’re going to make changes. Like, that’s what healing is. And you’re going to try to get back to that balance, eh?

She spoke of the importance of having someone to help you and to look after you during your fast. “You can just go to that high place and things can happen that will just kind of take you away from your everyday life.” She shared her experience after she completed her fast:

And I remember after, when I came out, and all of my relatives were there and we had a feast, and it was really nice. And people get a chance to speak. We passed the feather around and [my uncle] said, he helped me carry my stuff He said, “So I picked up that bedding that you were laying on ... when I picked up and put it on my back.” He said, “I had this experience.” It was like a spiritual wave that hit him as he threw that on his back. And he said it was humility. It was like he got zapped.

She shared another experience regarding energy:

Because there is only a certain amount of energy. And when you go back to our creation story, at one point, that energy manifested itself as a sound. But only because at the same moment, there was an essence that could perceive it as sound.

And that's why we use our shakers. It's that you are acknowledging way back to the first expression of who we are. You know, came as a sound to original man. Or when we became an entity, like that. It was a heard thing. So in our ceremonies, when we use our shakers, we are acknowledging that's where that came from And so the way it makes sense is that there is this certain amount of energy and things just start transforming and changing within that.

She also shared her experience of making a spirit plate for a memorial feast. She said that you make a dish for someone who influenced your life journey in an important way. She talked about preparing it for her mother, "making it perfect, for her in mind ... [then] you share with everybody there, why it is that you brought that, and what it means to you. The food that is prepared is shared with everyone who attends." She spoke about how important it was to acknowledge those people that were special and significant to you in your life and the importance of celebrating that. She also said that it helped with the grieving process:

But you're putting all that reflection of how many years with that person into a very condensed version. It's all about reflection ... it was just kind of like a natural thing that happened. And now I'm at the point in my life where I can do that at any time ... It's something that I picked up and I just do it for myself, because it helps you with your grief process, your reflection, everything. It guides you.

Relationships/Honoring Elders/Eldership

Mskokii Kwe shared stories of relationships with elders, that is, her father, adopted traditional family, women in the community, and an elder out west. She mentioned how

“a lot of it [learning about traditional matters] I guess was demonstrated, now that I reflect on it.”

She talked about her father and growing up watching him work as a guide on the lake. She said that being a guide was his livelihood after he came back from World War II:

And one of the things to me, like I was just a little wee kid, I remember that when he got a really big muskie or pike ... he'd take the head off and then he'd put it on a board, and so he'd attach it to the board. And then he'd stick a stick in its mouth, to make its mouth stay open ... I remember looking up at that board on the tree and he had it facing the lake...and then, a couple of years later, it was this wonderful glistening skeleton fish face, okay? ... But I do remember at one point, he had maybe three of them on various trees ... it was his way of giving back and honoring the spirit of those fish. And it was a reminder to all of us that that's where we were getting our livelihood was from the water and those fish. And so he was displaying that in a respectful way, to give back and to show, I guess, humility ... (that he wasn't like the mighty fisherman that had all these catches). It was his way of acknowledging all of that [humility]. But it was never put into words. And it's only been in the last 5 years that I've figured that out.

She went further on to explain that going out west to get the traditional context to be able to see things in this way was beneficial to her to understand her father and what he did.

“It just demonstrates that connection to our environment, so he knew that.”

Mskokii Kwe also talked about various experiences with her adopted traditional family and how important they were to her—celebrations of thankfulness, appreciation,

and joy. She also talked about other experiences with *Anishinaabekwewuk* (*Ojibwe* women) from another First Nation community in which she lived, who helped her to understand the importance of the placenta and belly button at her children's births and learning how to discipline her children. She said that it was because she had developed these respectful relationships with these elders that she learned a lot in how to honor her role as an *Anishinaabekwe* and a mother. *Mskokii Kwe* talked about her relationship with the elder out west who

taught me a lot of things in a way that he'd put it out there and I'm still reflecting on it to this day, making sense of it. But I wasn't the kind of person that's like, why, what's that, why? I just had a very special relationship with them. And I wasn't there to learn all this stuff and get all his knowledge.

She said that she saw this elder "as a very old, old spirit" whom she was "lucky to spend time with" when she was out west.

Political Experiences and Awareness

Mskokii Kwe shared her professional educational experiences where she promoted and adapted her work to include a traditional *Anishinaabek* perspective with the junior kindergarten classes:

It's like a take on the talking feather ceremony which I've experienced [in] sharing circles, so with other women. I've also experienced healing circles where something like a drum or a pipe is used to state that intention that we are here to heal. And then everybody goes through their process of healing in that circle, and it's like an experience. Everybody's going through their thing at the same time, but everybody is experiencing it differently.

She explained that she used a feather and a circle with the children:

When they see that feather, right away, they know its *Anishinaabe*. It just speaks to them; it connects to them, just the sight of it. And then to top it off, when they see that it's an *Anishinaabekwe* that's there to spend time with them, they instantly connect and you can tell they just feel so good ... they'll sit practically right on me. They just want to be in that place, eh? And it's just amazing when you see how they are. So with the feather, what I do is I tell them the story about how that first talking feather came to our region. So I tell them a story [that the feather] ... is a sacred part of creation and this is given for us. It's a gift from the creator and what it's going to do is help us to listen to one another ... the feather is going to help us.

She further explained that she and the children are on the floor in a circle together "where everybody is equal. No one is up on a chair." The feather goes around in the circle to each child, where "there's no pressure to speak," and it's "about listening to what that person [who is holding the feather] is sharing The only thing that you are expected to do though, is to receive that feather in your hand with respect."

She said that she sees the circle as a "listening circle." And over the years, children remember her as the one who "shares a feather with us. It's not like, she brings her feather, you know, it was just so profound that they get it. This is what we share ... that's so beautiful." She further explained that the process gave the children a sense of belonging and that the process was "based on you being respected. So, of course you're going to respect your buddies."

She shares that some of the kids are “newcomers to Canada. But they get that. And that’s kind of like the globalization ... all our paths are crossing more.” She saw the “climate” and timing “right” for

this kind of thing to be acceptable...even 10 years ago, where some people would say, oh, that’s a native thing. That’s the native way, that’s their thing. But, when the feather comes to me, I’m going to choose not to participate. Or, ya, I’m going to move my chair back, outside of the circle.

She saw globalization as the opportunity to share the *Anishinaabek* culture and the fact that “we can share our beliefs and our understanding of the world,” as part of that.

Mskokii Kwe spoke of her own political awareness:

But we are still here and this is contemporary times and let’s face it. Most people are newcomers to this land and we just want this basic acknowledgement.

Because I think if we can get that, so eventually generations of people will have that. Then you come to that place of respect and a relationship to where you are physically standing at this moment in time. It’s not just random and never acknowledged. It’s rooted in the history of the land and the people and the place.

She elaborated further on this:

One of the main ways ... when they’re in the school and they’re together for an assembly or they have a visiting group that comes to the classroom and they’re welcoming them, we want them to know the basics of where they are. They’re on Turtle Island. They’re in *Anishinaabek* country, *Anishinaabek* territory. These are our Aboriginal communities. There is a big one right in town [*Anishinaabek* name] and [*Anishinaabek* community]. These are our Aboriginal communities.

To the east is [*Anishinaabek* community] and [another *Anishinaabek* community]. To the northeast is [*Anishinaabek* community]. We want them to have that situational awareness of where we are and also as they get a little bit older, we want to make darn sure that they know that this is in fact where we used to live, because this is the place of resources. Like, there's water here for land and water travel, and there's resources here, like cranberries is big, if you look around there, where we are there, there's a lot of cranberries, high bush and low bush cranberries, and blueberries is big. We want them to actually, as they get older and they can understand, realize that they're here because we were displaced.

When asked about decolonization she expressed this:

To decolonize is to have that critical awareness that there are certain things, ya, I get swept up in the commercialism ... but I can also go through the process of the decolonization which I think is more of a personal thing to make sense of it all and to still have those values and to uphold them and to continue to seek them, like I'm always still going back to that. Going back to those circles, eh? To get more So that's like a decolonization process, I think. And also, to bring in more of our perspectives into the education system that's decolonizing the curriculum and stuff.

She saw decolonization as a “revitalization”

because the culture is a way to live today. It's not a thing of the past. It's how to use those values and beliefs and practices. And knowing our *Anishinaabek* way is meant for us. It's our truth. And applying that now in contemporary times. And it's always changing.

Final Interview Reflections: A Way of Being in *Anishinaabek* Research

She said that she agreed to participate in the research because she had had research experience before. She also mentioned that if she didn't have that experience, she may have had trust issues with participating. "It made a big difference that I've done research with people and interviewed elders before, too." She said, "Usually we don't ask questions that we know the answer to ... you might ... tell your side of the story and say, "What do you think?" She said that the research process is unnatural, and she talked about how this process is strange when speaking with elders. She said that interviews can be seen as "hurrying" people along to what you think you need to know:

That's being arrogant to your mentor, because your mentor is the one who knows ... because you have this relationship with them. They know what you are ready to hear and understand. And they pick the most salient things that are important at that particular moment, and they'll get to other things later.

She mentioned that research can "interfere with what you are receiving [from elders] because you are not in the moment" due to the research agenda. She said, for example, they might say:

Well no, you're going to keep fire until I say so and then we'll talk. They want that person to forget about those questions and just to be in the moment and to be helpful, to give something back before they're probing and kind of deal with their agenda. In the beginning stages in "the relationship," when you go to an elder, they're going to put you to work right away. So if I want to see a grandmother, she might get me to ... start cleaning those geese. And I'd be thinking, I just want to ask her about this other thing, right? It's all part of the process to get you into

the moment and to have that relationship and that trust. And it might take a long time before you can ask the question ... or maybe there are other things that you are learning that are more helpful in your life. When you go to harvest something, you put your tobacco down first; you don't just start taking, right? So, it's like with an elder. You give something first, and you respect and comply to their agenda.

Relationships/honoring elders/eldership. *Mskokii Kwe* expressed an appreciation of having the opportunity to share her experiences, because they helped her to remember important relationships and “awesome memories.” She wanted to speak to some of the people that she spoke about. She said, “I should share that story with her. I think she'd be really happy.” It made her think about “how lucky I am that all of those teachers have been in my life.” And all that she learned and “the information that she was able to glean from spending time with them.”

She also spoke of the good observation and listening skills, and the importance of spending time with elders:

To pick things up. Because you cannot even be there, you can be there and not even be connected to what is actually happening. And if you are observant and you open yourself to it, you're going to be able to get more from the experience and then reflect on it later. So it made me think about that, because things move so fast now. I need to, still, even though I am in my 50s now. I still do need to make that time to go sit with my teachers [elders], eh?

Political experiences and awareness. *Mskokii Kwe* spoke about why she chose the career that she did:

It was never because of me. It was always what I wanted to accomplish for the kids. Looking at how they're communicating and if the child is frustrated and can't be heard, I wanted to help them have the voice. That was way back when I was 19 years old and I didn't find out what my family clan was until I was about, maybe 24. And what I've learned about that is our family follows the Maang, the loon, and that's what we honor, community voice.

She mentioned that she thought it was important to know your clan, because it "can help guide us to do a lot of good work and a lot of good use of our gifts."

Mskokii Kwe spoke of working in education:

[It is] really quite stressful to work in education, because we know how it is and it's very ... a lot of times that whole schooling process isn't in sync with the way we do things as *Anishinaabe*. Even the learning process is totally different. We like to go into things holistically and see the whole thing and what's going on, and participate as we can. But in school, you're learning skills step by step; there is an end goal, so it's sort of out of sync that way.

She talked about "putting down that tobacco" when she needed guidance. "And this helps me to deal with the complexity of families and the education process and where we are as *Anishinaabek*, traditionally."

Mskokii Kwe talked about being distracted with the level of communication and connection with others and that it was more superficial today because of technology and its instantaneousness:

Everything is so fast ... you don't get a chance to develop your interpersonal skills, or even to listen to your own heart, and where it's going to take you, because you always have this distraction.

She considers herself to have a "fairly good connection with the earth":

I wouldn't say I spend a lot of time out in the bush. I'd like to do more of that, but I do have a closeness with the earth. I can go walk into the bush and just really connect with *Shkagamik-kwe*, Mother Earth, and put my tobacco down, and to put my back against a big tree, to give it a big hug. So I realize how important my connection is with the earth, to teach me how to be in the moment. It takes a lot of stress away to be able to go do that. And I know how important the earth is as my teacher. And she also shows me really beautiful, wondrous things that I would never experience otherwise. If I'm just driving in my car or going to work, you just don't see and feel those things. It [time in nature] opens up my consciousness to nature and then can bring that in with talking with children. It's not something you can get from a book. When you talk about the fish are spawning right now and what that means. And how we respect them now. And we don't fish right now and all of that. I see those things because I feel it, eh?

Adik Giigik: Caribou Sky

He is from a First Nation in northern Ontario. In his 50s, he is from the Caribou Clan: *Adik*. He mentioned that in *Anishinaabe* culture, you follow your father's clan and it is passed on. His mother was Moose Clan. His name was given to him by the name giver, that is, his grandfather's brother (great uncle). He has a Bachelor of Science degree. He also belongs to a variety of professional native and non-native associations

and community clubs. He has worked for First Nation communities in northern Canada and in the United States. He works in educational administration and has worked in native education for 27 years. *Anishinaabemowin* is his first language. He uses the following terms to identify himself as *Anishinaabe*: (a) *Anishinaabe ninni* (*Ojibwe* man), (b) by his traditional name and clan known as *Adik Giizhik*: Caribou Sky and *Adik dodem*: Caribou Clan, and (c) where he is from, that is, his First Nation community. All of these are used to identify himself as an *Anishinaabe*.

Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle

Adik Giizhik spoke of the need for us to keep who we are. So he spoke of going back to what our original gifts and instructions are as *Anishinaabek*:

Because in the work that we do, sometimes we do not do all of what we were supposed to do, okay? So we put things aside, okay? So in our stories, for example, when we left the Creator, *Anishinaabe* people, when you leave the creator, you are given four gifts. And the 4 gifts are very ... like, the first one is your name. What are you known as, *Adik Giizhik intigo*, it is, I am told ... *Adik Giizhik*. I am told [that] I am *Adik Giizhik*. So the second one is your clan, okay? And again, it tells creation who you are. *Adik Dodem* ... but the next one is our language. That's the third gift. And our fourth one is the one that really gets us in trouble. It's free will. So some of us choose to leave something aside for awhile. So what we need to do is to go back to our original gifts and instructions, pick up what we need, to what we were to carry, and language is one.

He went on to explain that “a lot of our original instructions are being left behind,” because a “good portion” of *Anishinaabek* have “put it [the language] aside.”

He stressed the importance of knowing the language:

It has to go back to the language To me, that’s the only way you begin to understand that worldview. Like, I have a difficulty in trying to explain it in English ... because I know the way I think. I know the way I do things. And I think in the language all the time.

Adik Giizhik further explained:

The language ... a lot of the philosophies in the language, if you know the language, it provides you with a way of thinking and knowing. Because the language, it is all about movement. *Anishinaabe* language is primarily verbs. So it will connote movement all of the time. So, in that how you think, how you do things, how you relate to the next person, or the environment, it is fluid. That is how basically I can explain it. The way you work: *ezhichigewin* is how you do it; *anokiiwin* is how you work; and *inendamowin* is how you think. And that is a perspective, I think. English, it’s something that I learned after.

He shared that the language is “who I am.”

When asked about the worldview in the language using the word *Manidoonhs*, he shared that “insects are called *Manidoonhs*. *Manito* is our spirit, so they are little spirits.”

He spoke of the *Anishinaabek* worldview:

Manidoonhs. It all goes back to the creator. *Manito* is like the Great Mystery. It is whatever is out there and everybody on this earth has that idea in their head. There is a great power out there, so whatever they call it.

He went on to describe that the spider is called *Asabiikenh*. Spider is the guy that makes the spider web, okay? And the fisherman in our community that sets the nets, they call that *Asab*. It is almost the same thing as the spider web.”

Adik Giizhig talked about the importance of speaking his language and of the *Anishinaabek* traditions:

There are fewer people in my community that speak the language ... what’s happening now, I am losing parts of it I feel sad about that. I’ll go to places. And I’ll go to places up north and my cousins. And I get a chance to speak. I get a chance to laugh and tell stories and hear stories. But at home, in my home community, are very few [speakers].

He continued by speaking about the importance of “pick[ing] up what we need, to what we were to carry”:

The place where my mother’s family comes from___, and there is a fellow that wants to have Midewin ceremonies out at that lake there. I know who he is. I want to go find him. And I’ll ask him, “When are you going to do that? And, if you do that, can I come help you?”

Wisdom-Nbwaakaawin/Original Instructions

In response to the topic of the medicine wheel, *Adik Giizhig* said, “I don’t have that one. I’ve seen it, but I don’t have that.” Throughout the conversation, however, he shared a lot about “how you look after that cycle of life.” He shared the wisdom he knew about *Mamanan akii*, Mother Earth:

Each living organism has instructions in the way we are taught. They have instructions on what they are to do, okay? If it’s wild rice or if it’s May, when I

ask the creator, what are my instructions? I know what my gifts were, but what were my instructions? So they are ingrained somewhere in my ... DNA, of what I'm supposed to do. So the same thing with a rabbit, or a robin, or a squirrel, or a chipmunk. Everybody has a job here. When we arrive here, we don't just sit here. We have things to do ... everything is work related. The plants have work, so they come out to do what creation has given them for instruction. So they follow through. So we do the same thing.

Adik Giizhig talked about the importance of knowing the story of our people:

I know I need the wild rice. That's what brought me here. If you know the migration story ... [it] is a historical fact over the last 500 years when our people left the eastern seaboard, turning west, the migration brought our ancestor to a place where food grew on water ... but, again, it is following food ... so I need to know these things, that to help me understand who I am and what brought me here. Like, I know where to go for harvesting blueberries, for example, in this part of the country. I know where to go for raspberries and that type of thing. And, the semaa [tobacco] ... for different harvest of the year, you go to the different parts of the territory here to look for whitefish or sturgeon. It is all weather patterns, understanding weather patterns, the water conditions, the temperatures of the water, all that.

Adik Giizhig spoke about living in a part of the country where "there are a lot of lakes and a lot of water, like rivers and lakes, and forest. So, living off the land is seeing what the land is doing." He stressed the importance of giving "attention to what is going on ... [and] attention to the environment." He went on to describe the traditional activity of

harvesting wild rice and explained its growing pattern and the importance of water fluctuations, birds, winds, and weather. He talked about the sequencing of growth and its relationship to the weather and environmental circumstances. He described that each stage is based upon the previous one for successful harvesting. He also talked about the importance of ceremony in the cycle for successful harvesting:

For giving back to the Creator. *Miigwech* for having that food available to us, again. For this year, a fresh crop and for the creation to rejuvenate and regenerate itself in the spring. And the result is that you have a harvest in the fall, so you offer ceremony for that.

He expressed that without offering thanks in a traditional manner for the harvest, you are not honoring the harvest. Therefore, you will be putting next year's harvest in jeopardy due to your neglect of being thankful as part of your obligation in maintaining the cycle.

He shared that there was no word for "environment" in *Anishinaabemowin*. He explained, "The way I understand is, what was given to us, the earth and everything in this ground was given to us. *Kiimiinigowin*, what was given to us." When asked, "For instance, man wouldn't have created technology unless he had some instruction to do so. Would you say that?" He agreed with this concept, but mentioned that it was important that man do so "in a good way."

Sacred Teachings and Learning from the Elders

Adik Giizhig spoke numerous times about the importance of being thankful and respectful of "*Mamanan akii*" [Mother Earth]:

In what you do, you know when you get up in the morning? People will have rituals that they start the day by. Saying *miigwech* to the Creator, whatever that

power is for having the opportunity to see another day, type of thing ... so you watch the sun rise. So wherever you are, you can watch the sun rise. And you watch the sunset. And the sunset, you say thank you [that it] crossed our sky and gave us warmth and allowed all of the things to happen while it was making its journey.

He continued by sharing knowledge about the Haudenosaunee [Iroquois] people:

[They] go through a progression [in their Thanksgiving address]. They come to the birds, all of the birds that they acknowledge their being. They acknowledge the land and all of the abundance on the land. The food that is there And then the Creation above the earth. I know some elders, they'll say "*Giizhigong*," you know, what's in the day, like what they see in the day, the daylight, above the ground type of thing. But to me, that's how you connect yourself to creation and then you always seek permission.

He went on to explain:

When you first wake up, you acknowledge I am being allowed to see another day. And greetings to all of your relatives in this creation. But also, as you work through the day, you know, if you need to take something from Creation, you almost need to ask permission. So you do that by offering your tobacco and saying, if you are going to go gather the wild rice, you offer your tobacco to gather the wild rice. And you have your feast for that. Or, if you are going to have a ceremony which involves gathering certain items, if you are going to have a sweat, so you are going to go collect grandfathers [rocks]. You are taking grandfathers where they were placed. You offer your tobacco. You say your intent

for taking that grandfather from its original place, relocating it to your backyard, and you're going to throw it in the fire. But you ask permission before that. You ask permission for the fire, because you are going to have a sweat. So it is being respectful.

He shared that it was important not to abuse Creation and that he learned that as a child.

He believed that we were part of the Great Mystery:

I am part of that. We are all part of Creation ... you know the moon, eh? There's a story ... it's the Aztecs have a story about the moon. There's a rabbit on the moon. So when you look at the full moon and when you look at that dark shape, because I put a rabbit in mind, you'll begin to see that shape of a rabbit. So there are a whole bunch of other stories about cosmos. And I don't know them, but I listen to the stories in the southwest about the Seven Sisters, the stories of the Seven Sisters. You know ... Greeks and Romans, they all have stories about the stars. You know they have the constellations, Orion and all those folks? But in our cultures, we have seen the same things. They may not be called Orion or whatever else, but there are names for them. So that's part of what we need to find out. That knowledge is there somewhere. If no one is alive that knows it, you may need to go to ceremony, to learn for those messages to come back ... to find out what is the story of those stars. You follow our ceremonies. You talk about *Anaango-kwe*, you know, Star Woman.

He spoke of women and the duties that women have:

Women need to conduct water ceremonies every spring, when the ice is leaving. They will make, in our community they make willow rafts out of red willow.

And they paint the red willow to make offerings, and they go by the river and sing songs. That's all I know; that's woman's teaching. I don't know the details ... they have to do that every spring. Because they're thankful for the water, like fresh water coming and moving again. The water is moving underneath the ice all the time, but, you know.

He spoke about an elder that he knows who "tells the story about Creation ... even the time before Creation. There was a void, wherever he was, the Creator was sitting, it was just quiet. No sound. And he sent out something, a big bang."

He talked about the cedar bath ceremony:

It is a ceremony for relaxation and a lot of singing and smudging and that kind of stuff. While I was there, all the ceremonies have different aspects. There could be people that are actually conducting the ceremony and assisting in the ceremony. There are also background people. So I was one of the background people ... because the people are in ceremony, they need to have certain things done for them. So my job was to prepare their meals. So I cooked breakfast and I cooked dinner.

He shared other aspects of participating in a ceremony:

And when I go to Manitoba, it is the same thing. People over there ask me to come. They invite me to their ceremony. That one, I'll go to the ceremony. I'll participate in that. But in the morning before the ceremony, I'll make breakfast ... while I am doing it, that's part of the energy that you put in that preparation. They always tell you not to cook when you are in a foul mood. Whatever you are

feeling, it is going through your hands, is going to end up on that food. And it isn't going to be a good experience for those people.

He talked about how people were invited to ceremonies:

And they know who I am. So they say, "We are having ceremony. Do you want to come help?" Or they'll just tell me they are having a ceremony. They just leave it like that. And it's up to me to decide if I can go there or not. Deep down they know who I am and how I can help them.

He shared that:

People know what I do and who I am. About a month or so ago, I was at a funeral and, after the funeral, this lady sent me a note saying that "I need to see you." So, I just found her later and she ended up giving me some tobacco. And her request was to make her son a pipe I make pipes. And two people in Manitoba gave me tobacco and requested pipes, and I've done that.

Political Experiences and Awareness

Adik Giizhig spoke about his mother and uncle going to residential school. He spoke of his own experiences of attending two residential schools: (a) one near his community and (b) one in the big city. He spoke of his experiences regarding

Anishinaabemowin:

The one in [the big city], not so much [did they try to take away his language]. Because we were in high school, the boys' supervisor, we could defend ourselves. You know, if they tried anything ... but it was in elementary school here when you were just a little boy, you couldn't defend yourself. So I remember, because where the school is located, there was a farm here, and we would have to look

after the farm. And I remember one of my good memories was sitting along a fence with some of the other boys and talking in the language. But we were always looking over our shoulders to make sure no one was able to hear us.

He spoke about being able to go home for the summers. He said that home was where he spoke his language because “my mother and father, that’s all they spoke, so that was the language.” He shared that his mother encouraged them to speak the language:

But not always But my two sisters, my brother, and I, the four of us all have the language. We have an *Anishinaabe* name. My two younger sisters and my younger brother that’s no longer with us, did not have the language, did not have an *Anishinaabe* name. In one family, I don’t understand what happened. Why did my parents make that decision to not have *Anishinaabe* names for the younger siblings? It is a little bit hard. Somewhere along the way, that’s been in my blood, as an *Anishinaabe* person, to maintain the tradition.

He also mentioned that his sister had been “a teacher at the school board. She was a language teacher.”

He shared that his father had told him to go to school. For high school, he went to the residential school in the big city. *Adik Giizhig* said:

Grade 11 was a hard year for me. If I could’ve dropped out, I would’ve dropped out, because I stayed to sit-in, where before sit-ins were cool. Ya, I sat in the classroom on the floor in the back of the room, all by myself, for 2–3 days. I was protesting, because I said, “I can read.” Because one teacher thought maybe the students in the grade 11 class couldn’t read. And she would stand up in front of the class and read to us So I sat in the back of the room, and every now and

then, my classmates would come by and sit down with me as well. But I sat back there. I said, “I know how to do this. I learned how to read when I was in elementary school. I can read books. I can read novels. I can.”

He talked more about his school experiences and about writing exams. “There were some questions on that exam that I did not know the answer to, because we did not cover that in the curriculum. So right away, we were handicapped.” He said that he did graduate from high school, and that there were not many First Nations students who had graduated when he graduated. He lamented, “I could count on one hand ... [and] I’d still have some fingers left over.” He said that he had listened to his father and grandfather:

It brought me this way. Okay? And the other thing, and I didn’t know this until a little later, but what I am doing, I don’t know if you would call it destiny or legacy or whatever else, but one of the chiefs that was negotiating Treaty #__, back in the [1800s] is one of my ancestors ... There was this old man back there that had this vision, and he died before the vision came out loud. So here you are, working on it, so.

Adik Giizhig worked with an organization that created “courses that we generate ourselves.” He spoke of the necessity to create a program which focused on indigenous studies and worldview “that we would design, conduct research, and offer what we have.” He said that he worked with an international organization: [GIFT: Global Indigenous Futures Together]. This organization supports accreditation for indigenous programs and is supported by indigenous peoples. He mentioned that the organization provides guidance, support, and intellectual resources to assist with establishing

educational programming. He spoke of working towards obtaining resources to support the programs that were developed:

Going back to the discussion with the province, the premier of Ontario has an agenda where he wanted to increase the skill level of Ontarians so that they have access to employment. So in that he's also encouraging immigration, okay? Immigration is saying to people around the world, we welcome you in Ontario. Come here and you qualify. You have access to employment, okay? So, in order for him to make that statement, in order for him to facilitate all of that, the government has to look at frameworks or qualification frameworks or accreditation processes from other countries. And he'll say, "If you're a doctor from wherever, we've looked at your framework and here's [what you will need]" ... and they do an evaluation and they come up with, like, you need one additional course. And we'll give you a license for a doctor in Ontario or a lawyer or whatever So my question to the government last fall, when you're doing that, you need to include accreditation for GIFT as well So that's what [the organization that he works for] is about. That's what some of the organizations that are involved in this world movement try to preserve more of that. Or, revitalize it, I guess. So, that it becomes flourishing again.

He also talked about balancing contemporary and traditional values:

There was always a movement of ideas. So what I do now is I translate that, compare that to what is going on, okay? I live, on one hand, I live a cultural and traditional lifestyle. On the other hand, I also live a very contemporary lifestyle. I

like driving my car and I like my blackberry. I can do what we've talked about [traditionally] I can still do that.

He commented:

One of my instructions that I've been given is that you need to look after yourself. So you need to provide for your sustenance, your food, and your clothing, and look after your health. Okay, so what I do for a living allows me to do that. I can put clothes on my back and put a roof over my head, and you know, food on the table, okay? So I utilize what is available to me to do that. So, if you go back 500 years or maybe more, whatever, the *Anishinaabe* that were walking around here, was doing the same thing. He was looking and taking care of creation on one side, but he was also looking at how do I feed myself and my family?

He further described technologies that the *Anishinaabe* used that were "really good and really nice the way they were looking after it [Mother Earth]. They were taking care of the environment, the water levels, and there's a good economic development project."

He talked about the fact that *Anishinaabek* have adapted throughout time to do things in a good way. He also talked about people from the US

who are hoarding the money. They've taken everything by force. All around the world It's not going to do any good if you're unable to put fuel in the vehicle or put proper healthy food on the table that's not contaminated or anything else, or good water to drink. Your billions of dollars is not going to be any good if you can't find a good cup of water.

Adik Giizhig spoke about globalization and decolonization:

Well, they're economic terms, eh? Like globalization is where you bring in ideas from around the world. That's what Marco Polo did. He went the heck over there on a horse and he came back on a camel or whatever, eh? He brought ideas; he brought silks behind. So the guys that came over here took all kinds of pelts back, so the queen could be warm.

When discussing decolonization he said:

I don't know if it is decolonization or more of a revitalization Revitalization is a good concept You know, you are going back to picking up what we left behind ... going back to our original cycle ... regenerating ... but you are also colonizing. You're colonizing the English speaking *Anishinaabe*, in *Anishinaabe* ... a reversal.

He believed that revitalizing and regenerating our language would support a revitalization and a regeneration with *Mamanan akii* [Mother Earth].

Final Interview Reflections

Adik Giizhik shared that he did not have any issues with the research process. He did not have anything he wanted to share about participating in the study, except that he had participated in research projects before.

Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle. He mentioned that it was everyone's obligation to regain our language as *Anishinaabek*. He said that you have to "go back and pick it up," because it is our responsibility to go and seek it out, regardless of the experiences which interrupted our learning of it (i.e., residential schools). Our conversations included that being *Anishinaabe* was something special because it made

you unique. It made you more aware of things. *Mino bimaadziwin* is a good life, a way of life.

Political Experiences and Awareness. *Adik Giighik* mentioned that “people should learn the language from ... preserving the language ... digitizing the language, so they would know what it sounds like.” He said funerals and ceremony should not be recorded at all:

But in order for people to understand it [ceremony], they need to know the language ... any ceremony, if you listen to a creation story or something like that in the language or any other teaching that is in the language, you don't record it, but you would understand what the teaching is about in its total depth rather than receiving an English translation to it.

He spoke about initiatives that his organization was doing about the language:

It's a vocabulary, but also a storage ... storing digitally ... each carrier of the language passes on. We lose some words ... we're also just taking a word ... so that sound is recorded. So our goal is to have 5,000 words like that ... to make sure you have a sound bite that shows you how that word sounds.

Survival. Last, we discussed that survival would not be an *Anishinaabek* concept. It would be a colonized term. The survival of the planet is a colonized term. There has never been a concept in *Anishinaabemowin* about the obliteration of the *Anishinaabek* people or of the planet.

Makade Nimkii: Black Thunderbird

He is from a First Nation in central Ontario. In his 60s, he is from the Red Tail Hawk Clan: *Giibwaanisii dodem*. He received his spirit name at a naming ceremony

during a 4-day fast. He was informed of his clan name by a family member. He is an *Anishinaabemowin* (*Ojibwe*) language teacher who has his native language instructor's diploma, a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Bachelor of Education degree, and a college diploma. He is a certified teacher (OCT) and a certified *Anishinaabemowin* language teacher. He mentioned that there was not a Native teacher or Native language teacher association in Ontario. *Anishinaabemowin* is not his first language, but he did learn the language from family, that is, from his paternal grandmother, from friends, and from teachers. He has worked for a variety of First Nation education communities, both on and off reserve, in central Ontario. He has worked in native education for 10 years. He identifies himself by the term, *Anishinaabe*.

Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle

Makade Nimkii spoke about "taking part in language study" to become connected to himself and further elaborated:

[I] knew my community, because we returned from time to time to go to weddings and funerals or whatever, right? Social things like that, and that's where I became familiar with my community. But it wasn't, and I'd just like to say, it's not so much community I'm talking about. It's just *Anishinaabe* culture and *Anishinaabe* worldview. That's what I was in search of, because I saw it lacking in my own intellectual vision.

Makade Nimkii had grown up off reserve in the city. He said that he was motivated to learn more about himself as an *Anishinaabe* person

to fill that lack. It would make me understand myself, self-understanding. That was what it [searching for the connection] was about, because I was a very

disconnected person, like a lot of *Anishinaabe* were at that time, especially those in the city, especially those.

He shared that learning his language helped him to look in “a window into the world of *Anishinaabe* thought.” He spoke of how he saw *Manidoonhs*, little spirits: insects:

What that does is that it goes a long way to explain *Anishinaabe* worldview of the respect for the diminutive aspect of life and including all life forms as respectable, even so far as the tiniest insect *Asabiikenh* is the *Anishinaabe* word for spider. What that means is the little net maker. *Anishinaabemowin* being the descriptive language that it is, describes that creature very well ... what that creature does. And likely the effect that it had on *Anishinaabe*. It could very well be that centuries and centuries ago, someone watching that little creature learned how to make a net and saw the way that the spider trapped his food with that net and decided they could do the same using that to be catching fish.

He shared the struggle he had for relearning his language:

We lived off reserve, so I lost a lot of what I learned. I didn't lose so much, 'cause I retained most everything. Almost everything that I was taught, I retained. But I needed further study, and when I began my elder years, I began studying the language again, in earnest this time. I had very little help during my adulthood in further learning and studying my language. I was unable to find any reading material, any instructional material. It was nonexistent when I was a young man in the '60s and '70s. And it wasn't until the '80s that I was able to come in contact with serious language teachers who began my serious studies and reeducation, I call it, of my own language.

Wisdom/Medicine: *Mshkiki*.

Makade Nimkii spoke about what he knew of medicine and the medicine wheel:

As I move on through my journey in education, and I've been involved in the education of other people for 10 years or more, my respect for the medicine wheel grows deeper and deeper. And it's not because I know anymore, because I'm still overwhelmed by the depth and breadth of the medicine wheel teachings. My main focus came to me from one of my teachers, _____. He was a great language teacher, one of the great language teachers that I have had the privilege of taking a class with. And I was only able to study under him for one year, but that one year changed my life, basically. It changed my worldview. It changed a lot of things on a lot of different levels. And it was done very simplistically. I am amazed to this day, the minimalistic approach that he used and the huge area that he covered with that.

He mentioned that although he knew "very little" about the medicine wheel, he did know that it was all inclusive. "The medicine wheel is all inclusive. That's real number one."

He continued to share what he knew about the medicine wheel, commenting that "the *Anishinaabe* style is built on the four directions and that's medicine. That's huge.

Communication is one of the highest forms of medicine that there is. And this is about communication." He saw the *Anishinaabe* ways of communicating through the birch bark scrolls, the petroglyphs, and our oral tradition, as aspects of medicine. He also shared his beliefs in good and bad medicine, affirming that "I put stock in medicine power that affects us all. That changes everyone. That leads in a good way. I only

believe in good medicine. I don't believe in bad medicine. I don't believe in evil medicine. It's of no concern to me. There is a lot of people who do."

He continued to share how he saw medicine:

Medicine is what helps people. Let's face it. Just look at the generic of the term now, what is medicine? It is something that you take when you are ill to make you better, right? ... Everything has a purpose. It's just like life, right? If you do evil, it has that effect, right? Doing bad things causes more bad things to happen. And why would you do that?

He finished by sharing his understanding of the conceptual nature of the medicine wheel: "All directions meet in the middle, so everything is apart and everything is together at the same time ... everything is related. It's all about relationship. And that's what *Anishinaabe* worldview is based on, relationship."

Makade Nimkii related his belief in the Great Mystery. "Exactly what it is ... a Great Mystery ... is an awesome thing. And I am only a vapour in the whole thing." He said the word "humility ... I think that would be the right way to go." He continued, "I think it is a spiritual reference, and I think it is designed to humble ourselves. The Great Mystery ... like who came up with that? Nobody knows. It's not written anywhere ... *Gzhe-manidoo*: The Great Mystery." He said he didn't know much about it and mentioned that he "had a hard enough time understanding this realm."

Makade Nimkii spoke about how he saw our connection to Mother Earth:

If all the water and all the trees and all the plants, all the animals, if all of those things disappear, then we disappear. So survival of Mother Earth is tantamount to

our survival ... [she] is linked to our own survival. It's the only way we can survive ... it's just as simple as that. It's the simple truth.

He explained that

traditionally, we're a noncapitalistic culture, so we don't see our survival and our occupation tied to capitalism. So traditionally, we look after ourselves. We look after our means of survival, and we could recognize the earth as our primary means of survival.

He further explained that "a way of life" is an *Anishinaabek* worldview and "our traditional point of view."

Sacred Teachings/Learning from the Elders

Makade Nimkii spoke of ceremony as part of *Anishinaabe* life. "That's something that the elders taught me ... you grow through ceremony. And ceremony, that's your way of life. That's the *Anishinaabe* way of life." He shared that "what happens at ceremony, stays in ceremony," but said that he would talk about it in general. He spoke of the different ceremonies that we, as *Anishinaabe*, take part in. "Let's say there are sweat lodge ceremonies, there is purification ceremony, there is the shaking tent ceremony, there is feasting, there is fasting, there is seasonal ceremony, depending on the time of year. There's the offering of tobacco." He remarked that "there has been a resurgence ... [and that] "more *Anishinaabe* are taking part in ceremony. And ceremonies that were once forgotten are now being conducted."

Makade Nimkii also spoke about his own experiences of harvesting cranberries at the place where his community ancestors had harvested cranberries. He expressed how profoundly he "felt the presence of the ancestors watching him." Throughout the day, he

had felt their presence. He said that he felt comforted, reassured, and nurtured throughout this experience. He said he felt the essence of “an ancestral energy-vibe.”

Makade Nimkii spoke about an elder who was one of his language teachers:

Almost every class ... it happened with a good deal of frequency. So when you left, you understood the importance of the four directions ... and he incorporated that into everything he taught and not directly, blatantly, but it was usually part of the first part of the class, so you'd be aware of the four directions.

He said, “That’s something I do the whole time now. I thank the four directions ... in our language ... the *Anishinaabe* style is built on the four directions.”

He talked about one of his important elders, William Jones, who was the first Native PhD in Anthropology:

William Jones was probably, was certainly one, if not the greatest elder of the last two centuries, I guess. Unfortunately, he left us far too young, and who knows what other work could have been done. But he did a massive amount of work with very little resource. Back when he collected all of these stories, in the late 1800s and the early 1900s ... he was able to understand where these stories were coming from, where they were going, and he treated the stories with the respect that they deserved. And as a result, he was able to preserve our language and our culture at a moment in time when it was in a lot of danger of disappearing.

He shared what he learned from the stories William Jones had collected from the elders:

The single most important thing that I’ve learned about these stories is about the respect for the elders. Many of these stories, that’s what it’s all about. Respect for your elders. To do as you’re told. And that doesn’t always happen. And

there are reasons why it doesn't. And there are consequences for that.

He discussed that “elders know about living on the earth. And every now and again, that's what gets challenged. And it should get challenged. That's the uncomfortable thing about it. And sometimes it should not.” He also shared what he believed the stories represented:

Well, traditional stories have a lot of morality involved in them. There are a lot of moral decisions being made, both good and bad in all of these stories. And there is something to be learned in all of this, whether they are good or bad. Just like parables in the Bible. The good and bad that's done. But we try to learn from them. We learn from our mistakes as well as our virtues. And that's the thing that I read in these traditional stories.

Relationships and Honoring Elders

Makade Nimkii spoke about his relationship with his father and how that encouraged him to honor who he was as an *Anishinaabe*:

A lot of that I was raised up with. My father was *Ojibwe* and he taught me to be proud of that, and he taught me to respect that ... it began when I was young. And it was always there with my father. My father taught me to respect my own people and to respect him, who he was. And that was family training that was a given, right? I didn't really conceptualize it and intellectualize it until I met other people in my life's journey.

He shared more about his father:

[He] was rather an alienated person from his community. He lived outside of his community. And, although he went back from time to time, he lived a long ways

away from his community He left his community shortly after I was born [for work], and he never did go back to that community.

He said that he was motivated to learn more about himself as an *Anishinaabe* person, because of his father's disconnection from his home community.

He continued to share how he was encouraged by "people that just came into my life" to connect to the *red road*, that is, to honour the teachings of the ancestors. He said that he met a lady in his community and she encouraged him to "take part in more traditional ceremonies. I was already taking part in language study, and this lady encouraged me to study more of the language and more the ceremonial aspect of life."

Political Experiences and Awareness

Makade Nimkii shared his experiences with his image as a native person:

I never did lose too much respect for myself. I am not saying that I didn't lose respect for myself. I did. I was encouraged, too ... by the media, largely. By the U.S. and Canadian media as well. Hand in hand, especially through television, especially ... somewhat in the education system. They were more neglectful. But, American media was outright disrespectful ... their main target was ridicule. And, they ridiculed a lot of groups, not just our group Unfortunately, a tool that was used against us a lot, was the stereotyping of us as a violent, disrespectful society.

He spoke of what motivated him to learn more about who he was as an *Anishinaabe*:

I came to a real crossroads. That I don't mind telling you. After the war in OKA, I had a lot of burning questions in my mind. Like, coming from a mixed background, I lived in two different worlds, right? And I was able to ... well, I

didn't have to justify that; it was just my experience. I grew up with two distinct cultures. That was my experience. However way that needed to be justified, it would be justified. Or however way it wasn't going to be justified, it would remain unjustified. But that's the way it was. I understood that I lived in two different worlds; to a degree, I understood. But after the war in OKA, I realized that these two worlds had a lot of problems. Have more problems than I already know, had greater problems than myself. That I understood. That's what I saw. I saw that there are more things that I needed to understand about the disparity between the two worlds that I live in. And I am still working on that, and I'll probably be working on that until I am no longer here.

He continued in sharing more about his desire to learn more about the *Anishinaabe* worldview:

Well, I need to know more about the *Anishinaabe* world, because that's the world that doesn't get any attention. The mainstream world gets all the attention. It has all kinds of ways and means of giving itself attention, resources, everything. It doesn't want for anything. Except a few really important things that it doesn't realize it wants for. Understanding of itself. It doesn't understand itself, as near as well as it thinks it does I really don't think mainstream culture understands how it motivates itself.

He shared his concern about mainstream culture:

[Mainstream culture is] very unconcerned about what is going on. Well, I can sit here and say that I don't see the reasoning in it, although ... it's probably something that I really don't want to understand or don't want to be aware of.

What we are talking about here is cultural genocide. And what motivates that?

There are a number of things that would motivate something like that. So, we could talk about that for a long time, couldn't we?

He also shared what was important in being a language teacher:

I tell myself every day that I am in the business of enlightenment. I am trying to enlighten myself, and I am trying to enlighten my students. It's the value of our language and our culture. And that in and of itself goes beyond just *Anishinaabe* language and culture; it goes beyond that. But it begins with that, and my main concern is with *Anishinaabe*.

He spoke about oppression. "It's not an accident [residential school, government policy, legislation, the Indian Act]. And it is not going away anytime soon." He talked about *Anishinaabe* language programs and the fact that they might disappear due to lack of funding, lack of interest, and lack of respect by the Canadian government: "being abandoned":

Who knows all the reasons why. We could go on a long time about that. There is homeless people; there are hungry people; there are sick people that shouldn't be homeless, shouldn't be hungry, shouldn't be sick. In this day and age, there is just no reason for it. And lost. But our society allows that to happen. It makes no sense to me. It never will I don't like to see people suffer. People shouldn't have to suffer needlessly. And so many people do suffer needlessly in this world.

He shared more about the *Anishinaabe* worldview:

Its [sharing] is a huge part of *Anishinaabe* worldview. We didn't allow people to go homeless. We didn't allow people to go hungry. We wouldn't allow things like that,

traditionally, not as a rule. It could happen, but it wouldn't be a segment of our society. We wouldn't have segments of our society that went homeless. We wouldn't have segments of society that went hungry. We wouldn't have segments of society that went without. We wouldn't allow it ... while other people had a great deal. We wouldn't allow that to happen. [It's about] a sense of humanity. A sense of culture. We were a noncapitalistic society. Now, how could we do that? How could we live without money? The answer to that question is that we lived very well without money. Nobody went without, so we didn't need money. And modern society today, with all its intelligences and with all of its resources, doesn't understand that. [It] hasn't begun to understand that.

Makade Nimkii saw modern man as having "at this moment, in time, in this time in history, we are in a very dysfunctional relationship with the earth. And, unfortunately, I see this growing worse all the time." He said:

Humankind, in this century and in the past century, has developed. Some see it as progress, but I see it as the exact opposite. It's not progress at all; it's a race to the bottom. And you look at things like nuclear power. I'd like to focus on nuclear power, because that's the most profound change that has come about ... I call it the abuse of fire They've taken this power and they've used it for weaponry, which is a huge mistake. And they use it for a lot of other things, too, not just weaponry. It is a mistake that we'll all pay for one day, I believe. I don't know when. But I really believe we are heading to that ... and it's only a matter of time before an unstable government decides to use these horrific powers.

We spoke about the Kyoto Accord and the United Nations. He said, “These are just little people with their fingers in the dyke, you know? ... They don’t have any influence or power.

Final Interview Reflections: Peace Is Our Worldview Demonstrated

Makade Nimkii shared his concern for the *Ojibwe* language. “One of the things I’ve noticed is our language ... in Canada. It’s a long way from being taken seriously enough.” He wanted to see native studies be considered an essential subject and saw insincerity and injustice on behalf of the Ministry of Education for this neglect. He saw this as having to be addressed immediately.

He also commented that knowing more about himself, as an *Anishinaabe* person, enabled him to have a

good direction in my life. If it weren’t for this, I would have no direction. I would be misled at every turn. My own culture has taught me how to build a better life in terms of who I am and what the language teaches me.

He referred to the next generations and what they need. “For them not to suffer, they need access to language, culture, worldview. And need it on a regular basis.” He challenged the school system and said, “There is a need to provide to all people of this country. There is a need to show respect for our language and our culture. Not just words, but in action.”

He further shared that “respect is something that is tangible and can be seen, and the absence of it can be felt.” He explained, “Peace is not oppression. Peace is the absence of oppression. And the perception of fairness and lack of oppression is oppression. That oppression does not exist in this country, is not true.” He further

elaborated on the concept of oppression and equality, commenting that “equality doesn’t exist for us. We don’t want to be them. Dominant society’s equality is misleading and is a cloak of oppression. We are not equal; we are different.”

Politically, he saw the removal of “everything that we need to survive, everything that we need to live.” He referred to the 1969 White Paper and said, “Today, to make everything the same. Cultural assimilation still exists.” He mentioned that peace education was respect and could promote alternative worldviews. He stated, “An assimilated mind will never know any peace.” He believed that “peace is our worldview demonstrated.” He further elaborated, “Peace is about peace of mind, not the absence of war. You won’t know peace of mind without language and culture, your identity

Disrespect is trying to make something that it’s not.” He shared that he will

continue my own studies, sharing with anyone I can with opportunity.

Opportunity is a two-way street. Opportunity is important. And we continue to create it, in spite of neglect and opportunity, because we create, as part of creation, in spite of political will, because it is in us to survive.

Aandek: Crow

He is from a First Nation in central Ontario. In his 60s, he is from the Deer Clan—*Waawaashkeshi dodem*. He mentioned that the clan system is paternalistic. He received his name in the medicine lodge. He told me that the *Anishinaabek* receive their name seven generations before we are born and that someone helps you find it (before it is known to creation). He said that information and knowledge are passed down intergenerationally. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree and a teaching certificate (OCT). He has worked for a variety of First Nation education communities, both on and off

reserve, in Ontario and in Michigan. He has taught for 45 years. He uses the term *Anishinaabe* to identify himself as *Anishinaabe*.

Aandek is an *Anishinaabemowin* teacher, and most of our conversation focused on the importance of the language; the teachings in the language; and the education, politics, and history in the teaching of the *Anishinaabek* language and worldview.

Sharing Your Sacred Bundle/Original Teachings

Aandek spoke of his experiences sharing the language as an *Anishinaabemowin* teacher and the important lessons in the language. He said, “Our words is what motivates us, our every being.” He shared the way to understand the term *Shkozin*:

In our words, the syllable is *zin*, is how you feel inside your whole, total understanding of your presence in the now, of where you’re living, so that whenever you indicate *zin*, that’s you, and your individual self, how you coexist with creation.

He continued explaining *Shkozin*, which has been simply translated as *to wake up*:

It’s not just wake up ... *Shkwe* is a word that describes what your emotional, what comes from within, your emotions and feelings, and a better word translation for *Shkwe* is awe. *Zin* is your being of how you feel stuff, so *Shkozin*, when we say it in *Ojibwe*, when we first open our eyes in the morning, we find ourselves in this beautiful Creation. And we see the sunrise and we see the blue sky. We see people. The fire is there. How should you feel? You should be in awe.

He explained that the culture is transmitted by our language and that “every syllable we utter has culture in it.” He exclaimed that it “is what I love about the beauty of it, right? The description and the essence of the power in the worldview. How

encouraging? It's very encouraging." *Aandek* spoke of many experiences where he shared the language and its meaning to help pass on curiosity: "It's a process, eh? The more young people whose curiosity you'll arouse, you know, that's going to be with them forever."

Aandek continued talking about the importance of sharing and "need[ing] to pass on that knowledge" that we have as *Anishinaabek*. He declared, "We need to tell these young people. The young people need to hear that we have to give them that certain language or knowledge that they can use to be in tune with everything." He was worried about the next generation of young people and the loss of a connection with Mother Earth. He elaborated on this point:

Young people now would say, "How do you know it's time to go [goose hunting]?" They don't have. We need to pass on that knowledge. And that's what we were talking about yesterday with [elder's name]. [He] came here yesterday, and we were discussing stuff. And one of the things he said was, "It's time to have those meetings they used to have with the elders, and medicine people, and young people. We need to tell these young people. The young people need to hear that we have to give them that certain language or knowledge that they can use to be in tune with everything."

Wisdom—*Nbwaakaawin* and Environmental Consciousness

Aandek spoke of the elders being so in tune with their environment:

They would know when the geese would be moving ... and that was our biggest concern. And there were people that knew that. The elders would have said, "Now it's time ... we'll go to goose camp now." And when I talk about geese,

the old people would talk about the goose hunt. They would have known when it was going to happen.

He spoke of the importance of listening to nature:

It's called environmental consciousness, when you are in tune with your environment. With everything about your environment ... I think about these things. And I look at the kids when I work with them nowadays, eh? Like, when I was a kid, just looking outside, I would see a bird flying. I would know what species of bird it is by the way it flies And crows, the way they fly. Even ravens, right away I know. And I learned it when I was young, so I guess from my people. And that's the kind of knowledge we used to have.

He talked more about crows and mentioned that "we can learn things from them." He shared a story about crows and the language that they speak:

We're standing there, and across the street is this great, big tree. And there's this raven there, and it starts squawking. And all the kids are saying ... hey, that crow is really noisy. Because I was having Ojibway class, eh? And we're lined up [outside]. And I said, "That's not a crow," I said, "Crows speak *Ojibwe*." They said, "Oh? They can speak *Ojibwe*?" And I said, "Ya. How do you say no? You say *kaaw*. That's what crows say. Ravens can't say that. That's a raven."

He continued sharing more about crows:

They know. They're in tune to what you're thinking. They must look at us Holy smokes, people are really stupid, they must be thinking Some native people don't like those crows and ravens looking at them all that much, eh? They say those crows can live up to 25 years, eh? [My wife] hates this crow that comes

here every year, eh? He will be coming here for many more years. They live up to 25 years or more. And, like geese, they mate for life. And in the fall, even if one of the crows dies, they die, too. Like people, they come around the neighbourhood. Not only this crow, but crows from the territory where they live will die here. And then they just sit there for a while and they don't make a sound. And after they sit there for a while, they come and pay respect to the crow that died, eh? Next thing you know, they just fly away silently. And they're gone.

He also mentioned that the crows "are the last ones hanging around. They'll be hanging around almost until the snow flies. When you think about it, in March, they're always the first one back. When you hear them, you know it's going to be spring."

Aandek also talked about the importance of the clan system to our ways of knowing, "[My wife] should be more intuitive. She's ____clan. And, that's the way our people were. That's one of the reasons we were in the clan system, because certain clans had their own specific abilities.

Sacred Teachings and Learning From the Elders

Aandek shared some learning experiences from his childhood:

I always tell [my wife], like my dad never sat me down to teach me things, but he would say things that I think about nowadays. Like, he didn't have to specifically scold me or lecture me. He'd just say a few things and he left it at that. It was left for me. And that was it, you know? I'm thinking, "Why did he say that?" Because, as young people, you wouldn't begin to have those kind of mental

capacity, process, to really understand that, you know? But it's planted there, and then you'll eventually come to realize, "Oh, that's why he said that."

He elaborated more on this point and the importance of reflection in learning as the *Anishinaabek* way:

But it's like I said before, whatever is inherent, you should be able to, even if you don't speak the language, you should be able to not jump to conclusions. You should be able to reflect on things. Because that was the nature of how our people were ... I'm not going to say to you, "This is the way you should be."

He shared experiences of seeing his daughter take the time to be in nature and reflect:

We've seen it. We've seen it. You don't have to go fasting for 4 days and 4 nights. You can go fasting for 2 hours [My daughter] when she used to be undecided about things, getting mad, in total despair, and then she'd go out, sit beside a big tree, be gone for a couple of hours. She'd come back. She'd be happy.

He also talked about learning from his grandmothers. "I learned that [reflecting in nature] from my great grandmother. We used to talk about her. My grandmother would talk about her. They, themselves, my grandmother would often wonder why she would go, find a spot, and be gone for the day. And that's what she did, you know. She'd be out there. He saw reflection as an important part in understanding things, but commented that, generally, "nobody does it anymore."

Political Experiences and Awareness

Aandek shared his professional educational experiences where he promoted and adapted his work to include the traditional *Anishinaabek* perspective with his classes in

the city school. He spoke about the opportunity to share our perspective during Thanksgiving:

Next, we are going to have Thanksgiving dinner at the school. The school will have turkeys plastered all over the wall, like the pilgrims. This is what they're going to be teaching. So we're going to walk in there with the *Ojibwe* students we are going to be teaching. So we're going to walk in there with the *Ojibwe* students. We are going to teach them. Everyone is going to be assembled in the gym, at one side of the gym. They'll bring in all the food, and they'll have ... so, what we're going to do is, we're going to make a spirit dish.

He continues to share the importance of bringing in the *Anishinaabek* worldview to the city school to show the kids the importance of Thanksgiving:

In front of everybody, we're going to make a spirit dish, and as soon as all the kids are assembled, we're going to tell them it's Thanksgiving. We want everybody to realize where all this good food comes from. So what we're going to do, we are going to give something back, even before we take the first bite. We're going to give something back to where all this good food comes from. So we might as well take a morsel of food that is there. We say thank you. This is how survival is. They have to realize that all this food comes from the earth, and every single bit of food that we're eating, that's where it comes from. And you have to realize that. And Thanksgiving was the time when the first people that came here. That's why they had Thanksgiving because they saw native people doing it. They took all the food that was available at the time, put it in a dish, and say thank you. And that dish returns back to the earth.

He shared more about the meaning of doing this:

And it's not like a prayer, because prayer is not allowed in public school. What we are doing is just saying thank you to the source of where the food comes from. So that's what we're going to do. And that's what people don't even realize. We take everything for granted. So at least that one school will realize that some of it. They'll grow up and they'll say, "Remember that old guy who came here and told us what we should really be thinking about during Thanksgiving?" Those are the things that really matter.

He spoke about the indirect way of teaching and encouraging curiosity:

But I didn't tell them everything. You can't just tell them So after we made the dish, they were ... curious The kids are curious. I put a little bit of tobacco in the dish as well. I didn't sprinkle it over the food, because you don't eat tobacco, a little bit of tobacco. Even some of the parents, eh? [said], "What did you put there?" And I just say, "It's medicine."

He elaborated more in explaining the process of learning the *Anishinaabek* way:

All that, when this is how it used to be done. Our kids, they weren't told specifically why we did this. But it's like a process. They'd be involved every year. And every year they'd have more understanding. Even this year, the little guys in grade 1 didn't know what we were doing, but they're going to think, well, for Thanksgiving, we have to do this. Eventually, they would get to the philosophical end of it. It's a process.

He mentioned that he felt that teachers today were “forcing kids to learn, and it’s not really the actual way of teaching them. What we want to do is arouse their curiosity. And they’ll figure out things for themselves. They’ll want to learn more and more.”

He spoke about the lack of connection that native students experience in city schools in what and how they were taught. He said that it would “take centuries to change that [the way our students learned into mainstream ways], because we’ve been here at least 10,000 years in this particular area. How can you change what’s been happening for 10,000 years in a couple of centuries?”

He shared the challenges of today’s education:

It’s like when you pick up a feather. All those different parts of the feather, like all those tangents in life, eh? But the main part of the feather, you should always come back to that, eh? And I think that the main part represents the knowledge, because yesterday we were talking about PhDs. And when I went to the meeting [in my community], I told that education director, we have to seriously think about our language now. And he said PhDs. But we can’t just be picking up PhDs off the shelf His interpretation is, we put everybody through the system. We’ll make PhDs and they’ll solve it. So what I am going to say to him is PhDs that have the worldview, that’s what you need. You don’t need PhDs He figures that these people that are going to solve it, just because they have a PhD. And I say no.

Aandek’s expressed concern:

Unfortunately, many of the PhDs, because I know a lot of these people, they don’t have the *Anishinaabek* worldview. It’s going to be more of a hindrance to the

direction we should be going ... what I told you about knowledge. It's all the same. So ideally, the PhDs should be a person that follows that, you know?

He commented further:

Even though [PhDs] are cognizant of all the other things that could happen on your life's path with that knowledge, those are the parts of that feather that goes off to the sides. They [the sides] are all stuck to that main part. Some PhDs are not aware of the main part. They're here. They'll always be there [on the side]. They never come back to follow that and this is what I was telling you. Even [an elder's name, said], it's time to sit down with the people that have this worldview, the *Anishinaabek* worldview. I think [elder's name] had a better idea. Let's just invite those PhDs and we'll talk about things, you know? And maybe some of them will open up their eyes. It's going to be capacity building, because I can't do it on my own. I don't have any letters behind my name with the system.

He said that he believes that PhDs will not, by themselves, be able to solve the challenges that we face.

He shared what "the old people" from his community wanted, that is, "native people teaching native kids." The underlying reason was to maintain and teach the worldview. He spoke of the challenges that occurred when Native teachers were trained in the mainstream education system:

We misinterpreted it though, because we were all Christian coming out of residential school. So we followed the system right to the end. Become teachers and teach the system that we learned and that's it. And I told them at that meeting [educational leadership for his community], the old people wanted us to teach our

children. It's because of ... to put our worldview with our children. That's why the old people wanted us to teach our kids. Because all people [in my community], most people [in my community] are Christians, [so they don't utilize the *Anishinaabek* worldview]. I told my [my wife], when I was really young, when my mother died, eh? The last words she said to me, "Keep going to school." It's like when I'm saying follow this path. You have an understanding of the colonialistic type of worldview. Christian, you know? If you're educated, you're going to understand that. You're going to understand yours. And you're not going to be [having to choose]. Ya. Having to ... that's what the goal of education should be. Not to put you on one track, you know, decide another one. You should be able to realize to have the benefit and the essence of each and make your choices. And I think that's what they wanted us to do ... still maintain our worldview and not leave it.

He went on to explain that people in his community had BEs, but not the *Anishinaabek* worldview:

So the old people are still waiting Now we still haven't, in a tangible way, introduced anything of our worldview in teaching our kids. He said that it was important that we listen to the old people, because "the old people were so smart."

He further explained that he saw *Anishinaabemowin* teachers as not teaching the worldview. He was concerned that "it's been 40 years now they've been teaching it. And they're teaching it with a colonialistic worldview. And the two worldviews are not the same. And you can't teach *Ojibwe* using the colonialistic worldview."

He believed that “what we need to do is teach [the language, with] our own teachers that have that worldview. And I talked about this [with other language teachers].” He said that other language teachers did “not even” understand this concept and that this was where the main problem is. He explained that “probably there is not one other one that [could] even begin to go there.” He saw language teachers teaching vocabulary and that it was “meaningless. Because if you just teach vocabulary, even many of our teachers don’t know the derivation of our syllables and words, and they don’t know that.” He shared that “our teachers, our language teachers, even us, should realize what we’re saying in our words.” He further explained that “this is why native people took tobacco at that time, put it down. It’s in the language. And people don’t even get it anymore.” He also mentioned that putting tobacco in your hand was important when you are going to speak to others because it helps you share things in good ways. Things come out that way (enlightening).

Aandek shared his views on modern technology:

It’s like the logic of the world. Everything will fall into place in the own natural way of doing things, occurring in sequence. It’s the same with modern technology. Like how you adapt with a sequence ... and how you do things ... I can figure things out without actually knowing how it works.

He further explained how he saw modern technology and connection:

Knowledge is all the same. Just your degree of how much you understand of what is going on around you. For the kids to learn what you put in front of them, [they] have to somehow try to make that connection. But we never attempt to make that connection. Basically, we are stuck on function. That’s where that

word connection, it is missing. That's a missing element. And as I said, knowledge, all of the ... what I'm saying is something that you know how I feel, everybody should know. And it's all the same. We're just going in modern technology. It's going in a roundabout way to get to where we should have been going in the first place.

Final Interview Reflections: Be Aware of Colonialistic Thinking

Aandek shared his feelings when reading his transcript, affirming that “when I was reading it, I didn't really think that I'd have to be going over this stuff again.” He thought it was repetitive to review his transcript. Instead, he wanted to share, “I look at myself from where I am. I don't look at myself from another perspective.” He was very frustrated by the research experience because he said, “I don't know why the interview is there.” He further explained his frustrations:

I've said most of what I had to say, and all I can say is that we are either more in danger of losing everything, because of the way people are ... they're talking about us as if we're already gone. And people write about books, and I've been screening books about education, and they talk about us in the past tense. And that's not even right. So, I suppose when I hear people talk about us like that, we are in a dire situation right now being *Anishinaabe*, because of that ... even our own people are talking about that. That's because they got educated like that. And they're not even using the language as part of their thinking process. They should be using the language as part of their thinking process ... not according to a foreign language, a foreign way of thinking.

He shared that university education makes our people think “from that foreign perspective.” He said that research should “describe how we think, as opposed to not just describing how we should be thinking.” He shared that “we should really be thinking like an *Anishinaabe* is how we should be thinking. And that’s what really bothered me when I read that.” He thought that that was the “biggest problem about everything that’s going on about our culture ... thinking from that foreign perspective.” He declared, “That’s not the way I think.”

He continued by sharing his views on the influence of the colonialistic way of thinking regarding how people learned the *Ojibwe* language. “And it’s going to be really hard to do [not thinking from a colonialistic perspective after being taught to think that way]. Even recently, when people are learning the *Anishinaabek* language, they are learning it by rote and memory, and there's no comprehension about what those words mean.” He mentioned that it could be corrected by language teachers teaching “even parts of our syllables.” He believed that “there’s bastardization of the *Anishinaabek* language” in the way it was being taught today [by the colonialistic perspective]. He spoke about the young people shortening the name of their community and the implications of this:

In our language, where we come from is important. We’re attached to that piece of territory, matter of fact, the earth. We call our settlements in *Ojibwe*, *Odenong*. *Ode* is your heart and *nong* is that territory where you live. And that describes where you come from. You’re buried there because they bury their placentas within that territory there, close to where we live. Our umbilical cords are buried there and all that, so that’s why our land is important.

***Akinomaage*: Earth as Context**

He asked me, “Did I tell you what *Akinomaage* means? *To teach*? That’s a verb, to teach, in *Ojibwe*. Did I tell you about that?” He said, “Repeat after me, *Akinomaage* ... so that’s it. We’re done. I taught you how to say the verb to teach. Did it mean anything to you?”

I responded that he “didn’t explain what the whole description of the action of what that means philosophically. I don’t know. To teach, I could just take what I’ve learned what that means. But to say it in the context of the language, not really.” He explained “that’s the way people are teaching *Ojibwe* now Do you remember it? Say it again.” I said, “Ya, I remembered it, because I wrote it down. *Akinomaage*.” I told him that I could only remember it if I wrote it down. He was surprised that I knew how to write the language. I told him, “That’s the only way that I will remember it, because it’s without a context, right?” He mentioned, “That’s exactly my point ... it doesn’t work.”

He went on to share more about the verb, to teach, with an explanation:

Akinomaage ... that’s how you say the verb, to teach. Okay? ... It’s in five syllables. Each of those syllables has a meaning and a description. *A*, which we always leave out in contemporary times when we talk about who we are. People say now, even where I live, I lived in [city with nearby reserve] [these] people. They say *Kinomaage*. What did they leave out? It’s the short *A* ... And, you know what the *A* means? The realm of living things. That’s what that means. And then the second syllable is *ki*. And so, when they talk about, we call the earth, *akii*, that’s where all living things are. *Akii*, so that’s how to teach starts,

akii and then, the next syllable, the third one is *no* and that means to direct or aim.

So if I'm teaching you, I'm going to direct you to, to where?

I said, "To the earth." He said, "That's right. *Akinomaa*. *Maa* is right here. *Maa* in *Ojibwe* is here. And *ge* is doing all those first four syllables. So what does that tell you about our language ... where do you find knowledge?" I said, "*Akii*." And he said, "That's right. That's the way I teach *Ojibwe* Now you have comprehension. Now you know where knowledge comes from. Now you know our worldview. Just that one word."

He continued sharing more about the importance of teaching the worldview when teaching the language:

Just think about everyone around here. They don't even explain where the words come from. They don't teach our worldview. They don't know it themselves.

They still know the language. That's because they've been forced to Christianity when they spoke. They tried to fit Christianity into our language, when in the meantime, they shouldn't have been thinking from a Christian perspective.

He further explained his experience teaching non-native kids in his *Ojibwe* classes:

The role is shifting. Instead of the white man making brown white men, I'm making white into *Anishinaabe* thinkers. I'm making them white Indians.

They're thinking that way, the kids. And I think that's the way it should be, if you teach the language. And you know? In December, a couple of parents came and shook my hand, of the kids that I teach, the white kids. And they said,

"Thank you for teaching those words to my children. They look at things

differently now.” Different perspective, what they don’t learn from English. So that’s what we need to do. And I’ll leave it at that.

He finished our conversation with the thought that “all our words are like that. Ya [it’s beautiful] and it’s just not the whole word. It is how those words come to be together.”

Summary

This chapter reports the findings when speaking with four *Chi Anishinaabek Akinomaagewag* to explore their lived experience as it relates to an *Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*: to educate our well-being with earth. Ten themes are revealed through coding and analysis: (a) Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle/ Sharing Your Sacred Bundle/Original Teachings, (b) Wisdom–*Nbwaakawin*/Connecting the Dots/Original Instructions/Medicine–*Mshkiki*/ Environmental Consciousness, (c) Sacred Teachings/Learning from the Elders, (d) Relationships/Honoring Elders/Eldership, (e) Political Experiences and Awareness, (f) A Way of Being in *Anishinaabek* Research, (g) Survival, (h) Peace is Our Worldview Demonstrated, (i) Be Aware of Colonialistic Thinking, and (j) *Akinomaage*: Earth as Context.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS

In this study, I explore the experiences of four 21st century traditional *Anishinaabek* elders—*Chi Anishinaabek Akinomaagewag* and their experiences of our worldview of peace with Mother Earth. The *Anishinaabek* worldview is based upon *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing and of being. This exploration has studied their contemporary perspectives and worldview of respect and peace with nature. In this study, *Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa*—to teach our well-being with earth is described as an *Anishinaabek* view of peace founded on a respectful relationship with *Shkagamik-kwe*—Mother Earth. The *Anishinaabek* (good beings) worldview of this spiritual relationship is one of the sustainability of all life that is connected to *Shkagamik-kwe*. This connection to Mother Earth is based upon the *Anishinaabek* worldview of respecting Earth's way—*akii-bimaadizi*. Elders' experiences have described a peaceful worldview as it relates to Mother Earth, and respect for *akii-bimaadizi* which promotes a harmonious survival of self, society, and our planet as a way of life. The *Anishinaabek* worldview shared by our elders promotes teaching a way of life which demonstrates our well-being with the earth for present and future generations in order for us to respect our way of life, our people, ourselves, and all life on our planet. This study explores what constitutes an *Anishinaabek* view of peace in the 21st century as passed down by our *Anishinaabek* elders and ancestors.

I utilized the foundation of the hermeneutic phenomenological research method based upon an interpretive inquiry methodology. Hermeneutic phenomenology is based on the worldview of interpreting the described phenomena of one's lived experience (Moran, 2000, p. 4). Qualitative data were collected through coresearcher interviews;

demographic questionnaires; reflective discussions shared in final interviews by participants; and my reflective journal (see Appendix B for demographic questionnaire and Appendix C for interview questions). Data analysis revealed 10 emergent themes within this study.

In the beginning, three research questions informed the focus for this study:

1. What is the traditional *Ojibwe/Anishinaabek* relationship with our planet: Mother Earth, and how can this assist us in developing harmonious relationships with the Earth, ourselves and each other?
2. How can the traditional *Ojibwe/Anishinaabek* Elders' experiences be used to articulate and create an understanding for a spiritual harmony and balance with the earth?
3. How can such an understanding support and embrace a worldview of living peacefully with nature, ourselves, and our communities?

Interpretation, Discussion, and Reflections

Interview data collected from discussions with the elders revealed 10 essential themes describing the meaning in their lived experiences. These 10 themes are: (a) Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle/ Sharing Your Sacred Bundle/Original Teachings (b) Wisdom—*Nbwaakawin*/Connecting the Dots/Original Instructions/Medicine—*Mshkiki*/Environmental Consciousness, (c) Sacred Teachings/Learning from the Elders, (d) Relationships/Honoring Elders/Eldership, (e) Political Experiences and Awareness (f) A Way of Being in *Anishinaabek* Research, (g) Survival, (h) Peace is Our Worldview Demonstrated, (i) Be Aware of Colonialistic Thinking, and (j) *Akinomaage*: Earth as Context

From these 10 themes, reframing the research questions from a personal and meaningful experiential point of view elicited the following questions which will be addressed in this discussion:

1. What are the lived experiences and shared traditional *Ojibwe* teachings (i.e., oral tradition, sacred stories, ceremonies, and values) of 21st century *Anishinaabek* elders who have a spiritual connection with nature and Mother Earth?
2. How can *Ojibwe* elders' experiences of a worldview of peace with *Shkagamik-kwe*: Mother Earth be articulated to be shared with others?

Research Themes

1. Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle/Sharing Your Sacred Bundle/
Original Teachings

The first of these themes focused on “going back to our original gifts and Instructions”; “building your sacred bundle” and sharing your sacred bundle. These themes referred to grounding oneself through taking the initiative, having the intentionality to develop and understand one’s identity as *Anishinaabek*. This was done through self-awareness and through reclaiming or maintaining one’s *Anishinaabek* identity: *Ninayaawin* –My Being, and cultural identity–*Yaayang/Our Being*. This included reclaiming and sharing the *Anishinaabek* language, culture, and worldview, and nurturing a connection to *Shkagamik-kwe*. Building your sacred bundle has been seen as active and experiential.

The sacred bundle has been in existence for tens of thousands of years, and its use is still very much alive and important, as described by all of the participants. Having a sacred bundle also consists of having a place to go in order to reflect and to develop self-

awareness of this connection. Participants shared that collecting your sacred bundle is a way to reclaim your unique and special status as a First Nations person. Sharing your sacred bundle is also important because sharing the knowledge is a way to keep the sacred bundle alive. It is also a way for humankind to reclaim our status and connect to the earth: for nature person(s) who are learning more about their earth identity. Keeping the sacred bundle alive: earth identity, earth-centred worldview, and a spiritual connection to earth; sustains life, not only for the *Anishinaabek* but for all cultures through this sharing.

Reclaiming your relationship with self as part of a larger whole enables you to come full circle in recognizing how you were born into the world: as a part of creation. This is something that we are all a part of, and it is an experiential: mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional awareness of our meaningful connection to *Shkagamik-kwe* that results from the process of knowing who you are. As shared by *Aandek* when speaking of waking up—*shkozin*:

When we first open our eyes in the morning, we find ourselves in this beautiful creation and we see the sunrise and we see the blue sky, we see people. The fire is there. How should you feel? You should be in awe.

Anishinaabemowin, our language, contains the worldview that connects us to recognize our well-being is connected to the well-being of *Shkagamik-kwe*.

In the literature, there have been past accounts referring to the “sacred pack.” In an example of Fox Clan ceremonials, “each Fox clan has at least one ceremony centering around a “sacred pack” or bundle that belongs to it and that by tradition originated in a

direct revelation” (Eggan, 1955, as cited in Tooker, 1979, p. 165). As further explained by a Fox Clan man,

This sacred pack does not belong to me alone. We alike own it, even a little baby. It owns it in just the same way that we own it. I have been instructed with regard to it, but nevertheless I do not myself own the sacred pack. (p. 200)

This supports the concept of sharing and passing along the teachings from old to young as part of the *Anishinaabek* worldview of peace as part of that sacred bundle. This sharing is tantamount to earth’s survival and to understanding our well-being with earth: the state of being in peace with the planet, oneself, and one another.

T. S. Smith (1995, p. 38) explains the “awakening” of reclaiming our connection: The *Ojibwes* that I know acknowledge the breakdown of their way of life, but they are struggling out of a heritage which buried their memories under the weight of cultural progress. This progress became a regress for them, but they do not feel that it is too late to recover much of what was misplaced ... [in speaking about her research] I have left it to my contemporary consultants to validate the truth of my entry into their ancestors’ life-world.

Unfortunately, most people today have become displaced with their connection to earth due to modernity. Technology and the fastpaced life in modern times, in addition to a lack of a healthy relationship with earth, encourage a disconnection of well-being in the Western worldview of progress. Today’s relationship in modern times with Earth is based upon a commodification of Earth’s resources and is based on a unilateral, utilitarian relationship. Furthermore, it takes time spent in nature to become reconnected

and to see one's well-being as being connected with *Shkagamik-kwe*. As well, time is needed for reflection of this connection and must be taught.

I, also like T. S. Smith (1995), am “concerned with the traditional belief system of the *Ojibwe* ... [and] must move continually between past and present” (p. 38). It is of utmost importance to respect the coresearchers in this study as “contemporary Anishnaabeg [as not to] fossilize and objectify the lived reality [that they/we experience today]. The coresearchers in this study come from the century of the Seventh Prophecy of the *Anishinaabek*:

The seventh fire foretold of the emergence of a new people, a people that would retrace their steps to find the sacred ways that had been left behind. The waterdrum would once again sound its voice. There would be a rebirth of the *Ojibwe* nation and a rekindling of old fires. (T. S. Smith, 1995, p. 38)

In this rekindling, and through recognizing the consistency over different studies, stories, and centuries, it becomes apparent that this research has supported timeless truths regarding the existence and importance of the “sacred bundle.” The maintenance of the *Anishinaabek* worldview as one of peace is demonstrated through sharing and teaching a responsibility in our duty to preserve and contribute to the growth of our “sacred bundle.”

In this study, all participants nourished their “sacred bundle” with purpose and with intentionality. They pursued and shared the traditional knowledge that they found and maintained and developed a conscious awareness of themselves within the sacredness of creation. Participants saw their health as related to the health of the earth, so to nurture your sacred bundle is also to nurture yourself as part of creation. The theme of going back to your roots or returning back to nature is part of our view of reconnecting

to Mother Earth. All people have to redevelop a relationship with the earth to complete themselves through the spirit of nature for peace to occur. It is time for humankind to become aware and to learn how to rebuild their connection to Earth in a peaceful way. It is time to heal the violence done to the planet, and hence ourselves, through identification with Mother Earth as elder.

The worldview of the *Anishinaabek* and of earth within this definition is based upon our ways of knowing and of being because it is an earth-centred worldview which exemplifies peace as a spiritual relationship with Mother Earth. This idea has been encouraged by Synott (1996), who encourages the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews in peace discussions; Bowers (1999), who encourages attention to the knowledges of earth-centred cultures to preserve the ecosystem and bring awareness to a more intimate relationship with the earth; and Sandy and Perkins (2002), who subscribe to the importance of the “condition of smallness” and seeing ourselves as a smaller part of the larger whole (p. 4).

The idea of the importance of Traditional Knowledge (TK), also known as Indigenous Knowledge (IK), is important over and across generations, as it supports the continuation of the Indigenous worldview:

Every indigenous people has its own knowledge, learning processes and assets. Each group develops expertise in their ecosystem that spans trans-systemic approaches to knowledge, which animate and manifest in languages, communication forms, ceremonies and teaching. Learning through the transmission of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) between or among generations over a

lifetime is a shared learning process, reflected in the education of the next generation. (Battiste, 2010, p. 31)

The coresearchers are reclaiming and maintaining their spiritual connection to *Shkagamik-kwe*, and through this reclamation it is hoped that others can learn from these experiences so they can understand the importance of the *Anishinaabek* worldview as it relates to learning our well-being with earth as one of peace.

In this study, food, place, *Anishinaabemowin*, and traditional knowledge of the land are all central components of *Anishinaabek* identity. These are also all important components of an earth identity. Coresearchers stressed that all of these elements were necessary in connecting them to Mother Earth. Historically and traditionally, food was what brought them to where they resided, and this told them who they were, and this identity was in relation to the land. Being in tune with what is around you is important in obtaining sustenance, your earth identity, and understanding the cycles and patterns in nature. Celebrations and ceremonies were always centred on food because the *Anishinaabek* know that it is important to respect and be thankful through celebration. Not taking sustenance for granted is consciously strived for, because it is of utmost importance in supporting our life, respecting nature, and our connection to *Shkagamik-kwe*.

Within an *Anishinaabek* worldview, people need to learn what it is that brought them to their place and territory. How can people think about their relationship to surroundings in terms other than residence, occupation, and personal history? A change in understanding in their relationship to nature is necessary. We need to be encouraged to be open to things that promote a change of consciousness. As shared by Peat (2002):

If we remain as observers, objective scholars of another society, we will never enter in to its essence. However, if we approach it in a spirit of humility, respect, enquiry, and openness it becomes possible for a change of consciousness to occur ... if consciousness is open, if it can partake in a more global form of being, if it can merge with the natural world and with other beings, then, indeed, it may be possible to drop, for a time the constraints of one's personal worldview and see reality through the eyes of others. (p.11)

The process of rethinking how we talk, identify, see, and relate to nature to help us learn that our well-being with earth is important, needs to be taught, and needs to be proactive.

This research has demonstrated that the *Anishinaabek* language and culture promotes a worldview that educates our well-being with earth through, for example, as a reference to the rocks as *Mishomaag*—our grandfathers, and *Akinomaage*—earth as elder, as examples. One of our original gifts is our language and how we use it. We need to carry our language as one of our original instructions because this will help us think well about our relationship with all things, especially in our development to earth connection, ourselves, and each other. We have to learn our language through concentrated effort and earnest. What is more, today *Anishinaabemowin*: the *Ojibwe* language, is perilously close to becoming extinct, and our language needs to be defended and preserved, more than ever, as part of the sacred bundle.

The *Anishinaabek* language is founded on using nature as the central teacher of all things. Today, the formalization of a traditional knowledge base has been used as a vehicle to share the *Anishinaabek* worldview. The importance of maintaining the language and traditional knowledge is also shared by Battiste (2010):

Indigenous languages enable the transmission of knowledge from elders to families and to children. Therefore, without language proficiency, it is impossible for families and communities to sustain IK [Indigenous Knowledge] for the next seven generations. (p. 33)

Through this, we can see that teaching *Anishinaabemowin*, and all Indigenous languages, would be beneficial in preserving and understanding a worldview which preserves an appreciation for learning and understanding a positive relationship and connection to nature. Just as we need to preserve the indigenous rainforests, we need to preserve the languages of the indigenous people who live there. *Anishinaabemowin* still exists and so do the *Anishinaabek* in Canada. Indigenous languages and, more specifically in this instance, *Anishinaabek*, could be taught within peace studies, environmental worldviews, *Anishinaabek* worldview, and/or traditional knowledge studies/Native studies as part of an interdisciplinary approach to understanding different ways of knowing and of being in the world. This diversity would also enable an appreciation for the First Peoples of Canada (and all Indigenous peoples of the world), and for Mother Earth, as it could be taught to both Native and non-Native peoples: trans-cultural education.

In this study, place was also seen as important as it represented intimate connections with the land and health and balance with nature. Karrow (2006) talks about the importance of place in connecting with nature:

Teaching-within-place foregrounds the essence of place and being in our lives. It grounds reality with the physical environment. This physical environment isn't just any environment surrounding us ... notions of place inform our relations with

Being and our understandings of Being have shaped our relationships with place—the essence of any existential. (p. 221)

As *Anishinaabek* who have lived for thousands of years on Turtle Island (North America), we base our identity on territory and place because of our connection to nature: our spirit in nature and in landscapes. Our territories are our ancestors, and we are the children and future grandfathers and grandmothers of the territory to which we have been born and to which we will return. In understanding this, your sacred bundle is a collective concept and is continuously ongoing between and across generations.

2. Wisdom: Connecting the Dots/ Original Instructions/Medicine

The second of these themes focused on the concept of wisdom. Wisdom was described as “*connecting the dots*”; as “*original instructions*”; and as “*medicine*.” These synonyms refer to having the ability to make purposeful connections through reflecting on why things are happening and what responsibilities come with these events. This wisdom occurred through awareness of *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing and of being and bicultural awareness between mainstream and *Anishinaabek* cultural values, and the modern context and application of *Anishinaabek* worldview. This also occurred through traditional and spiritual awareness of our worldview—*kii-inendamowin*; and knowledge of traditional and spiritual teachings, issues, and concepts. It also included energy, cycles of life, the seven grandfather teachings—*Anishinaabek* traditional virtues, and *Anishinaabek* cultural values and observations of *yaayang*/our being.

Coresearchers spoke of obtaining wisdom through lived experiences and applying the teachings through lessons learned. *Mskokii Kwe* spoke of the seven grandfather teachings and spoke of her traditional experiences learning honesty, truth, and critical

reflection. These are all virtues developed through the *Anishinaabek* worldview. She also spoke of the formalization of the teachings of the elders in the Medicine Wheel workshops which focused on healing that was founded upon the old ways. It is important to understand that the Medicine Wheel teachings are very old instructions that are now being presented in a contemporary format for contemporary *Anishinaabek* and for sharing with all peoples. Teachings of the Medicine Wheel and teachings of the earth are parallel in that both the earth and the Medicine Wheel are mirrors and teachers for reflection to humankind and for all of life. They both encompass each other, depending on the context. For example, the grandfather teachings are virtues that apply to having a well-being with all of life. Medicine Wheel teachings are “not of themselves Medicine Wheel teachings,” but, are a contribution in contemporary form in passing on the *Anishinaabek* worldview from past to present century. This shows the consciousness in preserving the old ways for future generations. It demonstrates a contemporary way to honour the teachings of our ancestors which can be applied to our lives today.

Further formalization of these ancient teachings is being done in the arena of traditional knowledge and indigenous knowledge. All of these teachings as they relate to our connection to *Shkagamik-kwe* can contribute to our understanding of the *Anishinaabek* worldview in teaching our well-being with earth. This formalization can contribute to a transcultural understanding of the *Anishinaabek* worldview for *Anishinaabek* and non-*Anishinaabek* peoples.

All participants spoke about the cycle/circle of life and nature’s patterns. Terms for the earth were Mother Earth and *Mamanan akii*. Environmental consciousness was discussed as something important and necessary for young people to develop in order to

be in “tune with their environment.” This was important in order for young people to learn how to listen and to connect with what the elders were saying, doing, and being in contemporary times. They spoke about preset patterns and the sequence in nature’s cycle as “original instructions” for creation’s existence. Learning our responsibility in maintaining our part in this cycle of life on a spiritual and spiritually experiential level must be taught, and can be done. The virtues discussed in this study were the importance of wisdom, truth, respect, honesty, humility, thankfulness, and sharing knowledge, especially with the young people.

Adik Giizhig spoke about the importance of ceremony in the cycle for successful harvesting and the necessity to give respect and thanks to encourage a successful harvest for the following year. This encouragement was, not only important, but necessary in doing our part in maintaining the cycle of life. He shared the *Anishinaabek* word for the English word “environment”: *Kiimiinigowin*—that which was given to us by the creator. *Kiimiinigowin* is our gift and it needs to be respected at every turn: with every harvest, with every meal, with every day, and so on.

Aandek demonstrated how animals were role models that taught us virtues. Therefore, they are our elders. He discussed the characteristics, knowledge, and behaviours of the crows as an example. Through his discussions, we learn that animals have also been dispossessed and displaced of their territories. His discussions of the importance of the clan system also acknowledge that we still need to respect and look to the animals to learn how to live. They teach us how to behave well and to survive well. Seeing animals and nature as teachers is a skill of insight which becomes more developed

with practice. It is part of learning, implicitly, through observation and our senses to the world that we are experiencing and are a part of.

For some participants, change and the adaptation of one's worldview, then, is also part of learning the *Anishinaabek* teachings. When people have to exist in mainstream society, it can become hypnotic in its effects to influence *Anishinaabek* people with negative values, virtues, and perspectives about the beauty of their *Anishinaabek* culture to promote colonialism and modernity as superior to the *Anishinaabek* worldview. We, as traditional *Anishinaabek*, have learned the worldview of mainstream society, both good and bad. It is now important for society, and nontraditional *Anishinaabek*, to learn about the good of the *Anishinaabek* traditional worldview in order to have the necessary balance. There have been many centuries of bad images of *Anishinaabek* peoples. Through recognizing our *Anishinaabek* worldview as one of peace, we can share our positive traditional worldview with other peoples as heard from the voices of the elders. Being exposed to other Indigenous cultures can also demonstrate the teachings in this worldview. All participants in this study saw or came to see themselves as part of the beauty and largesse of creation through the *Anishinaabek* worldview which brought about a peaceful coexistence between themselves and creation. Although we are just a small part of the vastness of the universe, we are still a part of this magnificence. This is also a part of our humility, and this connection is part of who we are.

To teach our well-being with earth as an *Anishinaabek* view of peace based upon earth's way is important as it presents an alternative worldview that is linked to survival. A presence of this worldview is important to demonstrate and to share in order to nurture our earth identity. Although people in the world are all part of different, distinct, and

diverse cultures, we need to all respect ourselves as people of the earth, because “all directions meet in the middle, so everything is apart and everything is together at the same time ... everything is related And, that’s what *Anishinaabe* worldview is based on, relationship” (*Makade Nimkii*). All people, especially young people, need to be taught *Waasa Inaabidaa*—we look in all directions. The circle of life is “created to honor our relationship with all the natural elements of the earth: the four seasons of the year, the four races of people, and the four directions, referred to in prayer as our four grandparents” (Peacock & Wisuri, 2002, p. 6).

There have been multiple “conversations” with contemporary elders which support this regeneration to honour the original instructions as *Anishinaabek*. As explained in discussions in the book *Wisdom’s Daughters*, an elder shares that “I was selected as a faithkeeper even before I was born. The Creator has his things for us to do while we’re here visiting, and it is set up before we are ever born” (Wall, 1993, p. 152).

To teach our well-being with earth involves understanding our connection to our Earth Mother—*Mamanan akii* and our obligation to look after the life cycle with wisdom. We need to pay attention by “seeing what the land is doing” and by participating in a way to honor earth’s harvest. We need to learn how to respect *Kiimiinigowin*, our gift, and the privilege of living on this planet through reestablishing a personal relationship with the planet as mother and to have humility and respect for this elder and the Great Mystery (the great energy called Creation). The *Anishinaabek* know and respect that the rational mind cannot understand all of what creation is. This is very important in understanding the *Anishinaabek* worldview and our spiritual ways of knowing and of being that are tied to earth’s way of peace. This requires a faith in creation for its own sake: that wisdom

lies in creation, and to become aware of this wisdom as respect for the earth because she has inherent value for her own sake.

As shared by Shawn Wilson (2008, pp. 87, 88), “There is no distinction made between relationships that are made with other people and those that are made with our environment. Both are equally sacred . . . Maintaining traditional obligations to the land is seen as more important than deeds or dates of transference of ownership.”

3. Sacred Teachings/Learning from the Elders

The third theme to emerge from the data was sharing the sacred teachings and learning from the elders. The third theme focused on relationships with ceremony and sacred teachings through learning experiences in participating in ceremonies, rituals, and sharing stories and knowledge from our ancestors. This also included teachings in ceremonies, being thankful, respect and sharing, the cycle of life, energy, and healing which included reflection, meditation, and mediation.

4. Relationships/Honoring Elders/and Eldership

The fourth theme included intergenerational relationships with family: parental relationships; relationships with childhood experiences; and traditional family, which includes Mother Earth. This traditional family consists of friends and others who respect and honor the ancestral teachings. We are an ancient people guided by nature and the original instructions to honor “our gift.” The mentorship and rolemodelling of elders for youth and community were also a part of this theme. It is critical to respect your elders and listen to what they say even when you think you know better or different.

The elders who had *Anishinaabemowin* as their first language blended themes 3 and 4 together throughout their conversations. These elders spoke about how they used

the teachings and what they did as it related to sharing. The other coresearchers, who did not grow up with *Anishinaabemowin* as their first language, tended to share their personal experiences of learning the language and about their learning journey to pick up the gift of language and their experiences learning from elders. They also spoke of their experiences sharing the teachings.

Aandek and *Adik Giizhig* shared the teachings and what they did in the community. They both spoke about the importance of recognizing the beauty, and the need for offering and being thankful for the new day. It was important to have a way to appreciate and recognize this. They spoke about the importance of offering something to creation when you took something from her (i.e., harvest). Tobacco was used as a consistent ritual offering that has, historically, been done for thousands of years. Through this process, we learn that we need to make ourselves aware of when we take something from Mother Earth and that something must always be given back in return for something taken from her. This makes one cognizant of the process of asking permission, offering, and taking, as this relates to being respectful of the planet and the concept of reciprocity.

All participants spoke about the importance of ceremony as part of *Anishinaabek* life, because Indigenous knowledge and worldview is “rooted in ceremony.” *Mskokii Kwe* said it best when she said, “we’re all part of creation and it’s all our truth. Like, this is our truth, this is who we are, this is what we do now.” Ceremony was also seen as a way to regain lost messages and teachings from our ancestors (i.e., through reflection and meditation). Ceremony is also a way to connect with other like-minded traditional people who respect *Shkagamik-kwe* and encourages us to remember that we are an “ancient

people.” To connect and honour creation, it is important to have rituals of recognition in order to give us time to do so. It is important to recognize that Mother Earth is our elder that has been here for a very long time and that, as her children and as those who respect her, we must remember this. The Haudenosaunee’s (Iroquois) Thanksgiving address, which gives thanks to creation at the beginning of any formal gathering, was also mentioned as an example of others who see things the same way.

In this study, the coresearchers discussed the elders that influenced their lives. They believed that we are accountable to our ancestors. Relationships with elders were not utilitarian; they were based upon respect and mentorship. Questioning elders was rarely done, as this was seen as rude and impatient. Being patient with elders was a virtue. One important concept that was introduced by *Makade Nimkii* is that eldership and mentorship can occur through research and literature. Dr. William Jones, the first *Anishinaabe* (Fox Indian) who graduated with a PhD in Linguistic Anthropology from Columbia University in the United States, collected stories from the elders in the late 1800s, early 1900s. The main focus of the stories was to teach morality and respect for the elders. Therefore, this study also concurs that respecting, listening, observing, and spending time with your elders are central components to the *Anishinaabek* worldview for our learning well-being with earth. Elders are respected because they have more life experience and understand things within this longevity and are seen to deserve respect in the sharing of this experience. It is part of the learning cycle to learn from your elders, because they pass on their wisdom to the younger generations.

Having time for reflection in nature was also seen as an important part of ritual. Reflection must be encouraged and role modelled. For example, preparation of a spirit

dish for Mother Earth enables this. What is more, the opportunity to go into a natural setting, with guidance for reflection would give people the opportunity to participate in this actively so they could become reconnected with the earth and themselves. People learn from reflection. Elders give you things to reflect on for present and future awareness.

In this study, reflection was also discussed as a way to bring about meditation and mediation to relax oneself and to learn how to cope for better health. Meditation and the opportunity to have a peaceful place in nature creates a sense of solace and balance. It helps to connect you to the energy of our ancestors and the source of this energy and the virtues and gifts of our ancestors (i.e., the seven grandfathers). Reflection was mentioned as something we do as part of our culture.

All participants spoke of learning things from their parents through actively listening to and watching them. They also learned from parents from reflecting on past things that they were told as children about life and the *Anishinaabek* worldview. Things that were learned from parents were taught by demonstration and observation. Reflection was encouraged by parents, and lessons were encouraged for children to learn through thinking things through on their own. Eldership encourages critical reflection and awareness, and these allow for growth. All participants talked about a strong connection to learning from family and learning from traditional person(s) and/or traditional family: like-minded in *Anishinaabek* traditional thought. Relationships were built through helping one another and by coming to know who people were by what they shared with others. Having an awareness of others' knowledge as it relates to respecting Mother Earth was the tie that binds.

Even though all coresearchers had parents who had little formal education due to residential schools, colonization, and exclusion in mainstream education, all participants obtained university degrees. This demonstrates courage in their pursuing credentials in an academic setting which excludes their worldview and which promoted embracing a difficult and challenging path into another worldview. Developing courage to embrace alternative worldviews has been a necessary part of our survival. This is one virtue all need to learn.

5. Political Experiences and Awareness

The fifth theme to emerge from the data was political experiences and awareness. This theme focused on the concepts of: educational experiences, regeneration, accommodation, colonization, decolonization and resistance, globalization, the planet, people, self, economy, and technology.

In this research, all participants speak of their personal educational experiences: residential school experiences of themselves and family, experiences with linguicide, abuse and frustrations, stereotyping and ridicule, the war in OKA, the neglect of acknowledgement as First Peoples, and the importance of learning more about who they are as *Anishinaabek*. Most *Anishinaabek* had to break out of mainstream perceptions of themselves: battling and unlearning negative stereotyping, giving voice to their academic and cultural needs, and realizing and affirming their potentialities and gifts as *Anishinaabek* peoples. Learning more and/or maintaining their *Anishinaabek* identities provided a positive direction where they could realize the beauty of the *Anishinaabek* worldview, culture, and language and themselves. It was important to connect and learn from the traditional knowledge and language keepers.

Elders saw themselves as supporting and sharing the traditional knowledge of the people in the work that they did at all of the levels that they were working in. These levels included: administration and communications with government for cultural programming, and in classroom applications of the culture and the language with both Native and non-Native students. All reclaimed their culture and language and were passing this on to all future generations. This was also seen as decolonizing and revitalizing, because *Anishinaabek* culture is a thing of the present and it continues to have life. They wanted the next generation to have better schooling experiences than they had experienced through recognizing that our culture is important and is part of today's reality. This way, the younger people would have an education that could be more "in sync with the way we do things as *Anishinaabe* ... go into things holistically ... [not] step by step." Reclaiming and maintaining one's identity as *Anishinaabek* was a way to reclaim their connection to creation and a connection to themselves. They felt compelled to share this with others in their work as educators. Passing on traditional knowledge is being accountable to those that came before: elders. And, the *Anishinaabek* worldview promotes the teaching of the elders and grandfathers as the utmost of importance in our survival—mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

Globalization was seen as opening the doors to share the *Anishinaabek* worldview. Our teachings would be able to be more readily accepted due to the global movement of peoples and the movement of ideas. Our place as First Peoples could inform other nations as to where they were in relation to our "history of the land, and the people and the place ... [that] it's not just random and never acknowledged" who First Nations people are (*Mskokii Kwe*). First Peoples could now be globally represented to

the newcomers to Canada and to the global history of Canada. It was thought that our worldview would be more readily accepted and not discriminated against, as it was in the past. Viewing our teachings as a nature thing, and not just as a Native thing, where it had been historically discriminated against in the past in Canada, would become more invitational to others too. Therefore, to teach our well-being with earth is invitational to others worldwide.

All participants can be seen as activists in their own right through obtaining mainstream credentialing as well as pursuing and promoting traditional *Anishinaabek* knowledge and language. Their parents had encouraged them all to continue going to school and to do their best. In this study, all coresearchers had obtained a university degree and also participated in working in mainstream education with a traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview. Working in education was seen as “stressful,” because it wasn’t easy to have a worldview that had been oppressed and repressed and because of possible consequences in teaching within this worldview (i.e., isolation, exclusion, critique, professional neglect and visibility, ridicule, minimization). It is difficult to work, to adapt, and to understand different worldviews, especially those worldviews that people are not readily understanding or accepting. This mediates one’s self-promotion and self-interest with respect, humility, and courage. It invests in a larger interest and quest for awareness through the importance of teaching and sharing it with others to honor those who came before. It is based upon a worldview that promotes our spirituality with the wellness of the planet. What is more, traditional families who were part of the elders’ awareness and experiences shared their knowledge with no material gain.

Through this, we can see the importance and possibility of all mankind and nontraditional *Anishinaabek* to reclaim their heritage, historically and culturally. All could be taught to make attempts at reclamation and to recognize the current state of political affairs in order to honour themselves and be honest about the history of all of our cultures. This is important so as to reclaim our own past connection to Mother Earth, our earth identity, which can also be seen as our Mother Earth identity. Understanding past to present to future states of circumstances and political affairs for Indigenous cultures, and of opposing colonialistic worldviews, encourages our own distinct thinking, because “we [as *Anishinaabek*] are not equal, we are different [and proud to be so]” (*Makade Nimkii*).

In this study, participants all agreed that balance was necessary in using technology. All agreed that man has learned about technology as part of his “original instructions,” since humans wouldn’t have technology unless this was so. The concern was in balancing the use of technology with the state of being. All saw balance as necessary in order to use technology in a constructive and good way versus a destructive and oppressive way (i.e., nuclear energy as the abuse of fire). Caution of the hurried pace of technology was discussed, in that it was seen as closing down your consciousness to nature, and this did not enable you to participate, observe, and appreciate nature if you were in a hurry. Participants also shared that they could live both a cultural and a traditional lifestyle while also living a contemporary lifestyle. It is necessary to have balance in your state of being, with the use of technology, and in your daily living, now more than ever. It is important to understand that intuition and connection also need to be included along with the use of the technological.

6. A Way of Being in *Anishinaabek* Research

The sixth theme to emerge from the data was revealed through discussions of engaging trust, respect, and humility with elders when discussing traditional ways and teachings. The protocol for speaking with elders is based upon elders knowing what you need to hear at a particular time. This is because “they know what you are ready to hear and understand. And they pick the most salient things that are important at that particular moment” (*Mskokii-Kwe*). Having trust comes from “being in the moment” and listening to what an elder is sharing with you. As shared by S. Wilson (2008), “[Indigenous] ways of knowing is based upon relationships ... respect, reciprocity and responsibility are key features of any healthy relationship,” and these are to be included in indigenous research (pp. 73, 77). To teach our well-being with earth is to listen to our elders and to put our relationship with them first before asking our own questions and to not be an imposition. We must also listen to *Shkagamik-kwe*, because

knowledge is shared with all creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships ... 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 ... you are answerable to all your relations (S. Wilson, 2008, pp. 56, 57).

Respect to all of creation is recognition of ourselves as being “present” when sharing with her.

7. Continuation and Survival

The seventh theme that emerged from the data was continuation and survival. We have been given *kiimiinigowin*—our gift, which gives us life and our source for life’s

continuation. Our gift is *Mamanan akii*—Mother Earth, and she is our elder (*Adik Giizhik*). All of our ceremonies present a gratitude and obligation to ensure our continuation and to live well with *Mamanan akii*. We all have a responsibility and a spiritual obligation to maintain our relationship with Mother Earth to promote us to do the right thing in our rituals of ceremony to honour our gift, our source of life.

Anishinaabek worldview is about continuation. As described by McNally (2009), the open-endedness stresses the “continuity of knowledge” Life itself is a cycle, within which individuals grow up listening to their grandfathers, come to be old themselves, teach their own grand-children, become one of the ancestors” (p. 142), and there is an expectation to pass on the teachings to the next generation while being adaptive to current times.

The concept of “survival” is not an *Anishinaabek* concept. It is a colonized term, a reactive terminology to oppression and genocide. Our language does not have a word for “survival” or the “survival of the planet.” These are colonized terms. The *Anishinaabek* view of peace is about continuation and *mino bimaadziwin*: “the art of living the good life” and “continuous rebirth” (Simpson, 2011, p. 26).

8. Peace is Our Worldview Demonstrated

The eighth theme that emerged from the data is that peace is demonstrative and exemplifies our worldview. For continuation, there must be peace, and this is founded upon the continuance of our worldview. “Peace is about peace of mind, not the absence of war. You won’t know peace of mind without language and culture, your identity” (*Makade Nimkii*).

Our language and our culture are all part of our worldview. We need to have our traditional worldview passed on, and we need to see our traditional worldview demonstrated. The *Anishinaabek* and others need more opportunities to learn of our worldview through political will and purpose. The traditional elders have demonstrated how the *Anishinaabek* worldview can be shared in contemporary times. Our worldview needs to be supported in order to flourish, as this will create an opportunity for its continuance.

As shared by McNally (2009):

Ojibwe children ... are taught skills of active watching and listening, not simply of the content of what to look for or listen for. They are taught to take in cultural lessons experientially, to take them in over time, and not to expect spoon-fed segmented units of knowledge. (p. 143)

Observation and demonstration are essential to learning and teaching. Nature is an implicit teacher, and we are taught to look and listen in order to hear and see what we are to learn. As a cultural pedagogy, the *Anishinaabek* demonstrate and teach through implicit means in order to encourage self-awareness, self-reflection, patience, and one's responsibility for learning and sharing through observation and example. This is how *Shkagamik-kwe* teaches. She has taught us that our well-being is connected to her well-being. She is our elder and our teacher, and she does so implicitly.

9. Be Aware of Colonialistic Thinking

The ninth theme that emerged from the data was to think in *Anishinaabemowin*. This would include doing research using the *Ojibwe* language as part of our thinking processes. The intended purpose would be to promote our way of knowing and of being

and to prevent thinking using a “foreign language, [or] a foreign way of thinking.” Concepts such as decolonization, globalization, and sustainability can all be seen as colonized terms because they are economic and political terms. It was suggested that future research with our people be done without this foreign way of thinking and be based on the *Anishinaabek* way of knowing and worldview. Discussions regarding teaching *Ojibwe* were also expressed. Concern was shared regarding the teaching of the language from a colonialist worldview. This worldview lacked cultural context and meaning, and hence a lack of transmission results between and across generations for the creation of future *Anishinaabemowin* speakers. It was also suggested that *Anishinaabemowin* be taught from the Anishinabek worldview; unfortunately, of the very few speakers that exist today, very few have this awareness.

10. *Akinomaage*: Earth as Context and Teacher

The tenth theme included the co-researchers’ perceptions of earth as an elder: teacher. All coresearchers believed in the concept of Mother Earth as elder and teacher. The word “to teach” is *Akinomaage*, and it means: the realm of living things, the earth, where you go to obtain knowledge. Learning our well-being with earth then would include going to our elder, Mother Earth, in order to obtain this knowledge. To learn and to teach, from our elder Mother Earth, is of prime importance to knowing our view of peace. We need her as context to know who we are and how to live well, and we all need this from our mother.

Personal Reflections

My personal reflections include my experiences with coming to understand my learning journey through sharing my coresearchers’ experiences in this study. The

importance of relationships in sharing personal stories based on traditional experiences was anticipated and confirmed in doing this research. I identified with all of the participants in this study. I have participated in ceremony, I have made efforts to learn *Anishinaabemowin*, and I have worked in mainstream education to encourage others to nurture their *Anishinaabek* identity and relationship to the ancestral teachings. The most challenging experience was speaking with *Aandek*, who did not know me as well as did the other participants. I believe he was somewhat hesitant about sharing his experiences within a “foreign” perspective, but he had a lot of important information to share and, with courage, participated in the research.

In our interview, he wanted to share his perspectives and cautions to me as a PhD candidate. He did not believe that PhDs were going to add to helping the *Anishinaabek* reclaim our worldview; in fact, he saw it as a hindrance. He believed this, because he saw *Anishinaabek* PhDs as being colonized into the mainstream worldview. I could understand his comments, and it had me reflect on my own experiences in doing the research from this perspective and in utilizing a mainstream worldview in general.

The methodology that I chose was an interpretive inquiry methodology and hermeneutic phenomenology and qualitative research as method. Other Native scholars have utilized these methods for the same purposes that I reasoned. If one is using a mainstream methodology (Eurocentric), it would be important to choose those that best integrate with an *Anishinaabek* worldview. I felt comforted in other discussions of experience and research methodology and the challenges with intellectualizing experience as shared by S. Wilson in his book, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (2008, pp. 102–103):

Manu Meyer talks about now, how things have to be put into and respect their context, or how knowledge is hermeneutic. To me, that is a key to our way of thinking and is a necessary ingredient of an Indigenous ways of knowing, is hermeneutics. Because so much of what we do and think is based upon the context or relational accountability, maybe hermeneutics is a good English word to describe our ways of knowing. Interpretation of the context of knowledge is necessary for that to become lived, become a part of our collective experience or part of our web of relationships. So, we contextualize everything that we do, and we do that contextualization in a conscious way.

In a response from “Cora,” another participant in S. Wilson’s (2008) study, she spoke about the dangers of intellectualization:

It’s like writing “bread” on a piece of paper and eating the paper instead of the bread. If you get by with intellectualization then you will probably pass that on to people too, and it’ll become a ritual. (p. 103)

When I first read this, I understood it at one level. Now, by going through this research study, I understand it on another level. *Aandek* explained the difference in this development as the difference in seeing the world through an *Anishinaabek* worldview versus a “foreign” worldview. The balance can be a very difficult process, and critical studies support the positioning for a reactive *Anishinaabek* worldview in academic research which is based upon the mainstream (the dominant) worldview dialogue as its premise. Most Indigenous research and research methods have not been created from a traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview, but a contemporary traditional *Anishinaabek* repositioning. Although culture and teachings don’t remain static, nevertheless, we must

take caution in the direction that we pursue when sharing, learning, teaching, and researching ourselves.

Furthermore, I realized that *Aandek*'s prior experiences with PhDs and such experiences as his "screening books about education and they talk about us in the past tense. And, that's not even right," affected the way he perceived my intentions with this research study. I did share with him that my purpose was to share participants' experiences with our worldview, our connection with the earth. And when I asked him how he would like to see things done differently, it created an opportunity for his discussing *Akinomaage*. This was very insightful and helpful for understanding the premise in teaching our well-being with earth.

Also, his frustrations with other PhD researchers conveyed a cautionary note. He also spoke of other frustrations to me: other language teachers who taught from a colonialistic worldview. I took his frustrations and cautions to heart, so I wanted to formalize this experience in this section to share it with other Indigenous researchers. I believe all *Anishinaabek* researchers experience this frustration when balancing mainstream and *Anishinaabek* worldviews in their work. It is something most of us are aware of, but it never hurts to be reminded again to maintain and be aware of our *Anishinaabek* consciousness.

In my journal, I wrote about the concept of colonization and compared it with the experience in Hiroshima and the atomic bomb: the A bomb. To me, colonization has been like an atomic bomb to the First Peoples. And it can be called the C bomb. It includes: capitalism, colonialistic confrontation, conformity, control, competitiveness, corruption, cultural annihilation, and chemical contamination. Only those who

experience it can understand it and feel its continued effects. The traditional *Anishinaabek* witness daily the attempted annihilation of our language and culture through colonization and today's modernization. These elements are violent, and they are perpetuated on First Peoples and the planet everywhere.

In reading the study by Dr. Robert Jay Lifton, a psychiatrist who dedicated a great portion of his work to studies in war, the effects of Hiroshima on its survivors paralleled those of colonization. As written by Lifton (1967, pp. 3–4),

the atomic bombings were experienced, even by Japanese born after they took place, as both an annihilatory culmination of a disastrous period ... a new and equally historical destiny—a destiny which could, moreover, be repeated, and which was open to everyone. What I am saying is that nuclear weapons left a powerful imprint upon the Japanese which continues to be transmitted, historically and psychologically, through the generations. But I could not begin to understand the complexities of this imprint until I embarked upon my work with ... "the survivor."

In Lifton's (1967) study, the Japanese are just as concerned with the rumors of the death of the land as they are with the rumours of those who had been exposed:

The first rumour simply held that all who had been exposed to the bomb in the city would be dead within three years But, a second rumor, even more frequently described to be and, I believe with greater emotion, was that trees, grass, and flowers would never again grow in Hiroshima; from that day on, the city would not be able to sustain vegetation of any kind. The message here was: Nature is drying up altogether; life is being extinguished at its source. (pp. 67–68)

Therefore, the importance of understanding the *Anishinaabek* worldview as a view of peace was important to explore, describe, and share, to counter the “C bomb” experience for First Peoples and those people who know the importance of returning to nature: nature people, and hence, for all peoples. Lifton (1967, p. 228) shares an experience and the importance of speaking to the elders in order to promote peace, in discussions with a Japanese man:

But his sitting in that manner was connected with traditional Japanese feelings to which he also gave expression: the philosophical doctrine of spirit over matter. He thus told how, during the third day of his protest, a little girl approached him and asked, “Can you stop it by sitting?” Struck by the profundity of the question, he evolved and publicly proclaimed that “A chain reaction of spiritual atoms must defeat the chain reaction of material atoms.” He went on to equate the splitting of the nucleus of matter with the much more difficult task of “splitting the nucleus of the human—the ego,” the latter also a Zen principle. And he emphasized that “once you sit for ten minutes, not for yourself but for others, as an instrument of human help, then you lose ego.

Hiroshima and the parallels of this to the colonization of Indigenous people and our planet demonstrate the wisdom and the importance of the elders. Peace is our worldview demonstrated. Traditional people from earth-centred cultures maintain the knowledge of the old ways to sustain peaceful actions and thoughts which can counterbalance the effect of a violent world. The caution would be that modernity will and may have the same effects as colonization towards all peoples.

Implications for Practice and Theory

This research has explored and has demonstrated our worldview for the *Anishinaabek* worldview as a view of peace. Teaching worldview could include teaching a connection with our planet through teaching worldviews that are based upon our relationship to earth and to support and enhance knowing peace with nature, self, and others. Currently, discussions of worldview and *Anishinaabek* views of peace can be included under social studies, social science and humanities, history, environmental education, equity studies, Native studies, world religions, moral and character education, and social justice through curriculum development. This worldview can be taught cross-curricular and also through interdisciplinary studies.

There are also implications for government in regards to Aboriginal education and the maintenance and preservation of our worldview and Aboriginal languages. *Anishinaabek* representation in school boards is low to nonexistent even for Native studies and Native language initiatives. Currently, there is no accountability on behalf of school boards to have representation of qualified Aboriginal persons teaching curriculum that pertains to Aboriginal initiatives and other subjects. For schools that have high numbers of Aboriginal students, this is imperative. The worldview must be taught by people who have an understanding and possession of an *Anishinaabek* worldview. These teachers could also have cross-cultural competencies in order to be able to teach both Native and non-Native students. Long-term commitments to programs, services, and curriculum for the hiring of Aboriginal teachers and support staff as well as First Nations employee hiring practices for representation in school boards need to occur. This must

be part of Ministry policy to ensure accountability for school boards regarding funding to support Aboriginal learning initiatives.

Accreditation to Aboriginal educational initiatives for community programming, especially as it relates to worldview, would allow for bridging programs for Aboriginal students to obtain secondary and postsecondary credentialing. This would encourage more Aboriginal educational programming in mainstream education, and hence would increase Aboriginal student retention and graduation rates at the secondary and postsecondary levels. It would also allow the teachings of the *Anishinaabek* worldview in higher grades and levels.

Furthermore, additional policy frameworks regarding Aboriginal education could occur to make it a mandatory part of curriculum to include First Nations perspectives to ensure an Aboriginal representation and Aboriginal student success.

In the classrooms, teachers could invite Aboriginal elders and other persons who hold alternative worldviews to come in and share with their students. Teachers could encourage more outdoor education activities, teach aspects of reflection and meditation in association with nature, and provide other opportunities where students could engage in experiential activities which would increase their interconnection and awareness of their relationship with their environment.

The findings in this study supported the theoretical and conceptual context for exploring the meaning of the elders' experiences with their contemporary perspectives. Their experiences shared their worldview of respect and peace with nature, which has created a basis for our worldview being demonstrated as an *Anishinaabek* view of peace. Through the sharing experiences which teach our well-being with earth, *Anishinaabek*

worldview has been identified and can be further explored. Related discipline areas of inquiry can welcome the *Anishinaabek* worldview as peace, and this can extend and blend in these existing disciplines. Current research areas where an *Anishinaabek* worldview and its peaceful premise with earth could be included are: ecological intelligence theory, Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Indigenous Knowledge (IK), environmental justice, environmental worldview, and eco-phenomenology. Because there is no previous research as it relates specifically to teaching our well-being with earth, this study prepares the setting for future research and for further development of this topic.

Implications for Further Research

Future research could include exploring other earth-centred worldviews from other Indigenous nations, nationally and globally, intergenerationally, as well as transgenerationally, with different ages and different genders. In addition, exploring a variety of other cultures' earth-centred worldviews would also be important to creating a transcultural element to teaching our well-being with earth. Also, investigating circumstances where nature-based experiences assist in bringing about mediation for other populations could occur in nonschool settings. An example of this would be with at-risk adolescents going into a woods retreat setting to get back to basics to reconnect with nature as a way to get grounded. Also, speaking with nature-based persons who have chosen an earth-centred worldview, who work in a variety of settings (i.e., outdoor educators, earth and nature sciences, etc.) would also shed more light on the development of having a peaceful relationship with earth.

Study Limitations

Limitations in this study are the omissions of discussions of gender and gender differences in the exploration of the *Anishinaabek* worldview of peace. The concept of Mother Earth was present, along with the inclusion of one female coresearcher, but discussions regarding this element were not present. While the Anishinaabek culture is patriarchal, there is very little in *Anishinaabemowin* that distinguishes male and female persons. Traditional knowledge contained in this thesis was meant to create a foundational work to describe the worldview of the Anishinaabek people as seen by the traditional people of today who adhere to the preservation of this worldview. Future research could include a more balanced group of male and female participants, with discussions of the possible influences of gender. Also, the research methodologies used in this research study were hermeneutic phenomenology and qualitative research using interpretive inquiry. Future studies could also utilize Indigenous methodologies to explore discussions such as these with elders.

Lastly, because it is part of the Anishinaabek worldview to teach and share through implicit instruction, this thesis attempts to “not jump to conclusions,” in order to encourage the reader to come to their own understanding, in their own way, and in their own time along their learning journey. It is hoped that everyone who has an opportunity to read this dissertation would obtain some quality of their own reflection and reevaluation, outside of researcher conclusions, which could help them respect themselves, others, and Mother Earth more dearly.

Concluding Reflections

I have identified with all of the coresearchers' experiences: traditionally, personally, and politically. Nature is an energy force and the source of knowledge and wisdom. We need to slow down and not speed up to remain connected to Mother Earth's meaning for life. Listening to your elders is a skill which needs to be nurtured, as it is of utmost importance to all of us in living peacefully on Mother Earth. The *Anishinaabek* are an ancient people. All peoples at one time honored this about themselves. We all need to go back to understanding this. Our worldview is taught to us and becomes embedded in the subconscious mind. The importance of understanding the need to teach and learn our well-being with earth is important to the future of all peoples so we can all become aware and awake again. The younger generation will need to have a direction and to have something that they will pass on to their future generations regarding a peaceful coexistence with nature. Ignatia Broker, a Minnesota Elder, says that in order to have continuation in life, it is important to pass on our knowledge and wisdom. She says:

We believe that all returns to its source; that both good and bad return to the place where they began. We believe that if we start a deed, after the fullness of time it will return to us, the source of the journey Because the earth is our Grandmother and our Grandmother is old, the Old Ones of our dodem are called grandmothers and grandfathers. Because they are wise and have known grandmother earth longer, we hear their words and remember them, for they are the words of the grandmothers and grandfathers who were before us. Thus the young hear what they must teach when they become the Old Ones. (McNally, 2009, pp. 132–133) *Chi-miigwech*.

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Appendix A

English Translations of Anishinaabemowin Terms

In alphabetical order:

Aadizookaanag	Traditional sacred stories
Aandek	Crow (male elder)
Aanii	Hello
Adik	Caribou
Adik dodem	Caribou Clan
Adik Giizhik/Giizhig	Caribou Sky (male elder)
Akii-bimaadizi	Earth's way
Akinomaage	To teach
Akinomaage mino akii-ayaa	To teach our well-being with earth
Anaango-kwe	Star Woman
Anishinaabek: Ojibwe	Particular group of First Peoples in North America
Anishinaabek/Anishinaabe	Good beings
Anishinaabekwe	<i>Ojibwe</i> woman
Anishinaabekwewuk	<i>Ojibwe</i> women
Anishinaabe ninni	<i>Ojibwe</i> man
Anishinaabek Yaayang	Our Being
Anishinaabemowin	<i>Ojibwe</i> language
Anokiiwin	How you work
Asab	Fisherman who sets nets

Asabiikenh	Spider
Bezhig	One
Bimaadziwin	Way of life
Boozhoo, aanii mishomis	Hello, grandfathers
Chi Anishinaabek Akinomaagewag	Traditional <i>Ojibwe</i> elders
Chi Anishinaabek Akinomaagekwe	Traditional <i>Ojibwe</i> elder (female)
Chi Anishinaabeninniuk	Traditional <i>Ojibwe</i> men
Chi-miigwech	Many thanks
Dodem	Clan
Ezhichigewin	How you do it
Giibwaanisii dodem	Red Tail Hawk clan
Giizhigong	Daylight
Gzhe Manito	Creator, Great Spirit, Great Mystery
Inendamowin	How you think
Intigo	I am told
Kaaw	No
Kiimiinigowin	Our gift
Ki-inendamowin	Our way of thinking
Kinomaage	To teach (shortened version)
Maang	Loon
Makade Nimkii	Black Thunderbird (male elder)
Mamanan akii	Mother Earth
Manaajitowin	Respect

Manitou/manito	Spirit
Manidoonhs	Little spirits or insects
Miigwech	Thank you
Miinawaa	And
Mino akii-ayaa	Well-being with the earth
Mino bimaadziwin	Way of the good life
Mishoomaag	Grandfathers
Mishomis	Grandfather
Mshkiki	Medicine
Mshkiki Detibisenh	Medicine Wheel
Mskokii Kwe	Red Earth Woman (female elder)
Nanabush	Central entity in sacred stories
Nbiish	Water
Nbwaakaawin	Wisdom
Niiwin Nikeying	Four Directions
Niizh	Two
Ninayaawin	My being
Niswi	Three
Nokomis	Grandmother
Odenong	Heart of where we live
Shkagamik-kwe	Mother Earth
Shkozin	To be in awe
Tansi (Cree)	Greetings

Waawaashkeshi	Deer
Waasa Inaabidaa	We look in all directions
Waawekewin	Having consideration
Waawiyeyaa	Circular nature of life
Wijiipenimonodawin	Honouring <i>Anishinaabek</i> worldview
Zhaaganosh	Non-Native person

Appendix B
Demographic Questionnaire

Name: _____ (Christian)

Name: _____ (Spirit)

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Clan: _____

Please share how you received your spirit name and clan.

Mailing Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Cell #: _____

Education Level: (Please circle)

College BA BEd MEd

Other: _____

Schools Attended: _____

Qualification(s) and Membership(s): _____

Is *Anishinaabemowin* your first language? If not, how did you learn *Anishinaabemowin*?

What communities have you worked for (on and off reserve)? _____

What term(s) do you use to identify yourself as an *Anishinaabe*?

Appendix C

Interview Questions

- 1) This study focuses on how *Anishinaabek* traditional teachings support respect for Mother Earth and the cosmos. How do you see your survival tied to Mother Earth's survival? How does being a traditionally minded *Anishinaabe* help you see this?
- 2) Can the worldview in the *Anishinaabek* language and culture be used to show our respect for nature (for example, insects are known as little gods)?
- 3) How did you come to take the traditional journey of an *Anishinaabe* person who wants to respect the red road and honour the traditional ways of our ancestors? (preserve the *Anishinaabek* worldview)?
- 4) Do you know any teachings of the Medicine Wheel? Can you share your knowledge of these teachings? What does Medicine Power mean to you?
- 5) Can you share an example or examples of what an elder(s) has taught you regarding having respect for Mother Earth (through ceremony, sacred stories, literature, or oral tradition)?
- 6) What do you think is the relationship between creation, man, and the earth? How do you see your relationship to these things: the Great Mystery?
- 7) What is your experience in researching, developing, teaching, and promoting programs or curriculum that support a peaceful worldview from a traditional and sacred *Anishinaabek* perspective?
- 8) How do you balance between contemporary and *Anishinaabek* traditional values or ways of thinking? (Please share some examples). As a contemporary *Anishinaabe* traditionalist, do you have any concerns about the teachings being passed on to future generations? Why?
- 9) "Mostly, modern man's relationship with nature is one that is based upon an economic [and technological] nature of reality." What are your thoughts on this statement? Do you see technology affecting the transmission and teaching of traditional values? How?
- 10) What do the words decolonization and globalization mean to you? How has globalization and the concept of decolonization affected our traditional teachings of our *Anishinaabek* worldview?