

Yukwalihowanahtu Yukwanosaunee Tsiniyukwaliho:t^
As People of the Longhouse, We Honor Our Way of Life

Tekal^hsal^ Tsiniyukwaliho:t^

Praise Our Way of Life

By

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DEDICATION

To my wife Carrie and sons Skye, Myles, Sako, Lahadokwas, Sonowhese, and Tekonyote, my family onuhkwa?t – medicine, who are always supportive and encouraging about my work. Their future is a significant reason to complete this dissertation about Indigenous knowledge as a record for those who are actively carrying on the traditions in their role within the longhouse community of Oneida and in their broader endeavors.

I dedicate this also to Elders Demus Elm, Sandy Elijah, Venus Walker, Dennison, Amy, Roy Buck and many others who have long been on their spirit journey who were earlier teachers of a young spirit who could not rest, dedicated to the defense of our land and people and often on the brink of trouble. During the seventies and eighties, I encountered many teachers from Indigenous communities who were advocating a return to the culture and helped make sense of cultures that narrowly escaped the colonial crime spree.

Over my lifetime, there have been many Elders, teachers, and spiritual advisors who have contributed to my knowledge, showing me a way of life that is real across North America. I have had the good fortune to travel to many different Indigenous lands on Turtle Island, the desert, the plains, the fishing places on the west coast, the interior of the mountain regions, the Great Lakes basin, and Haudenosaunee country. This dissertation is an accumulation of that knowledge that has guided my wisdom over my 60-plus years.

These words also represent my dedication to my culture. I fondly remember the influence of my grandmother, who passed many years ago, in 1965, on my spirit. She graces my dreams to this day whenever I need her love and guidance. I was deeply connected to her spirit. That is how I feel about my culture. Five years after my grandmother passed, I found my way back to the longhouse, and it was like finding a new grandma. The sense of spiritualism that flowed from the Elders grounded my being in a world of unimaginable knowledge and blessings. In the truest sense, there is a feminine spirit that flows from our Mother Earth through the longhouse teachings that has a “mystic potency” anchoring a worldview filled with ecocentric knowledge needed in a world gone mad with extraction without conscience.

I prepared this document to offer future generations a dialogue with my experience and my interpretation of a worldview that belongs to Oneidas as Haudenosaunee, as Onkwehónwe, as clan members, and especially as ecocentric human beings who are connected and related to Creation.

To my granddaughter W[^]hnisli:yostha and the future generations of the Haudenosaunee that will keep the fire burning in the longhouses. Another group that has shown remarkable resilience is the young Kanien’kehak men from Kahnawake, who work hard at keeping the teachings going and are always inquisitive about the culture. I have had a number of discussions with them, and they demonstrate the youthful spirit of the Haudenosaunee.

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To the late Barry White (Seneca), turtle clan, who recruited me out of college in 1971 to come to University at Buffalo (UB) and help build a Native Studies Program with John Mohawk and Oren Lyons. Since his passing, I have missed the dialogue we had for around 40 years that was always filled with our observations and analysis of the state of Haudenosaunee, what is new in terms of curriculum materials, and of course, the latest gossip making the circles. Barry was a quintessential teacher who loved to engage the subjects of Indigenous knowledge and brave enough to teach undergraduates who at times were disrespectful out of their own ignorance. Barry was a master at working with the reluctant learner whose only real interest was sports. He

was a human resource on everything to do with Indigenous knowledge and the Seneca language and had a sense of humor to balance the seriousness of reality.

To the late Dr. John Mohawk (Seneca), turtle clan, another of the turtle clan brothers with whom I had the good fortune to travel with around the country looking for Small Boy's Camp in the Rockies of Alberta in the 1970s; to attend a Cree Sundance in northern Saskatchewan; to participate in the occupation of the BIA Building in Washington DC; to travel around the Confederacy; to support Ganienkeh the Mohawk occupation in the Adirondack Mountains; to attend board meetings of the Seventh Generation Fund; and to work at Akwesasne Notes. After years of being disconnected, I returned to UB to finish my master's degree in 2006 and was able to take a class from John, who passed that December. We had renewed our friendship, and I felt a deep loss with his traveling on. As we renewed our relationship (which was strained because of political differences or perceived ones), there was a discovery of how precious dialogue is in our lives and the benefit of trading thoughts and ideas no matter how different they may be; in a culture of oral tradition, we must move beyond the barriers of difference and hear each other's thoughts. I have to say Yawako to José Barreiro for documenting John's words in Thinking in Indian: A John Mohawk Reader. John's voice is one that will be with us for generations to come.

Oren Lyons (Onondaga), turtle clan, was still at UB when I returned in 2006 but retired in 2009 and was a principle advisor on my master's degree project. He always offered the kind of advice that came from the notion of how the community was going to see the work. This is an important reminder for Haudenosaunee scholars to think about the communities, the people, and what is needed to advance our societies.

To my staff at Kiikeewanniikaan Southwest Regional Healing Lodge, who have been supportive in many ways as they continued the programs and gave me the space to do my research and write. To Crystal, who helped in word processing and turning my concepts into graphs, I'm deeply indebted.

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To my PhD Committee members, Dr. Grinde, Dr. Frisch, and Dr. McCarthy, and reader Dr. Sue Hill who have been supportive and encouraging throughout my studies at UB. Their advice has been immeasurable over the years as pieces of this writing surfaced throughout my courses of study. They provide a glimpse into the window of the academy that is critical to someone like me, who is more of a community activist than an academic scholar. I love working in the communities, designing programs, and building new ways of structuring and embellishing our Indigenous cultures. This often causes wonderment on my part as I try to bridge from the community to the academy. Special thanks to my outside reader, Dr. Susan Hill, for her review, analysis, and words of encouragement.

When John, Barry, Oren, I, and others who gathered during those beginning years at the University at Buffalo (UB), we often talked about the importance of community and the fact that whatever we do must benefit our Haudenosaunee communities. This dialogue really encouraged us all to be community activists and organizers, and I felt it necessary to stay true to that goal.

Yawako

Abstract

My dissertation is a critical philosophical interpretation of selected constructs of Haudenosaunee culture addressing barriers to liberation from colonialism; the decolonization of the disruption of the original humanistic constructs rooted within Onkwehónweneha; and what transformation means in the 21st century. I also explore the contemporary realities of Haudenosaunee life from the Seven Spans paradigm of standards established by the Kaianerekowa – The Great Law of Peace; Gaiwiio – the Teachings of Handsome Lake; Indigenous deconstructive methodology framed by cultural transformation; and the construct of “extending the rafters” as a critical analysis of the Haudenosaunee from within.

Haudenosaunee culture is growing and flourishing, and in recent years, the young people who are driven by identity are seeking more understanding from life and culture. They are often met with resistance by self-appointed doorkeepers of the culture who are protectionist, and, in their attempts to protect, they discourage people. Their family’s lack of activity in the longhouse community is often cited as reasonable cause. This is contrary to the original birthright of every Haudenosaunee person with respect to their culture. To challenge this issue, I advocate for more written cultural knowledge to be produced by Indigenous scholars as one critical step to cultural inclusion.

How we think, why we dream, how we solve problems, and what is important to a Haudenosaunee person are accumulating notions of cultural knowledge being forgotten as the Elders, the wisdom-keepers of repository knowledge, make their journey back to the Skyworld. It is vital that we explore these ideas in a process of decolonizing and experiential cultural learning connected to the important stories of the culture. This is an attempt at focusing that challenge with cause for dialogue.

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Glossary of Haudenosaunee Language Terminology

Confederacy Terminology

Haudenosaunee – People of the Longhouse – In the 1970s in a Confederacy Grand Council at Onondaga, the Chiefs, after long discussion decided that this was the term that they would tell the world to use when referring to the Six Nations Confederacy.

Oneida Terminology

Ukwehu'we is the same as the Onkwehónwe meaning – Real People

Yukwanushuni – “we are all people of the longhouse”

ka?nikohli:yo – having a Good Mind

Sakolawatha – he who punishes

Sowiskala – sometimes used in Oneida to refer to crooked-minded twin

Tahotikushututi yukwak:shata ukwetase – Faces Coming From Mother Earth

o:wilase – caring time – cradleboard to childhood,

Onyota'a:ka – people of the standing stone

tehutw^natenyese kanitotiy^sha – changing times voices – young boy/girlhood (puberty)

wahutotyake wahuwatilihutu – responsibility time – they are appointed as hunters (young men) or gardeners (young women),

wahut?wa:tsilu:ni – family time – father, mother, uncle, and aunt (faithkeepers are usually selected from active persons)

wahonatlsla:y^ton-sh^na^ laotnikula – teaching time – peaceful mind, grandfather, and grandmother

lotiyaneshu kutiyaneshu yukwasotsla – making a good path serving people/creator time; leadership in extended family, clan, community or nation

otanit^t?sla – compassion and innocence

kanolukhwasla – love and caring

kahletsyalusla – words of encouragement

kna?shatst^sla – strengthen

kalihwi:yo – nurturing words

Sk ^ ·n^ · – peace

ska?niku·lat – being of one mind

yukwatsiste skenonShakohlewatha (hiewaht [root word]) – he punishes them

Tadodaho – an Onondaga Chief title

Mohawk Terminology

Sek:on – a form of greeting

Skannen – peace

kasastenhsara – power

kanikonhriyo/karihwiyo – righteousness

Shakorihonnien:ni – the teacher (according to Tom Porter)

Ahdonhwa – personal songs of acknowledgement and naming ceremony

Thawiskara – the back side of a mountain where the sun never reaches

“Oneshu? – Hell in the contemporary sense, but also the area between the turtle’s shell and the earth – this is translated to mean “ the dark/sunless place where the minions/Creations are”

Seneca Terminology

Gaiwiiio – comes from the Seneca language, used this to reference Handsome Lake’s teachings instead of the Oneida version of the construct

Osto’wago’wa’, – feather dance

Gone’owo’, – drum dance

Ado’we’ – personal songs

Ganawe’gowa’ – peach stone game

Ska’niadar’io – Handsome Lake

Hanisse’no – invisible one

Gayanashagowa – Great Law of Peace

Cayuga Terminology

deganigonhadé:nyons – mind changers

Ganadaiyoush – town destroyer

hoya’ne’; Hoyanneh – different ways of saying “he makes a path” – translated to mean Chief

Ganio’dai’io’ or Ska’niadar’io – Seneca title meaning Handsome Lake

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Deskehah – a Cayuga Chief

Ojibway Terminology

Nigig – the name of the being that shared the teachings of the seven grandfather teachings of the Anishnawbe

Introduction

When I began the journey of writing this dissertation, I wanted to come to some realizations about Haudenosaunee culture and life that were cathartic and thought-provoking in a way that would create a dialogue among the citizens of the Haudenosaunee. I tried to stay away from comparative analysis with Western culture or thinking (which is hard to do) and offer an Indigenous knowledge-focused approach that is “Irocentric”¹ (totality centered on Iroquois ways and culture) in how an Onkwehónwe exercises thought and wisdom in the cultural context given the historic and contemporary reality. My years of experience sitting on the hard benches of the longhouse and attending many sweatlodges; ceremonial gatherings; political meetings in Ottawa, Washington, and Albany; traditional gatherings and workshops in many First Nations; Great Law and Gaiwiio² Readings; blockades and armed camps; and the many celebrations of life soon guided the thought process into action.

Out of my life experiences, I began to source teachings from memories of traditional life, teachings, stories, more teachings, meetings, discussion groups, cultural camps, fasting, and more narrative teachings. The unfolding of this knowledge raises questions about how these traditions could be utilized to create movement in our communities toward a future that is about change and transformation.

¹“Irocentric” is a concept of total Iroquoian. I think it is important to address these topics from that perspective, looking at the Haudenosaunee from inside.

²Gaiwiio comes from the Seneca language, and I use this to reference Handsome Lake’s teachings instead of the Oneida version of the construct.

As Onkwehónwe, we need to refresh our memories to sort through issues within our cultural world that prove to be barriers to our future, and this document is an examination of some of those issues and concerns in which all Haudenosaunee need to participate.

I was listening to a scholar from Kahnawake who was talking about his experience being raised a Catholic and then, in his adult life, deciding to follow more traditional beliefs. As he told his story, he talked about the fear that non-traditional people carry about the longhouse. They have an almost overwhelming fear of the longhouse. I realized how much the church convinces them to fear their own culture.³ This is one of the major barriers to change that I see in our communities. A part of my discussion about the culture and Haudenosaunee teachings is to open the door to understanding to bridge the gaps that exist in Haudenosaunee communities.

There is also a sense of protectiveness by traditionalists that is often misunderstood as self-righteousness. I have heard traditionalists say that you should know your own culture with an edge of blaming them for not knowing it. In the Oneida community, I have seen many young Oneidas returning to the longhouse ceremonies that come from families that the previous generation did not attend. There is a need for a more open dialogue about the teachings that encourages learning and participation that build clan and community.

In Chapter One, I provide a basic understanding of some of the teachings from the principle sources intermingled with conceptualizing transformation. It is a call for cultural transformation and a revision of understandings of ancient stories for more applicability to the current reality in Haudenosaunee communities. The reality of the 21st century must include the recovery of culture and making meaning of Onkwehónwe teachings in a world, inside and

³A discussion that took place in Oneida, Southwold, at the longhouse on December 5, 2012.

outside of the longhouse, surrounded by materialistic Western ideals and practices. Over the past 40-plus years, I have seen the gradual expansion of the culture filtering into many different kinds of activities beyond the interior of the longhouse. There is a constant reminder that the teachings belong in the longhouse, a rule that more recently has been a barrier to having the Haudenosaunee culture reach into every facet of the community.

During the 1990s, in the Oneida community, I worked on the devolution of the education of the community, the devolution of the health of the community, and the development of a women's shelter addressing family violence. In each of those efforts, the original management model was based on the clan system of the Oneida Nation. Over time, the clan management model was changed back to a Western model of an advisory committee or board. In those cases, individuals who were not culturally minded felt that it was too hard to understand, or they felt threatened or a sense of fear about it. In observing the various boards and committees, one of the factors that came out of the process was that those clan members who would under cultural norms did stay with the project. For instance, the wolf clan populated the family violence project. The wolf clan, according to our teachings, is responsible for safety and security. The other outcome of this work is the realization of the importance of the clan system in our community and what the next generation is being taught. The Haudenosaunee are adjusting their lifestyle to contemporary reality and, it is hoped, finding ways to continue to include the original teachings.

How does culture inform my lifestyle? How does culture create a space for my lifestyle choice and to honor the original teachings? More and more young people are gathering at the longhouses. Can this be the new movement of cultural recovery? Is there a shift from repository knowledge to applied knowledge – a transformation of cultural practice reaching into new venues for cultural expression?

As I prepared for this writing, in my own intuitive analysis of dream, the realization came that Haudenosaunee culture has been revitalized but needs to be deconstructed and transformed with the removal of borrowed negative concepts that do not fit the culture. I began to explore the art of dream as a Haudenosaunee construct – that is Haudenosaunee ways of helping, informing, and bridging the conceptualizations while building a vision.

Dreaming is still very much central to how we understand our world and is an ability to create meaning in our lives. It is one of those capacities that need discussion to further our knowledge of what it teaches us about ourselves.

In Chapter Two, I expand upon the Iroquois concept of “seven layers of skin”⁴ of leaders that evolves the idea into an analysis and model of the Haudenosaunee personality of the “Good Mind,” ka?nikohli:yo. This concept of personality advocates the functioning together of the mind, body, and spirit of the person in a holistic approach to life. Personality development is viewed within the culture as a lifetime process of learning the teachings that have been formed over generations. Growing the Good Mind or achieving ka?nikohli:yo requires the gifts of Haudenosaunee teachings that provide more meaningful analysis and guidance for Onkwehónwe to achieve or maximize their character development as more empowered Haudenosaunee people.

There are barriers and restraints to the Good Mind coming from within ourselves, which is the oppression we endured, witnessed, and/or participated in and the patterns of negativity within our communities that create internalized oppression. There is a personal and collective responsibility to address these barriers for the betterment of our culture and nation. Through the

⁴A concept often used in reference to original leadership of the Haudenosaunee.

understanding of the Good Mind teachings and healing the pain of oppression, we can begin to establish standards of human interaction that will increase the presence of culture in our lives.

One of the purposes of Chapter Two is to demonstrate that the culture has tools to heal and bring to balance dysfunctions within Haudenosaunee communities. The Requicking Address or condolence ceremony is one the processes that remains within the culture as a way to rejuvenate the spirit of the people, family, clan, or nation. The examination of this teaching aims to find ways to advance the transformation of the culture by taking a new look at teachings we take for granted. With careful thought, culturally focused analytical deconstruction of the invasion, Indigenous-minded instruments of cultural transformation, and identity validation, a reciprocal system can be constructed for the coming generations that maintains the integrity of the Haudenosaunee.

The condolence ceremony is a significant cultural apparatus of spiritual healing that draws together every element of life for the rebuilding of the human communal spirit. In the Oneida community, we have helped strengthen families with the ceremonial process, and its effectiveness empowers people to connect and support one another.

Chapter Three examines the impact of Christian concepts entering the cultural teachings. Is there a hell and devil in the pre-contact culture of the Haudenosaunee or other Indigenous cultures? I have had discussions over the years with learned individuals (Armstrong, Kills Straight, Red Shirt, Banyaca, Harry, Dumont, etc.) from the Okanagan, Lakota, Navajo, Hopi, Cheyenne, Paiute, Shoshone, and Ojibwa Nations. Most traditionalists (those who are Indigenous cultural knowledge carriers) have stated that there is no such concept in their original cultures. In

the last message we received, called the Gaiwiio or the Code of Handsome Lake, we see the emergence of a character called the Punisher and notions of a place like the Christian Hell.

Why is this important? We cannot dilute the Haudenosaunee philosophical cosmological worldview with Western cultural constructs that are designed to maintain colonialism and oppression. It is also important to understand how these colonial thoughts find their way into our thinking, and we need to figure out how we can decolonize our thoughts and beliefs. Although I have focused on these two items, I believe that there are many other issues that we need to come to terms with as well (i.e., if we are truly a matrilineal society, why do women take the last name of the men? How does repenting and making things right differ?). These will be questions for another time, but at the present time, sourcing the idea of hell and a devil is critical; at the very least, we need a clear understanding of how these constructs are used to understand the history of the invasion and our resistance.

One of the topical threads of interest weaving its way through the dissertation is the influence of Christian thought. Whether we like it or not, Christian thought, in the form of ideas, emotions, or reactions, plague our communities and increase the paralysis of cultural transformation. The fear of traditions is often ignored without knowing how to address it. The act of comparing Haudenosaunee teachings to Christian teachings as a way to make traditional teachings more acceptable is unnecessary, but it happens. There needs to be a forum for these discussions within the context of Haudenosaunee nation-building given that the culture is the foundation of nations. The foundation does not need to be confused with other belief systems that are reason for the exercise of deconstructing our teachings.

In Chapter Four, I present Haudenosaunee knowledge as a celebration of our wisdom and encourage everyone to embrace what they know and learn by owning and living the knowledge. In Chapter Two, there is the idea of the Haudenosaunee personality offering a way to make real the idea of the “Good Mind,” ka?nikohli:yo. From the place of the Good Mind, our knowledge can inform us how we can be more creative and expressive as Onkwehónwe, taking the teachings to new corners of our reality by constructing new forms of organizational development, culturally based healing and wellness models, and, it is hoped, discovering a new way to do economics.

There is also a review of what I mean by repository knowledge and pragmatic knowledge and how intellectuals in our communities are transcending from ancient to modern applications of Haudenosaunee wisdom. We need to offer our unwavering thanks for the teachers who have informed us and given to us the original instructions, the narratives of our culture. We need to celebrate their lives and remind ourselves of their special place in our world. Haudenosaunee culture teachers are rare human beings, and anyone who has the capacity to carry the oral teachings is a gift to the nations. They need to honor themselves, and we need to find ways to honor and support them.

It is the same for those who take on roles within the culture as leaders. It has become increasingly difficult to find individuals who can represent the ideals and voice of the clans. We need to create leadership institutes within our communities for future leadership, teaching the importance of Haudenosaunee intellectualism.

The challenge is decolonizing how we think about our knowledge as well as removing the phrase “we need to return to the past” and “we need to listen to the ancient stories.” These

statements are representations of ideas from meetings and conferences that call people to return to the past as if the culture exists only in the past. Our knowledge is not in the past; it is in the here and now. We must allow our teachings to inform our way of thinking and doing.

By celebrating Haudenosaunee knowledge, we celebrate Haudenosaunee intellectualism. Our people have always had a sophisticated way about them. The quiet, humble space of knowledge orators created around themselves projects a binding force of spirit and knowledge that comes to life in oratorical wonderment, transcending generations of learners. In listening to Indigenous storytelling, one realizes that, as a Haudenosaunee person, one is a lifelong learner, always an amateur, asking questions and exploring the vast amount of knowledge left behind by generations of intellectuals.

In Chapter Five, I focus on mapping how the Haudenosaunee thought process is “different” and how important owning our own way of thinking is to our creativity. Decolonizing our thought process is critical to recovery and transforming our world through Haudenosaunee thought. This is a further step in making sense of Haudenosaunee psychology that addresses how the original knowledge of Creation survives in our cultural abilities of retention. Here, I take another view of Wallace’s work on Iroquois psychology and examine it from a Haudenosaunee perspective and within more modern cultural constructs. I also include a fresh look at Hewitt’s work on the Iroquois soul and combine the constructs to paint a holistic picture of how we engage the world from a Haudenosaunee worldview. I believe that a lot more can be learned from this subject, and I hope that my examination will generate dialogue in building greater understanding of these points. A critical piece of decolonization is the unlearning of how we think, feel, and act in an oppressive environment to ensure that the oppression is not guiding our

thinking. I capture a few of the historical events of Oneida history that show how trusting Haudenosaunee ways continued our use of cultural strengths.

According to narratives in the community, it appears that, from 1840 to 1905, the Oneida people were largely Christian but still held to medicine societies, feasts, and personal ceremonies, including the clan system with Chiefs and Clan Mothers. Space was made for Christian ways, and it remains the same in Haudenosaunee communities. No challenges are posed to Onkwehónwe Christians even though they continue to find ways to circumvent traditional teachings. Why is that? It demonstrates Haudenosaunee tolerance and the notion of freedom of expression within the culture. For most Haudenosaunee families, Christian ideology has been a part of the invasion at the family level. Today, with many young people returning to the longhouse teachings, the acculturated families have to find tolerance.

Over the generations since the removal and relocation, the idea of the Haudenosaunee – a Six Nations Confederacy – has remained a nuance of ideology despite what religion or teachings they have held on to. Well after the removal and relocation of our nations, someone was always involved in a movement to rebuild the Confederacy whether you lived in Wisconsin, Ontario, Quebec, or New York.

I return at the end of Chapter Five to the Wiping of the Tears Ceremony, adapting information from Chapter Two into a model of helping families achieve the “Good Mind”/ka?nikohli:yo, the centerpiece of the Haudenosaunee personality. This is a search for instruments of decolonizing within the culture. The Haudenosaunee were gifted with teachings and ceremonial processes that help deal with the kind of grief left over from generations of pain.

The helping techniques that have evolved over the last 30 years increase our abilities to make a difference in healing and recovery from the historic trauma.

In Chapter Six, I pose a question: how do we make meaning of our culture from the perspective that it is a worldview and not a religion? The idea of growing corn is an important cultural construct that speaks of a way of life that we are experiencing today as a lifestyle. In most cases, our lives are diluted with the wage-based economic mode of survival, taking us away from the Haudenosaunee way of life as our time is minimized for cultural application. In a process of transformative decolonization, we can bring our Haudenosaunee thoughts, feelings, spirit, and ways of doing things into whatever we do.

There are critical elements of our culture that we need to devote time to recovering, such as the idea of our way of life being a woman-centered culture. More efforts are needed to gain community realization and national affirmation of gynocracy; ecocentric, intuitive analysis (dreams); and peacemaking notions of thought that will further encourage growth and connection within Haudenosaunee country.

Chapter 1 – Haudenosaunee Culture in Transformation

From the Singing Societies to the recital of the Handsome Lake teachings, Iroquois culture is enjoying a renewal and growth rate projected in some longhouses to reach into the next two generations. Some have attributed the increase to the realization of many of the Iroquois that the Onkwehónwe identity is critical to being whole. Much to the chagrin of the invaders and their policies of assimilation, the inner spirit of most Iroquois calls them home to their culture. The youth are re-examining the culture looking for answers to recover the Haudenosaunee way of life recorded in oral history and experienced by a few of the older generations still active today.

This dissertation is a call for cultural transformation and a revision of understandings of ancient stories for more applicability to the current reality, a reality that is not only about the recovery of culture but about how one makes meaning of Indigenous teachings in a world, outside of the longhouse, immersed in Western ideals and practices. As the Haudenosaunee have adjusted their lifestyle to contemporary reality, some find ways to continue to include the teachings in their lives.

With the recent publishing of John Mohawk's revision of The Iroquois Creation Story through John Arthur Gibson and J.N.B. Hewitt's Myth of the Earth Grasper, there is a resurgence⁵ in examining identity and lifestyle in light of the ancient story of Creation.⁶ How does culture inform my lifestyle? How does culture create a space for my lifestyle choice that

⁵Kevin White's work on the Creation story will bring the story into the 21st century.

⁶The Creation stories of many First Nations are being applied to healing processes across Canada and in some similar U.S. efforts. The Creation story has a profound effect on the psychological and spiritual needs associated with attachment disorder. It focuses on connectedness, a broad and more holistic cultural need.

honors the original teachings? More and more young people are gathering at the longhouses. Can this be the new movement of cultural recovery? Is there a shift from repository knowledge to applied knowledge, a transformation of cultural practice reaching into new venues for cultural expression?

When critical moments in Haudenosaunee life cause stress or bring joy, people understand that there is a way to honor change by allowing the dream state to inform and guide the unfolding reality that one is facing. The focus on the transformation of cultural knowledge in my dissertation comes from my dream state. The dream provided guidance and focus of what kind of knowledge was needed for a critical review and examination of Iroquois life, as experienced in my own life.

My dream:

As I stood by, I could see someone waking from asleep in the body of caterpillar; the face of the caterpillar was human, and at that moment, a cocoon was forming, and within moments, what emerged was a butterfly with the same human face. The dream thoughts began to race from revitalization to transformation but centering on transformation. The dissertation is about transformation, and revitalization is only a step toward the full actualizing of cultural change. It is necessary to explore beyond revitalization and recovery and direct one's thoughts to transforming the very essence of the culture into a meaningful lifestyle.⁷

Through my dream, I realized that Haudenosaunee culture has been revitalized but needs to be deconstructed and transformed, including the removal of borrowed concepts that do not fit the culture. The dream state is part of the creative process for the Haudenosaunee to engage in spiritual helping, informing reality by bridging the conceptualizations that build a vision for

⁷Personal recorded dream from October 2011, as I was struggling with the focus of my dissertation.

change. One of the principles of maintaining balance in the creative process, Armstrong states, is “to make certain all things in the world are right.”⁸ This is a reminder that we need to be “protective of the sensitivity and the relationship between all beings and things.” She further states that “the spiders’ web is a physical construct which many native cultures draw on symbolically to imbed this principle in their storytelling as an expression of the creative process concerned with the connectedness of all things.”⁹ The connection of deconstruction, revitalizing, transformation, and visioning creates a web of understanding for Haudenosaunee society to find space in the 21st century. Haudenosaunee culture needs to find the rule of change within itself – how change is perceived, reflected, acknowledged, and accepted as part of the creative process toward transformation, an extension of “collective long term healthy continuance.”¹⁰ Change is a normal occurrence in society or culture except in oppressive states when a culture is forced to retreat into a holding pattern while securing their cultural wealth of knowledge. This has been a common experience of most Indigenous societies in North America.

As we look at the cultural growth and change of Western society, as stated by Douglas Cardinal, we can see that “it has taken fifteen thousand years for the dominant cultures to go through this process.” As native societies, we have had to vicariously move “quickly from a hunting-gathering society to an agrarian society through to the industrial society and now to the information society”¹¹ in less than 200 years. The Indigenous creative force still lies within the ancient thought, wisdom, and practices of spirituality while functioning within the information

⁸Douglas Cardinal, and Jeanette Armstrong, The Native Creative Process (City: Theytus Press, 1991), p.p.18

⁹Ibid 18.

¹⁰Ibid 22.

¹¹Ibid 25.

age, seeking and creating a valid space for Indigenous knowledge. What is extraordinary about this 200-year journey is the adversarial environment that Indigenous cultures had to survive while maintaining the integrity of the cultures.

The last 200 years has vaulted Indigenous cultures into a futuristic space of lightning-fast information and computerization, but it is a space where Indigenous knowledge would naturally find a “home” with the opportunity to utilize Haudenosaunee creativity in re-establishing the culturally based Indigenous principles of harmony and peace, a highly prized attribute of Haudenosaunee knowledge. Transformation, then, is a natural course of events except for the vicarious trauma inflicted by the dominant culture that is further internalized within native societies creating roadblocks to harmony. The process of transformation must include a decolonization of the internalized beliefs causing adverse interactions within the Indigenous communities. This is the challenge of decolonizing – unity despite ideological differences in communities where people feel entitled, compensation for pain and suffering, as some would say. A transforming praxis is needed to encompass the past and present: joy and pain; internal and external notions; the twinness of life; and cultural renewal and decolonization. Similarly to how Freire defines in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it,” and from the experience, oppressed people can acquire a critical awareness of their conditions and find more meaningful ways of achieving liberation.¹² Haudenosaunee reflection and recovery must, then, challenge the conditions that paralyze the movement of change to find their own definition of liberation as an outcome of transformation.

¹²P. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York, Continuum, 1986), 36.

To learn from other Indigenous efforts, I looked at some of the work of Fitzsimons, Graham, and Smith challenging the colonialism and transformation of Maori thought. Although the Maori experience is different in that they represent 20% or more of New Zealand's population – strength in numbers, one might say – they have been dealing with the same kind of colonial sickness that Indigenous nations have endured in North America. To learn from the Maori experience, one of the clarification points is what cultural revitalization is and how it defines the evolution of traditional Indigenous knowledge (TIK). In the Maori experience, their transformation praxis is the reassertion of “Maori knowledge, Maori pedagogy and Maori ways of knowing ... with Maori ways of knowing the world.”¹³ Fitzsimons and Smith use Foucault's notion of power/knowledge as a vehicle to understand and illustrate the assertion of Maori Indigenous cultural transformation “without compromising their political and cultural position.”¹⁴ In the context of the Maori experience with the objective of transforming not only Maoris but the dominant white context as well, “Foucault's notion of power/knowledge” is understood to mean “Knowledge is power, and power, knowledge.”¹⁵ This notion places Maori Indigenous knowledge in a different space from other Indigenous worldviews.

The Haudenosaunee worldview has never been about control but about balance between human existence and the natural world. Haudenosaunee writers and orators, such as Mohawk, Lyons, Porter, and Shenandoah, have all articulated this belief. One of the clearest statements of Haudenosaunee thought on power relations is Basic Call to Consciousness, edited by John

¹³Patrick Fitzsimons, and Graham Smith, “Philosophy and Indigenous Cultural Transformation,” Educational Philosophy and Theory 32, no. 1 (2000): 25-26 (a paper on the politics of transformation in education).

¹⁴Ibid. 26.

¹⁵Ibid. 26&29

Mohawk with contributions from other Haudenosaunee scholars. What I find in this dialogue is the need to understand the elements of decolonization and the relationship of those elements to each other, such as the fact that Indigenous knowledge and power are not cultural synonyms. When one understands the Indigenous worldview, the merging of repository (ancient) knowledge with the action of creating or doing philosophy becomes a practice in the transformation of culture not as power but as a relational process of completing the circle of life and the harmony of all life forces. Power is never an isolated ideal or value in Haudenosaunee culture; it resides with peace and righteousness. Scholars such as Taiaiake Alfred, Donna Goodleaf, John Mohawk, and Dan Longboat use the threesome of the Great Law – peace, power, and righteousness – to describe the relational nature of these constructs and never in isolation. An important factor regarding the source of power as understood within the teachings of the Great Law is the extended family of the clan through the feminine side and the fact that it is never separated from the women but must remain a continuous and reciprocal source by the leadership of the clan.

One of the steps of decolonizing can also be viewed in how Foucault's model of power/knowledge is employed as "modern 'disciplinary' in society by the three primary techniques of control":

- Hierarchical observations – the watchful eye of authority
- Normalizing judgment – the reforms that lead society in establishing standards and norms

- Examination – the ways in which observations and judgments come together to form knowledge¹⁶

This is a process that can lead to the use of power in establishing the truth, creating a direct link between power and knowledge. In this scenario, “the goals of power and the goals of knowledge”¹⁷ are enmeshed and sometimes impossible to separate.

When I use this model to examine Handsome Lake teachings, the model is suitable in that there is application to Haudenosaunee knowledge because the Handsome Lake teachings become a contemporary system of power/knowledge. In a colonial space, it was a real way to survive the invasion of another culture, but after 200 years of colonialism, attention needs to focus on the deconstruction of how these teachings are being used more as just power.

In many ways, the Gaiwiiio has become a representation of the hierarchical eye of authority creating standards and norms to regulate behavior, and the two-year cycle of the presentation of the Code of Handsome Lake teachings and stories in the longhouses feel like an examination of commitment, involvement, and following the teachings with steep criticism by experts. This has created a shift in how knowledge is viewed and engaged in the communities. The strength of the Gaiwiiio has been the encouragement to continue the original ceremonies; to continue to grow the three sisters; and to continue to raise chiefs and Clan Mothers. Using knowledge as a power/control mechanism has been a practice of Haudenosaunee ideology since the Peacemaker, but a lack of safeguards and the inclusion of Christian concepts can turn these

¹⁶ Gutting, Gary. “Michel Foucault,” The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2011 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/foucault/>

¹⁷Ibid. (Gutting)

teachings into a fundamental religion. The major safeguard is the ability to deconstruct and remove Christian concepts from the teachings.

In Chapter Three, I examine one element that needs to be deconstructed, the idea of a character called Sakolawatha – the Punisher, sometimes referred to as the devil – and the notion of a “hell.” Both of these constructs are foreign to Haudenosaunee culture, and their presence needs the proper context if they remain part of the storytelling. This is a critical element that needs to be addressed before it alters the nature of the culture, turning a way of life into a fundamental religion. This invasion of the heart of the culture is dangerous and has the potential to alter the philosophical cosmology of the Haudenosaunee. This will be further explored in Chapter Three, and I will offer some challenges to the dialogue of cultural transformation.

Before we continue, it is important to understand the basics of the Haudenosaunee culture and the relevance of transformation. The Haudenosaunee worldview must be paramount in the continuance of the legacy of the Haudenosaunee doing philosophy, to encourage and seek balance, and to strive for harmony between humanity and the natural world. This means understanding cultural knowledge and being liberated in our thought process to allow cultural knowledge to provide a way to examine and engage the world. In the Haudenosaunee perspective, knowledge carries responsibility, and responsibility is in knowing. It is not about power even though it is understood that knowledge can be power; the power is about skannen – peace in the interrelation of all life forms.

The last 500 years or more before the invasion, the Haudenosaunee were busy with the advancement of skannen throughout their world community. This responsibility comes from long-standing oral traditions that I outline below. In the next section of the chapter, I will

examine the teachings of the Great Law, including the three principles that are referred to as skannen: peace, (kasastehsara), power, and kanikonhriyo/karihwiyo (righteousness), often spoken of as the principles of the mission of the Haudenosaunee. The Great Law has been the central focus of study of the Haudenosaunee over the generations, and even though it is only one part of the teachings, it is the accepted cultural knowledge that defines the Haudenosaunee.

THE FOUR SOURCES OF RELATIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN AND SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS

Basic Haudenosaunee Teachings

Within the oral traditions, Haudenosaunee knowledge provides clarity, supporting identity, purpose, and a transformative lifestyle. Both literature and oral tradition provide sources of foundational teachings, reinforcing and enlightening the inner Onkwehónwe whole person. Locating and expressing the cultural transformation that empowers and strengthens the self-esteem of the person is one of the focuses of this chapter as an example of transformation. This includes an examination of Haudenosaunee cultural knowledge to identify the components of Haudenosaunee culture that are supportive and enhancing principles for the well-being of the whole person. The whole person is described in the language and the Great Law as having the ability to use the Good Mind – ka?nikuhli:yo¹⁸ – and the ability to function from a place of “seven spans thick of skin,” a topic in the second chapter.

¹⁸The Oneida language is used to express a person with a Good Mind.

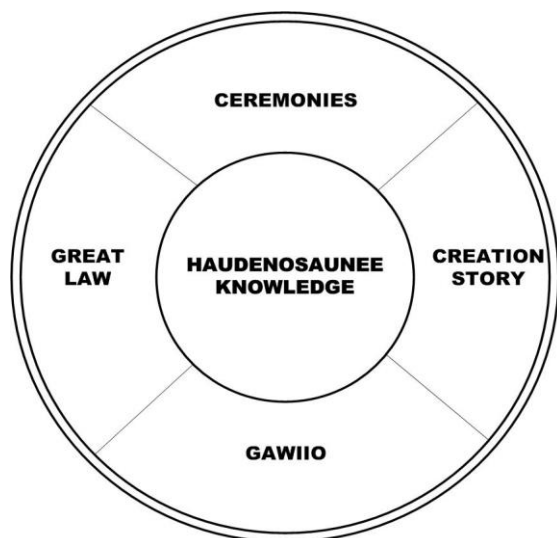


Figure 1 – Sources of Haudenosaunee Knowledge
[chart prepared by R. Antone]

Given the current state of cultural survival juxtaposing with acculturation, it is time for a re-examination of these ancient teachings for renewed definitions applicable to the current realities of Haudenosaunee communities. As outlined in Figure 1, the main sources of Haudenosaunee knowledge are the Haudenosaunee Creation story, the Ceremonies, the Great Law, and the Gaiwiio. The chart is meant to be read counter-clockwise as an

expression of how the Haudenosaunee considered the natural flow of the earth in the universe.

CREATION STORY

The beginning of all life as the Haudenosaunee know it is founded in their Creation story. The Creation is about the origin of the Onkwehónwe from the sky world and the First Woman descending to earth to a world where the original inhabitants gathered to prepare a place for the First Woman. As the world evolves, we hear the story of a daughter borne and later bringing forth twin boys. The boys represent the “twinness” of life while possessing the power to finish the Creation. Within this story, we are reminded that there is a duality of right and wrong, light and darkness, the power of human consciousness.

These teachings come from the Creation story that establishes the foundation of the Haudenosaunee person:

- The role of woman and man
- The original naming
- The original clan families

- Connection to the land
- Fire, the sacred element of spirit

“The story begins with a premise, if it was possible for the forces of the universe to converse with humans, how would they do so and what would their message be?” Mohawk asks the reader this in his forward to The Iroquois Creation Story. He further states that “every culture which attempts to communicate with the powers of the universe seems to invent beings.” One of the other points he makes is that this story comes from ancient knowledge and oral tradition meant for the “ear,” not the learning by eye: ¹⁹

Earth Grasper is one of those meta-narratives which seek to interpret the mysteries of human existence. Mythologies construct visions of the past which address the question about how the world became the way it is and equally important, how we, as cultural beings in a certain culture, came to be the way we are. Long ago, in preliterate cultures, such traditions were passed from generation to generation in elaborate but carefully constructed forms which sometimes existed for centuries.²⁰

The Creation story is about how the Iroquois believe they came to be on the island of North America, their Mother Earth. The story tells of a hole being created from the uprooting of a tree of life. The story tells of the original woman falling into the hole and descending from the sky world and, with the help of the birds and water animals, beginning the earth. The story says that the great turtle came forward and provided a resting place for the First Woman. The woman was placed on the back of the turtle, and the muskrat brought earth from below. The First Woman began to walk about on the turtle’s back, spreading the earth, and the world began to form. This

¹⁹ Mohawk, John, Iroquois Creation Story, John Arthur Gibson and J.B.N. Hewitt’s Myth of the Earth Grasper, Mohawk Publications, Buffalo, 2005

²⁰Ibid. viii -ix

became the island of North America. The First Woman was with child and gave birth to a daughter and the daughter with the help of spirit gave birth to twin boys.

The Creation story continues with the adventures of the twins, who created and expanded the world, preparing it for human beings. The twins are opposites and at times work against each other. The struggle of the twins brings balance to the Earth but the closer you are to the struggle of life the less likely one sees the balance. “My brother caused ruin to befall you as the first victim on the earth. He is continuing to cause ruin, and will do so as long as the earth endures.”²¹ Soon they separate their world so they can continue to exist. This part of the story is about nighttime and daytime and the symbolism of two energies of life-giving and life-taking, evolving into human experience.

As the story is told,

“...we find why the Haudenosaunee refer to the thunder as grandfathers, the earth as mother, the moon as grandmother, the sun as Elder Brother.” The story “[offers] a Haudenosaunee vision of humankind’s role in the universe, and they call upon the bearers of the culture to join that vision, to act it out, to join with a dream, and to form a society which reflects it and which has, as its duties, carrying forth the ceremonies which represent the activities which are taking place in the sky world.”²²

The symbolism of this story creates the meanings of Mother Earth and the multi-generational relational attachment that the Iroquois have maintained. This story forms the base of the cosmology of the Iroquois an absolute faith in the teachings of the Sky World. “Now in the future only the word and thoughts of the mind will be able to ascend to the sky world.”²³

²¹Ibid. 61

²²Ibid. x

²³Ibid. 69

Cajete explains that these stories are authentic Creation stories: they explain that humans, plants, and animals, and the forces of nature are part of the universe's creative impulse.²⁴

Cajete further states that:

Native Creation and origin stories have multiple components, meanings and variations. One of the recurring themes revolves around the observation of “distributed power” in nature. Energy is distributed throughout the natural world and plants, animals, places, natural phenomena, and human beings share such energy in many ways.

Creation stories reflect a kind of “natural democracy” in that rather than presenting humans as the gifted and favored species of the world, the special traits of plants and animals are regularly depicted again and again with mention of human dependence upon them.²⁵

There is an interdependence caused by Creation that define the relationship between the Iroquois and the natural world that for generations evolved the Motherly relationship with the Earth as the definition and accepted cultural norm. The Iroquois Creation story expresses the metaphoric drama of imagination in creating important relationships between human beings and non-human beings. There is an established kinship between the Iroquois and the natural world that is countless generations old.

Corn was a gift of the spirit and is expressed within the Creation story. This is another example demonstrating the unique relationship to the natural world, the role that corn plays in Haudenosaunee culture, and the interrelationship of all components of the culture. The tiny seeds are a critical element of the culture. Without the foods that they produce, all the words of the ceremony become meaningless: the Haudenosaunee worldview is extremely ancient, and each element is interdependent within a cultural complex. In Cornelius's work she references

²⁴ Cajete, G. ed. *Native Science Natural Laws of Interdependence*. 2000, p.p. 34-35.

²⁵ *Ibid* 35.

Lewandowski: “The Three Sisters is where agriculture and horticulture, and human culture meet. . . . it is a cultural complex, with distinct but inter-related factors, in which the functions of planting, harvesting and eating are more than simple biological necessities; they are elements of a well-recognized sacrament.”²⁶

A quick survey of Indigenous farmers in the Haudenosaunee leads one to realize that we are at a critical point if this vital source of Indigenous knowledge is not on the continuum of revitalization.

The words of thanksgiving offer a glimpse into the spiritual relationship to food.

And now this what Our Creator did. It was indeed at this time that he thought “I shall leave them on the earth, and the people moving about will then take care of themselves. People will put them in the earth, they will mature of their own accord, people will harvest them and be happy.” And up to the present time we have indeed seen them. When they emerge from the earth we see them. They bring us contentment. They come again with the change of the wind. And they strengthen our breath. And when the Good Message came we were advised they too should always be included in the ceremonies, in the Four Rituals. Those who take care of them every day asked, too, that they be sisters. And at that time there arose a relationship between them: we shall say “the Sisters, our sustenance” when we want to refer to them. And it is true: we are content up to the present time, for we see them growing. And give it your thought, that we may do it properly: we now give thanks for the Sisters, our sustenance. And our minds will continue to be so.²⁷

This reciprocal spiritual relationship with food is an example of the Indigenous knowledge of Haudenosaunee environmental teachings. Mother Earth is the provider, the birth place of foods, and cultivates a relationship with human beings.

²⁶ Cornelius, Carol, *Iroquois Corn in a Culture-Based Curriculum: A Framework for Respectfully Teaching about Cultures*, Albany, 1999 p.p. 117-118.

²⁷ Chafe, W.L. *Seneca Thanksgiving Rituals*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 183, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: US. Government Printing Office, 1961.

Corn, beans, and squash are the Three Sisters of the Haudenosaunee. The Three Sisters are expressions of the endearing relationship between the people and the sustenance grown by Haudenosaunee farmers. Historically, the Haudenosaunee were primarily agriculturalists with hunting, fishing, and gathering supplementing the Three Sisters. With agriculture as the primary source and activity of the Haudenosaunee culture, it is of paramount importance that natural non-hybrid seeds are protected as an important aspect of environmental protection.

In another version of the Creation story it is told that First Woman brought with her the seeds of the strawberry plant. This plant grew throughout Creation. This causes the listener to understand that the relationship to Mother Earth sometimes occurs through the significant plants that form Creation.

The Haudenosaunee are not alone in understanding, knowing, and relating to the Three Sisters and plant life forms. Many Indigenous Nations throughout the Western hemisphere have the same relationship, an ancient and complex cultural relationship that is holistic and foundational to the future survival of Indigenous Nations.

Mohawk makes the following points in placing real value on the Creation story:

The purpose of the explanation is to give human beings an identity relative to the forces of the universe, beginning with the individual and radiating out to the earth, plants, animals, trees, birds, winds, sun, moon, stars, and the spirits which created life on the earth. Humankind's relationship to nature projected in this pre-colonial, pre-patriarchal, pre-modern story carries a fundamental and unchanging truth, but one which subsequent generations would need to learn over and over. Humans exist in a context of nature, and not vice versa. Nature, which is the context of our existence, is sacred We who walk about on the earth are not without obligations to perpetuate this system.²⁸

²⁸Mohawk, John, *The Iroquois Creation Story*, x.

Ceremonies of Thanksgiving and Relationship

The story of the Coming of the Ceremonies is often told in a way that connects the Creation story to the Great Law and can be confusing. Tom Porter relates his experience:

Even when Roy Buck and Jake Thomas were telling this, they always mixed parts of each of these topics together: the Creation Story, the Clan system, the Four Sacred Rituals, and the Great Law... You would hear this story of the eleven kids when they did the Great Law. And it doesn't belong there: it belongs there with the Four Sacred Rituals.²⁹

The story tells of a time when the Haudenosaunee forgot the original teachings and drifted away from acknowledging their place in the universe. The story tells of a group of children born at the same time and one special boy who became known as Shakorihonnien:ni, the teacher. The spirit, working through the children, carried the new message of a series of four ceremonies that would honor all of life in a thanksgiving cosmology:

- The Great Feather Dance
- Ahdonhwa personal songs of acknowledgement and naming ceremony
- Strawberry³⁰ (Drum) Dance
- Peach Stone Game

²⁹ Porter, Tom, *And Grandma Said... Iroquois Teachings as Passed Down through the Oral Traditions*, 2008, p.p. 161. The other source is Howard Elijah, a wolf clan Chief and lead ceremonialist in the Oneida longhouse.

³⁰I use the term "strawberry" here because Elders at Oneida often interpreted this dance as such because of the strawberry drink that is used as a part of the dance.

Osto'wago'wa', Gone'owo', Ado'we', and Ganawe'gowa' are the four sacred ceremonial practices that combine song, music, words of thanksgiving, words of relationship, and the involvement of all generations from the babies to the elders present. These four ceremonial practices are often referred to as dances. For the sake of this work, I will refer to them as the four sacred dances. They are performed in accordance with a ceremonial calendar following the agricultural patterns of production and gathering of both grown and naturally produced foods. Shimony provides a concise observation of the importance in understanding the depth of the relationship among humans, ceremony, and Creation:

Man cannot really control any of the spirit forces, but if they are acknowledged and thanked and treated with respect, even as the Thanksgiving Address indicates, then man need not fear, but can be assured of their assistance. The Great Creator is conceived of as especially benevolent, for the Thanksgiving Address repeatedly mentions that many of his Creations are expressly intended to help mankind. In all relations with the universe, there is the element of mutual obligation and assistance between man and the Creator and the things which were made by the Creator, even as there is between moieties, between ritual friends, and among members of a family.³¹

Taking a step back and examining what an outsider (Shimony) observes helps in positioning the value of knowledge when the knowledge is the object. The focus of my dissertation is Irocentric, but it is also of value to view collaborative thought from the position of an outside observer.

One section of the Thanksgiving Address, a ritual incantation of “words before all others,” is a speech that opens and closes all gatherings and ceremonies.

And now we will speak about what he has done. He decided, “I will create a world below the Sky World. And there is a way people will have to refer to it as related, this the earth:

³¹ Shimony, A.A., *Conservation among the Iroquois at the Six Nation Reserve*, 1994, originally published in 1961, p.p. 140. I use Shimony's work because it is acknowledged by the academy and she has examined the community of Grand River in two different periods, the 1950s and the 1990s, providing evidence that the culture remains intact despite the acculturation.

“Our Mother, it is related to us, that which supports our feet.” And it is still that way, it is has come to pass that we are still moving about. That was his determination: he decided where we should be moving about. And also all that he left will be contributing to our happiness on the earth. And it is so still. It is possible that it comes from the earth, the happiness we are obtaining. For all this, therefore, let there be gratitude.

And so for this group of people, let it be our thought first to be grateful: we give thanks for the earth, Our Mother, as we are related to it, that which supports our feet, and so it will be in our minds.³²

The section of the Thanksgiving Address I have included is the one that refers to Mother Earth. These words provide a link to all that is Haudenosaunee from the Creation story to the teachings of Handsome Lake. It is within these words that we find the depth of the duty to the environment and Mother Earth. It is not membership in the Sierra Club but a lifelong cultural commitment to carry this Indigenous knowledge forward. Constant immersion in the knowledge creates a worldview that unfolds in one’s life, and one is not simply an environmentalist but in service of cultural knowledge rooted in a holistic worldview that is Haudenosaunee spiritualism.

As in the Creation story, the strawberry is significant in the ceremonies. There is one ceremonial event devoted to the strawberry, celebrating and giving thanks for the new life of the strawberry as medicine for the spirit and body. However, it is also a connector, a reminder, something real that is a part of Creation that we interact with in ceremonial life and every day during strawberry season.

The Strawberry Ceremony ... was at one time scheduled five days after the “berry moon” but today it is simply scheduled “when the strawberries are on”. The purpose of the Strawberry Festival is to give thanks for the first fruits of the new season, to give thanks for life and togetherness, to remind each other of the duties incumbent on the followers of Handsome Lake, and finally, to entertain the food spirits so that they will continue to

³² Cornelius, Carol, *Iroquois Corn in a Culture-Based Curriculum: A Framework for Respectfully Teaching about Cultures*, 1999, appendix 2, translation of thanksgiving speech by Enos Williams (1915-1983) pp. 214.

favor mankind with the harvest.”³³

The strawberry is an example of the continuity of the culture, providing knowledge of the ancientness of the culture, as old as the strawberry plant. In the Creation story, the First Woman descends to the earth, bringing with her strawberry plants she grabs as she falls from Sky World. As the knowledge evolved over the generations, the strawberry became a significant medicinal and spiritual contributor to the wellness of the Haudenosaunee.

The ceremonial life of the Haudenosaunee is a reminder to the people of Creation and how the earth herself was formed. The four sacred dances are utilized in all the ceremonial gatherings to assist the people in carrying out their obligations of thanksgiving and gratitude for the cycle of life. Throughout ceremonial events, people renew their attachment to family, Creation, and Mother Earth. The ceremonial calendar of events provides the Haudenosaunee with a way to connect to all the teachings. Tom Porter uses a Spiritual Ladder as a metaphor in helping people understand this belief:

All the ceremonies that the Iroquois do in our Longhouse are actually this ladder. And ceremonies are used to connect our present earth with our origin in Karonhia:ke, the Sky World. One end of the ladder is the Creator and the other end of the ladder is Mother Earth.³⁴

³³Shimony, Conservation among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve, 158-59, originally published in 1961.

³⁴Porter, And Grandma Said..., 257.

Each rung of the ladder is one of the elements of the thanksgiving address, helping each person to learn to relate to each element of the universe. The ceremonies are an annual re-enactment of instructing the Haudenosaunee on the original instructions of a sacred lifestyle.

Coming of The Great Law

When the Iroquois forgot their original instructions of Creation and spiritual ceremonial life, the Haudenosaunee found the people in a world that they had created, filled with the worst behaviors toward one another, to the point of taking life. This was the darkest period of time in Iroquois history. When the Peacemaker came, he carried a powerful message of peace and justice that included:

- Definition of a whole person connected to family
- Peace among the clan/families
- Leadership/power of the clan/families
- Reconciliation as a formality of grief/loss

The story of the Great Law is about the value of human existence in relationship with all of life, including and starting with the relationship between human beings. Today, the story still captures the spirit of the people through its spiritual significance; the formation of an Indigenous society; the renewed source of matrifocal identity; and a very different idea of leadership. The four points I make are my own interpretation of the important points of the Great Law. The Peacemaker and the teachings help redefine the human being, the Onkwehónwe, as an objective of the Great Law to redefine how are to act toward one another. The critical result of the Peacemaker's work was to bring peace to the extended families and to refashion the clan system across the five nations. As the family clans reorganized, systems of leadership evolved providing

a vehicle to voice and bring action to issues with the notion that the clan family will always remain the source of power through the women. Within the Great Law, a ceremonial process of reconciliation to address the issue of loss and grief was formally established as a part of raising new leadership to replace those who have completed their role.

The Great Law of Peace came to the Iroquois approximately 1,000 years ago:

The Peacemaker came to the people with a message that human beings should cease abusing one another. He stated that humans are capable of reason, that through the power of reason all men desire peace, and that it is necessary that people organize to ensure peace will be possible among the people who walk about on the earth. That was the original word about laws – laws were originally made to prevent the abuse of humans by other humans.³⁵

They had forgotten their teachings of life that came with Creation and the coming of the ceremonies. When darkness had befallen the Iroquois, a man referred to as the Peacemaker came from a tribe to the north to bring a message of peace and justice. On his journey, the Peacemaker was joined by an Onondaga named Hiawatha³⁶ to fashion a confederacy of nations among the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. After several decades of working among fifty extended families over five distinct nations, the Peacemaker and Hiawatha were successful in establishing a confederacy of nations bound together by the good message, power, and peace. The good message of peace was an encouragement of the leaders to convince their families to stop the blood feuds and learn to work together. “People respect each other as though they are one person; also everyone is related among the various nations, so now they will stop”³⁷... the wrongs and activities of hurting each other. Everyone would make things right with the Creator

³⁵Mohawk, J., Akwesasne Notes, Basic Call to Consciousness, 1978, 1981, 2005, p.p.80

³⁶Hiawatha became one of the Mohawk Chiefs.

³⁷Mohawk, J., Note, Akwesasne, Basic Call to Consciousness, ed., 2005, p.p.92

and all ages of people would respect one another. It was a peace that was about using good thoughts about one another, a peace that collates the mind and spirit of the people. The basic principles often referenced are peace, power, and righteousness as the core of the Great Law.

Power is a very different construct in Haudenosaunee culture than in Western society. The power referenced in the text of the Great Law as told by key informant John Arthur Gibson³⁸ is about the power of being one family, a family of families, meaning that all the nations will unite.

The culmination of this transformation was the uprooting of the Great Tree of Peace, causing a great hole to form, and all the Chiefs were called to toss in their weapons of war and end the blood feuds that had ravaged the five nations.

The Haudenosaunee are governed by a constitution known among the Europeans as the Constitution of the Six Nations and to the Haudenosaunee as the Kaianere'ko:wa or the Great Law of Peace. It is the oldest functioning document in the world that contains recognition of the freedoms the Western democracies recently claim as their own: the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the rights of women to participate in government. The concept of separation of power in government and of the checks and balances of power within government are traceable to our constitution.³⁹

The spirituality continues to flow through the thoughts and minds of the leadership, as the Great Law of Peace directs the leaders:

Whenever the Confederate Lords shall assemble for the purpose of holding a council, the Onondaga Lords shall open it by expressing their gratitude to their cousin Lords and greeting them, and they shall make an address and return thanks to the earth where men dwell, to the streams of water, the pools, the springs, and the lakes, to the maize and the fruits, to the medicinal herbs and trees, to the forest trees for their usefulness, to the

³⁸Woodbury, Henry, Webster, editors, Concerning the League The Iroquois League Tradition as Dictated in Onondaga by Gibson, John Arthur, Memoir 9, 1992.

³⁹Mohawk, J., Basic Call to Consciousness ed. 2005, Akwesasne Notes: Native Voices, p.p.80

animals that serve as food and give their pelts for clothing, to the great winds and lesser winds, to the thunders, to the Sun, the mighty warrior, to the moon, to the messengers of the Creator who reveal his wishes, and to the Great Creator who dwells in the heavens above, who gives all things useful to men, and who is the source and ruler of health and life.⁴⁰

Here again, the ancient words of thanksgiving are invested in leadership responsibilities, at the same time reminding the leaders of their connection to all that forms the Haudenosaunee world. The peace is the Haudenosaunee burden, which includes not only peace between the humans but also that which encompasses the protection of the natural world.

Another of the powerful stories that contribute to the seven spans paradigm is the story of Hiawatha. He was an Onondaga who lost his whole family as a result of the blood feuds. He had three daughters who took ill and died while he was doing the work of the Peacemaker. Even his wife was killed in an unusual accident. Hiawatha, burdened with his grief, left to wander alone. In his isolation, a teaching and ceremony came to him to help him deal with his pain and to make him whole again. The Peacemaker helped with the words and way of teaching so that, for generations to come, they would have a way to lift the burdens of grief to help others. Hiawatha was made whole to once again to be of the “Good Mind”:

“I wipe away the tears from thy face” said [the Peacemaker], “using the white fawn-skin of pity... I make it daylight for thee... I beautify the sky. Now shalt thou do thy thinking in peace when thine eyes rest on the sky, which the Prefector of our Faculties, the Master of All Things, intended should be a source of happiness to man.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ Arthur C. Parker, Parker on the Iroquois, The Constitution of the Five Nations, 32.

⁴¹ Ibid 55.

The kind Creator gave the Haudenosaunee this message of communal governance based on extended family clans, reinforcing the woman-centered culture, and defined the mission of peace and justice.

GAIWIIO

In 1799, Handsome Lake, through the first of four visions, brought a new message to the Haudenosaunee about what needed to change to continue being Haudenosaunee amidst the invasion and occupation by the settlers. Haudenosaunee country had been under siege for 200 years by the unrelenting settlers. It was time to adjust to the new reality facing the future of the Haudenosaunee. The message is prophecy and directive toward lifestyle change that is faithful to the original teachings.

It is my interpretation that the message is about:

- Change and adaptation
- Renewal of teachings
- New roles and responsibilities for men and women

The vision of the Seneca Prophet, Ska'niadar'io⁴² or Handsome Lake, for the revitalization of the Haudenosaunee came at a critical point in their history. This was twenty years after Sullivan's military campaigns were sent to annihilate the Western Iroquois in 1779. The army of the 13 colonies' mission was to destroy and burn all villages and kill all the Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca people. The Seneca were pushed west to Buffalo Creek and Allegany. By 1799, many of the Iroquois were disillusioned by the loss of their lands, and for many of the men of the time,

⁴²This is the Seneca word for his name.

alcohol had all but destroyed what remained of their shattered world. The loss of the land, decimation of wildlife, and restricted or limited access to their original hunting grounds destroyed the ability of men to fulfill their obligations to their family and clan. The loss of mobility in the original territories caused an enormous crisis among the men who saw the disappearance of hunting, fishing, the gathering of foods and medicines, building materials, and the ongoing responsibility of spreading the peace.

The Gaiwii Code gave the Iroquois a message of survival for the rebuilding of their family clans and nations. The Code defines and proposes a distinctive future for the Haudenosaunee predicated on the need for the survival of their culture, threatened with extinction by a dominant imperial force.

The Haudenosaunee have always viewed themselves as a separate and distinct people from the settlers and the established definitions, descriptions, and oral traditions in the original Two Row Wampum Treaty. The Haudenosaunee have always taken the position that they have their own worldview, ways of belief, relationship with the land, system of government, and social structure for their nations. The Haudenosaunee believed that their teachings had something to offer the world community through concepts of peace and the union of groups of people forming systems that benefit all people. It is important to understand why the survival of an Indigenous way of life was important.

The reality of the settler invasion and cultural destruction surrounding and invading Iroquois communities pointed to the need for drastic action as the only way out of the predictable demise of the Iroquois. There was a need for the spiritual resurrection of a way of life that was hanging by its fingernails by 1799.

Handsome Lake “belonged to the turtle clan. Later he was ‘borrowed’ by the Wolves and reared by them”⁴³ and carried the title of Ska’niadar’io, an ordinary man born at a time when the Iroquois Confederacy had fallen on hard times.

It is likely that the Iroquois Confederacy would have met their fate in the coming years if the social restructuring advocated by the Code had not taken place. The Code provided the needed framework to rethink and redo Iroquois institutions to survive the encroachment of an imperialistic culture.

Handsome Lake, responding to cultural and economic stress facing his people 200 years ago, forged a sophisticated strategy of cultural renewal by which people could relieve the pain of cultural decline while simultaneously dealing with their own dysfunction in forceful and concrete ways.... The three-prong approach that Handsome Lake recommended includes (1) a re-embrace of the people’s cultural traditions, (2) an adjustment of the culture so that it could successfully cope with the contemporary situation that people faced, and (3) overcoming dysfunctional patterns of behavior (such as alcoholic drinking) coupled with a penance for past misdeeds.⁴⁴

Despite the positive impact of the Code, it has remained controversial among the Haudenosaunee, challenging how people think about change and the future of the confederacy. From my personal experience of being involved in the longhouse teachings for over 36 years, this continues to be something to discuss and think about. Most Haudenosaunee agree that the Code played a significant role in the survival of the people and culture. Today, there are 12 longhouse communities out of 20 that follow the Handsome Lake teachings. The other eight longhouse communities continue to conduct the annual ceremonial cycle and maintain an

⁴³Parker, Parker on the Iroquois: The Code of Handsome Lake, the Seneca Prophet, Syracuse Press, 1968, 9.

⁴⁴Alf H. Walle, The Path of Handsome Lake: A Model of Recovery for Native People, Information Age, 2004, 112.

allegiance to the Great Law. The teachings of Handsome Lake are viewed as one of the foundational messages supporting continuity of the Haudenosaunee.

Alcoholism was the result of the grief and despair caused by contact with Europeans, and there was no significant challenge to the use of alcohol until the Code. What came with the alcoholism was low self-esteem – a loss of confidence even in the spiritual realm of the Haudenosaunee. All had to be given new meaning and reintegration into the everyday life of the Iroquois. What the Code provided was a way to refashion original concepts of traditionalism without changing the intent of the original teachings.

The Code gave the Haudenosaunee a way to reconcile a lifestyle that had become more sedentary, a domesticated existence revolving around farming that included the raising of animals. The male elements of the culture, hunting expeditions, and spreading the words of peace became less and less a part of the lifestyle until more recent times.

Following the Code, Parker provides a description of the ceremonial societies and seasonal ceremonies that are an integral part of the whole picture of the Haudenosaunee. Parker includes *Field Notes on the Rites and Ceremonies of the Ganiodai'io Religion*.⁴⁵ It would be safe to assume that he was demonstrating that the original ceremonies that existed before Handsome Lake's visions were very much present. The spiritual recovery of the complete circle of the Haudenosaunee was critical for the long-term survival, rebuilding, and development necessary to continue being Haudenosaunee.

⁴⁵Parker, Parker on the Iroquois: The Code of Handsome Lake, the Seneca Prophet, Part Two, 81.

Some questions that come to mind from the readings that are important to the intended focus are: Would the Haudenosaunee have survived without the Code? How did the Haudenosaunee survive? How long can they oppose the European way of life with the overwhelming forces of the modern world and continue to exist as a distinct Indigenous society?

The Haudenosaunee not only survived but also continued to grow for the last 200 years after the visions of Handsome Lake. The wampum spiritual fire given by the Six Nations to the Oneida Longhouse in Green Bay, Wisconsin, in 2006 is another example of the growing strength of the Haudenosaunee. In 1968, a small delegation of Wisconsin Oneidas returned east, looking for their original culture. Over 37 years of rebuilding a relationship with the Six Nations, learning the ceremonial cycle and constructing a longhouse within their Wisconsin territory, the Oneidas achieved a milestone of cultural reclamation.

I have witnessed an increase in the philosophical spiritualism that is being expressed and acknowledged outside of the ceremonial activities of the Haudenosaunee. The teachings are fashioning a new lifestyle for the Haudenosaunee that has been “burdened with carrying the message of peace,”⁴⁶ an ongoing activity today that was very much what the Iroquois were about before the invasion. Survival over the past 200 years has elevated the discussion and discourse of the foundational spiritual matters of the Haudenosaunee culture.

Most Haudenosaunee refer to following all the cultural elements as the total teachings, including the Creation story, the coming of the ceremonies, the Peacemaker and the Great Law, and the Gaiwiiio – the teachings of Handsome Lake. These have become the parameters of the current discourse on Haudenosaunee spiritualism and way of life.

⁴⁶A translation of the role of young men and women, often referred to as warriors.

Parker has provided data important to understanding the long-term survival and revitalization of learners and practitioners of Haudenosaunee culture. The culture-based resources in English are vital for learners to gain a greater understanding of the culture while traditional languages are in recovery.

The Gaiwiio sets the parameters for the advancement of the Haudenosaunee culture. The small, isolated reservations became sanctuaries for the spiritual and ceremonial practices of the longhouses. Some of the key messages of Handsome Lake teachings are to stay away from alcohol and other “mind changers”; refuse the white man’s religion; prepare for the white man’s diseases; reject his music and games of chance; and know that their legal system will only offer shackles.

The messages also mandated continuance of the ancient songs and seasonal ceremonies honoring life and to continue to grow corn, beans, and squash. Agricultural practices had to change as a part of the cultural transformation, including the raising of animals and increased involvement of men in gardening and agricultural practices. Parker offers a translation of a passage from the Gaiwiio, a direction to continue the original ceremonial practices:

Four words the Creator has given for bringing happiness. They are amusements devised in the heaven world, the Osto’wago’wa’,Gone’owo’, Ado’we’ and Ganawe’gowa’. The Creator has ordered on certain times and occasions there should be thanksgiving ceremonies. At such times all must thank the Creator that they must live. After that, let the chiefs thank him for the ground [Mother Earth] and the things on the ground [Mother Earth] and then upward to the sky and the heaven-world where he is. If all the world would repent [make things right with Creation] the [Mother] earth would become as new again.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Parker, *The Code of Handsome Lake, The Seneca Prophet*, 1975, 40-43.

Handsome Lake set the standards for Haudenosaunee survival, recovery, and rebuilding while staying true to the continuity of the original teachings. In Handsome Lake's message, he encouraged some ceremonies, like the memorial feasts, to be held in the late afternoon and not at night and to move mid-winter ceremonies away from the white man's celebrations; these are but two examples of cultural change and transformation. He wanted to stop nighttime ceremonies because the nighttime belongs to the dark side of life and the white man's celebrations were too disruptive, often with the use of alcohol. The people were encouraged to build houses like the white man and take up some of the agriculture practices of the white man that had already been going on in some communities for decades. The teachings helped in reconciling and accepting change, while people were encouraged to practice humility. This was how the Haudenosaunee were going to survive. The plan for adaptation is within the ceremonial messages of the teachings. I personally view this as a message of pragmatic spiritualism to see one's life in a flowing, collaborative process of the agricultural calendar and the ceremonial calendar, staying close to the original path of spiritual teachings and adapting only those things that are absolutely necessary.

Collective Messages

All of these messages and ceremonies form the Iroquois world and worldview that Handsome Lake advocated for the continuation of a way of life that is as old as the earth itself through the notion of adaptation to a changing environment and lifestyle perpetrated by the dominant culture.

The stories, messages, and ceremonies form Haudenosaunee cultural knowledge and the teachings provide the coming generations with ways to demystify and express a pragmatic

spiritualism that applies to their current reality. The current reality is inundated with multi-generational victims of the residential schools, child welfare issues, the hurt and pain of poor parental practices, and the unrelenting external forces of acculturation, including the wanton use of alcohol and drugs to medicate the pain and loss of the colonialism and holocaust. Finding the good words that come from the cultural teachings amidst the oppressive reality of life in most native communities is difficult. The teachings prepared the Haudenosaunee to survive encroachment, but more effort is needed to adapt the teachings into tools of healing and wellness, including the ceremony or words of “the Requickening Address, [to be] used for all generations... the Iroquois Condolence Ceremony.”⁴⁸ The multi-generational grief needs those words of healing and revitalization to recover from the abuse and suffering of the oppression and pain.

This process of reclaiming the whole person is returning to one’s own worldview. The basic premise is that, through multi-generations of abuse and oppression, the current generations of Indigenous peoples have been acculturated and assimilated by Western society. Indigenous scholars Herb Nabigon, Rupert Ross, Raven Sinclair, Michael Hart, and Gord Bruyere have pointed out that across Canada, there have been many efforts to address the issues of colonialism and healing in every First Nation. The notion of returning to one’s own Indigenous worldview is the process of decolonizing. To decolonize, one has to shed the skin of colonialism by returning to one’s original cultural worldview as a transformation process of cultural renewal. The cultural standard of the Haudenosaunee is achieving the “seven spans of skin”⁴⁹ in recovering

⁴⁸P. Wallace, *The Iroquois Book of Life: White Roots of Peace*, 1994, 55.

⁴⁹This term comes from the Great Law and refers to the quality of person one has to be to be a leader.

ka?nikuhli:yo – the Good Mind. With the collective Good Mind, the Haudenosaunee can continue on the path of transformation.

One of the barriers to this recovery is the decolonizing of how the Gaiwiiio is being interpreted. There are two constructs that need to be decolonized that emerge in the Gaiwiiio: the notion of a hell and a Punisher. There are attempts by some to relate the Punisher to Sowiskala, a concept of the “left handed”⁵⁰ twin from the Creation story, but this is a stretch of someone’s imagination. Many in the traditional communities question the notion of the construct of this kind of evil of a hell and devil being introduced into a kind culture of peace and spiritualism. Apart from that, the rest of the message that contributed and guided the people to cultural survival is still an immeasurable element of Haudenosaunee longevity. I deal with this topic in

more detail in Chapter Three to demonstrate the importance of the Haudenosaunee having the willingness and capacity to examine the messages within the culture that may have borrowed concepts to understand a changing world.

In summary Figure 2 is meant to capture the primary notions of each of the four teachings. From my personal growth as

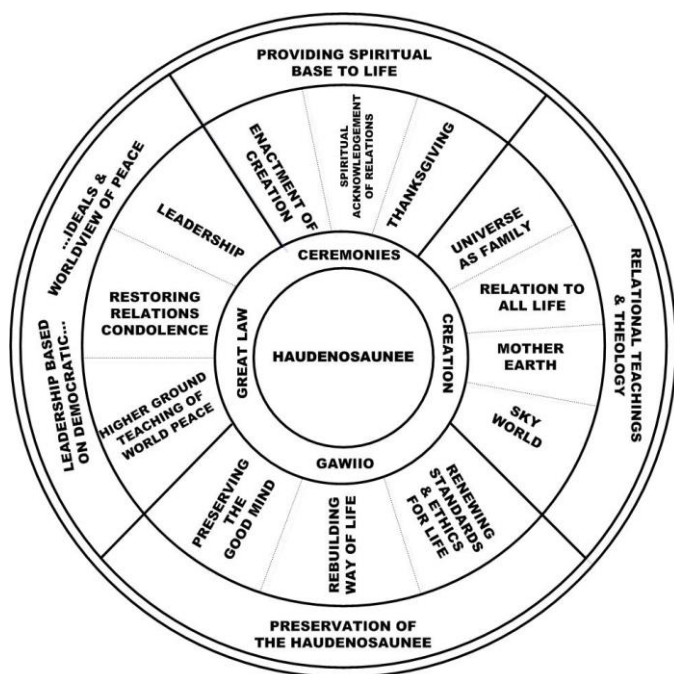


Figure 2 – Abbreviated Haudenosaunee Knowledge
[chart prepared by R. Antone]

⁵⁰A Christian concept of the left hand being of sin.

a yukwanushuni (person of the longhouse), I have identified significant teachings coming from the major narratives of Haudenosaunee cosmology. The chart is structured to be read counter-clockwise starting with Creation. This is the direction in which we dance and celebrate the food sustenance of the culture. This is not a comprehensive examination, but the intention is to demonstrate different possibilities of renewed discourse about transformation. The focus of the teachings that come from Creation is about the Sky World, Mother Earth, our relationship to all life, and the universe, to be understood as family, with our connection symbolized by the clan system. This forms the foundation of the Haudenosaunee based on relational teachings that form a cosmology or theology – a belief system that is centered on Creation – our Mother Earth. This begins the teachings of a woman-centered culture.

When the ceremonies came to the Haudenosaunee through the teachings of thanksgiving, the ceremonies gave the people a spiritual way of oratory, song, and dance to acknowledge their relationships to Creation. The ceremonies were enactments of Creation to be a constant reminder of the duties and responsibilities of the people to fulfill the honoring of this way of life that provides a spiritual base for the people, a relationship of reciprocity.

When the Great Law came, it helped reorganize the clan families and restore relations that were destroyed by inhumane behavior. The Great Law brought a system of leadership; with selection by the women and a higher purpose for the Haudenosaunee to bring peace and justice among the people. The message was transformative, based on democratic ideals and a worldview of peace with a mission to carry the message in the four directions.

After the invasion of Haudenosaunee country and 200 years of violence, in 1799, the last message came to the people, referred as the Gaiwiiio, the teachings of Handsome Lake. These teachings were about how to preserve the Good Mind, rebuild a way of life, and renew standards

and ethics for a changing lifestyle that would have to survive surrounded by Western culture. These teachings were about the preservation of the Haudenosaunee.

Historical Revitalization and Transformation

By 1799, most Haudenosaunee lands had fraudulently been taken by the settler governments. Alcoholism had become rampant throughout Iroquois country. The populations of each of the nations had been decimated by diseases and wars, and ongoing federal and state policies and laws of New York State, the U.S.A., and Imperial British Canada continue to manipulate and subjugate the Haudenosaunee peoples. Over the last 200 years, the Haudenosaunee has found itself in a recovery process guided by the teachings of Handsome Lake, a Seneca who had visions in 1799. As controversial as those teachings have been, the core of the teachings of the Gaiwiiio established a way to combat the invasion of alcohol, other mind changers, and their related instruments of oppression and a way to survive the genocide. This was more than a recovery process but also a significant message that engaged the people in a transformative process as a culture.

The ethnocide efforts of the dominant culture have not changed, as evidenced by the significant efforts and impacts of the colonial instrument of assimilation. Haudenosaunee scholars John Mohawk, Oren Lyons, Carol Cornelius, Tom Porter, and Taiaiake Alfred have exposed the failure of the western society in meeting the needs of the Haudenosaunee children. This is most evident in the education system, designed to Americanize Haudenosaunee children without providing adequate opportunity for cultural survival and self-development

By identifying the cultural sources that are self-esteem enhancing, educators and cultural advocates can better assist youth who struggle in today's Americanized worldview. There are a few Indian way schools that teach the culture and languages of the Haudenosaunee. It is those

few institutions that provide primary cultural education today. Haudenosaunee institutions value the culture and have acquired learning strategies for the successful transmission of the culture and language to the next generations.

The Haudenosaunee worldview is vastly different from the American pop culture, war, terror, and fear based system. The Haudenosaunee worldview is directly opposite to Americanization. It is a culture that survives surrounded by the dominant society and, as a result, must be more vigilant concerning future adherence to their own original teachings.

Critical to transformation praxis is the coming together of various elements of the process focusing on clear outcomes that are illustrated in a teaching I would like to convey as one of the focuses of transformation. It is told in the Great Law that when a Chief is put in place, he is reminded that he is to have “seven spans thick of skin” to be able to fully function as a Hoyanneh.⁵¹ This will ensure that he is of a “Good Mind” at all times, especially during the deliberation of issues in council. It is understood in the oral traditions that a person is watched from childbirth and schooled to become a leader. That is the way it was before the coming of the white man. It was also common for leaders to be selected from senior men who had a full life and were blessed with the opportunity to serve the people in leadership and government. In many cases, the best leaders were the grandfathers of the nation since it was the grandmothers who were the heads of the families and clans. That is the way we understood it to be before the coming of the white man.

The “Good Mind” ideal of Haudenosaunee personality is what the culture encourages, and investing educational and philosophical energy into understanding and applying those ideals

⁵¹A word that translates to “making a path” but is translated to mean “chief.”

in a contemporary context will only encourage an ongoing cultural renaissance of transformation. Transformation is not a foreign concept to the Haudenosaunee, and there are reminders in the oral storytelling of change happening during significant periods of their ancestral history. At the beginning of each message or gift the Haudenosaunee received, a major change occurred. For example, the late Leon Shenandoah states,

I see the Peacemaker as a man of peace, but with the power to do good things. When he was alive, he moved about the earth, he was getting his instructions from the spiritual powers. It is the same today. I try to tell people that as you are walking about, and you think you are using the Good Mind, the Creator is talking to you, coming into your mind.... and sometimes there are the thoughts of another mind, the mind that would destroy life. That was the mind which had possessed Tadodaho before the transformation, before he embraced the Good Mind and became a leader of the Grand Council. His transformation was complete, and he became a spokesman for peace and righteousness.⁵²

It is the responsibility of the people of the clans to give each person of the Haudenosaunee the opportunity to examine, explore, reflect, and engage in this transformation.

⁵²Wallace, *The Iroquois Book of Life: White Roots of Peace* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 1994), 15.

Chapter 2 – “You Must Have Seven Spans Thick of Skin”

The prized personal quality of Haudenosaunee personality, the “Good Mind” – ka?nikohli:yo¹ – is a way of being in one’s everyday actions. A person who achieves this value of Haudenosaunee human personality – a “Good Mind” – is understood to be a leader. The capacity of the Good Mind is the ability at any moment, with or without pressure, regardless of the nature or intensity of the situation, one is able to respond with a peaceful decisive act. In the history of the Haudenosaunee, this ability to function with ka?nikohli:yo is at the core of the Haudenosaunee understanding of humanity and is fundamental to the survival of the people and their culture. Ka?nikohli:yo represents the morality, mores, and understanding of the role of negative and positive energy in human behavior. The Good Mind will swing human tendencies toward the side of positive energy.

The Good Mind is defined as a holistic source, not as a single function of a person but about balancing one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions through the skill of meaningful communication and interaction. While researching for greater understanding and discourse of the subject, I realized that the fundamental principle of the Haudenosaunee way of life – ka?nikohli:yo – is the vehicle of change. It has been since the time of the Peacemaker. It takes greater effort to achieve the state of the Good Mind, whether at the individual or the collective level. The culture of the Good Mind is representative of human behavior, and human behavior represents culture; therefore, it forms a praxis for transformation. The human resistance to change is often the dogmatic notions that humans hold on to, clouding the “Good Mind.” These rigid notions often are rooted in colonialism, altering the true nature of the Haudenosaunee personality, most often seen in volatile relations in families and

¹Oneida word for Good Mind translation and written word by Howard Elijah, traditional language teacher and Chief.

groups. Did we learn from the past? When the Peacemaker came upon the Iroquois, they were suffering from a self-inflicted thirst for power, lost in the negative energy of human destruction, leaving a path of deep, deep grief. The Peacemaker’s teachings of ka?nikohli:yo changed the hearts and minds of the people. We are no strangers to violence, but by time of the European invasion, violence of that sort was a 1,000-year-old legend.

Cultural revitalization has invoked a more contemporary importance to sourcing the legacy of ka?nikohli:yo while realizing the wholeness of the Good Mind as a Haudenosaunee cultural construct of personality in today’s reality. What within Haudenosaunee teachings creates the Good Mind, and how does it contribute to the whole Onkwehónwe Way of Life in the 21st century?

In the Great Law, “Kayehngowa,” the standard of being a chief, is to have the “seven layers of skin.”² “Your skins must be seven thumbs thick”³ has been a point of discussion and interpretation over the years. It is often accepted as simply meaning tolerance and patience with people and the continuous use of the “Good Mind.”

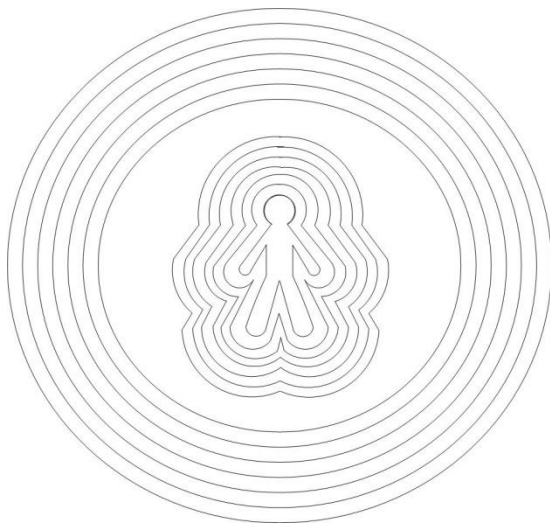


Figure 3 – Composing the Notion of Seven Spans

From lengthy discussions with learned Haudenosaunee traditionalists, my conclusion leads to an exploration of a definition of the “Seven Spans” as the seven values/traits that feed ka?nikohli:yo. Figure 3 is my conceptualization of how I see the seven layers that comprise the human being who has journeyed through seven circles of life experiences. From each circle of

²Wallace, *The Iroquois Book of Life White Roots of Peace*, 15.

³Wallace, *The Iroquois Book of Life*, 88.

experience, a teaching was passed on to the person. This chapter will provide an explanation of my view and understanding of those teachings. These seven values/teachings then form the strengths of functioning with a Good Mind in people's relations with their family, clan, community, and nation. The values come from the teachings of the original sources of knowledge that form Haudenosaunee cosmology.

Additional questions that arise are: How does one develop the personality of the Good Mind? What are the seven layers around a person? Could it mean seven levels of knowledge that contribute to the Creation of the Good Mind? There is also the idea of protectiveness of self – what does that mean? Or is it about the protection of the Good Mind? The assumption of this composition is that the *seven spans* are layers of acquired knowledge or abilities that contribute to forming and maintaining a person's Good Mind as well as the natural gifts of the person. The seven spans are more often viewed in the Western observation of the Iroquois and, by most Iroquois individuals who have written or been interviewed (Audrey Shenandoah, John Mohawk, Jake Thomas, Demus Elm, Roy Buck, etc.), as descriptive of Confederacy leadership. It was understood that leadership was community- or clan-based training and would have had wider exposure than just leaders. In most ceremonies, there is a constant reminder to use ka?nikohli:yo as an encouragement to everyone. Ka?nikohli:yo, then, is a highly held principle of the behavior or personality of the Haudenosaunee.

The Haudenosaunee whole person is described in the Great Law of Peace or the Constitution of the Five Nations; according to A.C. Parker,:

Then [the Peacemaker] said, "I shall now therefore charge each of your [Chiefs] that your skin be of the thickness of seven spreads of the hand (from end of the thumb to the end of the great finger) so that no matter how sharp a cutting instrument may be used it will not penetrate the thickness of your skin. (The meaning of great thickness of your skin is patience and forbearance, so that no matter what nature of question or business may come before you, no matter how sharp or aggravating it may be, it will not penetrate to your skins, but you will

forbear with great patience and good will in all your deliberations and never disgrace yourselves by becoming angry.) You [Chiefs] shall always be guided in all your councils and deliberations by the Good Tidings of Peace and Power.... I charge you to cultivate the good feeling of friendship, love and honor amongst yourselves.”⁴

By the time one achieves a leadership role in the Haudenosaunee, he has developed the *seven spans of skin* to function in the best and worst of situations. From my observations, this message is repeated today during the raising of chiefs, and it is a message of encouragement for everyone on how they are to govern their personal relationships in interacting with the people in their lives. The late Leon Shenandoah, Tadodaho of the Haudenosaunee, interprets it as follows:

When people turn their thoughts to the Creator, they give the Creator the power to enter their minds and to bring good thoughts. The most difficult part of this is that the Creator desired that there be no bloodshed among human beings and that there be peace, good relations, and always a Good Mind. It is difficult because people criticize the leaders all the time. But a leader must have seven layers of skin so those words don't penetrate and cause him to think thoughts which are not in the interest of peace and the well-being of everyone.⁵

My contention is that the seven spans thick skin or layers of life experience and teachings ground the Haudenosaunee whole person in confidence, humility, and fortitude. Philosophical values, edicts, and traditional teachings are critical in defining the transformation of Iroquois culture. My earlier work in this study examines not only the definitions of the seven layers but also the connections to other conceptualizations within the cultural structure that are tools of reinforcing the integrity of the culture, including the practice of condolence.⁶

⁴ A.C. Parker, *The Constitution of the Five Nations or the Iroquois Book of the Great Law*, New York State Museum Bulletin 1916(184).

⁵Wallace, *The Iroquois Book of Life*. 13-14.

⁶Within my master's project, I was able to present seven very distinct directions coming from my research of the Great Law, the condolence speeches, and longhouse ceremonies that encourage the Good Mind teachings.

In my master's project, I examined the theory of the seven spans thick of skin of leadership according to the teachings of the Kaianerekowa – the Great Law of Peace. What was achieved in my Master's Project was the identification of the each of the layers as human values and disciplines. My examination placed the Haudenosaunee teachings in a more contemporary space, providing a modern construct of the seven spans as seven teachings. How do these teachings inform Haudenosaunee identity today? To advance this work, I have included the construct of transformation within a dialogue of contemporary engagement with Haudenosaunee culture.

As a comparative analysis, a similar cultural expression, the Anishnawbe Seven Grandfather Teachings from the Midewiwin Society of the Ojibwa are a part of the story of Creation:

The boy had been given a huge bundle to take to his people from the Seven Grandfathers. Nigig' and the boy took turns carrying the bundle. Along the way, they stopped seven times. At each stop a spirit came and told the boy the meaning of one of the seven gifts that were given to him out of the vessel of the Grandfathers.⁷

The Anishnawbe teachings have been a part of the cultural immersion of their communities' education system among the Anishnawbe. These teachings have played a critical role in encouraging Anishnawbe people to immerse themselves in the grandfather/grandmother seven teachings, contributing to humanistic psychology and strengthened identity.

Affirmation of the Haudenosaunee identity is critical to the long-term positive development of individuals who have not had the opportunity to examine their culture within their family's life. The self-examination course of action would be a personal cultural revitalization process to achieve the Haudenosaunee whole person. Within Wallace's work on revitalization movements, he observes the following:

⁷ Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*, 64.

...human society ... [is a] kind of organism, its culture is conceived as those patterns of learnt behavior; a society will work ... to preserve its own integrity. It is more difficult for the individual to make change since the mental image of one's worldview – a holistic “model of cell-body-personality-nature-culture-society system is organized” and created by one's own life experience.⁸

This explains why helping individuals come to terms with their own life path is a critical part of long-term cultural transformation. Transformation of the personality begins with dreams or visions of the future. Most of what is discussed within this document is a new paradigm of Haudenosaunee knowledge attempting to shift from recovery to contemporary application.

By the early 1970s, there was a lack of cultural actions in the Oneida community, such as vision questing, puberty rite ceremonies, and more general use of healing ceremonies, such as the condolence ceremony for the rehabilitation of individuals who have experienced real trauma in their lives. The seasonal thanksgiving ceremonies were in decline. The vision of the Oneida Elders and Chiefs encouraged the use of the media to get the message out that help was needed to recover and maintain the ceremonies.⁹ The ceremonies and teachings were the source of the tools of wellness present in the culture; teachers and cultural experts need to revisit the teachings and create a dialogue on how we can fuel positive change with the instruments of cultural development. What is needed is a paradigm, a design of a contemporary model of Haudenosaunee personality founded on the seven layers of humanistic psychology within Indigenous knowledge of the seven stages of life that focus on transformation of the cultural understanding and application of the model.

⁸A.F.C. Wallace, *Revitalizations and Mazeways: Essays on Cultural Change Vol. 1*, ed. R.S. Grumet (City: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 339.

⁹*The London Free Press*, October 16, 1971.

Sourcing the Seven Stages of Life

In my dialogue about the seven layers, I realized that those teachings evolve over a lifetime that is filled with life experiences, and it was understood that during the aging process, there is an ever-evolving maturation of the person, the spirit, the way one relates to others, the knowledge one has gathered, and how one practices the teachings in everyday life. In this realization, there is a need to identify the stages of life that one journeys through. At this point of interpretation, the seven spans also represented the seven stages of life that provide the life experiences for inner strength and knowledge to give the person a sound foundation for their Good Mind. From this understanding, it is my perception that learning is a lifelong process.

In searching the culture, I remember the *sending a message ceremony*, a simple ceremony of bundling a message to give to a runner to carry to the intended people. When wampum is used to send a message to another nation, there are certain protocols mentioned in the message. During the ceremony for sending a message, the following generations of people are acknowledged as sending their message to the corresponding generations of the other nation. The following is a partial translation of the protocol for sending a message to other nation.¹⁰ In my own words, these different persons are identified as follows: *Those whose faces are coming from Mother Earth, the ones that are in the cradleboards, the young ones crawling around our feet and those that run about, the ones that don't have responsibilities, those that are burdened with responsibilities, the ones who take care of the families, our grandfathers and grandmothers, and the leaders our chiefs and Clan Mothers all send their greetings to those in your nation who are of the same way.* This has become my source of

¹⁰The ceremony or protocol for sending a wampum string as a message to other nations or longhouses requires a speech that articulates the different groups of people or generations that represent different stages of life.

the seven periods or stages of life that are considered stages of personal growth for the interest of this discussion.

The seven stages are as follows:

1. Creation or spirit stage – tahotikushututiyukwak:shataukwetase, Faces Coming from Mother Earth (conception)
2. Caring time – o:wilase, cradleboard to childhood
3. Changing times voices – tehtw^natenyeseakanitoty^sha young boy/girlhood (puberty)
4. Responsibility time – wahutotyake – wahuwatilihutu – they are appointed hunters (young men) and gardeners (young women)
5. Family time – wshut?wa:tsilu:ni, father, mother, uncle, and aunt (faithkeepers are usually selected from active persons)¹¹
6. Teaching time – wahonatlsla:y^ton-sh^n^ laotnikula, peaceful mind, grandfather, and grandmother
7. Serving people/Creator time – lotiyaneshekutiyaneshe – yukwasotsla, Leadership in extended family, clan, community or nation

Each of these stages provides life lessons that the character of the person. It is my contention that the seven spans theory is based on the seven stages of life of the Haudenosaunee person, providing the character of leadership gained through life experience. Even though the focus is on leadership, it is essential that these principles are understood to fashion Haudenosaunee character and

¹¹In my own experience, it has been individuals who have the experience of raising children who seem to be chosen to be faithkeepers, although this is not a hard and fast rule given that, more recently, younger persons have been chosen due to need.

whole person development as a requirement for every Haudenosaunee person to achieve his or her very best.

It is important to undertake a deeper examination of the seven stages that I have proposed as one component of the *seven spans paradigm in my master's project*¹². As stated, each stage of life offers a teaching that strengthens the person. As students of life, we need to look for those lessons. When we know what the lesson is, the teaching informs the learner about life. We need to know what to discuss and ask. I provide this information to help prompt that dialogue of cultural enhancement.

1. Tahotikushututi yukwak:shata ukwetase, Creation (spirit time) Faces Coming from Mother Earth

This is the time before birth that represents spirituality or the journey of the spirit of the person. That spirit is coming from sky world and joining with the human being coming from Mother Earth, like all living matter. We acknowledge this stage of life to remind ourselves how we are related to all living matter – the plants, animals, birds, water, earth, etc. It is where we evolve from and where our bodies will return. This is also an acknowledgement of our connection to the generations before and our future. Those faces cannot be seen but are “felt” intuitively as our hope and future. This is also a reminder that life is about renewal. The earth herself renews every year, every season. The spirit of the nation is renewed with each birth.

Creation is about the renewal of life and the ongoing cyclical nature of all life. The Haudenosaunee are taught that the child is a gift from the Creator/Creation in the larger context. It will take all of Creation to raise the child. Once the child makes the first sound, the spirit is received

¹²This chapter is composed of my master's project, which was centered on revitalization and the beginning work of this material to examine the sources for seven spans thickness of skin.

and connected to all of Creation. We are reminded of this sacredness of life in all our deliberations. Our spirit is our fire. We sing and welcome the new spirit among us.

2. O:wilase Caring time – cradleboard to childhood

Now the child is the center of all the attention of the families and Creation. Everyone and everything is looking out for and helping to bring the child into life. The first greeting ceremony and first song welcome the newborn into this world. It is the time of experiencing pure love for that new spirit coming into the family through nurturing with unconditional love. This is the stage of life that represents the critical time for the child to learn the basic spiritual teachings that are tools for them to engage their world in relationships and the decisions they make. This will make a lasting imprint on the character of the person. The first seven years of life set the stage for life's journey. Social skills are developed through sports and social events, drawing the clans together to help with the development of the body and spirit of the child.

3. Tehutw^natenyese kanitotiy^sha, changing time voices – young boy/girlhood (puberty)

Until puberty change stage, from around eight years old to the time when the boys' voices change and the girls begin their menses, children enjoy their freedom and are encouraged to be curious about life and explore the natural world. Small chores are given to the children, who are encouraged to explore their interests. From Caring Time to puberty change these two stages of life are the time to learn about the joy of life. It is a time to feel a sense of freedom in the protected world surrounding the extended family environment.

When children make the step toward adulthood, their bodies are changing, and it was during this time that they were put in the special places on the land to fast and seek vision. Tom Porter states, "That's why you would hear some Indians long ago say, after fasting, "The tree talked to

me.”¹³ Hewitt and Blanchard both discuss the importance of fasting for personal spiritual strength.¹⁴ This is the first step toward entering the next stage of life. It is a critical time for the youth to have the opportunity to seek a vision to guide them in future choices. Today, these are referred to as the teenage years, a very powerful time of seeking independence.

4. Wahutotyake – wahuwatilihutu (they are appointed) – responsibility time – hunter (young man); gardener (young woman)

From around the age of 14, a person will begin to learn in greater depth the skills of survival and attending to life. Traditionally, the men took the role of hunters/gatherers/protectors and the women the management and duties of growing and preserving foods, the making of clothes, the cultivating of new leaders, and keeping the clan strong. During this period, the young boys learn the responsibilities of being men in their clan, the providers, protectors, and gatherers of foods and medicines. The young girls are given the teachings of caring for the land, relations to the land, the growing and gathering of foods, medicines, womanhood, and their responsibilities as life givers. A reciprocal, responsible relation was shared by both sexes in preparation for gaining the skills for the next phase in their lives.

5. Wahut?wa:tsilu:ni, family time – father/mother, uncle/aunt (faithkeepers are usually selected from active persons who are in this stage)

The Family Time stage ranges from the early twenties to the mid-40s, a span of twenty years or more that is devoted to raising the children of the clan. It is not the only time that family is

¹³Tom Porter, <http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com/transcripts/mohawk.pdf>, 2006, 5.

¹⁴David Blanchard, "Who or What's a Witch? Iroquois Persons of Power," *American Indian Quarterly* (1982) & J.B.N. Hewitt, *Orenda and a Definition of Religion* (1902); both discuss the value of fasting vision questing.

important, but it is the time when it feels all-consuming. Time and attention gives those young spirits the nurturing that establishes a strong foundation in Haudenosaunee traditions. The children will teach us to use kalihwi:yo yew^niyó¹⁵ the kindness that resonates in the sound of the voice. It is the voice that makes the sound of kindness and loving nurturing. Our children will test their parents, pushing the limit to find how far kindness stretches.

6. Wahonatle sla:y^ton sh^n^ laotnikula – teaching time, peaceful mind, grandfather, grandmother

In ancient times as well as today, the elders of the extended families who keep the traditions are the teachers, the carriers of wisdom. Originally, the Elders were the living museums or repository of knowledge, the source of the oral traditions, and in addition, they provided wise counsel based on that cultural knowledge. Their most important responsibility is the encouragement of others, sharing positive words and helping to build the self-esteem of the community. The sense of peace the Elders enjoy is one of the reasons they carry the responsibilities of the curing or medicine societies.

7. lotiyaneshu kutoyaneshu yukwasotsla, serving people/Creator time – leadership in extended family, clan, community, or nation

The people, community, and nation will always need culturally based leadership, heartfelt wisdom with the ability to help those who are in need and struggle with life. Leadership is about serving the people, and by serving the people, one fulfills the service to Creation and the Creator. When one achieves this stage in life, connectedness to Creation and humanity is not a mystery.

¹⁵Karin Michelson, and Mercy Doxtator, “She has a good voice,” Oneida-English English-Oneida Dictionary (City: Publisher, 2002), 1023,

Haudenosaunee culture is holistic, and each lesson and idea flows into the next. Each stage is not separate from each other but is part of a cycle that continuously revolves. Each person will find himself at different stages regardless of age because we are in a cycle of life. Each span of knowledge draws from each source: Creation, ceremonies, Great Law, and Gaiwiiio. The evolution of the Haudenosaunee gifts of knowledge surround the central focus of ka?nikukli:yo, the Good Mind. These are expanding elements of organic knowledge, enhancing who we are as a people and giving unrelenting resilience to our existence. When you examine the chart in Figure 4, look at each piece but think about the wholeness it represents.

Each characteristic relies on the others, and the others cannot exist in wholeness without all the others. The Haudenosaunee personality becomes a chain reaction to life, triggering the power within each element that one needs to achieve what is representative of wholeness – ka?nikohli:yo. Then our yukwatsiste, our fire, burns with the passion for life, connecting with Creation, doctoring ourselves and others like medicine.

Figure 4 – Sourcing the Seven Teachings Over Time and Space

Chart: 1	TEACHINGS						
	“A Person’s Skin Is Seven Spans Thick”						
LIFE STAGES	Creation Story		Ceremonies		Great Law		Gaiwio
1. Creation (spirit time), Faces Coming from Mother Earth	1. Innocence, twinning of positive & negative energy	otanit [^] ?sla					
2. Caring time – cradleboard to childhood		2. Caring connect- edness	kanolukhwsla				
3. Changing times – boy/girlhood (puberty)			3. Words of encour- aging	kahletsyal usla			
4. Responsibility time – hunters (young men), gardeners (young women)				4 Power, empower- ing	Kna [?] shatst [^] sla		
5. Family time – father, mother, uncle, & aunt,				kalihwi:yo	5. Spirituality righteous- ness		
6. Teaching time – grandfather & grandmother						6. Peace Sk [^] n [^] ’	
7. Serving people/Creato r time – leadership in extended family, clan, community, or nation						yukwat siste skenon	7. Humility serving the Creator & people
	Understanding the difference between right & wrong.	Loving & kindness being good medicine for each other	Being supportive & inclusive	The inner strength to provide & protect	Celebration of Creation & thankfulness	Creating safe environmen ts for people to get along	Making things right with Creation

The chart provides a modern view of these constructs, but it is a way to give greater understanding of ancient teachings without change to the foundational value. I have also taken words from my Nation’s original language – Onyota’a:ka – to provide more evidence of these important values or principles that form the whole Haudenosaunee person.

The Seven Spans of Knowledge

A person spends a lifetime as a Haudenosaunee acquiring knowledge to possess the seven layers of ka?nikuhli:ho given to people from the four sources of knowledge. As discussed in the previous explanation of the life stages, our teachings are complex and integrated within a total cultural system of knowledge. It is this system of knowledge that is the foundation and guide to the cultural expression that is enjoyed today. The way we interact with this knowledge today is sometimes superficial and impersonal in a detached manner, like that of an observer. This might result from viewing the knowledge as something too difficult to personalize, but it is critical to the learner and keeper of this way of life to personalize and absorb this knowledge to create greater understanding of its ability to empower the people of the Haudenosaunee.

Now I would like to draw attention to each of the specific seven teachings or spans of knowledge.

Yukwatsiste – our fire our spirit

Life is not taken for granted but understood to be a gift from the beginning endowed with a sense of humility as each person takes his or her place as a small part of Creation. Our fire or spirit is the first gift we receive as we begin to make a bundle for our life journey. The truth is that the Haudenosaunee serve Creation. It is a cultural obligation to be Haudenosaunee in the service of others. Our spirit will remind us to reconcile life and our relationships with other human beings and Creation. A part of the teaching comes from the story of Hiawatha, who lost his whole family and had to learn reconciliation and the art of forgiveness to fulfill his role in life. In the same way, we look at the message of the Gaiwiio, in which Handsome Lake shows us how devastating the long-

lasting effects of the invasion will be and how we have to use our ancient teachings to find our place in the world without compromise.

Otanit[^]t?sla – compassion and innocence

Born out of the innocence of life, one of our first teachings is compassion for another human being. That new spirit of life is totally helpless, and survival is subject to the gift of love from others. As that spirit journeys to the new human being born into this world, the compassion of the mother is the doorway. Creation gives us this teaching. Human beings are totally dependent on the natural world, our Mother Earth. Each life that enters this world reminds us of the twinness of life. Just like the story of the twins in the Creation story, we are told of the two energies that exist within ourselves that teaches us the difference from right and wrong. This is a message that is received in each phase of the growth of the Haudenosaunee.

Kanolukhwasla – love and caring

In the Haudenosaunee world, awareness of the spiritual connection is a sign of love. How one spirit connects with another is most evident between mother and child. The connection and flow of energy is the medicine – what we feel from another, the spiritual-ness of connecting. Again, this is the relationship that the culture teaches us to have with Mother Earth. To know what that connection is gives one insight into how love feels and affects others. When one sees a mother nursing a baby, it is love that is both a spiritual and physical connection.

Kahletsyalusla – words of encouragement

The encouragement is one of the primary traits most expressed in the culture. It is connected to this time period of gaining one's voice and entering the period of the basic responsibilities of

being a man or woman in society. Compassion and love are the foundational teachings of encouragement. Within those teachings comes the Good Mind. It is a voice and action that is both supportive and inclusive of others.

Kna?shatst[^]sla – strength, power

This teaching is about the inner power that each person has to combine with the energy of the natural world to carry out life's responsibilities. It is not just a physical strength but also includes the spiritual energy, and the two work together in fulfilling one's obligations in life. For example, a star lacrosse player is not only physically strong but has an equal spiritual energy of love for the game. It is the same for a good hunter and gardener to find the strengths needed to bring balance within the role one has to fulfill.

In the story of the Peacemaker, he was tested many times to provide proof of who he was. His resilience was the sign of his strength, which was more than a physical strength. It demonstrated his spiritual connection as well. It is important to acknowledge the true source of power as the family or clan.

Kalihwi:yo – kind caring words

Celebrating life and Creation is a voice of kindness and caring. It is the sounds of these words that brought peace among the Haudenosaunee. The Peacemaker fulfilled his obligations through the act of kindness. As he journeyed throughout the confederacy, he mended the families and the clans of the Haudenosaunee. When our nations had their family clans again, they were able to return to the original instructions of spiritual teachings.

We often look at this story only through the restructuring of the Chiefs and the Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee. The critical long-term impact of the Peacemaker was the rebuilding of the clan family. The Peacemaker was a clan counselor who had the gift of helping people live with peace and justice in their hearts.

Sk^·n^· – peace

From ka?nikuhli:yo, the mind of peace, come the words encouraging others. The goal of “words of encouragement” is to bring peace among the people. The Peacemaker accomplished much with the sound of his voice, which that filled the world with positivity – peace and justice. When one is positive about life, it encourages others to face their realities in the same vein.



Figure 5 – Translated Understandings of the 7 Teachings/7 Stages [chart prepared by R. Antone]

The Good Mind Chart is a visual representation of the seven-values/attributes/life experiences that form the Good Mind. The outer circle is the seven teachings, and the second circle is the seven stages of life that are the sources of the teachings. These teachings and values come from the stories, ceremonies, and gifts from the Creator, like the Creation story, ceremonies, Great Law, and Gaiwiio. The previous presentations in chapter one are short versions of the sources of this information.

Haudenosaunee cultural knowledge forms the whole person and builds a personality foundational in pragmatic spiritualism. Every individual is born with the natural holistic and spiritual well-being of a person. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the culture from a humanistic

perspective that will demonstrate how Haudenosaunee knowledge can affirm real notions of transformation.

Affirmation of the Haudenosaunee identity is critical to the long-term positive development of individuals who have not had the opportunity to examine their culture or their family’s life. The self-examination course of action would be a personal cultural revitalization process to achieve the Haudenosaunee whole person. Within Wallace’s work on revitalization movements, he observes that



Figure 6 –Good Mind [chart prepared by R. Antone]

“...human society ... [is a] kind of organism, its culture is conceived as those patterns of learned behavior; a society will work ... to preserve its own integrity.” It is more difficult for the individual to make change since the mental image of one’s worldview – a holistic “model of cell-body-personality-nature-culture-society system is organized”¹⁶ and created by one’s own life experience. This is why helping individuals come to terms with their own life path is a critical part of the long-term process of

transformation. We need to be ka?nikohli:yo not just in the longhouse but all day long, every day, for our lifetime.

While the ceremonial and celebratory events grow in attendance, the practice of growing corn, a food staple as well as a critical component of the ceremonial cycle, is endangered, with fewer and fewer growers each year. What impact does this have on the thinking of the people? The simple answer is to learn to grow corn and the other foods of the Haudenosaunee and to connect to the land

¹⁶Wallace, *Revitalizations and Mazeways*, 28.

through the food, and the reciprocity teaches the natural order of Haudenosaunee life. John Mohawk worked to revitalize the Three Sisters culture, and Carol Cornelius examined curriculum development from this focus. Both have been advocates of connecting to Mother Earth through the growing of original foods, and it is another way of learning these teachings.¹⁷

The Teachings from the Requickenening Address

One of the more important ceremonies coming out of the Kaianerekowa Great Law of the Haudenosaunee is the condolence ceremony or Requickenening Address in its role of revitalizing and making things right after the loss of a loved one and re-energizing those left behind. Recently, this ceremony has been used primarily after the loss of a leader, chief, or clan mother. However, the words found in the condolence have made their way into other speeches of significance, like the burial rites. In more contemporary use, some of the teachings have found their way into traditional healing practices.

This examination of the Requickenening Address is to explore more contemporary applications of this ceremony as a process of revitalization and transformation. Most work in the study of revitalization movements as discussed in Wallace's work has been about the larger picture, the survival of cultures from the onslaught of invasion and genocide. Wallace's principal work has been a close examination of Handsome Lake's teachings. In "The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca,"¹⁸ we see the power of these teachings causing and influencing change for over 200 years of the cultural survival of the Haudenosaunee. One of the points of Handsome Lake's teachings was to keep the

¹⁷Cornelius, Carol. Iroquois Corn in a Culture-Based Curriculum: A Framework for Respectfully Teaching about Cultures. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 296.

¹⁸Wallace, Anthony. The Death and Rebirth of the Senecas. New York: Random House, 1969.

ancient teachings alive. In the spirit of that message, I review and re-examine the Requickening Address, words from the ancient teachings of the Great Law for direction and methodology in transformation.

The actual words and pattern of presentation of the Requickening Address speak directly to a process of recovery or healing of the person, clan, or family – physically, mentally, spiritually, environmentally, socially, and relational. The ceremony was born during the time of the Great Law coming to the Iroquois. This time was a dark period in Haudenosaunee history, when much death was perpetrated against one another.

It was understood that one of the most devastating events in one's life is the loss of a loved one. It is during this time that a person experiences an emotional breakdown that requires the help of the families and clans to put their world back together. This ceremony was a way of dealing with some of the most stressful events in a person's life. The loss of a loved one is the most devastating of the stressful events that a person can face in life. This ceremony was a way to deal with these kinds of events.

The historical trauma and multi-generational impact of the unresolved loss of family, home, land, and lifestyle is very similar to the kind of grief that the Requickening Address was designed to be used to unburden the people. There have been generations of unresolved grief in Iroquois communities resulting from negative historical relations with the settlers and internalized oppression.

The healers, medicine people, understood that when a person underwent stress, his or her whole person and spirit or *ka?nikohli:yo* was disrupted. From my own experience of doing healing and wellness work in First Nation communities, I have observed a person's "Good Mind" being disrupted and unable to function.

Hiawatha's Story

The origin of this way of putting a person's life back together is told in the experience of a Chief's life that was disrupted by the loss of his children and family in the Great Law narrative. The story of Hiawatha shows him facing the death of his three daughters and falling into a state of grief that was difficult and made it almost impossible for him to return to a normal life. He isolated himself and wandered the forest in his pain. During his grief, a message or vision, the gift of dealing with such pain, came to him in his search for meaning in his struggle. His great pain was the loss of children and facing life without their love and affection. In his journey of isolation and loneliness, he wandered through the forest trying to escape from the pain. He began to fashion strings of cut and hollowed wood hanging together over a pole to symbolize each element of his being that was in pain. Each element of darkness that his pain caused was then acknowledged to bring light back into his world.

The story is told that he made camp by a lake and, one day, as he approached a lake covered with water fowl; with his sudden appearance, the startled birds took flight, and as they rose from the water, the water was lifted and what was exposed was quahog shells. Hiawatha thought that that is what he must use to fashion the strings of condolence. Here was born the use of quahog shells to make wampum beads for the record-keeping of cultural practices.

The condolence ceremony is one of the most critical tools of survival and has been used by the longhouses in sustaining and balancing the spirituality of the clan families.

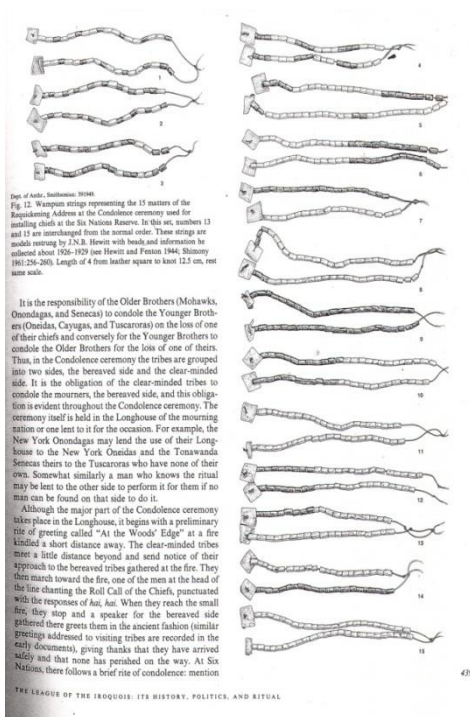


Figure 7 – Wampum Strings of the 15 Matters of the Requickening Address

The following is an outline of the meaning of the condolence ceremony, the most evocative tool for the recovery from distress in Haudenosaunee society. This was originally designed to bring back the Good Mind to the person or family who had suffered. It exposes all that a person or family will suffer through and what needs to be done to recover. The holistic and psychological implication of this remarkable tool of recovery is most useful in work within Haudenosaunee society today.

The photograph in Figure 7 is from the Handbook of North American Indians Northeast Volume 15; and pictures the wampum

strings used in the Requickening Address, which are a model put together by J.N.B. Hewitt.¹⁹

The following ceremonial pattern is used by the younger brothers or the Cayuga, Oneida, Tuscarora, and Tuetlo. They are also referred to as the four brothers. The Placement of the Condolence Mourning Strings as used by the Younger Brothers, including the Oneidas, is as follows:

1. Eyes and tears
2. Ears and hearing impaired by grief
3. Throat

¹⁹ Trigger, B.E. *Handbook of the North American Indians: Northeast Vol. 15*, 1st ed. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), p.p. 439

4. Yellow spots in the stomach
5. Red stains on a council seat
6. Covered with darkness
7. Loss of sky
8. Loss of sun
9. Grave
10. Twenty words of sympathy
11. Council fire destroyed by evil
12. Faithkeepers
13. Niece and nephew
14. Evil medicine
15. Light or torch notification of death; acceptance of loss and change

Requickening is an old term that addressed the actions of strengthening those who were affected by death.

“The fifteen strings of wampum, the Requickening Address each carry a message to lift the spirits of the bereaved nation. They are meant to calm the mind and reduce the pain and confusion of mourning.”²⁰

When an individual passed away it was believed that the death reduced the communal power of the family, clan and nation. If the person held a position within the Longhouse replacing the deceased’s name transferred the authority and is thought to bring back balance. Requickening is

²⁰Barreiro, Jose “Chief Jacob Thomas and the Condolence Cane” *Northeast Indian Quarterly* 7:4 (Winter 1990: 77-85)

about stimulating the energy or fire/spirit of the communal family. The following chart is a list of abbreviated meanings of each of the 15 strings of condolence from the Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast Vol.15 and Jake Thomas audio tapes of Haudenosaunee teachings from the Jake Thomas Learning Centre in Ohsweke. The two sources are compared to demonstrate the universal knowledge of the Requickening teachings and to gather similar knowledge to advance the idea that this information can be used to advance human transformation in a holistic spiritual and psychological process.

Figure 8 – Comparative Chart & Significance of Requickening Address

Younger Brothers (Currently used by Cayuga's)	Handbook of North American Indians – 15 Northeast	Jake Thomas audio tapes of Haudenosaunee teachings [29]
1. eyes and tears	To wipe away the tears	We will take you by the hand and wipe your tears
2. ears and hearing impaired by grief	To remove the obstructions from the ears	You cannot hear clearly. We unpluck and clean your ears
3. throat	To remove obstructions from the throat	The throat is stopped with grief and sadness remove the obstruction so that you may enjoy perfect breathing and speech
4. yellow spots in stomach	To restore the disarranged organs of the body & the yellow spots from inside	Ja-we-ka-ro-den medicine to drink to wash away the bitterness in your stomach
5. red stains on council seat	To wipe the bloodstains from the mat	Your sight becomes darkness blinded by grief loss sight of the sky – we remove the mist from your eyes so you may see the sun
6. covered with darkness	To dispel the darkness & cause it to be day	Dark clouds cover your sky and there is no light around you and lose sight of heaven. We remove the darkness so you can return to your duties and perform for the people
7. loss of sky	To cause the sky to be beautiful	The sun is displaced in the sky so now we restore the Sun you will feel the warmth of the midday sun
8. loss of sun	To re-place the sun in the sky	Death has stained your place with blood and scattered the ashes of your fire. We gather your fire together and rekindle you fire. We cleanse your seat and restore your mind
9. grave	To level the earth over the grave	Death causes a deep grief, the head is bowed down in deep sorrow and we lift up your head and cause you to stand upright again
10. twenty words of sympathy	To bind the bones together	Your nephew and niece are watching how you handle death. They watch to ensure you do not go astray from your duties & you have the interest of the people in mind.
11. council fire destroyed by evil	To gather together the scattered firebrands & rekindle the fire	Care of the grave - a pine board is placed on top of the grave to shelter from the rain and heat of the sun. The body will rest in peace.
12. faith keepers	To raise the minds of the women & warriors and cheer them up faith keepers	A pouch on a slanted pole holding a short string of wampum is in the pouch. This is used to encourage & cheer up their downcast spirits.
13. niece and nephew	To dispel the insanity caused by grief	Do not let your mind be troubled too greatly with sorrow.
14. evil medicine	To restore to its place the torch that has been carried through the Longhouse of the Confederacy by the person notifying them of the death	This can lead to self-destruction. We now put two poles together and place a torch on top.
15. light or torch notification of death acceptance of loss, change	To restore the chief by raising him up and again name him	We all share the light. Continue to protect the people and the great confederacy.

The comparative chart shows variations in the order of fifteen matters of the wampum strings, they are but consistent in terms of the message.

Figure 9 – Finding Meaning to Assist Current Reality

<i>Re-quickening Address</i>	<i>What it means to a person?</i>	<i>What can be done about it?</i>
1. eyes and tears 2. ears and hearing impaired by grief 3. throat 4. yellow spots in stomach	the direct impact of stress from grief & trauma are evident in loss of vision, inability to hear others (advise) unable to use one's voice and the feeling of sickness.	Personal impact: Healing of the self by beginning with the basics—cleansing the paths of one's connection to the world—sight, hearing, voice, physical wellness
5. red stains on council seat 6. covered with darkness 7. loss of sky 8. loss of sun	The collapse of one's world	The Connection: Examination of one's relationship with the natural world—the source of ones power Rebuilding all the connections
9. grave 10. twenty words of sympathy 11. council fire destroyed by evil	Grief / sorrow / Words of anger Pay attention to the impact on one's feelings & how those feelings can hurt self and others Inability to make decisions Place of disempowerment unable to make decisions	The disruption of the inner spirit: Through a revitalizing program a person travels through their grief to find their joyful self. Signs of recovery Use of the Good Mind to make decisions for the betterment of self & others.
12. faith keepers	Those who grief forget their responsibilities and neglect their duties.	There is a time when the mourning is over and one has to pick up their responsibilities and duties to their clan families.
13. niece and nephew	Reminder of connection to the family	Relational: Reconnecting with family Clan & community Picking up one's responsibilities
14. (evil) medicine	Grief leaves behind a feeling of darkness being present In times of stress everything can be seen as evil or bad	Regaining control over one's life. Left too long in the grieving state the darkness of the energy overcomes a person's sensibilities.
15. light or torch notification of death, acceptance of loss, change	The lack of control feels like someone is doing something	Acceptance: Relighting one's inner fire (spirit) – feeling the joy of life Acceptance of change

Figure 8 outlines the Requickening Address Ceremony and places each string into related conceptual sections that are organized into seven distinct categories. Most often, ceremonies are done for the greater good, and, as a participant, one takes from it what is needed. A participant was free to gain a balance for himself within the process of the ceremony. An examination of the Requickening Address shows that there is a process of revitalization through healing and recovery that entails far-reaching transformation. The ceremony was utilized as a way to re-energize those left behind after the disruption of their beliefs and way of life. Through the careful construction of stages for the process, there is evidence of moving through a revitalization process from within the individual to Creation, mending family and community to achieve a transformation of one's humanity.

Seven Strategies of Revitalization and Transformation

In further examining of the holistic nature of this ceremony, we can envision direct results and outcomes for the participants by interpreting the cultural concepts into strategic interconnected components. By further dissecting it into seven strategies, an understanding evolves of the wholeness of this ceremonial experience and its impacts. For the purpose of examination, I took the 15 elements of the Requickening Address and divided them into seven distinct components addressing the impact on the participant and revitalizing the wholeness of being Haudenosaunee. These seven strategies are a process of cultural renewal and personal revitalization. Read the chart in Figure 10 starting from Personal Impact in a counter-clockwise direction. The following are explanations of my interpretation of the proposed idea of seven stages of transformation.

1. Personal Impact – *“My culture encourages me to take care of myself.”*

The ceremonial words are a direct examination of self and the power of grief and loss over oneself; the eyes become blind to reality, the ears are unable to hear the truth, the voice is unable to



Figure 10 – Haudenosaunee Seven Strategies for Cultural Revitalization and Transformation
[chart prepared by R. Antone]

speak to one's needs, and sickness begins to grow within one's body. By addressing these fundamental elements of the person, a foundational strategy for a revitalizing process is instituted.

2. Renewing My Connection to Creation – *“My culture encourages me to always be connected to Creation.”*

The stress of loss disrupts the connection to Creation, and reconnecting is vital to one's

humanity. When death occurs, there is a loss of decision-making or the loss of the “Good Mind.”

When this happens, a person is disconnected from their world. The natural world certainly is a critical part of the everyday life of the Haudenosaunee person. This phase of the ceremonial words draws attention to how one connects to the sky and sun. These are natural elements utilized in the revitalizing process.

The first two strategies involve eight of the fifteen strings that are critical to bringing the person, family, and clan back into a functional state of wellness. Once this stage is reached, it is time to reexamine the events leading to the disruption.

3. Recovery of My Humanity – *“My culture encourages me to always strengthen the seven spans of skins or the seven layers of who I am as Haudenosaunee.”*

The disruption of the inner spirit and recovery in this phase is an examination directly looking at the events that cause the grief and sorrow and how other feelings are explosive without properly coming to terms with the event or events being experienced by the individual. The symbolism used is

scattered wood of the fire that has to be gathered together to rekindle the fire. Fire is often a reference to spirit. Here, the person is asked to examine their spirit and ensure that it is truly together. Each log of the fire represents a part of the individual that, when gathered together, form the whole person or the Haudenosaunee personality.

4. Recapturing My Responsibilities – *“My culture teaches me my duties to my clan, family, and nation.”*

It is now time to reconnect with family and pick up one’s responsibilities to family, clan, and community embracing the culture. This is when one is asked to face the unknown and accept it, building the trust of each other to complete the circle.

5. Family Relations Are My Medicine – *“My culture reminds me that my family and clan are my medicine and the source of my power.”*

Our loving relationships in life are what ground us and make life real and meaningful and sane. The traumas and grief in the life cycle are what makes life feel out of control and that there is an insanity about life. It is the love and comfort of our families that heal us, which is why love is referred to as medicine.

6. Cycle of the Spirit – *“My culture teaches me the full cycle of birth to death, encouraging me to be accepting of the spiritual cycle of life.”*

The darkness or opposite of goodness can invade the thoughts of person, leaving a feeling or state of uncontrollable existence fueled by an energy outside of our reality. However, as the wording states, we will never get used to death even though it is a part of life.

7. Acceptance of Change – *“My culture is supportive of growth and change through the joyful expression of our Tsi’Nikwaliho:tu.”*

We come to a place of acceptance one person at a time. Passing on the name is the act of accepting the change. A new chief is replaced. A new life is born. The clan family comes together and continues.

The ceremony continues today but is used primarily in addressing the needs of the people after the loss of a chief or clan mother. Elements of this ceremony are used to address the issue of loss, burial, and/or feast. Given the current reality of the need for cultural revitalization, it is my conclusion that this ceremonial process can be utilized in its original style or refashioned to assist in developing a contemporary process of revitalization among the Haudenosaunee.

The outcome of this ceremony is the return of the people to the “Good Mind,” the definition of the very best a Haudenosaunee person can achieve. How does one know that the outcomes are achieved? Is it possible to create cultural performance standards?

The seven layers paradigm is about defining the seven layers or spans of thickness of skin that a person must have to be able to be a good chief. These seven characteristics define the Good Mind. It is my understanding that the seven characteristics are life teachings that enable excellent leadership and good citizenship of the Haudenosaunee.

I have included a chart that I prepared to identify the seven principles or characteristics of the Haudenosaunee personality. These are the elements that create the Good Mind. As a person journeys through the wiping of tears ceremony, the objective is to return to the state of the Good Mind. The Good Mind, then, is a full expression of Haudenosaunee being.

Cultural decay and personal dysfunctions often go hand in hand. Among Native people, recovery can be expected to be a dual process that involves cultural renewal coupled with positive, healthy, and functional personal choices. Handsome Lake clearly recognized this truth. He simultaneously urged people to strengthen their culture as he encouraged them to rebuild their lives by transcending their dysfunctional habits and counterproductive patterns of response.²¹

Haudenosaunee communities are in critical situations resulting from adverse conditions that do not encourage cultural survival. Language loss is the single most important evidence and contributes to the acceleration of the acculturation and genocide of the Haudenosaunee. The real culprit is lifestyle change over the last forty years. Another factor is the inflexibility of traditional teachers to address cultural loss by utilizing components of the culture to create revitalization processes. Learners are usually faced with dogmatic approaches of learning coupled with blame for not knowing and less than inspiring acceptance of new interest.

The intent of this cultural study is to explore ways of reformulation of cultural knowledge that can help not only in revitalizing the culture itself but in providing meaningful tools that are helpful in recovery and lifestyle change and adaptation of Haudenosaunee culture. Since 1799, Handsome Lake's teachings have provided messages of change and adaptation while encouraging the survival of the original teachings and ceremonies of the Haudenosaunee. There needs to be a new influx of creativity that opens new ways for the youth of the future to reexamine who they are and extend learning systems to encourage the revitalization of the Haudenosaunee spirit within each learner who wants to explore his or her culture. This examination is a way to give easier access to the teachings for those who do not have a firm handle on Haudenosaunee languages. Most of this writing

²¹A.H. Walle, *The Path of Handsome Lake – A Model of Recovery for Native People* (City: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2004).

is abbreviated cultural knowledge provided for learners of the culture. The culture is a powerful teacher and affirmation of identity as experienced by individuals, similar to the following story:

A young Oneida man came to me, who is a husband of a young Oneida woman and they are parents of two children. He said, “I have been on crack for a while now,” and wanted to get off of it and take care of his family. He had also been a gang member in an urban center. He said something was missing in his life but he didn’t know what it was. He had gone to several treatment centers and did not find the answer. He came to a Healing Lodge that was culturally based and fortunately Oneida culture was a part of the program. He excelled as he discovered the teachings from the culture that were significant for him. After two years he is still in a very good place with his extended families and enjoying a full life with the culture as a part of who he is.²²

I tell that story as a way to understand how the culture is critical to the wellness of the people. By helping people through the traditional teachings, cultural revitalization is achieved through real transformation of the extended family.

Dr. Walle in *The Path of Handsome Lake* reviewed the work of Benedict’s *Pattern of Culture*, determining that social structural analysis provides an understanding or a forum for how cultural diversity is examined as a significant role in revitalization. In *Patterns of Culture*, Benedict determines that culture and the individual are intertwined. The culture is not a separate entity from the person. Benedict states or “affirms that cultures can best be envisioned as holistic and synergistic ‘patterns’ that orient their members to think, feel, and behave in certain, predictable ways.”²³

This process, born out of the Requickenning Address, is a structural approach for circumscribed groups that acknowledges the importance of the role of culture in identifiable groups within the Haudenosaunee. The Haudenosaunee, though a significant group with a population of over

²²Robert Antone, personal narrative from a person who was helped with a traditional healing program.

²³Walle, *The Path of Handsome Lake*.

100,000 today, approximately fifty percent remain isolated on Indian reservations in largely closed communities. The knowledge and source of the practicing Haudenosaunee culture remains in those environments.

The Requickening Address approach provides a revitalization model that could be incorporated into helping systems within the Haudenosaunee communities. By combining the Requickening Address and the seven layers paradigm, there is a process and projected outcome for intervention in cultural loss. I offer some suggestions in Charter Five.

This work has been an exploration into the cultural knowledge of the Haudenosaunee, the historical influence of the dominant society, and the conflicting realities of the two, necessitating dynamic cultural tools of survival, revitalization, and transformation. In developing an understanding of the pre-contact teachings and its relationship to the very basic fundamental essence of the culture, the Good Mind, there is a sense of empowerment within. The Good Mind functioned in a very different environment in the pre-contact period and also before 1776. The culture of the Haudenosaunee was at its pinnacle when the Good Mind existed in normalcy in the natural pre-contact environment. The disruption and dominating forces of oppression changed the whole world of the Haudenosaunee, making it difficult for the Good Mind to be a realistic behavioral function. Handsome Lake teachings offered ways to live within the changed environment of the reservation and within our broader boundaries of Haudenosaunee Country.

More recently, we have witnessed the environment making cultural shifts to more individualistic, materialistic consumerism, leaving little room for the Good Mind to function. What made it possible for the Good Mind to function in the pre-contact environment? The lifestyle revolved around the longhouse, which was a multi-family home to several families who were from

the same clan of the women of a particular longhouse. The women were the heads of the families and worked together to maintain a stable home environment and carry out the responsibilities of the gardens, home care, life essentials, medicines, and organizational community process. After contact and particularly after 1779, Sullivan's campaign that raided and burned over 60 villages and towns of the Haudenosaunee, the world of the Haudenosaunee changed dramatically. The lifestyle was gone. The central factor in the lifestyle was the communal clan living of the multi-family dwellings of the longhouse.

After 1779, the longhouse as a dwelling was gone. Smaller dwellings of two families at most and single-family dwellings became the norm. Although extended families lived in clusters, it was an extreme adjustment in the lifestyle. The move to the reservation and the loss of hunting, gathering, and fishing sites contributed to the lifestyle change. Handsome Lake's teachings offered some relief to the change as whole communities struggled to find ways to survive. In today's world, we witness more changes that are the result of the move to the single-family dwellings. The single-family dwellings offered some a place for extended family, usually a grandmother or grandfather. However, those families have further deteriorated into single-parent families. The continued change of the lifestyle to single-parent homes contributes to individualism, the core of acculturation to Western cultural values. This is having a significant impact on the way that youth and, for that matter, all people of the Haudenosaunee communities are responding to lifestyle changes.

A part of this dissertation involves re-examining and revitalizing the core of the Haudenosaunee teachings that find their origin in pre-contact knowledge within a very different environment from where those teachings first became an expression of the Haudenosaunee lifestyle of the Good Mind.

The following chart examines four periods that focus on key lifestyle, environmental, and relational subjects that impact how an individual would express his or her cultural values or not. The impact of change moves the Haudenosaunee further from the natural order of their worldview, another reason that it is important to transform a Way of Life into a lifestyle.

Figure 12 – Lifestyle Changes of the Haudenosaunee

Pre 1776	1779 to 1815	1815 to 1960	1960 to Present
<p>By 1750 housing styles were changing from the longhouse to the “short houses”</p> <p>Lived in multi-family dwelling that housed over 12 families in some cases</p> <p>The women were heads of the families and were responsible for the gardens, and management, selected leadership</p> <p>Men hunted, fished, and gathered natural foods, medicines</p> <p>Everyone involved in the ceremonial cycle</p> <p>Peace delegations were traveling to neighboring Nations.</p> <p>Elders are the teachers.</p>	<p>60 villages or towns of the Haudenosaunee were burned and destroyed</p> <p>1779 holocaust</p> <p>Families survived in makeshift housing, log housing</p> <p>Gardens had to be restarted, old village sites could not be recovered</p> <p>The roles of men and women began to change</p> <p>Ceremonial cycle is disrupted</p> <p>Increased Influence of missionaries</p>	<p>Single-family homes with extended family</p> <p>The women continued their role of gardener</p> <p>The men had to adjust to raising animals</p> <p>Missionaries play a significant role</p> <p>Government agents active in communities</p> <p>Loss of traditional form of government</p> <p>Residential/boarding schools became prevalent</p>	<p>Single-family homes</p> <p>Single-parent families</p> <p>More dependence on outside education</p> <p>Gardens disappearing</p> <p>More women involved in career and wage economy</p> <p>Men away from communities in wage economy.</p> <p>Acceptance of Christianity</p> <p>Use of voting system to elect leadership</p> <p>Relocation programs to move people to the cities</p> <p>Education controlled by American/Canadian systems</p>

Cultural revitalization is being advocated in a very different environment from pre-contact Haudenosaunee culture. The chart identifies key changes that we need to be cognizant of and accept as the reality of the future. These indicators are reasons for a concerted effort at transformation. The art of transformation will be to find the contemporary expression of ka?nikohli:yo within an influenced and diverse environment. This re-examination of cultural transformation aims to encourage and provide some parameters to facilitate the intellectual process or dialogue of change and growth in a 21st-century adaptation and transformation.

This chapter provides a cursory examination of Haudenosaunee knowledge, sourcing the following elements for ongoing dialogue:

1. The Seven Stages of Life that integrate the teachings into a lifelong process
2. The Seven Characteristics or Values of the Haudenosaunee personality that inform the Onkwehónwe how they are to function with ka?nikohli:yo
3. The Seven Strategies of Cultural Revitalization adapted from the Requickening Address as a process for the overall transformation; each stage of the condolence process brings the person back to the original notion of the Good Mind or ka?nikohli:yo
4. Decolonizing the foreign philosophical and religious constructs in the culture.

Cultural transformation is about re-energizing the incorporation of the Haudenosaunee culture into everyday life. To achieve this ambitious work, it is important to examine adapted or learned constructs that affected how we view our world. We have not survived the Holocaust, colonialism, and ongoing punishment of dominant society without emotional, physical, or spiritual scars. For some of the Haudenosaunee, adopting a Christian worldview was a way of surviving. For the future,

the important objective is to clean the culture of any invasive element of Christianity that found a way into the thought process of the Onkwehónwe, which is a critical component of decolonization.

Chapter 3 – Naming Evil – Separating What Is Real and What Is Dream

Most of what has been spoken of in the first two chapters is the enormous value of the Haudenosaunee culture in the revitalization and transformation of Tsiniyukwaliho:t^ – a Way of Life. However, in the pursuit of Haudenosaunee life – Tsiniyukwaliho:t^ – there are always barriers to overcome that are external uncontrollable forces or self-inflicted behaviors and thoughts spawned by the oppression. By 1799, the collision of European and Haudenosaunee cultures had created an imbalance in ideology in the Northeast the homelands of the Iroquois.

This chapter centers on an analysis how European Christian constructs have invaded the original teachings of the longhouse through the Handsome Lake teachings and the necessity to begin to address the impact of interpretative dialogues that use Christian constructs to describe Haudenosaunee spirituality. The purpose is to seek greater clarity of the colonialism by Christian English coding of Indigenous ways. Given that this was the kind of English language used in 1799, an archaic form of English language, awareness is increasingly clear in understanding the overly simplistic attempt to make meaning of Haudenosaunee spiritual concepts with Christian patriarchal ideology. The importance of this exercise is to address a barrier that can cause a divergence of Haudenosaunee constructs into Christian rhetoric.

Some of the barriers to the transformation of Haudenosaunee culture are part of the insidious invasion of language and cosmology. Christian constructs invade through the use of English linguistic interpretations of Haudenosaunee spiritual concepts, and after more than 200 years of the Gawiiio, the potential of those Christian constructs to misappropriate the real meaning of Haudenosaunee spirituality continues.

According to personal observation of ceremonial events, there is a general use of Christian constructs (by the older generation) that are not necessarily a part of the ceremony but are used to describe the ceremony. The four beings are often referenced as angels, making things right before the Creator is often referred to as repenting, sky world is referred to as heaven, etc. These analogies can cause a shift in meaning but are also a slur of the historic reality of Haudenosaunee spirituality. The critical constructs that are most dangerous are the ideas of a hell and devil within Haudenosaunee culture. This begins to emerge from the narratives of Handsome Lake's dreams, which, if not understood from a Haudenosaunee perspective, become a part of the insidious nature of assimilation.

The focus is to examine and deconstruct how Christian constructs are used to express Haudenosaunee understanding of the invasion, including an examination of how Haudenosaunee analytical capacity of the invasion produces a unique narration of colonialism. Like all Onkwehónwe in North America, the Haudenosaunee has been under constant colonial pressure to change, at times under extreme oppressive conditions. This discussion centers around 1799, twenty years after Sullivan's campaign into Iroquoia, and Handsome Lake has a vision to bring the Haudenosaunee back into balance. It is my perception that Christianity became a focus for study by the leadership in the 19th century in an attempt to understand Christian values behind the insane behavior of the total warfare of Christians invading Haudenosaunee country. I focus on constructs of evil and punishment emerging within the Gaiwiio, the true words or message and a record of the vision and teachings of Handsome Lake (1735–1815).¹

In assessing the cultural origins for Handsome Lake's code, as he expressed it during his lifetime, it is apparent that it was a blend of several streams of cultural tradition amalgamated in a unique formula by his visionary experience. ...The images of heaven and, most

¹Handsome Lake is the English translation of his Seneca title.

particularly, hell seem clearly to have been based on a Christian model. Inasmuch as the Seneca had been in contact with Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, for about 200 years by the time Handsome Lake had his visions, it is likely that the concept of a hell filled with the damned being tortured was widespread.²

My concern comes from observation of ceremonial life in the Oneida longhouse and the discussion surrounding the teachings, revealing that there is a lingering reference to the notion of the constructs of hell and a devil within the cultural dialogue, which can influence the Haudenosaunee understanding of their worldview. If left unquestioned, the adapted Christian concepts would undermine the integrity of Haudenosaunee knowledge.

One of the Haudenosaunee ways of conceptualizing an understanding of different behaviors or knowledge is the use and incorporation of dreams. The power of dream (vision) is important to the psychological/spiritual knowledge and activities of Haudenosaunee life and linked to the maintenance of oral knowledge. “The Iroquois have, properly speaking, only a single Divinity,” wrote Father Fremin – the dream.”³ Dreams were used as an intuitive analysis among the Haudenosaunee to find solutions to their struggles in difficult times.⁴ Problems in the conscious reality are taken into the sub-conscious through dream understanding as an Indigenous form of intuitive analysis. This is a critical process of the Haudenosaunee when fear and anxiety are rampant within the community resulting from change and new realities. Intuitive analysis is a non-linear way of analysis that takes into account the whole or totality of the experience.

² Wallace, Anthony, W.C., *Origins of the Longhouse Religion, History of North American Indians, Northeast*, Volume 15 p.p. 447, 1978.

³Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*, 59.

⁴Wallace, Hewitt, Porter, and Thomas are a few authors who have referenced the value of dreams in Haudenosaunee life.

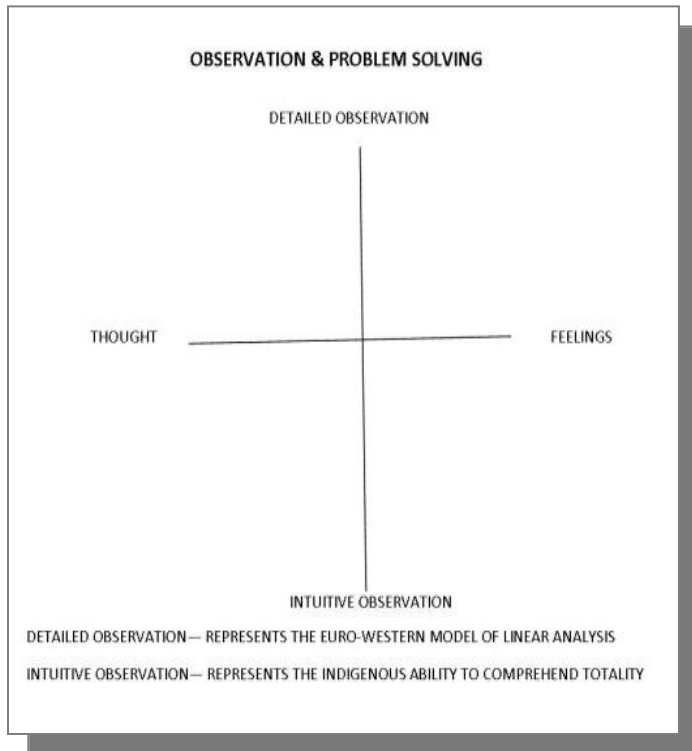


Figure 13 – Observation and Problem-Solving

Figure 13 offers a visual of the difference between Euro-Western thinking and the Indigenous thought process, which is a distortion between linear and holistic.⁵ It is my understanding that the power of intuition is the ability to synchronize thoughts, feelings, and spiritual law in the search for understanding.

In the major cultural stories, dreams or intuitive observation and analysis play a critical role in the acquisition of knowledge.

Certainly in 1799, a dream set the stage for cultural survival of the Haudenosaunee for the coming generations that still is a very integral part of Haudenosaunee culture. A majority of longhouses visit the recital of the Gaiwiiio every two years, or, during certain ceremonies, short narratives are told to emphasize the influence of the teachings on the lifestyle, belief systems, and importance of Haudenosaunee identity.

The Gaiwiiio does not define Haudenosaunee spirituality but is a cultural representation of the invasion, occupation, and colonialism of Iroquoia. Colonialism must be understood within the confines of the reservations or it becomes a perpetual source of post-traumatic stress disorder. What the teachings of Handsome Lake provide is a clear cultural expression of the invasion and the

⁵Donald Grinde, conversation, May 7, 2012; Chart A is constructed from the dialogue with Dr. Grinde as an interpretation of what is described as the difference in thought processes.

invader. The message offers an explanation of ways to survive the clash of cultures challenging Haudenosaunee citizens to help make intelligent choices when confronted with assimilative measures. It is timely to examine the Gaiwiio from a Haudenosaunee perspective to further advance the importance of these realizations how “dreamwork”⁶ as intuitive analysis provides experiential, pragmatic knowledge to bring back balance. In Death and the Rebirth of the Senecas,⁷ Wallace examines the cultural stresses that fueled the cultural revitalization of the Haudenosaunee. Handsome Lake’s message was not about religious rhetoric or a messianic offering survival for individual souls; the message offered simple guidance for the survival of the community, clans, and nations of the Haudenosaunee. Given the reality that all people live in societies that are either group- or individual-oriented, Handsome Lake’s message spoke of the distinction and difference between the Iroquois and the settlers; Western ideology and theology were about individualism, while the Iroquois remained communal or group-oriented.⁸

These concepts were examined through the Oneida language with the assistance of fluent language/cultural instructors from the Oneida community in Ontario. The Oneida Settlement in Ontario is 60 miles west of the Six Nations community on the Grand River. Oneida is a rather closed community, very protective and, at the same time, rich in tradition. In addition to Oneida, I have also included some Mohawk language understandings from David Maracle, a linguist/professor at the University of Western Ontario. The significant fieldwork revolves around discussions with fluent

⁶Dreamwork is a construct to describe the impact of Haudenosaunee dreams. The idea came from Archibald’s work in Indigenous Storywork in 2008.

⁷Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, 1972.

⁸John Mohawk, Tom Porter, and Jake Thomas are a few Haudenosaunee Elders and Chiefs who have discussed the difference between individualism and the communal role of a person in Haudenosaunee life.

speakers about the constructs within the Oneida language centered on the concept of evil and how the culture combats it.

The following concepts and constructs come from a discussion with Charlene Deleary, wolf clan student of the Oneida language, and Mohawk speaker David Maracle,⁹ who offered the following translations:

Shakohlewatha (hiewaht [root word]) – “he punishes them”

“Oneshu? – Hell in the contemporary sense, but also referred to the area between the turtle’s shell and the earth – the dark/sunless place where the minions/Creations of Thawiskara live.

It also means the back side of the mountain where the sun never reaches.”¹⁰

The use of an Oneida word meaning a dark/sunless place often referred to the backside of a mountain as the idea of hell. This is clearly a borrowed construct to describe the concept of hell. The closest description of a place that is often referred to as hell is somewhere underground. The reference to “Thawiskara,” the crooked-minded twin, draws on the Haudenosaunee concept of wrong-mindedness. However, this character is not the same as Shakolewatha.

In the Creation story, Thawiskara was the other half of his twin brother Thaluhyawaku, who was responsible for creating life. Thawiskara is often referred as the left-handed twin who lived in his brother’s shadow, involved in Creation but not the primary force. It is understood that they

⁹Charlene Deleary is the Chiefs’ Council secretary and language student. David Miracle, Mohawk, wolf clan, and linguist, is also involved in the development of teaching methodologies of the Oneida language. Charlene was researching similar concepts, and my discussion took place with Charlene during the summer and fall of 2011. The Oneida and Mohawk languages are similar, and the dialogue to understand meanings and how words are used to name new concepts are similar in both languages.

¹⁰David Maracle, Mohawk linguist.

represented the twinning of life, the forces that cause balance in the natural world.¹¹ The construct of a “left handed twin is too close to the Christian concept of left being the hand of the devil rooted in the Latin word sinistra meaning “leftwardness or evil”.¹² The original story refers to the twins by name – Thaluhyawaku and Thawiskara – and are not referred to as left- and right-handed twins. Attempts at relating Shakohlewatha to Thawiskara are inappropriate to the cultural construct of the Creation story by misdirecting the intent of the story away from the idea of the balance of the spiritual energies in life.

Once a character exists, it needs a home in storytelling. It would appear that Shakohlewatha needed a place and hell seemed appropriate. In Thomas’s work Teachings from the Longhouse, it is referred to as the “House of Punishment.”¹³ It would appear that this effort to place a construct of hell in Haudenosaunee culture is an attempt at trying to make sense of some of these constructs that emerged from the Gaiwiiio, Handsome Lake’s vision. I contend that these concepts were borrowed in an attempt to understand the invasion by Christians. These concepts were not borrowed and positioned to understand Haudenosaunee culture but to understand the invasion of the Christians. The new character (the Punisher) remains inside the story as well as the place (hell), and the story is about how to understand and survive the invasion without taking the burden of death and destruction as self-infliction.

The message or vision of Handsome Lake came during the generation when America waged the largest war campaign against an Indigenous group to destroy the Haudenosaunee. Sectors of

¹¹ Lounsbury, Floyd and Gick, Bryan translated & eds. *The Oneida Creation Story* by Demus Elm & Harvey Antone, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2000.

¹² Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, tenth edition, definition of “sinister.”

¹³ Thomas, Chief Jacob, Terry Boyle, Ed. *Teachings from the Longhouse* (Toronto : Stroddart, 1994).

Oneidas were allies of the Americans prior to the war against the Iroquois, but it did not matter because of the number of Oneidas that were killed at Onondaga who had married into that nation.¹⁴

In 1779, Sullivan's campaign was an act of genocide ordered by George Washington. Over 60 Haudenosaunee villages and towns were destroyed, 90% of the land was lost to the settlers, and their governments were busy finding ways to further the destruction of Haudenosaunee culture. By 1799, twenty years later, the shift from genocide to ethnocide was already taking place.

The attempt by Christian regimes to destroy the Haudenosaunee world has created a dialogue among the Iroquois in an attempt to understand the insanity of the invasion. It is my contention, based on those discussions and through the dream state, that the emergence of the character Sakolawatha – “Punisher” – in the Handsome Lake teachings was a way to understand or interpret the kind of evil that was being perpetrated against the Haudenosaunee by the Christians. One of the other realizations is that the concept of a devil and hell was borrowed from Christianity to understand the question, “What are these people”¹⁵ who have invaded our world? It would be fair to say that the Haudenosaunee did not have a way to understand this kind of evil, being unfamiliar with massive killing and the murder of women and children prior to Sullivan's campaign.

Handsome Lake was a Seneca Chief for the turtle clan carrying the title of Ska'niadar'io, an ordinary man who lived in the time when the Iroquois Confederacy had fallen on hard times.

[He] “was born in 1735 in the Seneca village of Conawagas (Cano' wages') on the Genesee River opposite the present town of Avon, Livingston County. He is described.... as a middle-

¹⁴Barbara Alice Mann, *George Washington's War on Native America* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005).”

¹⁵Stannard, David E. *The Conquest of the New World: American Holocaust* (New York, NY: Oxford, 1992), 149. Stannard refers to holocaust scholars Wiesel, Abrahamson, and Toland, who articulate their realization of: “what are these people?”

sized man, slim and unhealthy looking. He was a member of one of the noble (hoya'ne') families in which the title of Ganio'dai'io' or Ska'niadar'io ... It is known ... that he belonged to the Turtle clan.... His half brother was the celebrated Cornplanter."¹⁶

Handsome Lake's visions represent how the Haudenosaunee dealt with difficult times by listening to dreams, their holistic intuitive abilities. With respect to Indigenous research and cultural practices, dreams are critical components in the acquisition of knowledge, guidance, and focus of life that is about the ability to comprehend the totality of life's situations through the use of our gift of dream – intuitive analysis.¹⁷

The dream could also indicate what an individual should do in order to gain or restore his good health and his good fortune. Certain dreams indicated "the desires of the soul" (as the Jesuits recorded it in the seventeenth century), what dance and other ceremonies, feasts, and material objects the soul wished to have given.¹⁸

Understanding how dreams work in Iroquois culture requires one to examine the number of dreams that have influenced cultural development and change. It is a critical mechanism of Haudenosaunee cultural expression used as a defense against colonialism and similar to Smith's idea of the power of decolonizing in storytelling.

Storytelling, oral histories, the perspectives of the elders and of women have become an integral part of all Indigenous research... Intrinsic in storytelling is a focus on dialogue and conversations amongst ourselves as Indigenous peoples, to ourselves and for ourselves.¹⁹

¹⁶ Parker, Arthur C. Parker on the Iroquois, The Code of Handsome Lake, the Seneca Prophet, Book Two, p.p. 9 Syracuse Press, Syracuse N.Y.1975.

¹⁷From discussions with Dr. Grinde on May 6, 2012.

¹⁸, Tooker, Elisabeth, Iroquois since 1820, History of North American Indians, Northeast, Volume 15, pp454, 1978.

¹⁹Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples (City: Publisher, year), 144-145.

This includes the sharing of dreams and visions seeking the unfolding of truth.

Since the invasion, the cultural and historic pressures surrounding the world of the Onkwehónwe have been an unforgiving ethnocide attempting to force conformity and marginalization to fit the acceptable version of acculturated citizenship of the settler state. It is an unrelenting force of punishment. My grandmother gave me an understanding of punishment through a story that personalizes the construct of the Punisher.

As I reflected on this notion of punishment, I remembered what my grandmother used to say: “If you don’t behave, the white man is going to come and get you and he will punish you.”²⁰ For most of my younger life, I assumed that Punisher was the imaginary “white man”. The White Man²¹ has done painful work in metering out punishment over the generations of contact from the genocide of 1779 to the ethnocide policies and programs of the settler governments. The residential school system to “kill the Indian, save the man” captures the enormity of the ethnocide as one of the tools of oppression to destroy Indigenous cultures and languages. Hoover in *The Red and The Black* captures the totality of the invasion where the invader has to struggle to find space for the Indian in their consciousness only to witness the subjugation of a race separated in Western thought as not human. The invading settlers hide behind the doctrine of discovery while speaking about equality that does not include the Indigenous peoples. As Hoover states, “equality is an ethical conviction that lies deep

²⁰A memory from my childhood in the 1950’s.

²¹For the sake of this paper, I use the term white man as representative of European invaders and earlier settlers. It was a common expression of my Elders when speaking about white or Euro-Canadian society or the Americans.

in Western tradition and that, violated often in practice, still remains a cornerstone of any social theory that attempts to create a ‘good’ society”²², and it remains one of America’s mythologies.

Those memories and dreams of my grandmother’s voice caused me to focus on the importance of deconstructing the Punisher, who entered Iroquois culture through Handsome Lake’s vision and teachings in 1799 as critical to the process of cultural evaluation, decolonization, and acceptance of transformation. Did we have to create a Punisher to understand the level of evil the invaders were willfully bringing to the Haudenosaunee people and land? The Haudenosaunee have faced the devious ways of the invaders since 1534.²³ Does naming the evil separate one from the space of evil?

Stannard references Terrence Des Pres, a holocaust scholar; “with regard to the Nazis attempted mass extermination of Europe’s Jews, “demonic” seems a better word than “insane” to characterize genocidal behavior [the]informal definition, the dedication of life’s energies to the production of death is a demonic principle of the first degree.”²⁴ This definition expresses more of what was witnessed and documented about the wars and killings of women, children, elders, and the destruction of the towns and villages of the Haudenosaunee. The real question is:

... what are these people? – an observation of Wiesel’s (Nobel Laureate, and holocaust survivor) regarding the perpetrators of the Jewish Holocaust is an equally apt beginning for those who would seek to understand the motivations that ignited and fanned the flames of the

²²Hoover, Dwight W. *The Red and The Black*, viii.

²³ Trigger, Bruce, Ed., *History of North American Indians, Northeast, Volume 15: Early Iroquois Contacts with Europeans*, pp344, 1978. The first recorded contact with Europeans took place at Baie de Gaspé on July 16, 1534.

²⁴ Stannard, David in *The Conquest of the New World: American Holocaust*, quotes Des Pres in finding a way to define those who engage in extermination and genocide.

mass destruction of the Americas' native peoples: All the killers were Christian.²⁵

That is one of the similarities of two historical holocaust events: the adversaries were Christian. Stannard references another connection: "it is worth noting also that the Führer from time to time expressed admiration for the 'efficiency' of the American genocide campaign against the Indians, viewing it as a forerunner for his own plans and programs."²⁶ One could conclude that, to really understand the demonic nature of the Christian invaders, one would have to study the Christian worldview. For over 700 years before coming to the Western Hemisphere the Christian world has been at a constant state of war with the crusades in Europe and in the Middle East with the Muslims. The Christian mindset easily accepts the notion of total warfare. In accordance with Haudenosaunee law, the Christians were out of balance in both their human and environmental relations. Mohawk, in Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World, provides an examination of how genocide, slavery, subjugation, and exploitation of the natural world are deeply rooted in Western society's highest aspirations and notions of progress.²⁷

Up until 1799, the Haudenosaunee had the twins Thaluhyswaku and Tawiskslu²⁸ from the Creation story, whose behavior provided insight into Iroquois concepts of twinning, the good-minded and wrong-minded balance of the world. Then, in the Great Law stories, the Haudenosaunee also had Tadodaho, the Onondaga Chief whose symbolic graphic expression of evil was the snakes coming from his head. It was understood that a person's mind could be twisted to think and act in ways that

²⁵Ibid, p.p.153; Stannard quoted from Irving Abrahamson, *Against Silence: the Voice and Vision of Elie Wiesel*, 1985.

²⁶Stannard references John Toland's work *Adolf Hitler* (1976).

²⁷John C. Mohawk, *Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World* (City: Clear Light, 2000).

²⁸The name of the twins is from Demus Elm and Harvey Antone, Eds., *The Oneida Creation Story* (Lounsbury: Floyd, 2000).

hurt, injured, and destroyed other human beings. The work of the Peacemaker was a cultural revitalization over 500 years before the invasion of the white man. Haudenosaunee psychology is based on bringing into balance the different forces or energies as represented in the Creation story of the twins, who symbolically represented contrary forces of nature giving life and taking life. A similar philosophical concept, the Chinese yīnyáng, which is often referred to in the West as “yin and yang, is used to describe how polar opposites or seemingly contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent in the natural world, and how they give rise to each other in turn. Opposites thus only exist in relation to each other.”²⁹ The seeking of balance of these identified energy forces in nature and within the human being is one of the continuous activities of the way of life for the Haudenosaunee seeking Skennen.³⁰

In Christian doctrine, there is only absolute good and absolute evil; very seldom is there a discussion of accepting the spiritual balance of different forces affecting human existence. For centuries, the Indian was a representation of evil, the savage in the wildness, in Western thought.

The word savage thus underwent considerable alteration of meaning as different colonists pursued their varied ends. The constant of Indian inferiority implied the rejection of his humanity.... it came to deny the Indian citizenship in his own community.... [There was] no justification for Indian resistance to European invasion.³¹

For over 200 years, we have had a Punisher construct talked about, experienced, iconized, and living large in Handsome Lake’s teachings and in the recital of the Gaiwiiio since 1830 – as a mythical construct of Haudenosaunee reality. What does naming evil give a culture? Does it put into

²⁹Porkert, M. *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine* (City: MIT Press, 1974).

³⁰Skennen – Onkwehónwe word for peace.

³¹Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (City: Norton, 1975), 59.

perspective the invasion and ongoing senseless effort of destruction of culture, land, and peoples? As the white man renamed the rivers, valleys, mountains, and sacred places, the Iroquois named the invasion as the work of the Punisher. How does naming or labeling something create greater understanding?

The misuse of the Punisher character and construct of hell to form values and edicts to guide human development was internalized oppression when those values changed the space of the traditional relations of men and women in Haudenosaunee society, meaning that moving away from a woman-centered culture without careful revitalization can lead to a patriarchal ideology. One of the challenges within Iroquois culture is to examine and decolonize the borrowed Christian concepts used to understand the behavior of the white man before those concepts ruin Haudenosaunee culture.

The European invasion brought new cultures, and the ethnocide policies forced Indigenous peoples to take on Western values, in many cases as a matter of survival. When Western values were used to establish Indian residential schools, the intent was the total destruction of Indigenous cultures, languages, families, and land. Hoover's examination of the European invasion of other cultures and lands for resources, slavery, and wealth paints a mural of perpetual war from 750 AD to 1500 AD against Islam justifying genocide and bringing it to North America while at the same time arguing, debating, and theorizing that people who are different might be human.³² The domination and destructiveness of the Christians who invaded Haudenosaunee are understood and captured in Edward Cornplanter's narration.

³²Hoover, *The Red and The Black*.

Looking for the Punisher amidst the Oppression

Edward Cornplanter – Son-son-da-wa – a Seneca orator/traditionalist, prefaced the recorded Parker’s version of the Handsome Lake code with a thesis titled How the White Race Came to America and Why the Gaiwiio Became a Necessity,³³ addressing why the code was needed; what the purpose was; what the frame of reference was for understanding the code; and a summary of the ageless dialogue of why the white man tried to eliminate all the Indians. It is an incredible story of how the Seneca understood what transpired before Columbus left on his journey to the Americas. It is a critical summary of the Indigenous thinking at the time that provides a window into Haudenosaunee thinking about the origin of the white man. Did this story originate in the dream state? This part of the discussion is important because it demystifies the cultural integrity of the dream/message of Sganyadai:yoh (Handsome Lake).

Cornplanter’s narration exhibits Haudenosaunee thinking from of the 18th century in a world where the presence of the white man is incomprehensible when examining the results: ongoing mistreatment, genocide, and ethnocide, a story of criminal genocidal warfare and exploitation. In storytelling fashion, Cornplanter gathers the notions of evil into the character of the Punisher, which provides a picture of complete imbalance in human relations while attempting to understand the circumstances of that century. Edward Cornplanter’s translation of the following story about the origin of evil towards the Iroquois expresses how the Iroquois were dealing with the invasion that I summarize as the following ;

A young preacher in the Old Country who was an aid to the Queen was in a constant search for his god until he found a secret book of the Queen’s. “He read of a great man who had

³³Parker, Parker on the Iroquois: The Code of Handsome Lake, the Seneca Prophet, 16

been a prophet and the son of the Great Ruler. He had been born on the earth and the white men to whom he preached killed him.” He became distraught thinking that his god did not exist on this earth. The very next day after this realization, from his window, in his dismay, he saw a beautiful island and castle of gold. He took two older preachers with him to investigate and discovered a bridge of gold connecting to the island. The older preachers became afraid and ran off, leaving the young preacher alone to enter the castle. A man greeted him and told that he needed to instruct the kings and queens in the Old Country to amass men and ships to travel toward the setting sun and that what waited was a new land filled with riches and different people.

“Across the ocean that lies toward the sunset is another world and a great country and a people whom you have never seen. These people are virtuous, they have no unnatural evil habits and they are honest.” Tell them to destroy all the people with the five gifts, “a flask of rum, a pack of playing cards, a handful of coins, a violin and decayed leg bone”

When the young man left the castle and island, everything disappeared, a mirage, invisible to the naked eye. The man disappeared. The story was told much like a dream, a part of Handsome Lake’s dream, a vision that asked the question, “What are these people?”³⁴

Although, in the recitals of the code, the five things are not often spoken of, they remain a part of the dialogue during the gatherings today. The five things today are often referred as alcohol, the Bible, shackles, cards/violin, and diseases. These are instruments of oppression and ethnocide, causing imbalance and a hierarchical patriarchal societal change separating people from Creation.

In the language, they are considered mind-changers.

What you call “*deganigonhadé:nyons*” is what the messengers call the “mind changer” and was not given to the Ongwehónwe... For the Ongwehónwe it will bring great misery and hardship.³⁵

Each item represents different tools of assimilation or ways that the Onkwehónwe mind can be changed through cultural assimilation. The teachings recognize the power of these instruments of death and their use historically in the oppression of the Haudenosaunee. Each tool of Western culture

³⁴Parker, Parker on the Iroquois: The Code of Handsome Lake, The Seneca Prophet, 17.

³⁵Chief Jacob Thomas, and Terry Boyle, Eds. Teachings from the Longhouse (City: Stoddart, 1994).

is designed to destroy the culture of the Haudenosaunee. The use of these items will take one's attention away from understanding Creation and its balance

The “invisible man” is Haniisse’no, a force that is the evil spirit the Seneca refer to as the invaders’ God, their demon, their evil force, a Punisher. Is this a way to understand the horrific reality that Handsome Lake witnessed in his lifetime from 1735 to 1815? The Iroquois, who had become disillusioned and struggled to survive after Sullivan’s campaign, used dream to survive. It is human nature to rationalize what is incomprehensible to the human mind, the holocaust that was taking place across Haudenosaunee country. The dialogue of the time tried to understand why the white man hated the Indian so much that he wanted to destroy them all. It did not sound like human thought or a human idea. It had to be the work of an evil spirit, a power greater than human thought. Generations before during the coming of the Great Law, the Peacemaker engaged evil among the Onkwehónwe that was expressed in the character of Thadodaho, an Onondaga patriarchal force of evil. This evil was embodied in one of their own, and the Peacemaker brought the leadership’s collaborative energies together to defeat and change the mind of Thadodaho. This was over 500 years in the past, and the kind of evil the Haudenosaunee faced with the invasion was perpetrated a different people who had a different culture.

In trying to make sense of the inhumane actions of the white man, a spiritual energy was acknowledged as the “Punisher,” the evil one, the “invisible one” in the story who desires to destroy the Onkwehónwe. According to Cornplanter’s narration, the white man must be immersed in the Punisher’s grip, guided by evil. Here we see the Iroquois trying to make sense of the American Holocaust, and the real question was the same: “What are these people?” The answer was still the same: they were Christians following the dogma of distorted beliefs of human flesh as sin and evil.

The dream was not the sole vision of Handsome Lake; another story is related from Parker's notes by Wallace:

...in the winter of 1799 while one of the Friends [Quakers] was engaged in instructing the children in school learning, a message came from a confederate tribe, eighty miles distant, stating that one of their little girls had dreamed that "the devil was in all white people alike, and that they ought not to receive instruction from the Quakers."³⁶

It would stand to reason that the children would have nightmares; it would have been a common occurrence after the burning of the Iroquois towns and villages. There are those who say that Handsome Lake was influenced by the Quakers and Christian theology.³⁷ There was much dialogue between the Quakers and Senecas, whom I believe were trying to understand the foreigners. Did Chief Cornplanter and Handsome Lake ask the same question: "What are these people?" Red Jacket, an influential Seneca of the time, was outspoken against Christianity and would have asked the questions trying to make sense of the invasion. In November 1805, in a meeting held at Buffalo Creek this is an excerpt from Reverend Cram's speech trying to convince the Senecas to become Christians.

"Brother: I have not come to get your lands or your money, but to enlighten your minds, to instruct you how to worship the Great Spirit agreeably to his mind and will, and to preach to you the gospel of his son Jesus Christ."³⁸

After a two-hour council debate over the issue, Red Jacket replied with the standard acknowledgement of thanksgiving and then addressed the issue:

"Brother; Listen to what I have to say.

³⁶ Wallace, Anthony, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*, New York, Vintage House, 1972, p.p. 60

³⁷ Anthony Wallace, "Origins of the Longhouse Religion," *Handbook of the North America Indian*, Volume 15 (City: Publisher, year), 4.

³⁸ Densmore, Christopher, *Red Jacket Iroquois Diplomat and Orator*, Syracuse Press: Syracuse, N.Y., 1999, p.p. 136

There was a time when our forefathers owned this great island. Their seats extended from the rising to the setting sun. The Great Spirit had made it for the use of Indians. He had created the buffalo, the deer, and other animals for food. He had made the bear and the beaver. Their skins served us for clothing. He had scattered them over the country, and taught us how to take them. He had caused the earth to produce corn for bread. All this He had done for his red children, because He loved them. If we had some disputes about our hunting ground, they were generally settled without the shedding of much blood. But an evil day came upon us. Your forefathers crossed the great water, and landed on this island. Their numbers were small. They found friends and not enemies. They told us they had fled from their own country for fear of wicked men, and had come here to enjoy their religion. They asked for a small seat. We took pity on them, granted their request; and they sat down amongst us. We gave them corn, and meat, they gave us poison in return..."

Brother; our seats were once large and yours were small. You have now become a great people, and we have scarcely a place left to spread our blankets. You have got our country, but are not satisfied; you want to force your religion upon us.³⁹

After a two-hour deliberation on this issue of religion, it is clear that there was much dialogue and wonderment about the White man's religion and his representation of his religion.

What Handsome Lake's message helped to do was bring some clarity or understanding of a way to look at the invasion and the future of the occupation by the white man of Turtle Island. The Punisher becomes a character but more of a representation of the oppression, colonialism, and suffering. He appears like a new character entering our stories, the oral traditions that maintained the culture and ceremonies. Sakolawatha (Punisher) is a strange character, out of place in the original stories of the Haudenosaunee about Creation, ceremonies, and great law, peace, and being Haudenosaunee. He is spoken of as a distant, invisible being that most Haudenosaunee would sooner not talk about, but my personal memory recalls what my grandmother would say, and it was clear that she accepted the notion that it was the white man who was the Punisher, a force that she spoke of that only harmed, never helping.

³⁹Christopher Densmore, *Red Jacket Iroquois Diplomat and Orator*, Syracuse, 1999, 137-138.

As the Punisher entered our stories, so too did the white man enter our world, and how the Punisher was described in the dream state of Handsome Lake is what we have witnessed as recipients of pain that the white man chooses to use to manipulate our world, imprisoning our freedom and sovereignty on reservations. At the time of his visions, in 1799, it was five years after the Canandaigua Treaty, and most of the guarantees in the Treaty of Protected Reservations were violated.

Sakolawatha means “*he inflicts punishment*”⁴⁰: in the Oneida language, his name aptly describes a character whose primary role is to cause hurt, pain and suffering to those around him in a way that we describe today as genocide, colonialism, and ethnic cleansing. For the purpose of this dissertation, Punisher is more than a character in a story; he is a Haudenosaunee representation of what the invasion means to the Onkwehónwe. This is a form of evil unknown to the Haudenosaunee before the arrival of the white man. To kill without purpose, without reason, without meaning, without war, without communication, and suddenly, without warning is a thought that was not even imaginable before the coming of the white man. Before the invasion, the Haudenosaunee experienced their share of warfare over the expansion of their Great Law of Peace but never the total of destruction brought by the American invasion.

Did Handsome Lake witness Sullivan’s campaign throughout Iroquoia, the burning, destroying, and murdering of whole families, including the women and children? Mann refers to *The Journal of Major John Norton*, Seaver’s, and Kelsay’s writings in her research:

⁴⁰Additional information from the fluent Oneida speakers. Speakers include Howard Elijah Hodasita, wolf clan firekeeper, and Bruce Elijah, Faithkeeper, Wolf Clan, Oneida.

“The launching of Sullivan’s campaign began at Onondaga Creek on the early morning raid April 21, 1779.... Van Schaick men had indiscriminately killed twelve to fifteen people and taking thirty-four prisoners, men, women, children.... small children were killed, the soldiers taking them by the heels and dashing their brains out against trees, a commonplace European way of disposing of unwanted Innocents at the time.”⁴¹

The total devastation of the genocidal march ordered by Washington involved sixty towns of the Haudenosaunee. Sganyadai:yoh was 44 years old during the invasion, witnessing a force spreading across his country, burning and destroying, killing everything and everyone in the path. Venables cites the Haldimand Transcripts for further evidence of the evil of the invasion:

In 1782 during a council at Niagara an Onondaga Chief recalls what happened in April, 1799; “When they came to the Onondaga town (of which I was one of the principal chiefs) they put to death all the women and children, excepting some of the young women that they carried away for the use of their Soldiers, and put to death in a more shameful and scandalous manner; Yet these Rebels calls themselves Christians.”⁴²

Washington was soon named Ganadaiyoush, Town Destroyer, responsible for continuing “colonialism ... a 500 year organized crime spree.”⁴³ Washington was a Virginian, slave-owning land speculator who used his position of power to make wars of genocide on Indigenous populations for an immeasurable fortune in land speculation. As an architect of genocide, was he any different from Hitler? Today, we understand them as psychopaths, people with an incurable mental illness that has ravaged our history with demonic episodes of crime and genocide. I keep reminding myself that Handsome Lake was in his 40s during this holocaust and that the psychological impact it would have on his life would have been traumatic. It is important for me to try to put a real face on the reality of the time, realizing the value of human nature in historical events.

⁴¹Mann, *George Washington’s War on Naïve America*, 31.

⁴²Robert W. Venables, *American Indian History: Five Centuries of Conflict and Coexistence Volume 1: Conquest of a Continent 1492–1783* (City: Clearlight, 2004), 293-294.

⁴³Mann, *George Washington’s War on Native America*.

Parker, Shimony, Thomas, and Wallace are referenced by Johansen and Mann as they try to place Handsome Lake in a historical context. In 1794, Handsome Lake witnessed the Canandaigua Treaty signing; “he stood silent and glum at the Canandaigua Treaty, which time, his beloved wife died, followed quickly to the grave by two of his daughters. Sganyadai:yoh began drinking heavily.”⁴⁴ He was 59 years old at the time.

Handsome Lake was 64 years old in 1799 when his visions came to him, and the Holocaust was fresh in the minds of the Haudenosaunee and their nightmares. What he described was not a surprise, but the painful reality was that it was not going to stop.

The different methodologies of oppression are articulated in Handsome Lake’s teachings. His vision was right. We would continue to be punished for being Indians, being different, believing in our ways, practicing our traditions, and maintaining our self-determination. One of the realities of war and genocide is the fear and anxieties that were present, affecting the dreams and functionality of the people in their everyday activities. The fear and anxiety fed the need for dream since it was a common way to deal with troublesome times to forge a new reality that would lead to survival and restore balance in Haudenosaunee society.

What is it about evil that we try to ignore? In our ignorance, we fail to see the truth about what evil is. The evil brought to our territories by the invaders does not connect with the balance of spirit energy we had come to understand from our own teachings introduced to us through the Creation story. There are two opposing energies in our world. Neither is evil, but the human mind has the capacity to alter negative energy to create evil. This evil is about control, manipulation, force,

⁴⁴Bruce Elliot Johansen, and Barbara Alice Mann, Eds., *Encyclopedia of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy)* (City: Greenwood, 2000), 146-147.

retribution, greed, vengeful, lust, etc. The fancy terms we have for it includes “oppression by state governments” and “colonialism.” There is nothing good about colonialism. It is a pain deep within one’s soul aching to be released from the infliction of the assault of the crown’s sword.⁴⁵

Handsome Lake’s vision captures the essence of the evil within the description of the Punisher. The fluent speakers of Oneida provided an analysis of the constructs of evil within the Gaiwiiio texts from a Haudenosaunee cultural perspective. This discussion is about the Christian influence on Handsome Lake’s teachings. The Punisher as a devil is a new construct, as is the idea or notion of a hell, which are both Christian concepts, not Haudenosaunee. Although the concept of Punisher is analogous to Christian ideas, it is also an adaption or interpretation of the colonizing forces changing Haudenosaunee reality.

As stated, the Punisher arrived in the culture as the Haudenosaunee were grappling with trying to understand the horrific terror that was being inflicted by the Americans and British. Edward Cornplanter’s rationale for the Gaiwiiio speaks of a story that is part of Handsome Lake’s dream and a part of the dialogue among the people at the time. For many traditionalists, it is still a point of discussion, as the war against “different” continues in both Canada and the U.S. Why does white society hate the Indian, the Iroquois?

The vast majority of traditional Haudenosaunee give thanks for the Gaiwiiio, Handsome Lake’s teachings, for the direction it gave to keep the old ceremonies alive and to keep raising Chiefs and Clan Mothers and to work with the earth for sustenance. Our ancestors lived through the hell created by the white man during Washington’s invasion and destruction of our towns and villages.

⁴⁵I use the crown’s sword as a representation of the authority of the European crowns that invaded North America.

The white man has earned the title of Punisher/devil and creator of hell. Washington was aptly named “Town Destroyer” a name that has survived the centuries with the Haudenosaunee and continues to refer to the President of the United States. Johannah Cornblatt states in an article in the Collector’s Edition U.S. News & World Report: The American Revolution magazine:

“The Iroquois Indians bestowed on Washington another not-so-flattering epithet: *Conotocarious*, or “Town Destroyer”... in 1779, when Washington ordered what at the time was the largest ever campaign against the Indians of North America. Washington authorized the “total destruction and devastation” of the Iroquois settlements across upstate New York so “that country may not merely be *overrun* but *destroyed*.”⁴⁶

Venables concurs the cruelty faced by the Haudenosaunee was well established.

“The whites’ reputation for slaughter and cruelty, including the failure to take Indians alive as prisoners of war – unless it was to sell them into slavery – was well established and on-going.”⁴⁷

This was well understood before the 1799 campaign. Like most of the Haudenosaunee of the time, Oneidas were divided; some were pro-British, others pro-American, and still others neutral. The larger faction was pro-American or pro-colonist beginning in 1775 when the war among the whites began to rage across their territories.

The Oneida Haudenosaunee’s presence on the patriot side, and the formidable number of other Haudenosaunee on the British side, were clear declaration that conflicting debates within the confederacy had transformed into conflicting choices.⁴⁸

⁴⁶This April 24, 2012, publication stresses the record that is maintained about the destruction of the Haudenosaunee relived in historical records.

⁴⁷Venables, *American Indian History, Five Centuries of Conflict & Coexistence, Volume 1 Conquest of a Continent 1492 -1783*, Clear Light, Sante Fe, N.M., 2004 p.p.292.

⁴⁸*Ibid* p.p.286.

After 1799, Oneida towns were victims of the acts of revenge on the part of pro-British Haudenosaunee. In 1780, the Oneidas sought shelter at Fort Stanwix when their towns, crops, and orchards were destroyed. The colonists' armies did nothing to help the Oneidas.

After the Oneidas migrated to Ontario, Canada, in 1840, they reestablished a relationship with the rest of the Haudenosaunee by 1858,⁴⁹ and a condolence ceremony to rectify the past was held and to rejoin the council of the Haudenosaunee.

What is demonic evil?

According to the Haudenosaunee, evil is the activity of a human being who has chosen to manipulate thoughts and behaviors to control others and, in the end, to destroy them if necessary. Some of this understanding comes from the story of Tatadaho, who is not only symbolic but representative of what Haudenosaunee in their ancient knowledge recorded as their experience with evil. Evil is an individual who has manipulated spiritual energy to cause harm and exert control over other human beings. This understanding is about using spiritual energy to manipulate other human beings. When evil becomes a group activity, it is demonic. Washington the Town Destroyer is typically named for his demonic act of using his power to destroy others.

Do the Haudenosaunee have words similar to demonic in their Onkwehónwe neha or language? The strongest representation is words that refer to witchcraft or punishment or descriptions of activities that result in death or pain. I conclude that it became necessary to borrow constructs from Western culture that explained the evil that the Haudenosaunee experienced.

⁴⁹Alex Frank Ricciardelli, *Factionalism at Oneida, an Iroquois Indian Community*, (1961).

At the time of the invasion, the explorers had the blessing of their churches. As Columbus traveled from island to island, he made claim with a proclamation a *reuerimiento*:

I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of Their Highnesses. We shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as Their Highnesses may command. And we shall take your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey and refuse to receive their lord and resist and contradict him.⁵⁰

This proclamation is a summary of Edward Cornplanter's thesis in How the White Race Came to America and Why the Gaiwiiio Became a Necessity, an effort to understand the demonic reality of the invasion with the blessing of the church.

Similar to the 18th-century Seneca dialogue with the Quakers to understand this Christian religion that inflicted evil against other human beings, I have examined some of the writings in Western psychology to understand their evil. Dr. Michael Stone, a professor of clinical psychiatry and author of The Anatomy of Evil, offers the following definition:

For an act to be evil

1. it must be breathtakingly horrible
2. malice aforethought (evil intention) will usually precede the act;
3. the degree of suffering inflicted will be wildly excessive;
4. the nature of the act will appear incomprehensible, bewildering, beyond the imagination of ordinary people in the community.⁵¹

While Dr. Stone's primary work is an examination of evil during peacetime, he does point out that, during wartime, everything is different.

⁵⁰Stannard in American Holocaust references Arthur Helps' work *The Spanish Conquest in America* (1990), 264-267.

⁵¹Michael Stone, *The Anatomy of Evil* (2009). Stone is the author of ten books and host of Discovery Channel's former series *Most Evil*.

“During wartime many of the leaders in such times, especially the aggressors, partake of this “otherness” ... being awash in violence ...to a point of becoming monsters.” The soldiers under these leaders become swept up in the battle, “their minds replaced temporarily.

[He goes on to state that:]

...many of these “ordinary” soldiers who commit atrocities are *not all that* ordinary: they may have been the ones who beat their wives, were harsh or cruel with their children in such a way that they found war a welcome opportunity to give vent to sadistic tendencies that were kept somewhat under wraps in civilian life.”⁵²

Another prominent American psychiatrist, M. Scott Peck, describes evil as “militant ignorance.” This can be understood as a form of self-righteousness that denies sin or wrongdoing. The Judeo-Christian concept of sin is an avenue to allow for the imperfections of humanity and a process to acknowledge wrong and make one feel better. Peck argues that most Christians know this but refuse to accept this consciousness and, in their refusal, become self-righteous. When one progressively refuses to accept wrongdoing, the conscience is inundated with denial, causing a malignant type of consciousness and behavior. Peck characterizes evil in this context of self-righteousness that projects itself onto others, in most cases those who are vulnerable, innocent, and powerless. Peck considers those he calls evil to be attempting to escape and hide from their own conscience (through self-deception) and views this as being quite distinct from the apparent absence of conscience evident in sociopaths.⁵³

According to Peck, an evil person:

1. Is consistently in denial to avoid guilt and maintaining a false self-image of perfectionism
2. Orchestrates deceptions of others as a consequence of their own self-deception

⁵²Ibid 332-333.

⁵³ Peck, M. Scott, *People of The Lie The Hope For Healing Human Evil*, Touchstone, New York, N.Y., 1983.

3. Projects evilness onto specific targets, through scapegoating or blaming others while appearing normal with everyone else
4. Commonly hates while pretending to love, for the purposes of self-deception as much as deception of others
5. Abuses political and/or emotional power by imposing one's will on to others for the purpose of coercion
6. Maintains a high level of false superficial respectability and lies incessantly in order to do so
7. The person is consistently destructive towards others in both small and/or overwhelming acts of immoral thought/behavior towards others
8. Is unable to think from the viewpoint of their victim
9. Is narcissistic with an intolerance to criticism⁵⁴

Dr. Hare, a psychologist who conducted research for 25 years on psychopathy, had this to say:

Psychopaths are social predators who charm, manipulate, and ruthlessly plow their way through life, leaving a broad trail of broken hearts, shattered expectations, and empty wallets. Completely lacking in conscience and in feelings for others, they selfishly take what they want and do as they please, violating social norms and expectations without the slightest sense of guilt or regret. Their bewildered victims desperately ask, "Who are these people?"⁵⁵

In these readings, there is a discussion as to whether sociopaths evolve socially or are bred. I wonder whether or not the thirteen colonies were a breeding ground for sociopaths, a question I decided was beyond the scope of this work.

From a Haudenosaunee perspective, from the perspective of the recipient of generations of colonialism, evil is a violation of a moral code that one would be hard pressed to find among Christians in relation to Indigenous peoples. It would be safe to say that morality has been absent in Christianity concerning Indigenous peoples. They have used religious doctrine to hunt and kill Indigenous Peoples, to declare them non-human and primitive, to declare their lands empty, to design policies of extermination, to commit acts of genocide, and to maintain a federal legal system and

⁵⁴M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil* (City: Century Hutchinson, 1983, 1988).

⁵⁵Robert D. Hare, *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths among Us* (1993).

bureaucracy of oppression into the 21st century. The conscious and deliberate acts of the Canadian and American governments in their relations with Indigenous nations have remained acts of evil. The deliberate discrimination designed to harm Native people, the humiliation of people designed to diminish their psychological well-being and dignity, blatant destruction of Indigenous lands, and acts of unnecessary or indiscriminate violence against targeted groups like Indigenous women are evidence of the wanton criminal treatment of Indigenous nations. A philosophical question of American and Canadian policies is whether evil is an absolute driving force and natural Western human mindset that leads to questions about the existence of morality in Western thought.

Peck discusses the relative nature of certain institutions that perform acts of evil in his modern reference to the My Lai Massacre and the attempted cover-up of the incident. The cover-up illustrates the evil of such acts as state terrorism.⁵⁶ Countless acts of this kind of evil have occurred in the 21st century wars in the Middle East.

Are we surrounded by a sociopathic society?

Looking out the window of the longhouse, beyond the borders of the reservation, an Onkwehónwe today sees the ongoing exploits of Western policy and law that further represent the Punisher. It always appears as a distraction from what is inside the Haudenosaunee, but it is part of survival to remain aware of what surrounds the Great Tree of Peace.

Based on these definitive understandings of the Punisher, the United States and Canada are sociopathic societies, as evidenced by the military acts and state terrorism they inflict upon Indigenous cultures. I use noted American psychiatrist M. Scott Peck's summary analysis as a

⁵⁶Peck, *People of the Lie*, page.

framework of the evil experienced by Indigenous peoples. Peck makes nine points about an evil person that I consider representative of state terrorism, a collective form of evil that the Haudenosaunee has been subjected to for over 400 years. It is an evil that is present today in the policies and laws that continue to exercise the power of state terrorism over Indigenous peoples.

The following construct forms a framework of understanding “state evil” as the focus of this chapter on the construct of the Punisher – the evil force as the European, Euro American, Euro Canadian societal negative power as self-deceiving, scapegoating, using abusive political power, disingenuous, destructive, totally detached from victims, intolerant to criticism, and narcissistic.

My Indigenous mindset seeks to understand this centuries-old phenomenon of the treatment of the Indian by applying the framework of understanding today’s reality. This framework can be viewed in light of how Canada handled a situation in 2011 with Attawapiskat, a northern Cree community, in dealing with issues of poor or no housing, with people living in tents as winter was settling upon the community on the coast of James Bay. When Canada was confronted with the issue of why the International Red Cross was responding to these kinds of situations in Canada, the government began by blaming the Indians for lack of fiscal management, claiming that the government had done nothing wrong and given them millions of dollars, telling lies about how the funding was spent, refusing to go to the community, requiring the leadership to travel away from their community to meet with Indian affairs minister, having no sense of regard for the victims, being argumentative about the criticism that the government was receiving, and maintaining its narcissistic role in the whole matter. This evidence of the sociopathic character of the state of Canada in this event of 2011 is characteristic of the long-standing Indian/White relations experienced over the centuries. The question that arises in this matter is why Canada is refusing to correct these wrongs and continuing to punish the Cree people. According to confirmed sources, the conservative element

of Canada has taken the position that the remote and isolated Indigenous communities are not viable and is attempting to starve the people out of those communities, forcing them to move to urban centers. The Frontier Centre for Public Policy does not admit to enforcing poverty but argues that remote communities are not viable, and there is little reason not to believe that this is part of the plan.⁵⁷

While I digress to shed some light on my analogy and construct of modern state terrorism in Canada's treatment of First Nations, I remind everyone about what Handsome Lake witnessed in his life from 1735 to 1815. Handsome Lake's life story displays the same kind of victimization we saw in Attawapiskat in 2011.

Another example of how evil works in state sociopathic societies is the U.S. court system in dealing with Indigenous land claims. The Oneida case was a modern case that traveled the legal circuit a couple of times from the local federal court to the Supreme Court. Having won a test case that basically ruled that land confiscation from the Oneida was illegal and that the Oneidas were owed restitution, an Oneida faction secured a casino and purchased land back to put in tribal title. The local counties demanded that taxes be paid on the land, and the Oneida argued that Indian land was non-taxable. The counties refused to back off, and for some reason, the Oneida Nation of New York (ONNY) lifted their sovereign immunity and decided to go to court over this argument. The court soon ruled in favor of the counties and determined that the ONNY had to pay the taxes. According to the Courts the Oneidas took too long to gain back their sovereignty over lands lost. The twist in the ruling is that the ONNY waited too long to bring the matter to court and lifted what was

⁵⁷Quesnel, Joseph, *Respecting the Seventh Generation: A Voluntary Plan for the Relocating Non-viable Native Reserves*, Frontier Centre for Public Policy. <http://www.fcpp.org/publication.php/3171> 2010.

determined in other cases that laches did apply. It didn't matter Indians were denied access to the courts until the 1970s. In the earlier cases, laches did not apply, meaning it did not matter that wrongs were committed over 200 years ago; the court had to hear the cases. As stated above in the Sherrill Case, the law made a surprising twist that no one expected – the counties were able to include laches as a reason that such cases should not be adjudicated. The demonic nature of this decision by the U.S. court system has basically barred Indigenous Nations from the ability to seek justice in their system. Among Haudenosaunee traditionalists, it was expected. It is a part of the continuous denial of Haudenosaunee existence, right to their homelands, and forms a part of the ongoing policy of terrorism of Town Destroyer to continue the punishment. The denial of the Oneida claim, the Cayuga claim, and the rejection of the Onondaga claim in 2010 shattered the modern dream of reconciliation that many Haudenosaunee thought possible.

Despite these examples of current state terrorism against Indigenous peoples, the visions and dreams of the Haudenosaunee remain a strong part of their resolve.

Iroquois political philosophy was transmitted through the social education of the young. The ideal Iroquois personality exhibited tribal loyalty tempered with intellectual independence and autonomy. Iroquois people were trained to enter a society that was egalitarian, with power more equally distributed between male and female, young and old than in European society.⁵⁸

Grinde's work exposes the influence of the Haudenosaunee on the American Constitution in spite of the historical imbalance raging on in and around Haudenosaunee country. The unique abilities of the Onkwehónwe intuitive perception and analysis in dream telling carry the culture forward.

⁵⁸Donald Grinde, *Iroquois Political Theory, Exiled in the Land of the Free*, 236.

Dreamwork

Jo-Ann Archibald discusses in *Storywork* a Stó:lō Indigenous concept of how the keeping of stories and storytelling work to transmit cultural values and how the true storyteller allows the stories to have their own life and “become the teacher.”⁵⁹ Through this concept, I understood the Haudenosaunee cultural construct of dream telling as “dreamwork,” how dreams play a more than significant role in the culture.

In 1649, Father Ragueneau describes what he witnessed among the Iroquois in terms of their natural desires or dreams, which:

...come from the depths of the soul, not through any knowledge, but by means of a certain blind transporting of the soul to certain objects: they pay attention to avoid illness, anger and to have good health to be ... very careful to note their dreams and to provide the soul with what it has pictured to them during their sleep.⁶⁰

Wallace points out that the Iroquois had achieved a more sophisticated understanding of psychology than Europeans of the time period, “recognizing conscious and unconscious parts of the mind.”⁶¹

While in Haudenosaunee tradition, a cultural construct of dreamwork is critical to understand how the stories, messages of the spirit world, find their way into the cultural practice of the Haudenosaunee. Dreams work in our favor to capture our reality and project a glimpse of the future into our reality, transcending time and space by creating story and culture. The Haudenosaunee celebrate their abilities to dream every year in ceremony, honoring personal dreams, helpful dreams, healing dreams, supportive dreams, and visions of tomorrow for self, family, and community.

Dreams cause ceremony, enhancing the culture.

⁵⁹Jo-Ann Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*.

⁶⁰Anthony Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*, 60-61.

⁶¹*Ibid* 63.

The Creation story begins with a dream of the uncle of Sky Woman. How to organize the clans came from a young boy's dream. The four sacred dances come from the power of the dream of a young boy. The grandmother dreamed the Peacemaker's journey and role in societal change, and Hiawatha dreamed the condolence ways. Handsome Lake dreamed the last message to carry the Haudenosaunee into the future. Think of the power of this dream that has its own life, a real story, messages, creating culture and working in ways to breathe life back into the Haudenosaunee.

Handsome Lake was an ordinary man who listened to his dreams and was not afraid to share his dreams with his people. By all accounts, he was ordinary but real – an Onkwehónwe who was the vehicle of a powerful message that became dreamwork that continues to this day, over 200 years later. The dialogue continues about what he saw and what is meant for the Haudenosaunee. The notion of a Punisher is not so much a character in a story but a greater understanding of Western society's behavior toward the Haudenosaunee. The settler governments refuse to fully accept the Haudenosaunee as the Haudenosaunee. The settler governments remain anti-Iroquois, detached, dispirited, racist, and incapable of inclusion.

The Christian constructs used to describe the invasion by Cornplanter in the story appears to have come from trying to understand the evil of the invasion. This might have been the only way to understand it. When your worldview does not have constructs that can interpret strange and different human behavior, you find an explanation even from another worldview. To understand the craziness or demonic nature of the white man, it would make sense to look at what they believe to try to understand them.

I reflect on America trying to understand suicide bombers and the recent 9/11 bombings of the World Trade Center and the scramble to read the Koran and point at something there to

understand that craziness. By the end of Sullivan's campaign to destroy Iroquoia, the Haudenosaunee leadership was examining white man's doctrines to understand the Holocaust being inflicted upon them.

In the Haudenosaunee dream state, the constructs of evil keep sending reminders of the effortless way that the practice continues to affect Indigenous people and their environments. The nightmares that keep us awake at night are extensions of the negative energy that surface whenever we try to understand demonic Western human behavior.

During the writing of this material, I had an opportunity to sit with a group of Onkwehónwe from southern Ontario First Nation communities who were involved in the development of a child and family service agency. The group was composed of both traditionalist and Christian people as stakeholders of the organization. The Development Team was carefully selected for their Indigenous knowledge. I was most fortunate to have the opportunity to be a part of this team.

One of the critical factors in the development process is creating something that is uniquely culturally based compared to what is currently done in child protection agencies. The new concept also had to address the long-standing poisoned relations with child welfare agencies resulting from the stealing of Indigenous children by children's aid societies. The Development Team fashioned an incredible holistic model that incorporated the three cultures of Lenape, Ojibway, and Haudenosaunee into a system of best practices. In the midst of the presentation, objections to being culturally based began to surface among the leadership. Their resistance came from the concern that many of their people are Christian and are mostly just relearning their traditions. However, they wanted the ideas presented to be used to explain to the government why First Nations were different

so they could get the required funding. The impression was that we should not try to use the model to change the community or attempt any process of decolonization.

The process turned into a debate about the direction of the material, particularly around issues of governance. They did not want it to appear that they were losing control of the effort. The dilemma of Christian vs. traditional teachings is left over from colonialism and continues to create barriers to self-determination, often initiating the nine behaviors of evil through acts of internalized oppression.

In the process of decolonization, we are faced with the nine masks of evil that I mentioned earlier from Dr. Peck's work People of the Lie. Evil is the ultimate disease that we face in decolonizing work. The more masks there are the more intense the wrongness is. How, then, do we deal with the masquerade of normal that we feel as the oppressed? The old maxim is relevant: know your enemy. When oppressive instruments or constructs are invading a culture of peace and thankfulness, they should be removed or placed in their proper context.

A Haudenosaunee maxim, know yourself and your teachings, is even more critical to decolonizing our worldview. Haudenosaunee culture does not have a concept of hell, and it requires a review of the construct we are currently dealing with and work out an agreement that it was a way to understand the white man. Included in this dialogue is the notion that the Punisher should be understood as more than a character in a story but a way for the Haudenosaunee to understand the white man, to understand the invasion, and to understand the holocaust, a cultural representation of colonialism.

We can understand a holocaust from our reality of who we are and how we engage the world, carrying the burdens of the loss of Indigenous language and the sound of culture, being raised by

parents who spent their childhood in residential schools, witnessing the decline of a woman-centered world, struggling with poor health conditions as a reality that is neither post-colonial or detached from the demonic agenda of the invasion.

Indigenous cultures are surrounded in America and Canada by a troubled demonic ethnocentric force – trigger-happy, narcissistic, and psychopathic – that continues to administer law, legislation, policy, and programs with variations of manufactured punishment, keeping Indigenous nations in a fixed marginalized reality. In Canada in November 2012, the Conservative government announced new policies for the termination of Indians and their lands.⁶²

The Punisher is a characterization of colonialism, and hell is representative of what colonialism creates. The constructs of hell and the devil exist outside the space of Haudenosaunee culture. The Onkwehónwe live in accordance with a spiritually based worldview involving a kind Creator, giving thanksgiving, seeking peace, the ability to condole our heartfelt pains, and the gift of seeking visioning. Understanding the American holocaust and putting it into an Indigenous context is liberating, and, with spiritual certainty, the Haudenosaunee will continue to play a role in the greater scheme of Creation.

In light of this reality, the Haudenosaunee may very well have to alter their conceptual understanding of evil to make space for a society that believes differently from Indigenous societies. Haudenosaunee traditionalists need to lead a discussion and engage in a dialogue that will eventually

⁶²Russell Diabo, First Nations Strategic Bulletin, June–October, 2012.
<http://intercontinentalcry.org/harper-launches-major-first-nations-termination-plan-as-negotiating-tables-legitimize-canadas-colonialism/>

put Christian concepts into their proper perspective and eliminate their influence on Haudenosaunee teachings.

Chapter 4 – Celebrating Haudenosaunee Knowledge - The Intelligent Thing to Do

There is spiritual intelligence existing throughout the Confederacy passed from generation to generation, remaining a constant reminder of our cultural purpose as Haudenosaunee within the world community. The work in the international arena is just one example of how the Haudenosaunee have grown despite the invasion and colonialism. The Haudenosaunee began their international work in 1924 when Deskehah, a Cayuga Chief, went to the international court at The Hague in an attempt to bring international focus to the issue of sovereignty of the Six Nations Confederacy and the right to their own government.

In 1949, the Haudenosaunee were invited to attend the laying of the cornerstone of the United Nations in New York City. The Haudenosaunee appeared on the fringe of the United Nations, placated as some form of Stone-Age United Nations. By 1975, work had begun to launch an international gathering of Indigenous nation representatives, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1977. The documents prepared for the 1977 meeting witnessed Iroquois thought through culturally based messages in defense of the natural world for the benefit of humanity at the international meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1977. “In our ways, spiritual consciousness is the highest form of politics.”¹ It was a message to the international community that further stated; “What is needed is the liberation of all the things that support life – the air, the water, the trees, – all the things that support the sacred Web of Life.”² I have selected the international work as a showcase of Haudenosaunee intellectualism in

¹Akwesasne Notes, Ed., Basic Call to Consciousness (2005), 85.

²Ibid 91.

the 20th century. Haudenosaunee knowledge does not belong in the Stone Age but is relevant in today's reality.

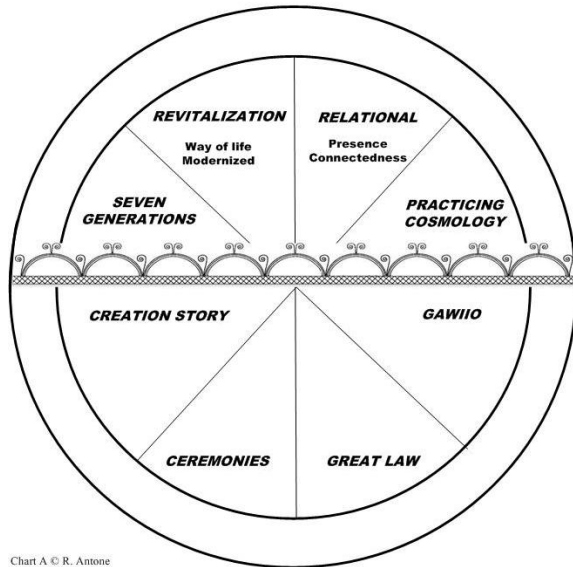


Chart A © R. Antone

Figure 14 – Haudenosaunee Intellectualism

Figure 14 is a symbolic representation of the two forms of Haudenosaunee knowledge and the complexity of the source and expansion of knowledge. This provides a visual representation of what is entailed in merging the ancient knowledge with the new way of intellectualizing the knowledge.

Figure 14 is designed to represent the holistic concept of knowledge in the Haudenosaunee worldview. The repository knowledge includes the stories, narratives, ceremonies, songs, recitals, ritual sounds, etc., that originate from four specific sources: the Creation story, ceremonies, Kayanhnehgowa (the Great Law), and the Gaiwiiio (Handsome Lake's teachings). These sources are the foundation and original sources of Haudenosaunee repository knowledge. The four sources comprise all that became the moral code, legal standards, belief system, and practices of the Haudenosaunee. The repository knowledge is the foundational knowledge of the Haudenosaunee.

Figure 14 is a graphic representation of the totality of Haudenosaunee knowledge and intellectual use of that knowledge. Practicing Cosmology is about the ceremonial cycle that is constant within the longhouse; Relational is about the connection between all life forms – human, earth, water, animal, plant, elements, fire, planetary, and celestial; Revitalization is the ever-evolving nature of the culture while maintaining the constancy of the foundation; and Future Generation is

about the work of examining the future, applying the principles of peace and balance to life. The repeating symbol of Skyworld and the Celestial Tree protecting the path we journey on Mother Earth is the constant and reciprocal relation between the Haudenosaunee and the spiritual center of life, the One Who Has Created All. The larger outer circle symbolizes the land, our Mother Earth, and what she bears for life.

Repository knowledge³ guides and directs the emergence of a Haudenosaunee intellectualism, calling attention to the world community to understand the complexity of humanity's relationship to the natural world. From this moment in history, we witness more contemporary Iroquois scholars emerging expressing how Indigenous knowledge is constructed to advance and increase the movement of cultural survival. In terms of Haudenosaunee knowledge, what has remained constant in the transformation of the lifestyle of the Haudenosaunee? This is an examination of the work of Iroquois scholars: Mohawk, Lyons, Alfred, Goodleaf, Longboat, Porter, Thomas, Cornelius, Doxtator, and others.

*Celebrating survival accentuates not so much our demise but the degree to which Indigenous peoples and communities have successfully retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity.*⁴

An important part of authenticity is acknowledging and recording the revitalization and transformation of an Indigenous *Way of Life* as a paradigm shift of Indigenous knowledge.

Haudenosaunee culture is not static but has survived over time, protected in the human repositories

³Repository knowledge is a concept I am using to describe the bank of oral traditions, songs, stories, medicines, societies, etc., that has primarily been housed in the cerebral power of the gifted knowledge keepers of the Haudenosaunee.

⁴T. Linda Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1999), 200.

of oral tradition. The saving and storage of knowledge evolves again into owning, using, and being the knowledge applied through pragmatic realism into 21st-century Haudenosaunee intellectualism as a liberating act of decolonization. As Onkwehónwe, we know what Haudenosaunee intellectualism is in the context of Indigenous knowledge (IK) in the 21st century and that this is a significant stage of development for Indigenous intellectualism within the Haudenosaunee. To continue the act of doing philosophy, there is clarity of knowledge, as addressed in Chapter Three, that needs to continue.

An Onkwehónwe examination of Indigenous knowledge within their own cultural context is a decolonizing exercise that is critical to the survival of IK as a viable component of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination that confronts and challenges the continuous attempts at genocide and ethnocide.

“It springs from the disaster resulting from the centuries of colonialism’s efforts to methodically eradicate our ways of seeing, being, and interacting with the world. At the dawn of the twenty-first century the recovery of Indigenous knowledge is a conscious and systematic effort to revalue that which has been denigrated and revive that which has been destroyed. It is about regaining the ways of being that allowed our peoples to live a spiritually balanced, sustainable existence”⁵

...as the nations of peoples that we were originally gifted to be.

Sustaining Haudenosaunee knowledge is not about creating space in the academy for Haudenosaunee knowledge. *Owning and living the knowledge*⁶ is about our knowledge, presenting our story, determining our thoughts, reflecting our feelings, designing our future, voicing our

⁵W. Angela Wilson, “Indigenous Knowledge Recovery Is Indigenous Empowerment,” American Indian Quarterly 28.3.4 (2004): 13

⁶The heavy emphasis is on owning. The function of collecting and storing Haudenosaunee knowledge and placing the items in museums still has not come full circle to complete ownership by the communities. The knowledge is stored in museums that assumed ownership. There have been successful efforts to secure the return of items, such as the wampum belts, but they continue to be treated as artifacts.

languages, and empowerment for self-determination as our ways of being. *Owning* is allowing the inner voice of identity to exist and practice “orenda”⁷ the mystic potency of being Haudenosaunee. It is that part of personality that is an energy that perseveres and desires to be Onkwehónwe despite the long road of colonialism. It is the energy that connects to the natural world and causes our fortitude for the earth and all that she supports and encompasses as part of our deep familial relationship. It is evident that Onkwehónwe have spirit or, I should say, a functioning spirit, unlike our Western counterparts, who work at disconnecting from their conscious ecological responsibility. By owning and applying Haudenosaunee knowledge, we will only strengthen our inner being and experience the fullness of the knowledge through our Onkwehónwe intellectualism.

The people are challenged by their own communities, which have been severely disrupted by the historic persecution and assimilation efforts of the Euro American society. There are those in our own communities who question the value and usefulness of Indigenous knowledge. One of the real challenges is how we can get our communities to *own the knowledge*, their knowledge. I have placed emphasis on the notion of *owning the knowledge* because a part of the assault on Indigenous peoples has been the detachment of identity and, therefore, a detachment from the original stories, songs, names, values, beliefs, spirituality, and relationships with all Creation.

To decolonize, we need to *own the knowledge* and live or use the knowledge to form our current reality, not as an escape to “return to the past.” Many Indigenous people have been convinced that our original ways have no space in modernity and Western civilization. Confronted with the punishment of colonialism through our experience with Western civilization, they were correct; our ways were irrelevant in that space. Indigenous cultures did not have the demonic meanness and

⁷J.N.B. Hewitt, “Orenda and a Definition of Religion,” *American Anthropologist* 4.1 (1902): 13.

cruelty of the Euro American and Euro Canadian civilizations. Our values, beliefs, and ways of life were incompatible with materialism, militarism, extractionism, imperialism, and destructiveness, the characteristics of the historical and present-day civilizations. Indigenous peoples were taught that their knowledge was worthless while many Indigenous deaths fueled their colonial machine. Complete extermination would have required “the muting of Indigenous voices, the blinding of Indigenous worldviews, and the repression of Indigenous resistance,”⁸ along with the diminishment of our capacity for producing knowledge.

The decolonization of knowledge is the recovery and renaissance of Indigenous knowledge, the maintenance and practice of knowledge with the goal of the Creation of knowledge, doing philosophy. It is placing our knowledge in the present tense, removing the colonial context of the past that surrounds Indigenous cultures. Colonial educational institutions have attempted to own and place our cultures in the past, convincing the world that Indigenous cultures belong to the Stone Age.

When we experience the freedom and joy of new knowledge, new capacities of knowledge and futurism determined by our own liberated thought process, then the act of decolonization of knowledge is being accomplished. We can again feel a sense of confidence in our own intellectualism. It is liberated Onkwehónwe thought, Haudenosaunee intellectualism, that I search for in examining Indigenous knowledge. The restoration of our intellectualism is a struggle to *own* Indigenous knowledge, which, in turn, is a struggle for land and a struggle for our lives. In Haudenosaunee knowledge, the person, the land or Creation, and the knowledge are in a natural, reciprocal relationship, maintaining a balance of power between the three.

⁸Wilson, “Indigenous Knowledge Recovery Is Indigenous Empowerment,” 361.

Indigenous intellectualism is exploration, examination, discovery, and connection to a thought process that exists within a cultural frame of reference of Indigenous knowledge that offers Indigenous peoples:

- Matrilineal relations with all of life founded on Indigenous feminism-centered ideology
- Matrifocal clan groups and familial relationships
- Solutions for contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities
- A connection to the land that celebrates natural knowledge and values
- New ways of research that are truly beneficial to Indigenous Peoples
- Traditional food knowledge to enrich health and solve present-day health problems
- Enhancement of medical knowledge to address the crisis of lifestyle diseases such as diabetes
- Solutions for modern environmental and ecological issues and problems
- Styles of leadership that are more egalitarian, democratic, thoughtful and spiritual

Haudenosaunee intellectualism is the ability to use foundational knowledge as a natural frame of reference in the work of the intellectual pursuits of engaging the world for the betterment of humanity and the holistic relationship with the natural world.

This research examines the transition of Haudenosaunee ideology and worldview to a postcolonial construct and the importance of deconstructing Western discourse and objectification of Haudenosaunee knowledge. It has been the experience of the Iroquois that outside experts examine and conduct research from the perspective of the demise of culture and lifestyle, underlined by a curiosity influenced by the colonial attitude of the doctrine of discovery.

The doctrine of discovery and Darwinism create an illusion of Indigenous cultures functioning without concepts of connectedness to the land and the ability to advance critical thought. Most Indigenous societies are egalitarian in structure and process within environments of democratic principles of consensus-building, weighting decision-making based on the impact of seven generations, while Western decisions are made linearly and based on the value of personal or

individual benefit. Some of the early works of Morgan (1851) and *Parker on the Iroquois* present the Iroquois as a highly organized society and nations of people interconnected over a vast area of land totaling more than 100 million acres. What the academy has done is objectify Haudenosaunee knowledge into cultural objects and idols, such as corn, the Handsome Lake teachings, or the constitution of the Five Nations as examples. These objects exist in literature as extracted elements of the Haudenosaunee that the academy determines to be pre-Columbian culture. Once the culture is attached to a time frame, it is then attached to the Bering Strait Theory. The written record then becomes a “discovery” and presented as suddenly appearing out of the ancient caves of forgotten stories from a culture that was dying and unable to comprehend its own vitality. In 1851, Haudenosaunee knowledge was “discovered” by Morgan, who was celebrated as the father of ethnology. However, he could not have extracted the knowledge without the assistance of Ely S. Parker, a Seneca.

Outside expertise examined the Indigenous cultural knowledge with the doctrine of discovery as a frame of reference. Euro American ethnologists were explorers and fashioned the “discovered” knowledge to suit their ethnocentric psychological frame of reference. William Fenton states in his review of Hale’s work, “Here was a linguistic laboratory that awaited discoveries.” Horatio Hale delivered a paper to the American Association of Science at Cincinnati in August 1881 under the title of “A Lawgiver of the Stone Age.”⁹ It is a confusing story of Hiawatha, whom he claims was the author of the founding of the Iroquois League. In his conclusion, he states that this study leads him to conclude that the Aryan races have evolved to a far superior culture and race and that the Iroquois were a people of the Stone Age. In another example, Hale explains in *Notes on the Canienga Book*

⁹H.H. E., *The Iroquois Book of Rites and Hale on the Iroquois* (City: Iroquois Reprints, year), 367.

that certain Onkwehónwe words are plural but were personifications of concepts of nationhood while using biblical examples of similarities. Some of the record that has been preserved by Eurocentric ethnologists is data important to cultural recovery, but they have to be sifted through for Onkwehónwe truth. The historians and ethnologists examined Indigenous cultures with the same audacity with which they examined other unknown objects of the forest in a comparative judgmental discourse of Eurocentric self-gratification. Frances Rains states that “Western knowledge production is a self-contained, self-sustaining, handy, convenient... with a sense of righteousness.”¹⁰

Haudenosaunee knowledge does not conform to the Western view of the world. The primary difference has been the resistance to subjective representation of the culture and not just “static objects of scholarly contemplation”¹¹ by Western institutions. The literature resulting from research by historians and ethnologists has become the accepted record by the academy. Most early “explorers” of Indigenous knowledge were looking for evidence to place Indians on the human scale of Darwin’s theory of evolution, a hierarchical, linear analysis. This theory treats man as the crown jewel of Creation without regard for the ecological implications of imbalance and a narcissistic relationship with the natural world. It has been pointed out that;

...anthropological discourse and practice is still shaped by colonialism... the power relations and contradictions implicit in conducting fieldwork in societies ‘conquered by our own governments’ anthropologists, for the most part, are now grappling with the history and politics that such a past has made for them. Their awareness of the incestuous relationship between colonization, military power and knowledge production has been brought on in part

¹⁰L.M. Semali, and Joe L. Kincheloe, *What is Indigenous Knowledge?* (New York: Falmer Press, 1999), 381.

¹¹A. Simpson, *Paths towards a Mohawk Nation: Narratives of Citizenship and Nationhood in Kahnawake* in *Citizenship in Kahnawake*

by global, political, and philosophical factors.¹²

Colonialism, the military, and knowledge production contribute to the ongoing representation of the fallacy of the right of discovery and the right of conquest.

Another example of how the academy has impacted Indigenous peoples is an examination of the construct of “Aboriginal,” introduced into Canadian law to describe all Indigenous peoples in Canada. Alfred confronts this reality by stating,

Aboriginalism is a modern false consciousness fixated on the fear of the white man, calculations of interest, and the construction of instrumental soft identities in the context of a paradigm... social Darwinism, the concept of progress, and the fundamental but rarely stated belief in Euroamerican cultural and racial superiority.¹³

Eurocentric protectionism offers little room for the full expression of the Haudenosaunee cultural reality of traditional knowledge within the context of nationhood. In Doxtater’s examination of the Decolonial Era, he has been able to deconstruct the notion of Western knowledge, which “privileges itself as the fiduciary of all knowledge with the authority to authenticate and invalidate other knowledge.”¹⁴ Because of the mere fact that the elitists of Western knowledge are direct contributors to oppression, genocide, and colonialism, they have no right to authenticate Indigenous knowledge or have a voice on any facet of Indigenous knowledge or the right of intellectual sovereignty.

Decolonizing knowledge, the beginning stage of the decolonial eras, commences the process of reengaging Indigenous knowledge with a practiced culture rather than merely a performative culture. From here on we emancipate Indigenous knowledge of governance, sovereignty, agriculture, architecture, mathematics, astronomy, communications, medicine,

¹²Simpson, *Paths Towards a Mohawk Nation*, 122.

¹³T. Alfred, *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (City: Broadview Press, 2005), 313.

¹⁴M.G. Doxtater, “Indigenous Indigenous Knowledge in the Decolonial Era,” *American Indian Quarterly* 28.3, 4 (2004): 15.

and healing.¹⁵

Indigenous cultures have a right to their own expression of knowledge as authenticating the revitalization and transformation of their own intellectualism.

I include in my examination thoughts from Edward Said concerning intellectualism and Linda Tuhiwai Smith's decolonizing methodologies. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a Maori, is very clear what Indigenous research is about – “the survival of a people, cultures and languages: the struggle to become self determining, the need to take back control of our destinies” as individuals and societies.¹⁶ Edward Said states intellectualism is about

...social change and transformation. Real intellectual analysis forbids calling one side innocent, the other evil.... The morality and principles of an intellectual should not constitute a sort of sealed gearbox that drives thought and action in one direction and is powered by an engine with only one fuel source.¹⁷

In addition, there is concern about the notion of intellectual property and the ownership of Indigenous knowledge, which is a part of Indigenous sovereignty belonging to the Indigenous nation as the keeper of the traditions and knowledge.

Haudenosaunee knowledge has existed in the context of oral tradition as a story, wampum record, ceremony, or ritual while surviving the onslaught of the invasion and cultural extraction by Western institutions. For the better part of 200 years, Haudenosaunee knowledge has had to be protected, guarded, made secure from the incursion of ethnology and anthropology seeking to prove their often inappropriate empirical theories. Most of the earlier informants of the culture were simply

¹⁵Doxtater, “Indigenous Indigenous Knowledge in the Decolonial Era,” page.

¹⁶T. Linda Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1999), 142.

¹⁷E.W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994), 121.

“mined” for their knowledge, and very little of the person was honored. The outsiders only wanted the stories, songs, cultural knowledge, and information, the objects of the culture. Some of the Western institutions did not recognize traditional knowledge as knowledge because it included beliefs, values, and practices, and in their extraction of the knowledge, they depersonalized the knowledge by separating it from the knowledge carrier, a process of dehumanizing.

In oral tradition, knowing the person is a critical factor in knowing and understanding the knowledge by valuing the source. The forms of traditional knowledge are expressed through stories, legends, folklore, rituals, songs, and even natural laws. It is these forms of representation that are unacceptable to Western institutions because they do not conform to the Western knowledge hierarchy. Despite the institutional resistance to Indigenous knowledge, the knowledge remained in storage in the minds of the orators of traditional spiritual knowledge and continues to be transferred to the next generations. Haudenosaunee intellectualism is the merging of ancient knowledge that has been in the care of natural orators with the pragmatic intellectualism of contemporary practitioners of ancient knowledge.

The intent of using pragmatic ideology is derived from a simpler analysis of logical and practical ways of addressing problems. In Pratt’s work *Native Pragmatism*, the author articulates the influence of native tradition on American pragmatism and argues the origin of pragmatism is in native traditions.

Native Pragmatism presents us with a causal argument: “Native American thought contributed to European-American philosophy at key moments in its development” (272). More simply: pragmatism owes its distinctive character to Native sources. How did interactions with the Indigenous peoples of North America affect “the American mind” and

could they have influenced pragmatism?¹⁸

As I reviewed this construct, it became clear to me that Haudenosaunee pragmatism is not the same but is rooted in Haudenosaunee constructs of gynocracy, intuitive analysis, ecocentric ideals, and democratic peacemaking. These four thoughts form the source of Haudenosaunee logic and practice in problem-solving. I do not think that there is any question that the Haudenosaunee have influenced the way America thinks, particularly on the issue of democratic development (see Grinde, Johansen).¹⁹

Within the same thought, the revitalization of Haudenosaunee cultural lifestyle based on ancient knowledge is based on practical tools of rebuilding the individuals and families of the Haudenosaunee who are burdened by colonization. It is possible to design programs of change and models of decolonization rooted in the ancient knowledge.

For instance, the Creation story has remained a reminder to the people through certain ceremonial songs and ceremonial activities. The story is deeply rooted in the spirit/psyche of the Haudenosaunee person. The gift of the sustenance of the three sisters, the strawberry, and tobacco all form the ceremonial cycle practiced today in the seasonal calendar in all 18 longhouses across the territories of the Haudenosaunee. Each has its own interpretation of the foundational knowledge but similar spiritual outcomes of being Haudenosaunee. This remains a part of the natural process of decolonizing by participating in and learning the culture.

¹⁸Thomas Alexander, "Thinking in Place: Comments on Scott Pratt's Native Pragmatism," *Philosophy & Geography* 6.2 (2003), page.

¹⁹Donald A. Grinde, and Bruce E. Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy*.

The Great Law or Gayanashagowa has provided a way to organize the people or society of the Haudenosaunee by family, clans, and nations of people who gather as a confederation of distinct peoples with a common vision of $sk^{\wedge} n^{\wedge}$ or peace. The law provides ways for the people to raise leadership, settle disputes, organize people, build consensus, and, most importantly, evolve the holistic relationship of all life forces.

With the advent of the invasion, another vision or teaching came to the people to address the changing reality now imposed upon the people. The vision of Handsome Lake provided a road map to address and confront the destruction of colonialism. From the rum bottle to the Bible and the new thought process that came with the invasion, Handsome Lake challenged the people to resist “mind-changers” by unyoking the insidious mechanisms of assimilation and marginalization. The teachings encourage one to maintain the original practices of ceremonial life and find new ways to practice the sustenance of life. This abbreviated explanation of the foundational knowledge is an overview of a lifetime and generations of cultural survival. All of it is related and encompasses one another to create a holistic repository of traditional knowledge.

Figure 14 also demonstrates the fluidity of the knowledge that remains foundational but flows as the power of 21st-century Haudenosaunee intellectualism. It connects and joins the past with the present, recognizing that we cannot allow the historic repository knowledge to be trapped in the colonial isolation of misinterpretation and academic detachment. Haudenosaunee life practices or pragmatic knowledge is Indigenous knowledge that is directly related and a product of the repository knowledge. Haudenosaunee cosmology is an organized method of interpreting the relationship of spiritual works and beliefs into practical applications in life and is one of four distinct ways to view the pragmatism of the Haudenosaunee. Relational or present connectedness is how we as a people have maintained our inter-relation among ourselves through our extended families and clans. This

relation is about how we have maintained our connectedness with the natural world as well. Conscientious relationships are the high point of skennen or peacemaking. Peacemaking is the result of connectedness that engenders trust and acceptance by bringing people to ska?niku·lat,²⁰ revitalization with the careful, well-thought out movement of the Haudenosaunee way of life. After the invasion and faced with the reality of the pressure of colonialism, it was essential for everyone to get on board with cultural conservatism and revitalization of a way of life to house the cultural practices. With settler governments and their myriad of assimilative weapons, hope for a future seven generations ahead encouraged the resolve to rebuild and maintain the Haudenosaunee way of life.

Beginning with the Creation story, the journey of the circle to futurism encompasses a wealth of Indigenous knowledge that requires an academy of individuals to absorb and practice, a longhouse of interconnected clans of like-minded, peacemaking, pragmatic, learned Onkwehónwe maintaining a cultural worldview steeped in natural world tradition. The journey of experiencing Haudenosaunee knowledge is a lifetime of engaging in language, song, ceremony, council, clan, thanksgiving, teachings, and ka?nikohli:yo.

Some of Haudenosaunee cultural knowledge became available to the public through the researchers of the time for example, Hewitt's work concerning the Iroquois Creation story. The key informant is John Arthur Gibson (1849 to 1912), a practitioner of oral tradition who was a rare individual with the capacity of extraordinary memory and there are others who followed in his footsteps to the present day. One of the connections to the ongoing work of owning our knowledge is the dialogue concerning the Creation story. This is one of the pieces of work of the Gibson/Hewitt relationship that a contemporary writer examines further.

²⁰Oneida word meaning "being of one mind."

The Creation story as rewritten by John Mohawk is an example of oral tradition originally translated by J.N.B. Hewitt from informant John Arthur Gibson into a transformative tool of decolonization. Hewitt was Tuscarora Bear Clan and a brilliant ethnologist who once stated that “there is no proof that the mental and the physical capacity of the American Indian race ... is inferior to that of any other race of mankind.”²¹ Hewitt must be included in an examination of Onkwehónwe intellectualism. His fieldwork gathering written record and recording the sounds of the Haudenosaunee created space for Iroquoian knowledge and narratives, increasing the repository knowledge. John Arthur Gibson trusted J.B.N. Hewitt; if he had not, he would not have allowed him to record and document some of the most highly prized Haudenosaunee Indigenous knowledge. “The two worked together between the years 1900 and 1912.”²² Hewitt had several files released during this time and after Gibson’s death.

In my closer examination of the Hewitt/Gibson relationship, I found a description of where Hewitt was coming from in his work. In that research, I came across two papers Hewitt did that began to focus my work and the intent of the work with respect to a definition of the spiritual consciousness of Haudenosaunee intellectualism. Hewitt’s work was to explain the Iroquois notion and belief of the soul and spirituality or, as he interprets it, the “mystic potency” of the Haudenosaunee being. In my view, Hewitt’s papers attempt to expose a sense of deep Haudenosaunee wisdom and are careful not to offend the “civilized”²³ with his research. Hewitt would have seen in those who were practitioners and carriers of the ancient knowledge that

²¹E. Tooker, and Barbara Graymont, *J.B.N. Hewitt* (1975).

²² Woodbury, H.H., ed. & translator, Henry, Reg, Webster, Harry., ed. *Concerning the League – the Iroquois League as Dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson*. Vol. Memoir 9., Memoir 9 Algonquin and Iroquoian Linguistics. (1992) 755.

²³In my opinion, this was a period when the Iroquois were Stone-Age objects and reference to their high intelligence or spiritualism would have been flatly rejected by the academy.

fundamental Iroquois “mystic potency,” “orenda,” or karma.²⁴ “Orenda is a hypothetic potency of potentiality to do or effect results mystically.”²⁵ Orenda or an inner “*spiritual bundle*”²⁶ is part of the root of Onkwehónwe humanity, a socializing energy fueling the survival and connection to all of life’s energies, including Haudenosaunee human intelligence.

Haudenosaunee intellectualism is a compilation of foundational knowledge and pragmatic application engaged in societal developmental. There are concerns given the reality that the world of the settler is an oppressive neighbor to the Indigenous world. The repository system will engage in transformation in the coming generations, and the context of the knowledge will contribute to the lasting functionality of society in general.

For example, pollution has no boundaries or barriers. Like the plagues of the invasion, sickness is unavoidable. Cures are humanitarian in nature. Indigenous knowledge surviving in the isolation of the reservations offers some truth for the needed paradigm in lifestyle if futurism remains a light at the end of the tunnel. One of the requirements is a shake-up of the lifestyle that devours the natural resources that are being exhausted at an ever-growing rate.

The ethics or responsibilities of Haudenosaunee intellectualism are to speak the truth and confront colonialism through a pragmatic approach to life today. We must recognize that our communities and our lives have been shaped by colonialism.

“The Indigenous intelligence and clear minded commitment to remaking their lives ... in an indigenized culture of resurgence, disentangled from the colonial mentalities that are still

²⁴J.N.B. Hewitt, “Orenda and a Definition of Religion,” *American Anthropologist* 4.1 (1902): page.

²⁵*Ibid* 38.

²⁶Ohle:na? is the Oneida word meaning “spiritual bundle.”

oppressing the vast majority of Onkwehonwe.”²⁷

Onkwehónwe authentic behaviors must flow from the teachings, not from the oppression or assimilation.

The focus is on individuals who are known for their ability to carry hundreds of songs, scores of stories, multiple passages of ceremonial recitations, ceremonial procedures, and spiritual knowledge as one of the critical functions within an oratorical society. I have selected six individuals to review the growth, change, evolution, and focus of Indigenous knowledge among the Haudenosaunee. These individuals represent or are the embodiment of the wisdom. The Indigenous knowledge forms their identity, is from their experiences, and creates experiences in their lives, a reciprocal flow of energy. It is not knowledge in an abstract or ideological form but practical concepts for living and celebration of life. How did they learn, and how did they hold so much of the knowledge? They lived a certain way and walked on this earth in a special way, which is critical to understanding how Haudenosaunee knowledge remains a knowledge of practice and use in everyday Haudenosaunee life.

Since Handsome Lake’s vision in 1799 and the revival and restoration of the Haudenosaunee, most of the intellectual and knowledge resources in the confederacy remained isolated and protected resources within individuals like Gibson. The knowledge that was saved on the human “hard drive” were classical stories of the Creation Story, the Coming of Ceremonies, the Peacemaker’s journey and the Great Law, and, of course, the teachings from Handsome Lake’s message.

²⁷ Alfred, Taiaiake, *Wasase indigenous pathways of action and freedom*, Broadview Press, Peterborough, ON, 2005: 278.

John Arthur Gibson (1849–1912), a practitioner of oral tradition, was a rare individual with the capacity of extraordinary memory. This is what I have learned about him:

John's mother was turtle clan, Seneca and his father was an Onondaga Chief, Thatota:ho. He was multilingual fluent in Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, Oneida, some Tuscarora, Mohawk and English. In his adult life he carried the Seneca title Skanyatai:yo in the Confederacy Council. He was also an orator of the Handsome Lake teachings. An excellent lacrosse player in his youth but by the age of 31 he was blinded by an injury. At the age of 34 he was witnessed reciting the condolence ceremony, a very complex ancient ceremonial process for the installation of Chiefs. His mind was the "hard drive" of the traditional knowledge including ceremonial recitations, songs, and wisdom. He was a family man with three children whom also eventually became involved in the recording of cultural knowledge. Gibson was the best known expert at the time and was consulted by government and researchers. He served in dispute resolution consulting for the government concerning other first nations.²⁸

Based on the record of who he was, it is clear that he represented knowledge that was very much a part of who he was. In the work he was doing, he was a *peacemaker* transforming the cultural knowledge into functional applications, improving the situations of other tribes.

I have personally witnessed the recitation of the Kahyenragowa, the Great Law, over a seven-day presentation, with a total of over 30 hours of recitation from memory in presentation, and the Handsome Lake story and teachings over a four-day period, with 12 to 15 hours of recitation. The idea of this kind of memory and recitation ability says a lot about the keepers of the oral traditions. For the most part, they were simple human beings totally immersed in their way of life. One of the individuals whom I personally knew was R. Buck. This is what I personally know of him:

His home was a modest log cabin about a half mile from the main road in the woods in the center of an area on the Six Nations Reserve. At my first visit in the early 1970s, his mother and two sons were living at the home. His mother was very old but actively involved with life. Mr. Buck was a seer as well as a ceremonial leader. The home was heated by a wood

²⁸ Woodbury, H., Henry, Reg, Webster, Harry, Concerning the League The Iroquois League Tradition as Dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson. Memoir 9 Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, Winnipeg: 1992.

stove, and there was no electricity hook-up. Water came from a well and was hauled by hand. He was very personal and thoughtful and engaging in conversation. He was always very helpful to me. He was intense with his knowledge and appeared to be engaged in the spirit realm most of the time. His humor was about mishaps and adventures in helping others. He exulted in his confidence and commitment to knowing the teachings of the Haudenosaunee. Buck was the one I witnessed reciting the Great Law in the seventies.

He reminded me of D. Elm, a ceremonial leader from my home community of Oneida. This is what I personally know of Elm (1875–1979):

When I first met D. Elm, he was in his late 80s. He was Chief of the turtle clan, ceremonialist, farmer, and family man who had his son and his wife, who were in their 60s, living with him. Again, extended family is very much a part of the lifestyle. Well into his 90s, he farmed a little over an acre. He was a key informant in a research project done by Floyd G. Lounsbury, an outside researcher and linguist, on the Oneida Creation story. D. Elm was born around 1875, and he told me one of his earliest memories: “I was riding on the back of a horse-drawn wagon looking back watching the road we came from. We had a relative in the box, and we were taking her to the graveyard. That was the way we used to do things.” Demus was 96 years old when he recorded the Creation story for Lounsbury.²⁹ D. Elm was a man of peace, always thoughtful about life. As he smoked his pipe, he would prepare himself to tell stories. He was the principal advisor to many of us during the 1960s and 70s.

These men embodied their wisdom and intelligence and spoke of the *Way of Life of the Haudenosaunee* in a very personal tense. The emphasis on ka?nikohli:yo is about how this was the center and core of who they were. They were encompassed within the teachings and living examples of those teachings. The highest form of human expression of the teachings was ka?nikohli:ho skenekohli:yo or the “good, peaceful mind being of one mind,” and this is who they were. I knew both of these men in their late 70s to 90s, and they were the living source of Haudenosaunee knowledge. Their lifestyle was very simple, non-materialistic, family-based, ceremonial, and filled with thoughtfulness.

²⁹ Lounsbury, F.G., Gick, Bryan, Ed. The Oneida Creation Story, Demus Elm and Harvey Antone and Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Thoughtfulness is a word that seems to provide the most powerful description of how, through engaging with life, spirit, or both, they inspired others to do the same. Thoughtfulness is about attention to detail, contemplativeness, kindheartedness, and unselfishness. They represented the holistic personality of the Good Mind. They may have had their human faults, but they expressed life through their thoughtfulness. Buck and Elm were spiritual advisors to many people.

Another person who was significant in the storing of memory was Amy Elijah (1905–1985), wolf clan, Oneida, and clan mother. This is what I remember of her:

She spoke very little English, and it was better to take someone to translate to have a conversation with her. She spent her time in her home and had a small garden but watching over the community. From her home, she could see the area she grew up in and witnessed, as she would say, the spirits returning to the area to gather their medicines. She spent most of her time in the memory of the teachings. She did not watch TV or listen to the radio much. I often went to her place to listen to her husband and her talk about the teachings. She was the one who corrected others when they said the wrong things or lost the order of the story or memory. She knew more of the cultural memories than many of the speakers. That was a part of her responsibilities as a clan mother. She was one who lived a simple life, having only what was necessary and comfortable.

The women of the Haudenosaunee have played a significant role in the memory of the culture. They were responsible to know what the ritualists and/or ceremonialists were doing and saying. They were the foundation of memory and provider of the environment, caring for the memory and enhancing memory. Elijah ensured harmony of responsibility and joy, passing on and teaching the stories and songs.

Another person of the Cayuga Nation, J. Thomas, was also a specialist in the recitation of most of the teachings of the Haudenosaunee. This is what I personally know of Jake Thomas (1920–1998):

My first experience with J. Thomas was at a special presentation in London, Ontario. Thomas was the honored speaker about Iroquois culture. He was moving in both worlds: the

Indigenous world and the Canadian world of non-Indians. He was comfortable in both. But he was most comfortable in talking about and *living* the Iroquois stories. His voice brought the stories to life but also stirred the feeling of being Haudenosaunee. He was most comfortable in being who he was. He was well respected and honored by the white people who came to listen to him. What struck me about him was his passion for the stories and teachings. Over the years of my own learning, I traveled to Jake's home and learning center for practices in the condolence and great law. He honored the teachings by creating a distinct learning center devoted to Haudenosaunee knowledge and personally recording texts of oratory for the coming generations to learn. This was the first and viewed by many as an unusual step for a Chief of the Confederacy. With it, there has been a shift in acceptance of developing systems of knowledge acquisition. Jake Thomas states:

Language consists of the most important set of symbols used by human beings. These symbols extend beyond the physical world for which they stand, they express the culture of the people and offered a way of referring to events gone by and yet to come. Native people need to understand that to speak a language is to give voice to the culture.³⁰

Peacefulness, being helpful, mindful, sense of humor, passionate about the culture and always encouraging are examples of the kinds of characteristics that embody the human repository or resource center of Indigenous knowledge in the Haudenosaunee.

Historically, it has been believed that the Confederacy would not have survived if it was not for Handsome Lake's pragmatic teachings. Like the Confederacy, the teachings would not have survived if not for individuals like Gibson, Buck, Elm, Elijah, Thomas, and Mohawk, etc. Numerous individuals have contributed to the longevity of the Haudenosaunee. The cultural knowledge survives, struggling, facing extinction at times, even as late as the 1960s. The culture and group adaptation over the generations since 1799 of practical applications of the knowledge has established a firm foundation going into the 21st century.

Today, there are individuals representing more than two generations at any given time learning Haudenosaunee cultural knowledge. This is not as many learners as the communities want,

³⁰Thomas, J. *Teachings from the Longhouse*, ed. T. Boyle (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co., 1994), 149.

but the requirements to learn are tremendous, and they are affected by modern-world distractions. It is obvious that a person has to make strong or serious choices in life to become a learner of Haudenosaunee traditions in terms of original cultural knowledge and practice.

Those who choose to advance the thinking and application of this knowledge in a modern context are different but yet hold some of the same values and lifestyle realities. The late J. Mohawk is an example of the modern Haudenosaunee thinker and knowledge practitioner. *The Creation Story* by John Mohawk is an example of oral tradition, translated by J.N.B. Hewitt from informant John Arthur Gibson into written form. Hewitt clarifies and challenges the observer's assumptions about Onkwehónwe intellectualism. The written form has been recaptured by John Mohawk to provide a 21st-century Indigenous perspective of the ancient story. This is what I know of Mohawk (1944–2006):

This is a personal account of a respected Native American writer and friend. I begin in the early 1970s when Harold Cardinal, an activist author, published “The Unjust Society” a critique of the Canadian and Indian relations, was invited to UB as a guest lecturer by John. A group of us from Oneida traveled to Buffalo to hear him speak. It was at this event that I first met John Mohawk. He was a Seneca, and I was an Oneida. By the end of the day, we were Iroquois friends.

The late John Mohawk was Sotsisowah, Seneca, a singer, a farmer, a historian, and a critic of American culture, a writer of “applied pragmatic knowledge,” a storyteller, a lecturer, a philosopher, an environmentalist, a teacher, a friend, and a leader. He was the voice of what really matters to the continuance of life and society. He was always thoughtful about how he examined someone's truth, taking care to analyze and only infusing another view in the order of the thought process when it was necessary. He was a weaver of cultural fabric, bringing together a Seneca worldview and creativity, a Haudenosaunee mandate, the reality of Americanization, a love for the land, and spiritualism as the highest order of his daily business.

Sotsisowah was first Seneca from the turtle clan who moved about the world as John Mohawk, an accomplished singer of the social and spiritual or ceremonial songs of the Haudenosaunee. He was an advocate of the traditional teachings and respected carrier of traditional knowledge.

Some of his accomplishments and work include serving as the editor of the news magazine *Daybreak* (1987–1995) and the editor of *Akwesasne Notes*' (1977–1983) books,

including *Basic Call to Consciousness* (1978, republished in 2005), *Exiled in the Land of the Free* (co-edited with Oren Lyons, 1992), *Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World* (2000), and *Iroquois Creation Story: John Author Gibson and J.N.B. Hewitt's Myth of the Earth Grasper* (2005), and numerous articles in several publications.³¹

Iroquois storytelling is one of the things he enjoyed relating to others, passing on Haudenosaunee knowledge. Whether it was the Creation story or the teachings of Handsome Lake, he brought attention to the Haudenosaunee worldview.

John Mohawk was different from the previous individuals I have examined. The difference was his choice to move outside of the protective nature of the Indigenous community to exercise his intellect in a broader arena. With Haudenosaunee knowledge as his frame of reference and foundation, he motivated others to bring to life the teachings with a more dynamic postcolonial approach. Maybe in a different time, John Arthur Gibson would have been a carrier of Seneca songs and stories. He chose instead to move the repository knowledge into pragmatic knowledge, utilizing his cultural intellect in contemporary applications.

It is here that we see a decisive difference in the movement of intellectualism within the Haudenosaunee world. Jake Thomas continued to move Haudenosaunee knowledge into a more effective repository system of transformation for the coming generations. Gibson applied ancient knowledge to the modern context, addressing issues of Indigenous rights, international issues, environmental concerns, and globalization. The other point that is important to review is the

³¹ Jackson, B., *Saying "Oh!": John Mohawk 1944-2006*. Buffalo Report, 2006.

connection between John Arthur Gibson's work and John Mohawk's review and re-edited version of Gibson's work, which "conforms more to today's sensibilities."³²

This continuous communication is dialogism, a concept in the literary theory of Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin. Mohawk's writing transcended the oral tradition with the written record and

"carries on a continual dialogue with other works of literature and other authors... This means that everything anybody ever says always exists in response to things that have been said before and in anticipation of things that will be said in response."³³

In his last book, *The Iroquois Creation Story*, Mohawk offers a contemporary interpretation of John Arthur Gibson and J.N.B. Hewitt's work *Myth of the Earth Grasper*. Mohawk's work is a dialogue with the past and the future. The information in *Basic Call to Consciousness*, written in the 1970s, and *Iroquois Creation Story*, written 30 years later, is timeless and appropriate for current realities. The information is there for the future generations to continue the dialogue with him.

It is important to also acknowledge H. Elijah, B. Elijah, T. Porter, R. Brown, L. Honyoust, J. Hill, and A. Shenandoah as just a few individuals who are deeply involved in the acquisition and transmission of the cultural knowledge to the next generations. There are many others throughout the confederacy or Haudenosaunee territories who have made strong commitments to learn and to ensure the continuation of the natural cycles of the Haudenosaunee.

³² J. Mohawk, Ed. *Iroquois Creation Story: John Arthur Gibson and J.N.B. Hewitt's Myth of the Earth Grasper* (City: Publisher, 2005), 98.

³³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialogic> Antone, R. *Haudenosaunee Relational Knowledge (Teachings) and Cultural Revitalization – Seven Spans Paradigm in American Studies* (Buffalo: State University of New York, 2007), 67. I originally cited this work in my Master's project.

What is the purpose of intellectuals in Indigenous societies and nations? We do know that the primary responsibility has been the maintenance of the repository knowledge over the last 200 years. It has been a part of the survival process of Indigenous cultures. Said states that “one task of the intellectual is the effort to break down the stereotypes and reductive categories that are so limiting to human thought and communications.”³⁴

I have integrated Said’s thinking about intellectualism into being a Haudenosaunee intellectual that may very well be anti-west if one is to fulfill the obligations of telling the “truth about human misery and oppression were to be held to”³⁵ at all costs. The intellectual must appeal to a wide public audience and not take up the role of insiders promoting special interests. Intellectuals are society’s conscience; they “[question] nationalism, corporate thinking, and a sense of class, racial or gender privilege. [The] ... principal duty is the search for relative independence.”³⁶ In so doing, the intellectual is seen as “exile and marginal, as amateur, and as the author of a language that tries to speak the truth to power.”³⁷

In reviewing the quality of character and purpose of life of Haudenosaunee knowledge holders, the definition that Said offers fits the profile:

“The intellectual is an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public. [And this is done on] the basis of universal principles: that all human beings are entitled to expect decent standards of behavior concerning freedom and justice from worldly powers or nations, and that deliberate or inadvertent violations of these standards need to be testified and fought against courageously.... A universal view of the job as an intellectual is...

³⁴Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, xi.

³⁵ *Ibid.* xii

³⁶ *Ibid.* xiii & xvi

³⁷ *Ibid.* xvi

maintaining a state of constant alertness.”³⁸

Another of the critical notions of Haudenosaunee intellectual thought is the idea of group consciousness as a focus, not individualism.

Let us celebrate the life of all those who have carried the knowledge to the present day, knowing that our very own identity as Haudenosaunee is founded within that wisdom. Without their contribution, we would have been empty vessels floating in the river of life, disconnected from the source of Haudenosaunee reality, the sacred teachings of the ancient knowledge. Those individuals who voluntarily devote their lives to the culture ensure the ongoing presence of the Haudenosaunee. I have provided a glimpse into the lives of some who, as Haudenosaunee, embodied the common

denominators representative of the culture. These individuals embodied the seven teachings of the Haudenosaunee.



Chart B © R. Antone

Figure 15 – Haudenosaunee Personality [chart prepared by R. Antone]

Figure 15, the Haudenosaunee Personality Chart or Ka?nikuhli:ho, offers a snapshot of the values and characteristics that evolve from Haudenosaunee knowledge. They are drawn from foundational

³⁸Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 11 & 23.

knowledge under a simple premise: “What is this teaching guiding me to do in my life?” What is traditional knowledge asking me to do in life? The knowledge is also viewed as a gift to one’s life path. This chart is designed to be read beginning with Yukwatsiste – our fire or spirit – and following the circle of learning in a counter-clockwise journey. This direction is the way of our dance and the passing of our food in harmony with the movement of Mother Earth. Each characteristic comes from the Creation story, ceremonies, Great Law, or Gaiwiio and reinforced by each of the teachings. Onkwehónwe all have the ability to achieve these values as functional interactive skills in their lives with the goal of achieving the Good Mind. When one becomes fully versed in the Haudenosaunee teachings, the outcome is the impact on one’s whole person – the notion that our thoughts and feelings are interconnected to create our reaction/action in life. Ka?nikohli:yo is the balance of thought, feeling, and action working in concert with the Haudenosaunee worldview. These energies of personhood are deeply interconnected and interdependent, encouraging lifelong learning and acquisition. The model assists in decolonizing by presenting concrete behavioral directives for change and growth. The teachings encourage human behavior in a broad environmental context as well as a human context.

The chart is a representation of the “Good Mind” prized by the Haudenosaunee. This abbreviated symbol of the teachings represents lifelong learning in the acquisition of Haudenosaunee cultural knowledge. The current intellectuals of the Haudenosaunee are now deeply involved in not only the acquisition of knowledge but the expression of that knowledge in the spiritual, social, cultural, political, and legal realities of life. John Mohawk, as one example, carved a decolonizing direction with his authentic and brilliant style of examining history, dissecting it as he exposed it, tracking the ideologies, myths, and distortions into an understandable story and forcing others to think about indigenizing their own story.

Often, the intellectual finds solace as an exile from reality to explore and exercise one's own intellect. Because of this exile, one makes the choice to not make adjustments to society's standards, "preferring instead to remain outside the mainstream, unaccommodated, unco-opted, [and] resistant."³⁹ Exile is not only a physical condition or experience but a symbolic one as well. It is not only the result of dislocation and migration but a spiritual journey of escapism. It is the feeling of being an outsider, outside the mainstream, and "even [disliking] the trappings of accommodation and national well-being."⁴⁰ The best approach comes from Said, quoting Adorno: "It is part of morality not to be at home in one's home."⁴¹ Exile is then further defined as "the condition that characterizes the intellectual as someone who stands as a marginal figure outside the comforts of privilege, power, [and] being-at-homeness."⁴² It is like living on an island: "an intellectual is like a shipwrecked person who learns how to live in a certain sense *with* the land, not *on* it."⁴³ The Haudenosaunee intellectual is one who is about being holistic in life while encouraging and causing change and being involved in the revitalization and transformation of a Way of Life, alone in thought at times but never too far from the group, the clan, the nation, and the tree.

Intellectuals are held within boundaries that are political, geographical, and cultural, and they are victimized or idealized by other cultures. The carriers of oral knowledge from the Haudenosaunee were held within the boundaries of Iroquois communities across the imposed international boundaries of the settler government states of Canada and United States.

³⁹ Ibid. 52.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 53.

⁴¹ Ibid. 59.

⁴² Ibid. 59.

⁴³ Said, (*Representations of the Intellectual*). 59.

To speak of intellectuals today is also to speak specifically of national, religious and even continental variations on the topic, each one of which seems to require separate consideration.... Every individual intellectual is born into a language, and for the most part spends the rest of his or her life in that language, which is the principal medium of intellectual activity.⁴⁴

All people belong to some national or religious community that demands a loyalty that is manipulated by societal demands.

The current reality of being Haudenosaunee is burdened more by the contemporary attractions of American society, leading to accommodation and eventually acculturation. Western society has a natural draw or influence on anyone within the sound of the media. To remain an intellectual within a certain cultural context in North America is demanding with respect to the ability to exile oneself in search of relative independence. It is within the isolation of thought surrounded by oratory that Haudenosaunee intellectuals' consciousness is developed and honed by the ancient knowledge.

It is a spirit in opposition, rather than in accommodation, that grips me because the romance, the interest, the challenge of intellectual life is to be found in dissent against the status quo at a time when the struggle on behalf of underrepresented and disadvantaged groups seems so unfairly weighted against them.⁴⁵

Within the Haudenosaunee, many are challenging the status quo concerning land rights, treaties, land claims, residential schools, and historical oppression by expressing the truth.

The Elders/Teachers encouraged the truth to pour from our wisdom on all subjects that challenge the real issues of society. As intellectuals, we need to approach the world as amateurs, questioning and bringing to light the inequities of society. In today's world, an intellectual who fails

⁴⁴Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 27-28.

⁴⁵Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, xvii.

to hold to speaking the truth despite who is in power can be pushed by fear to back away and toe the line. It is the habits of our mind that cause or lead us to avoidance, causing us to turn away from principled positions. The intellectual must “pick the right one and then intelligently [represent] it where it can do the most good and cause the right change.”⁴⁶

Considering the value of the role of the intellectual in society, a question comes to mind: Can there be an independent, autonomously functioning intellectual who is not controlled by salary, loyalty, compromising judgment, or restraints? Within the Haudenosaunee, there are limited opportunities for employment, and most have to work for existing government-funded agencies or organizations and institutions outside and within the communities. Independent intellectuals in Haudenosaunee country can be limited by the necessities of family lifestyle. However, there exist those who place no limitations on themselves in seeking change and impacting the survival of culture. What accompanies exercising one’s intellectualism, as Said examines, are the threats to contemporary intellectuals of professionalism and specialization. Intellectualism becomes something one does for a living, fitting a societal framework of acceptability and, as a result, four pressures of professionalism that challenge the intellectual’s ingenuity and will are as follows:

Specialization is the limiting through narrowing acquisition of knowledge sacrificing one general culture. This leads to the second concern of becoming experts who are answerable to those that certify the experts of the chosen field of study. The third pressure is the draw towards the power and authority, its requirements and finally being employed by it.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 65.

⁴⁷Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 76,77,80.

The fourth pressure is money. In response to professionalism, it is important to remain fueled by one's abilities of caring and affection for what one does rather than for profit or selfishness of power or authority.

So far, I have been drawing on the importance of understanding intellectualism that is appropriate to the cultural context of the Haudenosaunee experience. Indigenous knowledge forms our cultural intellect. A window of reference is created by the worldview of one's culture, and it is through that window that we see ourselves in the world community and we determine how the world is responding to us as a culture. The idea of decolonizing is to remove those elements that block the view through our window. The more we decolonize, the more our natural cultural intellect emerges.

As we decolonize issues addressed in chapter three, concerning borrowing Christian constructs that have been used to define the Holocaust in America, particularly Haudenosaunee country, will need intellectual attention to ensure that those constructs do not change our worldview.

The Haudenosaunee have reached a place in history that is experiencing more independence than has been the case in over 200 years. Individuals who participate in Haudenosaunee life can begin the process of seeking more influential approaches to change and growth, enhancing the cultural knowledge and pragmatic notions of creativity. Smith states that "every Indigenous community has retained throughout colonization ... the ability to create and be creative."⁴⁸ This is not only about the artistic abilities but the fundamental spirit of creating and using our imagination and dream new possibilities. "It fosters inventions and discoveries, facilitates simple improvements

⁴⁸Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 158.

to peoples' lives and uplifts our spirits.”⁴⁹ This is the pragmatic notion of Haudenosaunee intellectualism.

There is an acceptance of different ways of storing cultural knowledge, learning, transmitting, and moving information throughout the confederacy territories. The Haudenosaunee is no longer a defensive canoe in the river of life having to avoid the knowledge extractors. Many of the intellectuals in the Haudenosaunee are exploring, researching, studying, writing, analyzing, and discovering cultural creativity is very alive and expressive.

What is the role of Haudenosaunee knowledge in the Western academy? Haudenosaunee scholars need to begin the process of owning the knowledge. While the collections are certainly useful, they need to be reinterpreted within meaningful dialogue with the culture of the present-day Haudenosaunee communities and not remain pre-Columbian artifacts. An excellent example is the work of John Mohawk and Kevin White on the Iroquois Creation story. They are direct dialogues with Gibson's work as well as Hewitt's, and, at the same time, they engage the Onkwehónwe of today in learning Haudenosaunee philosophical foundational knowledge.

Second, scholars need to establish a more descriptive definition or construct of Haudenosaunee intellectualism. With a more decisive analysis and hypothesis, the function of the knowledge and intellect is more precisely conceptualized within an Indigenous frame of reference.

The survival of Indigenous knowledge commands some examination with respect to the concept of sustainability. This is especially true when the world community is facing a crisis and struggle in the management of humanity and environmental survival. Indigenous knowledge has the

⁴⁹Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 22.

ability to survive in the worst of situations with a real track record of sustainability. It is within that ecosystem of survival that an intuitive wisdom of sustainability transcends the negligence of limited Western, Eurocentric knowledge.

It is difficult to define without borrowing assimilative thought when the language of application is foreign. Foreign ideology has the tendency to invade through the language of use. It is critical to use Indigenous language for key conceptualizations and descriptive renditions of the knowledge and cultural use. It is encouraging for scholars to combine Indigenous languages, returning the thought process to original language conceptualizations.

Indigenous thinkers and scholars will continue to advocate a return to our original story to source the knowledge needed in the future. At the same time, there is a need to remain vigilant about the colonial dogma from external adversaries and the internal defeatists who succumbed to the Western idea of semi-intelligence. Another challenge for Haudenosaunee intellectuals is rehabilitation of the knowledge by removing the Christian concepts that have invaded the knowledge.

“What is clearly needed, then, is regeneration of a culture of indigenous knowledge among our peoples. Educational institutions and processes, both formal and informal, need to undergo a serious de/reorganization and be made to reflect both indigenous knowledge and Onkwehonweneha, the indigenous way of learning and being.”⁵⁰

Haudenosaunee involvement in the academy must be focused on the deconstruction of the colonialism that remains a mechanism of settler state modernity that continues the oppression of the Onkwehónwe. The academy needs to provide the space for critical analysis and support of the

⁵⁰Alfred, *Wasase*, 200.

importance the independence of Indigenous knowledge as acts of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

In 2009, a young Cayuga, A. VanEvery, completed his master's dissertation on Haudenosaunee citizenship, calling for more inclusive approaches in how people are acknowledged as clan members and the urgency of the Confederacy to work together in finding new ways to greater acceptance of our peoples.⁵¹ The young minds of the Confederacy are there, willing to help with the decolonizing work.

Haudenosaunee Indigenous knowledge evolves with the pragmatic infusion of contemporary intellectuals exercising liberation of thought and action in the current realities of challenging colonialism. Liberation is exercising Indigenous knowledge in international diplomatic work on Indigenous rights, growing corn, building new ideas in organization design, finding new ways of cultural expression, and always the defense of Haudenosaunee lands. As Haudenosaunee knowledge is turned into practical skills and applications, there are moments of discovery and joy in realization. Haudenosaunee scholars need to be fearless about some of these issues that are choking the life out of the Confederacy and challenge the status quo in the communities, including the traditional sectors of our Nations. Liberation of thought carries the responsibility to seek the truth in all matters in our presence.

This is only the beginning of the paradigm shift for Haudenosaunee future generations who will impact once again the distant journey of the roots of the Great Tree of Peace in exercising their Haudenosaunee intellectualism.

⁵¹Aaron L. VanEvery, "Let Us Put Our Minds Together As One: To Be a Citizen of the Haudenosaunee," Thesis University at Buffalo, 2009.

Chapter 5 – Mapping Things out – The Difference We Are Is the Difference We Create from

The reality of European settlers' presence in Haudenosaunee country will remain a contest for generations. The level of punishment they mete out oppressing Indigenous people will also be contested. The emergence or manifestation of renewed cultural practices will gain new spaces with the implementation of cultural knowledge as foundational constructs of entities in health, healing, and social, political, and organizational development.

Haudenosaunee culture is finding new life as the communities struggle with the colonialism and internalized oppression inundating the daily lives of the people. The major shift from a Haudenosaunee Way of Life to a lifestyle guided by the virtues and principles of Haudenosaunee culture involves finding new ways to practice tradition. Before the Europeans came, the Haudenosaunee Way of Life was an enactment of the teachings, a fulfillment of the cultural obligations that pervade all human activities. In the original Way of Life, the natural resource availability would have kept the families healthy and prosperous.

Despite the overwhelming loss of land and resources, the vast majority of the Haudenosaunee population chooses to continue to be different and reject total assimilation. How does the culture help create a “difference” in community and organizational processes of change? While the standard approach is to examine Indigenous culture from a revitalization perspective, the intent is to discover the transformative process of how Indigenous knowledge maintains pre-contact custom and practice within a very different environment than when those teachings first became an expression of being Haudenosaunee.

In this chapter, I will explore different venues of cultural expression in the modern context. I have often referenced the notion that we are finding ways to give culture a new or different home in

our modern world “on the edge of the woods.”¹ The Haudenosaunee have remained deeply attached to the woods, holding on to the Great Pine the Great Tree of Peace. No matter what state of acculturation our people are in, there is a level of pride in being Haudenosaunee. That pride, I believe, is a natural part of ka?nikohli:yo – the Good Mind, the energy necessary for transformation. Ka?nikohli:yo is the outward expression of Haudenosaunee psychology, a different way of thinking coming from a different worldview, which is why Iroquoian expressions remain an empowering idea.

In Wallace’s 1958 work “Dreams and the Wishes of the Soul: A Type of Psychoanalytic Theory among the Seventeenth Century Iroquois,” published in *American Anthropologist*, Haudenosaunee psychology is examined as an ethnographic curiosity: “we find here a ‘primitive’ people actively using a theory of the mind similar in many essentials to that expressed by Sigmund Freud and his intellectual heirs in Western European cultural tradition of two centuries later.”² It is pointed out that these are independent inventions and a reminder that this is a different culture of primitive people who have primitive thoughts that include an animistic thesis.

Wallace’s research of the Jesuit records of Father LeJeune (1636) states that most Iroquoian peoples ascribed to the belief that the human body possessed a soul that had several functions “in its capacity to animate the body and give it life; in its capacity to have knowledge; and in its capacity to

¹A Haudenosaunee expression that comes from the process of helping each other to condole our relatives.

²Anthony F.C. Wallace, “Dreams and the Wishes of the Soul: A Type of Psychoanalytic Theory among the Seventeenth Century Iroquois,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series 60.2 (1958), 234-248, 3 Feb. 2012 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/665159>>.

exercise judgment; in its capacity to wish or desire; and in its capacity to leave the body, as it might during dreams or after death.”³

Ka?nikohli:yo or the “Good Mind” is a collective summary of Iroquoian psychology’s way of understanding the human mind, behavior, and spiritual wellness. Wallace’s paper for the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute states that the Iroquois had an advanced understanding of the human psychology centuries before the invasion. Some of those findings are important to reexamine from an Indigenous perspective that can create greater dialogue about Haudenosaunee psychology in modernity while decolonization is still in process. Most of the references used are the documentation and records of the Jesuit Relations of the earliest insight and observations of the Iroquois. My aim is to place these findings into a more meaningful Indigenous context, interpreting and defining a more modern cultural definition of those observations. These definitions are not conclusive but given space for more research and dialogue.

Western humanistic psychology in the mid-twentieth century attempts at trying to understand the human being holistically. The seventeenth century observations of the Iroquois perceived Indigenous humanistic psychology as ancient understandings deeply rooted in a culture that created a holistic worldview of humankind and all other life forces having a symbiotic relationship. Humanness was not about being above all other life forms but dependent and supportive, creating real communities of equality, embracing the good life connected to all forms of species. Pre-contact communities were not utopian imagery but the result of generations of dreams. Men and women were equal, children were spiritual gifts, peace had a minimum of 500 years of practice, and people were free to pursue their dreams.

³Ibid 237.

The Iroquois understood that the energy that travels the corridors of the human body also animate all life forms, establishing a worldview of spirituality that is about connection, reciprocity, relationship, and balance. The observer’s interpretation of a belief that nature has soul and is connected to Indigenous people inspired a worldview that understood a universal energy that formed a bond in nature of all Indigenous relationships. Animism reflected an oratorical worldview that, in turn, mirrored a psychology founded on the relationships with the cultural stories of grandmother

moon, eldest brother sun, the three sisters, the animals as symbolic representations of the clans, etc.

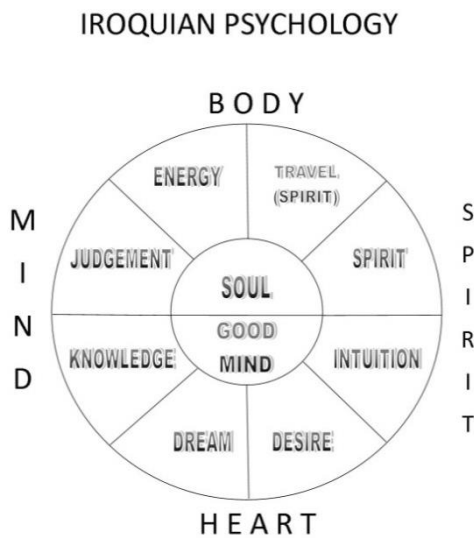


Figure 16 – Iroquoian Psychology

The chart in Figure 16 is a representation of my modern interpretation of Wallace’s 1954 work using the construct of the medicine wheel model. The chart is representative of what Haudenosaunee people in the seventeenth century expressed as their talents or gifts of complete humanness. These eight gifts or faculties of the holistic person/soul are spirit, intuition, desire, dream, knowledge, judgment, energy, and spirit travel.

All of them are considered to be capacities of the human being within an understanding that the human has both conscious and unconscious parts. “[T]he Iroquois had achieved a great degree of psychological sophistication.”⁴ I have placed this knowledge within a circle or a medicine wheel that is described as foundational of an Indigenous approach to healing and wellness. The medicine wheel

⁴Ibid 237.

has been accepted across many Indigenous cultures as a universal methodology, providing an easy way to explain the notion of wholeness.

Some easily recognizable examples of ideas and/or entities that are often cited by Aboriginal people include the four aspects of humanness – the emotional, physical, mental and spiritual – the four key periods of life cycle spanning from birth/infancy, to youth, to adulthood and finishing with elderhood/death.⁵

This more modern examination of Iroquois psychology within the medicine wheel or circle format enhances the construct of Haudenosaunee personality based on the seven spans thick of skin teachings of Chapter Two. This is critical to the recovery or decolonization of the Haudenosaunee while at the same time creating new understandings of different ways of thinking: Indigenous cultural thinking.

The contemporary construct of the holistic circle of spirit, emotion/heart, mind, and body is a foundational view in Indigenous healing practices. This construct creates a platform for a contemporary expression of Iroquois psychology. Based on current knowledge of the four parts of the human being mind, body, spirit, and heart, I charted a representation of the 1636 observations to outline the gifts of Iroquoian psychology to further explore and advance the construct in the present-day context. There are ongoing discussions in the Indigenous healing and wellness field about this perspective of holistic human development. This understanding that the greatest damage done by the punishment from a dominant culture is the attempted elimination of the humanity of Indigenous peoples becomes an important element of recovery from colonialism. As we decolonize, we recreate our natural understanding of our humanity within an Indigenous context.

⁵Michael Anthony Hart, *Seeking Mino-Pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal Approach to Helping* (2005), 40.

Spirit (spirit & intuition)

The spirit portion of the holistic construct of the Haudenosaunee human being is considered yukwatsiste – the fire within. This takes the form of an energy that flows throughout the body. It is also understood from this place as the ability of intuition, an ability to predict and to sense what is crossing one's boundaries, to feel and sense change, to know what tomorrow brings, or just to have the good sense to be careful in new situations. Furthermore, analytical intuition is the ability to comprehend the totality of one's experience. The cultural narratives express stories of the human spirit and the connection to the universe. From this understanding comes respect for being connected to other life forms, creating an animistic bond and causing the human spirit to build a synergistic relationship to Creation. It is these bonds of which the Elders tell stories of the human spirit traveling to preselected destinations that are sites of their whole family of choice, including their spirit helpers.

Heart (desire & dream)

As human beings, we desire to fulfill the needs we feel. Our desire is attached to our feelings, how we relate to the world around us, and how we create relationships. We are born into this world attached to other human beings, who are family and the source of our Creation. We understand that it is the spiritual journey to this world that brings the gift of dream to allow our connection to the spirit realm, the origin of human spirit. The Iroquoian understanding of the dream state creates the understanding of a conscious and unconscious part of one's mind. Both are critical to human development, and respect for both is encouraged.

Mind (knowledge & judgment)

Our spirit carries knowledge of life, identity, culture, history that we invest in our presence as Haudenosaunee. We are gifted with ancient knowledge that fuels our energy to never forget but calls

us to remain connected; calling us home the further we travel away. Our mind is aware of the conscious and unconscious levels of our thoughts. Our mind functions to make judgments about ourselves in our daily life, engaging the world fulfilling our desires as Haudenosaunee. Knowledge is thought to be alive, living in the oral tradition, the constant storytelling, and the renewal of the knowledge passing from one generation to the next.

Body (energy & spirit travel)

Our body is the vessel in which our spirit travels. The energy of our spirit flows freely throughout our being, encouraging all the functions of humanistic psychology to function in the ways of the “Good Mind” – ka?nikohli:yo.⁶ The body is the house of all that is whole with the ability to work the energy within. The spirit leaves the body to travel during dreamworks, resting the physical being and examining the spirit realm for guidance, knowledge, and affirmation.

These four components of the sacred circle seek greater understanding of the self by allowing the self to explore the spiritual space of one’s existence.

Here, power and place are dominant concepts – power being the living energy that inhibits and/or composes the universe, and place being the relationship of things to each other.... Put into a simple equation: power and place produce personality. This equation simply means that the universe is alive, but it also contains within it the very important suggestions that the universe is personal and, therefore, must be approached in a personal manner. The personal nature of the universe demands that each and every entity in it seek and sustain personal relationships.⁷

⁶Oneida word for Good Mind; translation and written word by Howard Elijah, traditional language teacher and Chief.

⁷Vine Deloria, “Power and Place: Equal Personality,” ed. Vine Deloria, *Indian Education in America* (City: American Indian Science and Engineering Society, 1991), 4.

The four elements of the person, the completeness or wholeness of humanness, must function in collaboration with synergistic empowerment to achieve the optimum functions of ka?nikohli:yo.

Defining cultural motivation (identity)

Cultural motivation is rooted in the synergistic energy forming the Haudenosaunee persona based in holistic relations with Creation, forming a unique humanness that seeks the very best of one's whole being and existence. Culture's critical attribute to life is instilling the deep desire of being, the motivation to live one's life, how we walk on our Mother Earth, molding who we are and etching our souls into an Onkwehónwe being. Culture fashions identity, but critical to life and identity is building the bundle of knowledge that will unfold one's life journey. Haudenosaunee destiny is orchestrated by intuitive analytical powers of dream, vision, spiritual, and manifested guides within the Haudenosaunee cultural context.

J.B.N. Hewitt examined the Iroquois conception of religion or spiritual center, defining what he uncovered as "mystic potency ... Orenda."⁸ Hewitt's works that are central to this discussion are "The Iroquoian Concept of the Soul, 1895" and "Orenda and a Definition of Religion, 1902," which are in contemporary dialogue with the current work in linguistics, language recovery, and cultural revitalization. Fluent Oneida speakers engaging in cultural language recovery within the Oneida community in Ontario were able to research and document the current understanding and interpretations. Preliminary research has identified "Orenda" as the source of a "sacred bundle"⁹ construct as collections of spiritual knowledge during different stages of life. The source of an

⁸ Hewitt, J.B.N., "Orenda and Definition of Religion, American Anthropologist, New Series Vol.4, No. 1, 1902", URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/658926> Accessed: 02/12/2008.

⁹ Howard Elijah, language instructor, in conversation during the fall of 2011 about Hewitt's work, and his Iroquoian word for spirit or soul is Ohle:na?.

Onkwehónwe's ability to redirect, change, and move with the evolving landscape while maintaining a deep inner strength of being Haudenosaunee is concealed within the understanding of our inner being. This identifies the Haudenosaunee source of the Sacred Bundle construct that defines the Haudenosaunee character, the motivated energy challenging change. The "mystic potency" is hidden in layers of identity of self, clan family, role, nation, and confederacy represented in the collectivism of the multi-tribal union of the Haudenosaunee. Cultural motivation is seen as how the Haudenosaunee move and touch the world, always claiming one's place within ceremonial life, during a lacrosse game, while growing a garden, or involved in international diplomacy.

Expressing and practicing being Haudenosaunee are the evidence of culture in action, how we behave toward one another, and the capacity to make decisions within a culturally based frame of reference. There is a capacity to survive as longhouse people in the dire of situations even when we make it most difficult for ourselves. The Haudenosaunee have a great capacity to think, an intellectualism rooted in generations of Indigenous epistemology. How Haudenosaunee epistemology guides survival, rebuilding, revitalizing, and now transforming a people, is seen in the telling of history from an Indigenous worldview.

The first story I review is the critical decision for the migration of the Oneida people, the collective ownership of the land, reconnecting with the Haudenosaunee, and establishing communal democracy in the present location of Southwold in southern Ontario. Iroquois psychology plays a critical role in the decision-making process, including dreams and intuitive analysis as witnessed in the people moving about, guided not only by their psychology but their inner spirit as Haudenosaunee. During this migration, resettlement, and revitalization to create critical community decisions were made as Oneida people using Haudenosaunee epistemology. The Oneida desire, holistic view, intuitive analysis, and dream that is foundational to our Iroquoian psychology directed

the Oneidas to make dire decisions in their efforts to reestablish their nation. In this story, moments are reviewed when a decision is made from a cultural revitalization perspective.

In 1840, Oneidas arrived in Southwold, Ontario, Canada, migrating from the homelands in upstate New York. Chief Moses Schuyler sent a delegation to Canada to seek land. In October 1840, 241 Oneidas arrived at Southwold, in the spring of 1841, another 120 arrived, and in 1845, thirty more arrived from New York. Moses Schuyler's letter to British Superintendent of Indian Affairs J. B. Clench referred to his party as the "Peace Party." They were the ones who desired to maintain neutrality during the wars. Here is another example of using one's identity and belief system of "peace" as a mandate for external relations for the mutual benefit of the nation.

Four years after the migration, the British government reported that "in 1844 there were ... 6 frame and 48 log homes with 4 wigwams ... and total of 335 acres under cultivation."¹⁰ The people busied themselves with reestablishing a community.

In March of 1850, they sent a delegation to the Six Nations at Grand River to request the chiefs to come and condole and raise new Chiefs to form a new Oneida Settlement government of traditional Chiefs based on the Great Law. One of the points of interest is that the British Indian Agent Clench attended the meeting at Grand River and observed "the ancient ceremony of burying the hatchet between the Six Nations and the Oneidas who had shed each other's blood at the

¹⁰A.F. Ricciardelli, *Factionalism at Oneida, An Iroquois Indian Community*, Anthropology (City: University of Pennsylvania, 1961), 287.

instigation of the British and American Governments.”¹¹ A critical decision was made to remain Haudenosaunee by reestablishing relations with the rest of the confederacy at Grand River.

The relationship between the Grand River and Oneida communities grew over the years through marriage and mutual political support. The constitution and traditional customs were continued through the supportive relationship.

By the late 1880s, the community was becoming too small. It could not support the agricultural endeavors of all the Oneidas. “Between 1888 and 1890 sixty-three Oneidas immigrated to Wisconsin.”¹² Again, because of the maintaining of relations with other Oneidas during previous trips to Wisconsin, the ability to move large groups of people to other communities was possible. This speaks strongly about the Iroquoian psychology, the Indigenous intuitive analytical strength, and the depth of the brotherhood that remains intact despite the surrounding dominant culture’s policies of control.

By 1900, most Oneidas were augmenting their Way of Life by getting involved with the white economic system, becoming day laborers for area farmers or logging companies. Venturing outside of the community to access resources became a pattern of how the Iroquois kept the outside from invading the community, a strategic cultural idea of protection.

The Kansas Claim of 1905–1909 had a significant impact on the status of the Canadian Oneidas. “The Court held that as far as the Canadian Oneidas were concerned, their migration did not sever their ties to the United States. The Court said:

Our Indians are and have been the wards of the United States, and the Indian has no right of expatriation. Whether they may or may not leave the country is a question of Indian policy.... in 1842 the Indian policy might have required that the Oneidas be brought back,

¹¹J. Campisi, *Ethnic Identity and Boundary Maintenance in Three Oneida Communities – 2*, *Anthropology* (Albany: University of New York, 1974), 270.

¹²Campisi, *Ethnic Identity and Boundary Maintenance in Three Oneida Communities*, 290.

and if it had, they would have been brought back. They did not cease to be wards of the United States because they had crossed the border and attempted to domicile themselves in a foreign country”¹³

The Oneida Chiefs’ involvement in the Kansas Claim is another example of the depth of awareness of their national identity as the Oneida Nation and their treaty relationship with the United States. Council minutes¹⁴ are adamant that the Oneidas had a strong relationship to their homelands, and the Kansas Claim was a way to be involved with the United States. Again, it is evident that the idea of being Haudenosaunee was still very significant in the political and legal activities of the Oneida Chiefs.

The Oneida Settlement continued the raising of chiefs in the traditional manner. Hewitt attended a condolence ceremony in March 1917 in Oneida Southwold. Tooker reports that Hewitt attended a Condolence ceremony at Munceytown as an official delegate of the Grand River Six Nations Council, where [he] intoned the Requickening Addressing in Onondaga.”¹⁵ The community was governed by the Chiefs Council until the imposition of the Band Council system in 1934.¹⁶ For 96 years, the new community exclusively enjoyed the extension of the traditional form of government of the Haudenosaunee.

The band council system came into use because the people’s way of rejecting negative behavior was to ignore it. Less than 50 men voted for the elective system encouraged by the colonial master, the Indian agent. One of the most interesting discussions about elective systems that took place before the election was why Indian women were not allowed to vote. The Indian agent said that

¹³Campisi, *Ethnic Identity and Boundary Maintenance in Three Oneida Communities*, 434.

¹⁴During my research, Katherine Riccadellio had in her possession the Oneida Council Minutes from 1905 to 1915, which she gave to me.

¹⁵Tooker and Graymont, *J.B.N. Hewitt*, 88.

¹⁶Alex Ricciardelli, *Factionalism among the Oneidas*.

it was against the law for women to vote. This was one of the reasons for low voter turnout. The election of a band council, an imposed system of governance, never gained any real support in the community.

The Chiefs Council remained holding council on a regular basis until the present day. Factionalism remains a part of the community character today. The band council is limited by their inability to work with the Chiefs Council. In more recent times, the Chiefs Council has made numerous attempts to work with the band council only to be disappointed by the disingenuous nature of the band council system. The chiefs are viewed as “hard-liners” who do not agree with giving another inch in land or policy to the Canadian government or external forces, while the band council is more accommodating with external authorities. The Iroquoian way of thinking is deeply imbedded within all activities, especially concerning outside influences.

One of the surviving strengths of this traditional model was the General Council, which was an open council of the people dealing with issues that could not be decided in the Chiefs Council. The origin of this model was tracked by Ricciardelli to Seth Newhouse’s version of the Great Law:

76th Wampum. It is provided thus:--- That the warriors of every clan of the Five Nations shall have a Council Fire which shall ever be burning for the purpose of holding a council of the warriors of the clan when in their opinion it seems necessary to hold such a council to transact such business as may be needful for the welfare of the clan, or the people. It shall have the same rights as the council fire of the women.

82nd Wampum. It is provided thus:--- That it shall be constitutional that whenever an important affair, or affairs, brought before the Five Nations Union Council, which it would tend to bad effect, in a disadvantageous, so it to ruin their National Prosperity. Then the Union Council of Lords must refer the affair to their people in General, of such affair they shall have a voice and decide.¹⁷

¹⁷Ricciardelli, Factionalism among the Oneidas; reference is from Seth Newhouse’s version of the Great Law, a codified version that was controversial.

In the last statement, we see the acknowledgement of right of the people to form a council for matters that affect the whole community.

The minute book of the chiefs' council contains an entry which clearly describes the nature of the general council. All Indians belonging to the Band and upon the announcement by the head chief with approval of the governing council of the Band to hold a general council for the discussion of certain matters interesting to the public generally, where everyone is invited to attend and may if desire to discuss or witness the proceeding and a vote may be taken to ascertain the opinion of the public whenever deemed fit or found necessary. The general council is to take place in the Oneida Council Hall but not in any individual residence which is not a public meeting place and could not conveniently accommodate the whole band. Meetings in any local residence may be held by certain clubs but not under the assumption of a Band Council.¹⁸

When a General Council was called, the people were given a few days' notice, and the first order of business would be to select a chairperson. The issue would be stated, everyone had an opportunity to speak regarding the issue, and if further information or evidence was needed, a committee would be selected and given a time frame to bring the results to another General Council. At that point, a final decision was made. People respected the General Council and usually complied with the decisions. This was the central form of government used in Oneida from 1840 and, to a far lesser degree, to the present. The General Council gives the power of decision-making on critical issues to the people, much like a referendum process. A point of interest is that all leadership cannot come into the meeting carrying their titles. There must be full equality. Here is evidence of how the Haudenosaunee democratic system functioned within the Oneida community. Haudenosaunee epistemology and Iroquoian psychology remain strong within the community regardless of the amount of acculturation taking place. The Oneida experienced additional dimensions in their decision-making through years of community-building, constructing a system in which every adult

¹⁸Alex Ricciardelli, Chiefs' Council Minutes, March 24, 1928.

had a voice in serious matters affecting the community, especially land issues. According to community narratives, this was a safeguard to ensure that the community would not lose their land again. What it offers is an understanding of how the Indigenous mindset works in creating processes that are Indigenous and fit the norm of the culture. Even after the settler state imposed the elective system, the General Council form of decision-making remained an active function with the community, although its use decreased over the years. The Euro American observer Ricciardelli came to the community in the 1950s and wrote extensively on the Oneida situation. In one of the documents, he detailed the origins, workings, functions, and values of the General Council system. For the interest of this chapter, this becomes a valuable tool to examine how Haudenosaunee Indigenous thinking is used to create cultural safety in managing, rebuilding, revitalizing, and transforming an important element of community life, group decision-making within the context of cultural safety and cultural congruence.

The Chiefs Council remained in contact with the Grand Council at Onondaga New York as well as the Six Nations meetings at Grand River. The Chiefs also traveled with delegations of the Six Nations to meetings in Washington, D.C., Albany, New York, and Ottawa, Ontario, as well as meetings in other Haudenosaunee communities. In the 1950s, Ray Elm, an Oneida living at Onondaga, was appointed by the Oneida Chiefs to represent the Oneidas in New York. The Oneida Nation is still an active participant of the Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee.

The longhouse at Oneida Settlement has suffered some difficulties as well, with many people moving away from the community for employment. The majority of the elders/teachers were retired and so were available to teach. By the late 1960s, for many, there seems to have been a loss of interest in the old teachings, but the elders, chiefs, and Clan Mothers publicly announced their

situation with the first full press coverage of ceremonies. Some of the young Oneidas acknowledged the call and returned to the longhouse to help with the recovery.

The Oneida story is about building community with Haudenosaunee thinking inspired by the inner spirit of holistic personality, a psychology that is their own, and Ka?nikohli:yo – the Good Mind – never going too far from the Great Tree. The ideals of the Haudenosaunee form of democratic process are a constant thought within the community renewal and rebuilding strategy.

Regardless of the acculturation, there is something undeniable about the depth of identity as Haudenosaunee. Acculturation is not a natural process and has never been accepted as an alternative in the Haudenosaunee worldview. Acculturation is not the product of choice but the result of accumulative pressure to change in a variety of forced cultural experiences. For the Haudenosaunee people, the inner strength of our inherited psychology continues to guide those who are willing and dragging along those who are reluctant.

The greatest challenge remains – colonialism and its multi-generational assault on the core of the Indigenous person.

Colonialism is the guiding force that manipulated the historic, political, social, and economic contexts shaping Indigenous/state/non-Indigenous relations and account for the public erasure of political and economic marginalization, and racism today. These combined components shape the health of Indigenous peoples.¹⁹

In the wake of multi-generational events of trauma, many individuals, families, clans, and communities experience poor mental and physical health. For example, uncaring behaviors toward spouses and children are examples of the product of distal actions not under the control of the

¹⁹Czyzewski, K., “Colonialism as a Broader Social Determinant of Health,” The International Indigenous Policy Journal 2.1 (2011): 4 Web: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10168vol2/iss1/5>

individual or the community. The decolonization process must include more direct action addressing common factors of healthy living in a holistic way.

The medicine wheel reflects good health as a balance between four realms: the mental, the spiritual, the emotional, and the physical. This conceptualization of health speaks to the interconnectedness of these spheres of being and emphasizes the notion of holism when attempting to understand what it means to be well. These dimensions, which also represent the four directions, can provide a way to conceptualize our belonging in the world and they also relate our health to the social environment around us.²⁰

Within this understanding are ways to break the colonial glass that surrounds our existence within the culture of the Haudenosaunee.

The concept of the ‘ecocentric self’, which envisions the ego as one piece in a web of relationships that includes extended family, kin, clan, ancestors, for some also animals, elements of the natural world and spirits. The balancing of these relationships is key to a healthy social environment, and is a concept we will return to.”²¹

Wiping the Tears is in dialogue with finding and renewing the “ecocentric self” within Haudenosaunee recovery.

Wiping the Tears: A Personal Map

In Chapter Two, I discussed the importance of the condolence ceremony, providing significant knowledge of how the Haudenosaunee are to recover from colonialism. This is a further examination of how those teachings can be utilized in a modern context of healing and helping individuals and families. As a healing methodology, it provides a culturally appropriate and safe mechanism for families to restore their relations.

²⁰Ibid.5

²¹Ibid.7

Most people are unaware of the lifelong learning required as Haudenosaunee acquire knowledge to possess the seven layers of ka?nikuhli:ho given to people from the four sources of knowledge. Most people in cultural recovery are learning language, cultural stories, ceremonies, music, law, treaties, and the artifacts of the culture. The important point of who we are – the psychology of being Haudenosaunee – the essentials of humanity, is a by-product of the things we attempt to learn. We may become singers with the gift of carrying many songs, but if we are inwardly angry, fearful, jealous, or negative in our outlook, where is ka?nikuhli:ho? The way we interact with this knowledge today is sometimes superficial and impersonal in a detached manner, like that of an observer. This is just an example of what Elders mean when they say we must represent the teachings of our culture by who we are and how we act in the world.

The Indigenous understanding of life stages integrated within a total cultural system of knowledge speaks volumes about the complexity of our teachings. The Haudenosaunee understanding of this system of knowledge is the foundation and guide to the cultural expression that is enjoyed today. To create opportunities for cultural longevity, the personal renewal process is important. It is critical to the learner and keeper of this way of life to personalize and absorb this knowledge to create greater understanding of its ability to empower the people of the Haudenosaunee through the daily acts of ka?nikuhli:ho. The person must achieve a level of total healthiness that has removed the harbors of historical negative family experiences that circumvent the fullness of the Good Mind.

Colonialism has molded negative human experiences and the behaviors learned in residential schools, and acculturated parenting practices replace the behavior of ka?nikuhli:ho. In my own personal struggle to bring myself to ka?nikuhli:ho, I had to come to an understanding and balancing of pain from childhood dilemmas and crises; I explored and searched for a way that would address

those issues that formed questions of myself. Why was I angry, and what was I trying to forget? Why was my identity an issue for me? These were innocent questions that confronted me in the 1980s during my search for answers. I came across the practice re-evaluative co-counseling, based on the theory that “human intelligence is defined concretely as the ability to construct a new, unique, accurate response to each new, unique experience”²² confronting the human situation. Oppressions cause internalized negative behavior and are seen as” irrationality ... defined as failure to create and present such a new, unique, accurate response(s)... The source of human irrationality is located in the distress experiences which the human has undergone and has not been permitted to recover from completely.”²³ In my life from childhood to the present, re-evaluative co-counseling became a healing process. This was largely due to its simple idea of looking back to understand the present and removing the internalized negative messages, emotions, and beliefs that blocked the intelligence. As a humanistic movement that practices the teaching of passing on helping skills to the lay person, it fit well with the cultural models of healing. Since 1982, I have had the privilege of practicing an indigenized version of this practice, sharing it with Indigenous peoples across the country.

As my internal make-up cleared, I realized how Haudenosaunee cultural knowledge forms the whole person and builds a personality foundational in pragmatic intellectual spiritualism. Every individual is born with the natural holistic and spiritual well-being of a person. This chapter demonstrates that those who seek to help restore the culture can be helped with Haudenosaunee knowledge and experience. One of the culture revitalization and transformative actions is the Creation of a personal map of renewal and transformative Haudenosaunee personality.

²² Jackins, Harvey, The Human Side of Human Beings: The Theory of Re-evaluation Counseling (Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1978): xi.

²³ Ibid: xi.

Affirmation of Haudenosaunee identity is critical to the long-term positive development of individuals who have not had the opportunity to examine their culture or their family's life. The self-examination course of action would be a personal cultural revitalization process to achieve a Haudenosaunee whole person. When we understand personal wellness, it is about our beliefs that make up our worldview. That is why it is more difficult for the individual to make changes since the mental image of one's worldview is formed by one's life experience. This is why helping individuals come to terms with their own life path is a critical part of long-term cultural revitalization.

Transformation of personality includes dreams or visions of the future. Most of what we have discussed within this chapter is not common knowledge because of the lack of cultural actions in our communities, such as vision questing, puberty rite ceremonies, and the more general use of healing ceremonies such as the condolence ceremony for the rehabilitation of individuals who have experienced real trauma in their lives. The tools of wellness are present in the culture. Teachers and cultural experts need to revisit the teachings and create a dialogue on how we can fuel positive change with the instruments of cultural practice.

In a further examination of the holistic nature of ceremony, we can envision direct results and outcomes for the participants by interpreting the cultural concepts as strategic interconnected components. By further dissecting them into seven strategies, we begin to understand the wholeness of this ceremonial experience and its impacts. For the purpose of examination, I took the 15 elements of the Requickening Address and divided them into seven distinct components addressing the impact of the participant and revitalizing the wholeness of being Haudenosaunee. These seven strategies are a process of cultural renewal and personal revitalization. Before one proceeds with this process with a family, the family will need to learn the process of the ceremony and healing circles. This will assist the family in recovery to identify those roadblocks that need to be dealt with whether they are

deaths, separations, loss of relationships, unhappiness, or simply the inability to effectively communicate as a family.

The trauma of state enforced separation has affected the ability of many Aboriginals to achieve balance in their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. When experienced by more than one generation, personal trauma becomes institutionalized within a family. Where multiple families within a community experience similar life events, the community is left without the resources required to effectively address the resultant social consequences.²⁴

Intergenerational trauma can be addressed in a series of events that reconnect the family. Families need a series of family circles before the ceremonial process of Wiping the Tears. One of the teachings from this ceremony is about providing an order of renewal for those who are in the midst of chaos and crisis. It is a way to “comb the snakes from your hair”²⁵ or remove the negative-ness in a person’s thinking and feeling toward others and about themselves. This at times would be done in a group process, encouraging individuals to help one another. The Wiping of Tears ceremony is not a single event but must be linked to a series of activities of the extended family gathering to speak to issues confronting the family until they feel ready to have the ceremonial process. The gathering is a sharing circle process where the family gathers in someone’s home or at a healing lodge in a circle. One of the guides will be asked to offer a thanksgiving address outlining the purpose of the gathering. A smudge of sweetgrass or sage is offered to everyone. Then one of the senior women is asked to begin expressing her observations of the family. Then she begins by asking everyone to share their stories and feelings about the family. The circle begins, going to the right until everyone

²⁴Menzies, Peter, “Understanding Aboriginal Intergeneration: Trauma from a Social Work Perspective,” Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation, Clinical Head, Aboriginal Services Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, the Canadian Journal of Native Studies, XXVII, 2(2007):367-392.

²⁵This is a direct reference to Tadadoho, an Onondaga Chief who during the coming of the Great Law of Peace was the most resistant and most negative person among the Haudenosaunee.

has an opportunity to speak. The facilitator will offer some advice and guidance, or more specific questions can be asked to clarify issues. Everyone will have a chance to speak again. A date will be set for another family gathering, and then everyone will enjoy a feast. At the next gathering, more family issues will be talked about in the sharing circle process. In many cases, the opportunity to voice feelings, difficulties, and wonderment opens the natural process of rebuilding relationships and reaches the inner space. The Wiping the Tears ceremony and its teachings that offer guidance and a map of self-transformation honors Haudenosaunee epistemology. The Wiping of the Tears ceremony is a cultural function that is transformative and exists in modern Haudenosaunee community life, providing a process of decolonizing.

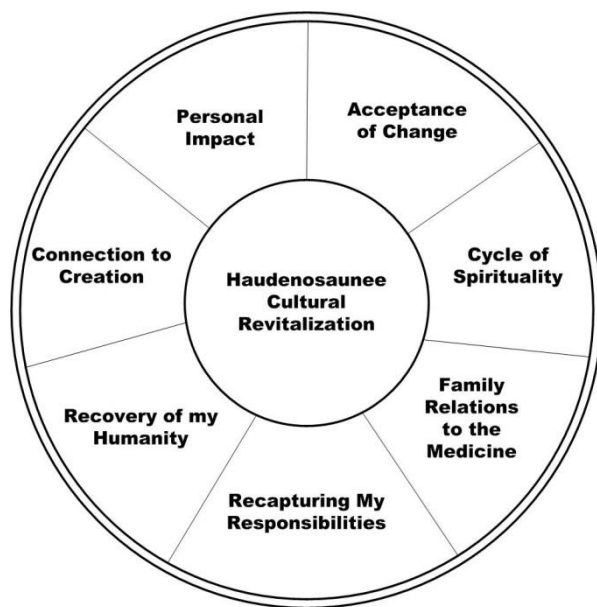


Figure 17 – Haudenosaunee Cultural Revitalization
[chart prepared by R. Antone]

The Wiping of the Tears ceremony or condolence is formed to assist the individual, family, and/or clan to reach a state of peace within. The important lesson is that the process itself teaches one how to map things out, creating a healing process of self-actualization that reaches deep within one's inner soul and externally to Creation, coming to realizations about humanity, responsibilities, the spiritual food of relations, acceptance of spirit, and the value of the fluidity of change.

1. It begins with a Personal Impact addressing the tears, the loss of hearing that sorrow brings, the inability to exercise one's voice, and the sickness we feel when we are overwhelmed with

emotions. Self-acknowledgement is a critical step to healing and change and opens the door to other possibilities – “My culture encourages me to take care of myself.”

2. Connection to Creation is central to Indigenous epistemology and offers the support of multiple resources we often forget in our chaos – “My culture encourages me to always be connected to Creation.”

3. Recovery of My Humanity is finding our ability to love others and find the spiritual energy that exists in all of life. We have a natural humanity that lives within the culture, carried as energy within our beings – “My culture encourages me to always strengthen the seven spans of skins or the seven layers of who I am as Haudenosaunee.”

4. Recapturing My Responsibilities is a reminder that every man, woman, and child carries a bundle of duties and responsibilities we must carry out in our lives – “My culture teaches me my duties to my clan family and my nation.”

5. Family Relations to the Medicine feeds my soul and spirit. The reminder is that the love we feel is like medicine for each of us. Without the love of our family, our spirit is weakened – “My culture reminds me that my family and clan are my medicine and the source of my power.”

6. Cycle of the Spirit reminds that our entrance into this realm is the beginning of a journey that still remains a mystery with respect to where or when it ends. Our culture teaches us to be accepting of this knowledge, and at times when it affects our family, we will be surprisingly understanding about the unknowns of life – “My culture teaches me the full cycle of birth to death, encouraging me to be accepting of the spiritual afterlife.”

7. Acceptance of Change is a significant understanding of the teachings. Change is about reaching higher goals of positive human endeavors. In a world surrounded with a dominant culture,

our vigilance in cultural restoration and adaptation is important to our longevity – “My culture is supportive of growth and change through the joyful expression of our Tsi’Nikwaliho:tu.”²⁶

The information in Chapter Two is a significant representation of the importance of this one ceremony. While here I refer to this concept as a map, in Chapter Two, it is also an outcome of the whole. As a piece of Haudenosaunee epistemology, it defines how valuable these elements of the culture are to the overall process of decolonization of self, family, and community. It is a different thought process that allows and encourages our difference to continue.

These include the elements that create the Good Mind. As a person journeys through the Wiping of Tears ceremony, the objective is to return to the state of the Good Mind. The Good Mind, then, is a full expression of Haudenosaunee being. In the proper context, the cultures of our people are powerful healing energies that will continue to carry the people for many generations. Decolonization is a process of learning and healing, building a great love of one’s Indigenous culture and psychology through a series of therapeutic activities.

Haudenosaunee psychology is deeply connected to the ceremonial nature of the lifestyle, contributing historically to Haudenosaunee survival as a people and culture. The history of punishment and oppression has left behind a trail of broken dreams and anxieties over space, future, and simply being a people.

According to terror management theory, when cultures are not functioning properly, they lose the ability to mitigate the terrors of life. That is exactly what has happened in innumerable Native cultures. When this occurs, we expect anxieties to rise. With rising anxieties, dysfunctional behavior increases in frequency and severity.²⁷

²⁶The seven strategies I have outlined here are connected to Chapter Two and earlier work I did in cultural revitalization for my master’s thesis.

²⁷Alf H. Walle, *The Path of Handsome Lake: A Model of Recovery for Native People*.

The obvious antidote is the restoration of the culture, increasing psychological comfort and encouraging seeking help from the culture.

The work of addressing intergenerational trauma is in the hands of Indigenous people and their cultural practices. This examination of one cultural mechanism (ceremony) can provide treatment for many social, emotional, and spiritual ills that have been a major roadblock to building an Indigenous future.

Recognizing colonialism as a determinant of health involves questioning if colonialism is a finished project, one of ongoing unequal relationships, but equally, that these relationships have real negative effects on health. As a result, interpreting colonialism as a determinant of health is related to recognizing its influence on Indigenous lives as multi-faceted. From a mental health perspective, colonialism can be produced and reinforced within Indigenous mental health discourses, but its effects can also be embodied as a reaction to contemporary political, social, economic situations and historically through trauma.²⁸

Having the willingness to right some of the wrongs of colonialism takes more than an apology and the gathering of the stories from residential school survivors. Addressing the focus of the crime will take the commitment of the perpetrators to begin resourcing one of the key elements of loss in the genocide: the recovery of Indigenous languages. This would begin a coexistence of cultures, acceptance of Indigenous identity, and a start in making things right.

²⁸Reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission travel across Canada to give victims of the residential schools an opportunity to tell their truths.

Chapter 6 – Making Meaning – Are We Still Growing Corn? Is the Idea of Being Haudenosaunee Still Alive?

The Haudenosaunee people need to willfully engage in cultural transformation and not appear to be dragged kicking and screaming into an unknown future. The impact of the disappearance of the original Way of Life, replaced by a more sedentary lifestyle, including a wage-based economy, coupled with the devastation of colonial policies, set in motion forced assimilation when cultural transformation was not accepted. Although much effort has been focused on cultural revitalization, it is necessary to transition to a paradigm of transformation. Culture, then, reaches beyond the artificial boundaries of the longhouse, ceremony, traditional gathering, and pow wow and is applicable to all life-sustaining activity in both organizational and community development constructs rooted in the original teachings. What we grow and develop is not without culture but meaningful in life, giving continuance to traditional practice in modern applications. This chapter explores new ways in which Haudenosaunee citizens can challenge their culture while maintaining all of the essential elements of identity, social systems, governance, nation to nation relations, and self-actualization.

The purpose of this work is to define the motivational factors of Haudenosaunee cosmology and culture that would energize a transformation paradigm that provides integrative application of Indigenous culture, reenergizing the incorporation of the Haudenosaunee culture into everyday life and the ongoing growth process in the 21st century. To achieve this, the Haudenosaunee must realize that their bundle of knowledge in a very different way based on our cultural way of visioning, relating, thinking, and doing.

We certainly have come to an understanding of the white man's bundle of knowledge that rejects our rights to a homeland, just as Handsome Lake realized that Western, Christianized

knowledge was punishing and attempting to force the Iroquois into submission. One of the messages that we need to heed is that Western Christian culture is here to colonize the Onkwehónwe. Not much has changed today; according to their brutal nature and their ethnocentric knowledge, we are still put into categories of Western knowledge – as primitive cultures, no more than a part of the North American landscape, subjected to the doctrine of discovery, fantasized as conquered by the rule of conquest, lied to by treaty, forced into reservations by colonial policy, targeted for genocide, educated for assimilation, and de-spiritualized for citizenship, all of which is the continuance of the punishment foretold in the vision in Handsome Lake’s dream.

When the settlers finally stand in front of the colonial mirror, they might see their real history and they, too, can begin the process of decolonization.

Okanagan author and activist Jeanette Armstrong asks the non-Indigenous to cast a critical eye on the imperial garden we have cultivated with our colonial tools, on the lands and in the lives of Indigenous peoples. She asks us to turn over the rock and face whatever ugly creatures slither out, examining them honestly and unflinchingly. To challenge the romantic myths we believe about ourselves and to focus our energies on questioning our own identity, values and experiences as colonizers. To share honestly with Native people what we learn about ourselves in the process, and more importantly, how we will change our attitudes and actions.¹

For the Haudenosaunee, we need to move ourselves away from that Western form of distorted knowledge, away from victimization, and we must bundle our own knowledge in our way of understanding the world according to our worldview. Handsome Lake’s vision gave us a way to understand genocide, colonialism, racism, and tools of oppression and to survive the American Holocaust. His vision bundled the relationship with the white man as a punishing experience that

¹ Regan, Paulette, Unsettling the Settler within Indian Residential Schools: Truth Telling and Reconciliation in Canada (2010): 235.

would continue on as long as we do not do something about it, and whatever we do must come from confidence in being Haudenosaunee. The very essence and power of the Haudenosaunee continue today because the Haudenosaunee remains a separate, distinct culture and country. The relief from oppression is the sanctuary of dialogue with each other, in the circle of our ceremonies, listening to the sounds of our music, celebrating each ceremony, watching our children explore their freedom, and being in our communities. It is a space we can think of as Haudenosaunee, drawing upon all the attributes of the culture energizing our existence and presence.

The Haudenosaunee is still an idea that Elders, Clan Mothers, leaders, and the learners of the culture, the citizens of Iroquoia, are keeping. The notion of Haudenosaunee is an idea planted in the minds of the people. By keeping Haudenosaunee as an idea, we keep the spirit of being Haudenosaunee alive, living in a spiritual space while we wrestle with the everyday historically related realities that permeate our communities. The idea of Haudenosaunee – the very essence of the Great Tree of Peace we vividly conjure in our minds – must remain an idea that is filled with the greatness of being Haudenosaunee, the humility of Ka?nikohli:yo. The invasion of Turtle Island and the American holocaust from this vantage point is seen as interference in our development as a confederacy of nations. When we look at the centrality of our power base in spiritual knowledge, the gifts we offer to the world community as the Haudenosaunee remain a resource of ideas for the possibilities of coexistence and reciprocity between humans and the natural world.

A Haudenosaunee idea is a genetic spirit element circulating within our minds for nourishment and a home to nurture and replenish the idea. The idea becomes fuel and a source of being. In the metaphysical realm of ideas, everything that is thought is perfect. In the realm of ideas, what spoils the thought is not present, only the purity of thought, a place of perfection. In each of our minds, we have our place of perfection, abounding with ideas and notions of thoughts. Reality

becomes an imperfect interpretation of a perfect thought. World peace is a perfect idea, and in reality, the notion is ground up until splinters of it are attached to a fruitless cause walking the streets of protest. At the same time, without ideas, our human capacity to change diminishes. However grand an idea may be, life is not real without the idea that life can be more balanced. Ideas are critical to human existence.

The Haudenosaunee has remained an idea for centuries since the 1779 American invasion of Haudenosaunee country by Sullivan's campaign. The idea sat in the minds of the Iroquois as they scattered in different directions, finding new homes by 1840 as far away as Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Ontario, Quebec, etc. An idea is like a dream, the intuitive analytical ability that Iroquois are no strangers to, making dreams work. It would seem from an Iroquois' perspective that dreams and ideas are sourced in our creativity, curiosity, and intellectualism. For the Onkwehónwe, the idea of the Haudenosaunee is very much an active ingredient in our thought process, an idea that has very little chance of dying or disappearing in the 21st century.

We need to bundle our ideas and knowledge in ways that build self, family, clan, and community, which, in turn, builds nation. What is meant by bundling knowledge? Let us examine a way of bundling knowledge in reference to the growing of corn. For a Haudenosaunee agriculturalist, it is not simply about farming but about the wholeness of one's relationship to the land, culture, teachings, ceremony, and spirit. It is not a career or job, although it could be. It is one of the highest forms of cultural expression for many reasons that I will explore.

Cultures are composed of interrelated and interdependent elements, therefore one item cannot be artificially extracted from a culture and studied as representative of the entire culture. Utilizing a cultural element, in this instance corn, as a thematic focus provides a way to

present the selected cultural element within its connection to all parts of the culture, that is, the holistic cultural context. Corn is integral to all aspects of the Haudenosaunee way of life.²

We begin with seeds that originally came from Sky World in the Creation story with the First Woman. It is the main food of the Haudenosaunee people, grown with the beans and squash, the three crops known together as the Three Sisters. There is a spiritual relationship between the Three Sisters that teaches us to grow them together and prepare them together, and in each phase, they feed each other and increase the nutrients for the nourishment of the people.

The outcome we need to understand is corn as one of the essential ingredients of ceremonial life. Without corn, our ceremonial life comes to a close. Corn needs to have its place within our cultural family at the head of the table. Every ceremony calls for the use of corn in various forms, such as soup, mush, bread, symbols of markers, messengers, and offerings to the spirits.

“The origin of corn, beans, and squash in this world was said to have come from the grave of Sky Woman’s daughter after she died giving birth to the Twins.”³ In the original teachings, women carried the knowledge of growing the corn, beans, and squash and how that reinforces the relationship to Mother Earth. Growing corn is more than farming; it is sacred work, growing the food of the spirit. It is about nourishing our Haudenosaunee spirit. Growing corn is the ceremony of life through exhibiting our caring for seedlings, cultivating the garden, weeding out what interferes with the growth of the corn, watering and nourishing the plants, and harvesting produce, all metaphors for life itself and, at the same time, the role we need to fulfill as cultural beings. The growing of corn is a spiritual idea, a relational concept, a source of knowledge and the act of working with Mother Earth

²Carol Cornelius, *Iroquois Corn in a Culture-Based Curriculum* (City: Publisher, year), 99.

³Ibid 94.

and the feminine energy of life. The idea of corn draws upon the Iroquoian conceptual notion of the Three Sisters: corn, beans, and squash. It is natural to relate one to the other while remembering Sky Woman and her daughter originating the foundation of the space we know as Turtle Island. The Haudenosaunee Creation story is a space filled with feminine energy, the beginning of an Indigenous worldview and cosmology.

As Haudenosaunee ideas of Creation are spoken, the idea of clans comes to mind, relating the story of a message of organizing communal people into clans to structure the functions of a growing society. Here in the original story, it is the grandmothers who seek the sign of their family clan: turtle, wolf, bear, snipe, etc.

Following the idea of clans, we find the ideas that live in the Great Law, particularly the idea of a clan mother, the head of the family, the one who would choose the leader of the family and have veto power in the council of nations over matters that involved sacrificing the foods and goods of the nation. All of these constructs are feminine-based ideas that became practices in woman-centered Haudenosaunee culture. Gynocracies like the Haudenosaunee are “woman-centered tribal societies in which matrilocality, matrifocality, matrilinearity, maternal control of household goods and resources”⁴...forming a very egalitarian society. This flows from the Haudenosaunee worldview and included within the worldview are the languages;

Haudenosaunee languages are matrilineal and they are 4,000+ years old. Everything is commonly referred to as female until there is a definite noticeable feature that makes it male – like feathers on a bird. It is my thought that with all of our communication there are always underlying tones of the world being female based – words are used to identify all of Creation

⁴ Allen, Paula Gunn, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* Beacon Press, Boston 1992: 3.

and our societies so it would be ingrained [in the thought process].⁵

The idea of corn causes the Iroquois thought process to remember from Creation all the connecting thoughts, leading to a collection of related ideas and notions that form an element of cultural foundational thinking, fashioning a bundle of woman-centered knowledge that began with the thought of corn. A gynocracy is a Haudenosaunee thought that is not exclusive to their culture but paramount to being Haudenosaunee. It is a thought that separates real Onkwehónwe thinking from Western thinking. Western thought is patriarchal and places feminism in a secondary notion of the thought process. The idea of woman-centered culture in the Haudenosaunee mind is as real as the idea of corn. Both constructs are related and function in concert with the rest of the culture in reciprocity and significance.

Critical to self-examination and decolonization is the exploration of our thought process and what we believe as the important ideas of our Indigenous culture. If one thinks about women as the Haudenosaunee teachings express, all women will be honored, respected, and treated with kindness. If there is a single most significant Haudenosaunee value, belief, or virtue that will change our world from the imperfections of assimilation, it will center on how Haudenosaunee men treat women both publicly and privately. In making meaning of culture, it is the idea that we can transform the notions of cultural teachings into everyday practice. “The male and female roles were complementary in Haudenosaunee lifestyle. There was a balance inherent in these roles which worked to keep the village in harmony.”⁶ The evidence of the imbalance stares us in the face when every Haudenosaunee

⁵Charlene Deleary, email communication, 7 July 2012.

⁶Cornelius, *Iroquois Corn in a Culture-Based Curriculum*, 107.

community has a women's shelter for victims of violence. This is clearly an example of a behavioral contradiction to Haudenosaunee woman-centered culture and the teachings of Ka?nikohli:yo.

The gradual termination of our direct relationship to the land, our "original mother," has contributed to the detachment of relations with the women of the nation. "The major difference between most activist movements and tribal societies is that for millennia American Indians have based their social systems, however diverse, on ritual, spirit-centered, women-focused world views."⁷ As the land disappeared, the changing relations between men and women WERE reinforced with patriarchal colonial policies.

The Colonizer saw (and rightly) that as long as women held unquestioned power of such magnitude, attempts at total conquest of the continents was bound to fail. In the centuries since the first attempts at colonization in the early 1500s, the invaders have exerted every effort to remove Indian women from every position of authority, to obliterate all records pertaining to gynocratic social systems, and to ensure that no American and few American Indians would remember that gynocracy was the primary social order of Indian America prior to 1800.⁸

As the wars ended in the eastern woodlands during the early 1800s, the invasion turned into attacking the Indian family and then the Indian. As a reminder, the colonizers did not want a woman-centered societal system in their backyard. Wagner in *Sister in Spirit* states:

Matilda Joslyn Gage and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the major theoreticians of the women's rights movement, claimed that the society in which they lived was based on the oppression of women. Haudenosaunee society, on the other hand, was organized to maintain a balance of equality between women and men.⁹

⁷Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*, 2.

⁸Ibid 3.

⁹Wagner, Sally Roesch, *Sisters in Spirit: Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Influence on Early American Feminists*, Native Voices, Summertown, TN, 2001:29.

The target of the imperialistic policies of the American government was focused on destroying the matrifocal and/or matrilocal familial systems with the forced residential and boarding schools.

Among the Haudenosaunee, after 1815, treaty-making, policies of removal, and forced schooling all became tools to continue the oppression and suppression of Indigenous nationhood, relegating Indigenous nations to the status of bands, tribes, reserves, reservations, 1,934 reorganized corporations known as business committees, and constituted systems of government. All of this effort was aimed to dismantle the original form of matrifocal government of the Haudenosaunee.

An important point of order must be understood and acknowledged: that Haudenosaunee sovereignty must be foremost feminine based. Without the direct involvement of women, real Haudenosaunee sovereignty is nonexistent, caught in an internalized and repressive web of oppression. All efforts at cultural revitalization must include the women of the nations. At a recent national Aboriginal health conference, a presentation about research and application of *culturally relevant gender-based analysis* promoted:

- ...application of a gender-based approach along with a culturally balanced approach when conducting research and policy and program development. It adopts a lens characteristic of mainstream gender-based analysis but also acknowledges socio-cultural and historical realities caused by colonization. This analytical tool focuses on:
- *Holism*, through recognizing the importance of all interconnected aspects of the individual and the community.
 - *Cultural diversity*, through respecting the distinct identity of different cultural groups, Nations and communities.
 - *Equity*, through recognizing historical injustices that have occurred and ensuring that disadvantaged communities are provided with services and resources in keeping with the human rights of all individuals.
 - *Ownership and voice*, through ensuring that communities control their own research agenda and identify their own priorities, and that all voices are actively engaged in decision-making

processes.¹⁰

Applying these standards to the question of Indigenous sovereignty brings together the social and political discourse of rebuilding holistic Indigenous nationhood. To fit Haudenosaunee holistic thinking, the instrument would need to be expanded to include not only *culturally relevant gender-based* but natural world-focused analysis. The revitalization and transformation of Haudenosaunee culture would require a broad base of analysis and approaches to redress the colonization. With the application of the above concept or a similar instrument, it directly challenges the consciousness, ensuring the involvement of women in the full scope of Indigenous self-determination. The following is an example of woman-centered guidance in decolonization taking place in Oneida Settlement.

Case Study – Woman-centered Community-based Organizing

The work of C. Deleary, a woman, wolf clan faith keeper of Oneida Nation, is a critical examination of what is meant in rebuilding the role of women in a traditional community. Her work is also representative of a large group of women in Oneida who work cooperatively to enhance the longhouse community. I worked with Charlene over the years since the early 70s when she finished high school and helped as a youth organizer. Many years later, after raising a family, she began to take a direct and involved interest in the strengthening of the longhouse community. As an Oneida woman, she began her involvement with learning and strengthening the language and wanting to make a difference in the longhouse community. Her mother is a fluent speaker, and they worked

¹⁰ Resource Extraction and Aboriginal Communities in Northern Canada: Gender Considerations, (Ottawa: © 2008 NAHO/ONSA ISBN 978-1-926543-04-8): 3-4.

www.naho.ca/documents/naho/english/resourceExtraction/Gender_EN.pdf

together with language instructor H. Elijah to broaden the content and approaches to language recovery. To enhance language development, weekly cultural teachings sessions have been implemented to address questions of cultural, ceremonial, and historical demands for knowledge. An array of speakers and Elders are invited to come to the community to provide teachings. The important aspect of this work is that the primary organizer is a woman and the major focus is on the principle of the woman-centeredness of the culture.

An example of a teaching session is the one from May 28th to the 30th, 2012, when the Oneida longhouse was host to Tom Porter, Mohawk Bear clan Elder, who spoke for three days telling traditional stories about the importance of Haudenosaunee culture for the children, women, and leaders of the community. In one of his sessions, Porter related the history of Haudenosaunee communities surviving the onslaught of George Washington's holocaust. Porter talked about how the Akwesasne Mohawk language dialect is different at Akwesasne compared to other Mohawk communities because of the influence of the number of Oneidas who moved there after 1779. The Mohawks at Akwesasne have other clans, including the Snipe and Eel clans, because of the Onondagas and Cayuga who moved to Akwesasne to escape George Washington's extermination efforts. From the oral tradition, we see how our communities helped each other and provided support in critical times. The idea of the Haudenosaunee remains a driving force in survival.¹¹ Tom Porter told the story as a reminder of how close we all are as Haudenosaunee. The idea of Haudenosaunee is being a family, a communal source of all that one needs to live a good life. From the oral traditions, it is quite clear how much we depended on each other during the holocaust and the aftermath, and today, we still need to keep the idea of Haudenosaunee active in our deliberations and

¹¹This event was held in the Southwold Oneida community.

transformation. The following is a three-month sample of cultural teachings offered in the community and organized by the women:

Teaching Schedule – Monday Evening – 6:30–9:30		Activities
April 2011		
1.	Introduction	- Connection to Mother Earth - Grandmother teachings - Cycle of life - Responsibilities of each stage of life - Celestial family - Protocols - Sharing stories
2.	Creation Story - Original Instructions	- Review Creation stories from Indigenous peoples - Connection to Mother Earth - Responsibilities - Sharing stories
3.	Ceremony: Wátha (Maple Syrup)	- Purpose, protocols, responsibilities - Cleansing - Grandfathers the Thunders
4.	Ceremony: Ohki:wé (Dead Feast) - Closing of Feasting	- Going back to the sky world - Condolence - Purpose, protocols, responsibilities - Sharing stories
May 2011		
5.	Cycle of Ceremonies	- Purpose, protocols, responsibilities - Maintaining your energy – keeping your energy clear - Sharing stories
6.	Ceremony: Kan:n^he? (Seed Ceremony)	- Purpose, protocols, responsibilities - Planting process - Haudenosaunee seed saving
7.	Ceremonies – Life Cycle	- Grandparent teachings - Women’s teachings - Men’s teaching - Responsibilities to next seven generations - Sharing stories
8.	Kanuhelatuksla – Thanksgiving Address	- Purpose, protocols, responsibilities - Learn to give thanks in own language - Sharing stories
June, 2011		
9.	Ceremony: Aw^hihte (Strawberry)	- Purpose, protocols, responsibilities - Children
10.	Kaye niyoliwake – Four Ceremonies	- Eleven boys were given the responsibility to learn the ceremonies - Reminder that all children have a gift and their own special purpose - Sharing stories
11.	Kayantlako:wa – Great Law	- Story of the Peacemaker - Sharing stories
12.	Kayantlako:wa – Great Law	- The Peacemaker brought a message called Ahsaniyoliwake or the three matters: Skal:na to be at peace with yourself; Kashetsasla to have strength and power derived from your knowledge of self; and Ka?nikuhli:yo to have a Good Mind so one can make sound decisions in life’s journey - Sharing stories

In reality, the idea of Haudenosaunee is a matter of choice for many of this generation. The multi-cultural dimensions of the societies that surround our little communities are attractions drawing us more and more to Western culture with its individualism, materialism, possessiveness, and private ownership, as if it grants the human being more than is needed. The real value is to take more than you need, and that is soon learned if one stays in Western culture long enough. However, is it a choice when one is schooled to favor the material world? The Onkwehónwe are placed in a dialectic position if one does not understand the original ways of the Haudenosaunee. For some reason, people are convinced that the traditional way of life is hard and the Western way is much easier with all of its gadgets. The material instruments are not paramount to the choice; it is the lifestyle and how one lives in a state of wholeness and reciprocity with the natural world that is important. John Mohawk relates a story from his teachers about choice:

“In the old days” she said, “people were pretty strict. Today, you young people think that because no one guides you in decisions, that this is better because you think you are free to make decisions for yourself. But you are not free – rather you are lost. You have so many choices open to you that you have no choices at all. That’s the trouble today. People make choices, and they don’t even know why they made those choices.”¹²

Is it choice or being lost when it comes to deciding about one’s culture, one’s way of life? As Haudenosaunee, we should not be in a position where we are deciding to follow the cultural teachings or not. Our way of life is such an important cosmology for our present and future well-being that it should not be a matter of choice but an accepted responsibility and willingness to participate.

Each person must seek his own way in the natural order of things. We were given a mind that we could understand these things. The ancient teachings tell us of the origin of things and the

¹²José Barreiro, *Thinking in Indian: A John Mohawk Reader* (City: Publisher, year), 250-251.

reason that we are told to do things in a certain way.¹³

Haudenosaunee ways are ancient and complex in ceremony and societal structure with generations of knowledge tracing one's footsteps back to Creation.

These teachings of humanity advocate the formation of families and a relationship with the natural world and through this profound sense of synergistic reciprocity, a spiritual life is experienced as a natural world of familial extended relations.

In the country of the Six Nations, when the people had absolute access to an undamaged Natural World, the social organization that worked to this end was the extended matrilineal family. When the people were confined to reservations and small plots of land and were subjected to the enormous pressures of Western society, they found that the Natural ways were still possible through pair bonding and a community effort to support the survival of what remained of the extended family.¹⁴

As spirits, we are guided to the family that needs us. Today, we are a part of a family that we refer to as our family of origin, and many are born to a single-parent family, a blended family, a troubled family, an addicted family, and, in some cases, an unhealthy environment. The number of children in the care of children's aid societies is staggering, and an enormous amount of rebuilding of families is needed and under way. It is probably some of the most heart-wrenching work that any Onkwehónwe can do. The unfortunate nature of the work has not afforded very many efforts to establish a culturally based approach to that work.

I have had the opportunity to be directly involved as a cultural advisor with such an effort, and it would be fitting to present that information as a part of this chapter, "Making Meaning." Making our cultures have meaning for the youngest members of our communities, the children in

¹³Ibid 250.

¹⁴Ibid 257.

turmoil for generations: the children victimized by residential schools, foster/adoption programs that stole children from reservations, and the continued punishing efforts of state-run children's aid societies. Mnaasged Children and Family Services is an Onkwehónwe effort to create an Indigenous culturally based institution with a fully delegated mandate to assume the responsibilities of caring for children in need in seven First Nations in southern Ontario, including the Oneida community. The organization is managed by a group of well-educated, culturally minded Lenape, Ojibway, and Oneida women with a Board of Directors appointed from the seven communities. To begin the cultural journey, a sacred bundle is called for as a response to the Executive Director's concern that something needs to be in place to guarantee the long-term focus of the organization's cultural foundation.

Child & Family Services will share jurisdiction under the Regulations Part 10 of the Indian and Native Child and family Services, Child and Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER C.11 (see attached Part 10), Ontario, within the following described cultural mandate of Mnaasged. Under section 208 of the Act, a broad descriptive, "customary care,"¹⁵ is used to mean the care and supervision of an Indian or native child. Within the cultures and First Nations in the Mnaasged catchment area of Lenape, Anishnawbe, and Onkwehónwe, the following translation of the cultural teachings will serve as the determinants and guides to the work of Mnaasged in child protection and family support.

¹⁵This is Ontario Provincial law that allows for the Creation of Native-controlled children's aid societies within the province. Because of the extensive nature of this law, it has been almost impossible to create anything different from the established norm until more recently, when the cost of child protection in the province has skyrocketed.

The Onkwehónwe/Anishnawbe/Lenape speak about natural law and their original instructions as the teachings that define the sacredness of life. It is the principles or values that govern human relations and the relations between humans and the natural world, the land, the animals, and the spirit world, all of which contribute to and create balance in life.

This bundle is an expression and extension of those natural laws. These bundles have historically been used to extend the teachings to the next generation, reminders of the traditional oral transmission of the teachings that travel from one generation to the next. It is within this spirit that this bundle is created to acknowledge the natural law of each of the First Nations, combining their teachings to create an Indigenous foundation of spiritual law guiding human interaction and relations in the caring and helping of children and their families.

In cultures with oral traditions, history, culture, language, and laws are woven together in story and ideological expression of a way of life unique to those who continue to dialogue from one generation to the next. The first bundle is our own entrance to this world in the womb of our mothers. In that state, each child is a sacred bundle entering the world at the time that the spirit enters the human body, giving life to the being. Each spirit of the child find/selects his or her parents, those who will guide and offer love to the child. In this understanding, each child is considered a gift from the Creator, and birthing is a spiritual act or ceremony of Creation.

In the beginning of Haudenosaunee existence, dreams guided the people, representing the existence of the spiritual and helping to maintain the connection to the past and future through the dream state. It is important to acknowledge the role of dream in Anishnawbe/Onkwehónwe daily life. Each of the teachings began in the dream, the spirit or energy that connects all of life. It is here that we are given the direction of law drawn from the values and principles of life rooted in the ancient

teachings. The Indigenous person knows this to be true given the reality of one's existence in an invaded world in which colonialists attempted to destroy the native cultures.

As an example of natural relational law, information will be provided on the clan systems that govern family relations. The clan system is the original family and child agency among the Indigenous populations of the immediate cultures of the region.

The clan system of the Haudenosaunee emerged soon after Creation in a story about a young boy having a dream and giving direction to the formation of the clans. It was the grandmothers who were sent off to find their totem, which became the clan expression. From that moment on, the clans followed the maternal side of the family. Among the Haudenosaunee, you are what your mother is.¹⁶

The Haudenosaunee have a tradition based on law – the Great Law, Kaianerekowa – a series of stories about the origins of the teachings of the Great Law. It is not codified but expressive in its narrative fashion, presenting a story of the customs and leaving one to interpret a tradition or way to respond to situations. Law is the result of the spiritual unfolding of story, the understanding, and the direction for relations with others and Creation. In relational law, each Indigenous person belongs to a clan – an extension of one's immediate family that is not defined by blood relations but by totem clan connected to many generations. For the Haudenosaunee, the mother is the root of the clan totem. We are the clan of our mothers. It is a simple law, but it defines all relations. It is from that understanding that Mnaasged is informed to uphold and offer the original connection of the Indigenous family.

¹⁶John Mohawk, *The Creation Story*.

For the Anishnawbe, the clan dodaim flows from the father. Within their teachings, the father was given the responsibility of giving clans to the families.

The Creator gave the Earth's Original people, through the great prophet and teacher In.Do.Daim. the O.do.i.daym.i.wam (the Clan System). The Law of Clans had been given to The People as a way of sacred knowledge and order – a system that became a government framework for the unity, strength and social order of the Nation. The clan system became the way in which people could and did maintain individual and collective identity without separation from the village, tribe or the nation. The clan system was a complete democracy ... given the right and voice to all the People ... the right and voice for women, children, young and old and the unborn.¹⁷

Dumont states that “there were seven original clans. Each clan was given a ‘seat’ in the Lodge, and with that place they were given their gifts to best serve the people.”¹⁸

The Lenape people are organized into clans determined by matrilineal descent. There are three clans: turkey, turtle, and wolf. Territory was collective but divided by clan. There is a movement among today's Lenape communities to bring back the round house ceremonies and clan system.

As knowledge and understanding grows, more of the teachings will be documented constructing natural law that will guide Mnaasged in its work with children and families. Mnaasged will appoint Elders to a council and continue the work of interpretation, teaching, and understanding the natural laws guiding human relations.

Settler State laws appear differently written in code, enacted by legislative bodies, interpreted by the courts, and enforced by assigned agencies. Natural law is similar, but the critical difference is

¹⁷ Benton-Benai, Edward, The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1988) .

¹⁸ Jim Dumont, “Anishinabe Izhichigaywin” (teaching curriculum for New Credit, 1999).

that the onus is greater on the Indigenous person to “carry the bundle” or be responsive to the law. The broad spectrum of Indigenous law can be sourced to those teachings, but for this document, it will address those teachings that speak to children, families, clans, and communities. An important source has been the staff of Mnaasged, who contributed from their experience and knowledge. The principal leaders of this organization are women, and their work of the last six years in building a new form of organization that is culturally based is significant, ground-breaking, and cutting-edge work. It is a reminder that women need to lead in their own way and be given the space to demonstrate their leadership skills, knowledge, attributes, and gifts as women. As men, we need to be supportive and willing to decolonize our attitudes and beliefs about women to create a space of cultural safety.

When I think about this issue of the woman-centered society, there is a vast difference from the patriarchal dominance of Western society that does not allow more humane approaches to the issues facing humanity. It is the single most important characteristic of Haudenosaunee culture that hangs by a thread. Without serious reclamation of this idea, this principle, the current acculturation process will open the door to patriarchal dominance. Care needs to be given, and Haudenosaunee women need to be more involved in organizing and educating the youth and children of the nations about the importance of woman-centeredness. It is not just about our clan identity flowing from our mother; it is a much deeper and meaningful acquisition of the intuitive analytical practice from the perspective of the Earth as our mother. As a critical part of the decolonizing process, one of the outcomes is a return to a woman-centered cosmology. The idea of Haudenosaunee as a woman-centered culture is a critical element of decolonization.

Ka?nikohli:yo, the art of the Good Mind, is an idea deeply rooted in Haudenosaunee knowledge and formable in human behavior. The previous chapters have dwelled on this topic with

respect to what would be considered the ideal behavior of a Haudenosaunee person. It is one of those ideas that keep getting trampled on by the colonial institutional response to actions within our communities.

Today, Haudenosaunee women ... together with ... the men, continue to shoulder the heavy burden of a Nation working to free their people from all oppressive elements within the dominant society as well as in our own societies.¹⁹

How does one practice the art of the Good Mind in relation to oppression? Paulo Friere says, “Don’t become like the oppressor,” which is a simple statement and summary of one of his marquee books, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed. It is one of the critical elements of dealing with oppressive elements within our communities. Most oppressive behaviors are learned from observation of the settlers. A prime example is the oppressive behaviors of the schoolmasters in the residential schools.

The residential school is an example of the major external block of Canada’s and America’s governmental practice of racism in policy, law, and practice. How do these actions affect the internal nature of Haudenosaunee communities? The punishment from the external institutions becomes internalized within the very fabric of the community, creating roadblocks to building more dynamic communities. We need to remove the internal roadblocks that exist resulting from the internalized oppression. These are the learned behaviors from the oppressors that we have adapted in our communities to cause conflict and disruption in our communities as we try to get what we think is our fair share of limited resources. The resulting negative behavior comes from the feeling of entitlement that many people are expressing. This includes the negative behaviors we use to express

¹⁹Donna Goodleaf, *Entering the War Zone: A Mohawk Perspective on Resisting Invasions*, 15.

disgruntled feelings against power, which in most cases, is the leadership in both band councils and traditional councils.

There is an ideological struggle within our communities between the two forms of government that can be traced to conflict: progressive vs. traditional, Christian vs. traditional, modernization vs. keeping to the original ways, patriarchal vs. matrifocal/matrilocal, etc. This often leads to a right and wrong way of viewing the world and in the way we view ourselves. In the end, the Onkwehónwe fight amongst themselves while the settler observes his punishment being self-inflicted. Different groups or families grapple for control of political power in Haudenosaunee communities, searching, it seems, to gain some control over their own lives.

The following is a case study of internalized colonized behavior in a community despite every effort to build a community of empowerment:

The community has both forms of belief and political structure of a Band Council and Traditional Chiefs/Clan Mothers systems. For over twenty years there have attempts to work together, build a relationship based on respect, peace and friendship. The unfortunate nature of this relationship is the Band Council usually changed membership every two years and someone who didn't believe in the relationship usually tried to do something to disrupt it. In the midst of this nation building one family among the traditional sector decides they want their own group and breaks away from the longhouse community. The next critical event is the Band Council violates an agreement with the Lotiyouneshe (Chiefs) Council over lands purchased paying taxes on lands that were subject to a political process of forcing government to deal with the transfer of land to Indigenous status. There is a suspension of the relationship as a result of the band council's action. The new traditional cult begins to have a tumultuous relationship with the band council that usually is based on making demands of the band council and forcing them into giving their family services or jobs. At the present moment these three entities including the other entities in the community do not have a means to bring them together. Male egos are often at the center of these conflicts which speaks to the

discord of Indigenous male and female roles in community life.²⁰

The elective system is imposed by the outside government, and the ineptness of the system creates this kind of community behavior. The disruptive behavior is the result of internal belief systems that pit one group against another in some way of seeking power. What is it about political power that makes people feel entitled? Is it surviving oppression that it makes people feel they are owed something?

Entitlement is a false sense of self-importance resulting from a survivalist attitude toward the oppression. It sounds like this: “I’m an Indian surviving the evil of oppression that has historically damaged my family, and I’m entitled to more than others.” This sense of entitlement is wreaking havoc in community relations, family relations, and community resources. This sense of entitlement is being used within communities to victimize individuals, groups, or families. For families who have long histories of family violence, sexual abuse issues resulting from the internalized oppression need to be confronted in the recovery process. A program in Six Nations has published a book about their work in this field.

Sonhatsi:wa was the name given for the sexual assault program at Ganohkwasra Family Assault Support Services located in the Six Nations community on the Grand River. Sonhatsi:wa is a word in the Mohawk language referring to the true self. It was chosen for the name of this book because it best describes the transformation that happens when individuals work through their sexual traumas.²¹

The book relates a series of personal accounts of sexual assaults and the journey of healing. This is also representative of the decolonization work that Indigenous communities need to do to address the

²⁰This is a summary of the relation-building efforts that has taken place in Oneida Settlement from 1982 to the present. It is from my personal perspective being directly involved in my capacity as a Chief of one of the turtle clan families.

²¹Tekonwanyahesen Stacy Hill, ed., *Sonhatsi:wa Your True Self*.

issue of men raping and assaulting women. This is an indicator of how acculturated men have become in our communities. Women have been murdered in Haudenosaunee communities by Onkwehónwe men, a damaging indicator of how far away we are from our teachings. The victims, both women and men, need to take the steps to address these kinds of issues of finding one's true self.

The overpowering behavior of the oppressor has meted out punishment to force change in the thinking, feelings, behavior, and spirit of the oppressed. This form of long-term brutal genocide punishes the very core of the human being until one thinks less of himself, has negative feelings about being Indigenous, behaves out of anger and fear, and has no sense of real spirit. This then creates unhealthy environments where we see family violence, abusive behaviors, a warped sense of entitlement, power struggles between community factions, a distorted view of culture, and ongoing forms of addictions involving alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, food, and violence. This is a tough place to hold on to the virtue and Haudenosaunee behavior of the Good Mind. This is an example of the point I made earlier that reality can make a perfect thought an impossible challenge. This is the reason it is critical to heal one's own family history to bring back into balance the distortions of one's thinking, feeling, behavior, and spirit. My own story has followed this path in seeking a sense of balance within myself of the distorted reality of a second-generation residential school survivor, alcoholism, family violence, a broken family, and physical and sexual abuse. The goal of recovery was always greater cultural understanding of self and a greater sense of Haudenosaunee humanism. Since 1982, I have been on a healing journey challenging the demons within my own life and finding peace within myself. In 1998, I was asked to design and manage a healing program for the Kiikeewanniikaan Family Healing Lodge, which I have done for the last 14 years. Last year, there was over 2,000 participants in sweatlodges and ceremonies and over 1,000 in the healing programs.

There is a standing waiting list of over 200 requests to come to the Lodge. The Lodge and its grounds have evolved into a sacred place for many people who seek to bring their life back into balance. The Lodge is a sanctuary for the many who have made the Lodge a part of their journey.

Making meaningful lives must be a personal internalization of belief about culture, life, spirit, and human behavior that includes the ability to make things right between self, relatives, the Creator, and Creation. Pain is the reason it must be a personal journey because it is something that only that person will understand and know. When we talk about making meaning in a Haudenosaunee person's life, there are steps that can be taken that result in being a stronger, more resilient, and balanced Onkwehónwe.

The seven steps to making meaningful transformation to being an Onkwehónwe are as follows:

1. Heal the painful events in one's life.
2. Listen to women and let women lead (the basics of the culture).
3. Learn a Haudenosaunee language; the TsiNikwaliho:tu Learning Centre²² in Oneida is a cultural survival school, one of many that sprang up throughout the confederacy, including the Survival School in Kahnawake, the Survival School in Akwesasne, the Faithkeepers School in Alleghany, New York, and the Mohawk and Cayuga language immersion schools at Grand River.

²²A total language and culture immersion school in Oneida Nation at Southwold that has been providing programs since 1986. I was one of the founding parents and organizer of the learning center.

4. Learn a song from your culture.
5. Support and be helpful toward the ceremonies, your relatives, and the environment.
6. Learn to leave the mind-changers alone. These include alcohol, drugs, other religions, subcultures, gangs, and crimes.
7. Exercise self-determination, grow corn, gather medicines, treat women with utmost respect, ensure that your children have the opportunity to learn from the elders, and counsel with your own people with Ka?nikohli:yo.

These are simple steps and activities that make a remarkable difference in one's life. Making meaning out of this life, this history, this culture, this spiritual idea is personal and can be academic and scholarly if one applies oneself because the more is learned, the more is expected of one until the cloaks of colonialism are lifted from one's space, and freedom and hope become a feeling transforming one's thoughts and voice to envision a future of Haudenosaunee country.

Conclusion

When I began this project, I had my audience selected as my children, grandchildren, and the future generations of Onkwehónwe who would benefit from understanding a way to look at culture, especially one's own culture. The struggle is to select the information from the culture that would have the most meaning in this time with a link to the past but, most importantly, how to be culturally based in the future. Another difficulty was putting the information in an order that did not reflect importance but more of a 360-degree view of the culture. The Haudenosaunee world evolved with a spiritual sense of itself and did not sporadically emerge into existence from some Stone-Age cave. The Creation story, the coming of the ceremonies, and the Great Law all represent amazing periods of our evolution into a society of Peacemaking through the 1500s.

When the invasion happened, the Haudenosaunee was a highly organized, woman-centered culture that was ecologically in balance with the natural world, honored nation relations with other cultures with treaties like the Dish with One Spoon Treaty with the Ojibwa Nation. As a nation, we understood nation-to-nation relations in a familial way that included a reciprocal spiritual connection that was about renewal and peacemaking. In the spring of 1982, I heard the roll call of nations that exists in the oral tradition. It was a chant calling those nations with relations with the Tree of Peace. It was a remarkable world of longhouse communities spread from the St. Lawrence River to the Ohio Valley and a great deal of knowledge about the natural world's gifts of medicines, foods, tools, housing, clothing, and the spiritual relations that sustained the Nations of people.

265 years after first contact with the European invaders, plagues of diseases, wars, and false treaties, another message came to the people through a visionary who gifted the Haudenosaunee with a way to understand and survive the ordeal of colonialism.

During the 1970s, when I was learning about the culture, I had the opportunity to ask questions, wonder out loud, and listen to those who were close to that history. Demus Elm, who was over a hundred years old when he passed, was a teacher who personally represented those teachings of peacemaking. The Elders and old Chiefs always spoke of the Confederacy in a way that exhibited pride and joy in just the realization of where we come from. It is a part of us, it is what makes us Haudenosaunee, and it is that idea that I wanted to convey to the reader: the joy of knowing the source of Haudenosaunee identity is liberating.

The other reality is that our world is not perfect, but it is also acceptable to feel that our world was much better off before the invasion. The European invasion of Turtle Island was not a blessing but more of a punishment rooted in the ideology of the invasion. Diseases, the doctrine of discovery, racism, slavery, sociopathic behaviors, wars, theft, dishonorable agreements, etc., came with the invasion.

The Haudenosaunee survived, and we who speak of this Great Tree and the longhouse are thankful and are again feeling the joy of those teachings. There is still a lot of work to do in our longhouses to remove the yoke of internalized oppression and bring the deep inner joy of being Haudenosaunee into reality. The internalized oppression that I speak of is the family violence and the victimization of children in our communities. We must do something – take action, become a foster parent, take a parenting program, learn how to love children. We must search for inner peace within ourselves – the kind of peace that the Peacemaker talked about that included justice, equality, and the balancing of all life energies.

In November 2012, I was asked to present to a local conference of First Nations held by the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians on the topic of community healing. It was a three-day

conference covering topics including the doctrine of discovery, treaties, federal policies on Indians, using economics as leverage, and consult and accommodate policies. I was the last presenter on the agenda, which is usually when people are leaving and tired from three days of presentations. From my perspective, community healing needs to be first on the agenda given the despondency in our communities. What can we do about the history? We cannot change it, but we can learn how to build tomorrow from a more informed place. As I listened for the three days of this conference, I realized that we need to spend three days talking about poverty, family violence, and the social decay in our communities and do some strategic planning on recovery, but we would sooner come and listen to stories about treaties – 200-year-old agreements with thieves. It is the community organizer in my soul who wants to transcend the political discussion into community action. This is part of the transformation that needs to take place to tackle real problems with cultural knowledge and pragmatism.

As this dissertation unfolded, the power of dream came through the discussion along with the search for meaning that is very much a part of our current reality. We are never far from using dream work to manage and direct our lives, balanced with the altruism of our inner wisdom. The critical disruptive issue in our communities is our distance from a communal connection between all sectors and families of our communities. The power of unity is left in neutral as the communities struggle to find ways to encourage each other to be family, avoiding the discussion of the wedge driven between each silo of silence resulting from the mimicking of the oppressor. Transformation requires facing the truth of Indigenous reality such that we have to accept differences and remove the requirement of similarity. There may be various canoes in the river of life, but if acceptance is part of the transformation, they will be lashed together and sailing in the same direction.

The idea of transformation is a dream, and dream is Haudenosaunee intuitivism beginning in our psyches as an idea – always an idea that is generations old but renewed in each ceremony and filled with the notion that we have survived and now need to ably refashion a nation based on the foundational principles and beliefs of being Onkwehónwe. The invasion, the holocaust, the wars, and colonialism never won, only scarring the land, our souls, our governments, and our way of life. Our memories are continuous in oratory, ceremonial acknowledgements, storytelling, rites of passage, the practice of original democracy, clan families, and the joy of our music.

Our transformation is gradual; whether we are organized or not, the power of our culture wants to live on. Haudenosaunee culture has a life of its own that we all contribute to and take from. The culture balances out the outcome for us. It does not mean that we should do nothing and take it for granted. We need to be more proactive about the future. To apply the culture in more meaningful applications, we need to learn how to do cultural application as a decolonizing activity to further our knowledge and give more meaning to a culture that has the capacity to support change and growth.

As a cultural practitioner, my objective is to see more people understand the practice of Ka?nikohli:yo in all discussions of importance and relations throughout the Confederacy. We need to stop the confrontational nature of discussion of the difference between the Great Law and the Gaiwiiio. The emotional stress does not seek resolution but creates barriers to reject or accept when we need to create more understanding of our history of 200 years ago at a time we were at the lowest point in our history. We need to challenge ourselves to decolonize our teachings as much as necessary to find those things that we need to change about ourselves.

As I was researching, reading, pondering, and writing this introductory document of Haudenosaunee culture, the thought came that it might be possible to understand all of this as the

five pillars of Haudenosaunee thought: gynocracy, ecocentrism, peacemaking, futurism, and intuitivism.

When I was writing my dissertation, Dr. Grinde advised me to take a look at Pratt's work *Native Pragmatism*. His work focuses on the notion that American pragmatism has its roots in Native American pragmatism and has some examples in which he draws his conclusions from exploring the "border" space between the cultures of the settlers and Native American communities. Grinde's work in *Exemplar of Liberty* articulates the influence of Pratt's claim.

I asked a question: What is Haudenosaunee pragmatism? The original idea was just to look at the simplicity of being pragmatic in how one goes about addressing issues and resolving problems. The more I researched pragmatism, the more a realization emerged that the Haudenosaunee thought process is built from a cultural agenda that is unique to them as Indigenous thought.

The Elders and the old Chiefs would say that, whenever one is deliberating over an issue, one must consider the impact of the decision on the next seven generations. It is a profound ideal, but after sitting in council for over 30 years, I understand the value of the principle. The enormous amount of cultural Knowledge a person has to maintain to help reach a communal decision. As a part of these discussions, there are other concerns as well, and certainly this project has provoked other conceptual frames of reference to be considered that bring into play other vital interests of the Haudenosaunee that form the foundation of critical thought.

The results of my exploration of Haudenosaunee foundational knowledge are five important concepts that are vital to the Haudenosaunee critical thought process: intuitivism, gynocracy, ecocentrism, peacemaking, and futurism. The connection of these concepts establishes a unique thought process that is indigenous to the Haudenosaunee. The value of this idea is in how it can be

expanded and revitalized in its use as a construct for application in the contemporary Haudenosaunee thought process and problem-solving.

According to this understanding, in a cultural context when the Onkwehónwe are deliberating over an issue, the following constructs need to be considered to fulfill the full gamut of

Haudenosaunee thought process.

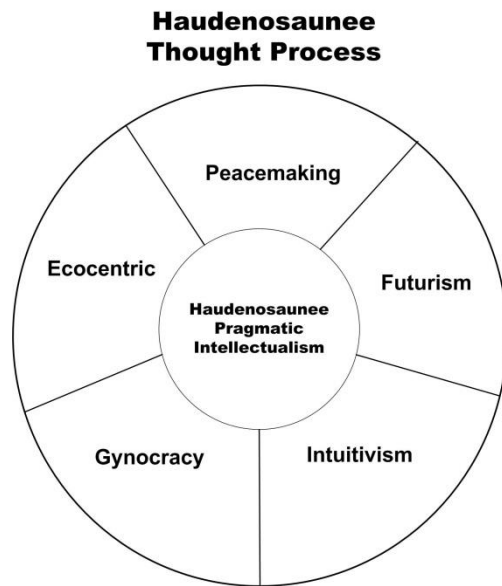


Figure 18 – Haudenosaunee Thought Process
[chart prepared by R. Antone]

Intuitivism is the ethical perceptions and insights of Iroquois psychology, including our spiritual use of dream work. We can honor this part of our holistic thinking by respecting the power of the subconscious abilities of intuitive analysis and dream. What does our inner knowledge say about the issue, and how have our dreams informed us?

The most common expression of decision-making is futurism related to the notion that, in deliberation, it must be considered how a decision is going to impact seven generations ahead. This has been a common practice amongst Haudenosaunee leadership. How will this issue impact the future generations?

Our gynocracy defines our relations with the feminine spirit within the clan structure and family as well as forming the very foundational elements of Haudenosaunee culture. The woman-centered ideology of Haudenosaunee and languages has been weakened by the invasion of the wanton patriarchal theology of the west. The state of this important thread is weak and needs the attention of all to bring it back to a full practice. The Creation story and language recovery is a vital

narrative and sound of Haudenosaunee, helping in understanding how women are central to the worldview. How is this issue impacting the women of our nation, and what does their voice say?

Our ecocentric knowledge comes from our Creation, Mother Earth and all natural world life forms. Haudenosaunee relations with the natural world remain a constant in deliberations in a world that has brought global warming to reality. How is this issue impacting the natural world, our environment, our Mother Earth?

Our duty and responsibility as Haudenosaunee is Peacemaking, gifted by the Peacemaker in the Great Law. This is the gift that has set the Haudenosaunee apart from all other nations with a definitive role in the world community of addressing the notions of justice, peace, and democratic principles. How is this issue disrupting the peace, balance, and harmony of the Nation and all its relations?

The Haudenosaunee thought process is extensive, holistic, reciprocal, spiritual, and meaningful toward all life energies connecting the past, present, and future by drawing upon the indigenous knowledge of countless generations, including the dream work about the future. In a modern context, the Haudenosaunee thought process is engulfed in transformative principles and ideals with the capacity for sustainability and growth within the teachings to rethink culture. These five concepts of Haudenosaunee thought provide a process for addressing the issues that come before us.

During the final rewriting of this dissertation, I found myself examining the current movement “Idle No More” for the focus of this new wave of protesting in response to new federal legislative amendments affecting First Nations and the environment. The movement began with directives by Indigenous women in Western Canada. One of the pieces of legislation is Bill C-45

Omnibus Act, a bill passed in Canada's parliament on December 18, 2012, that impacts First Nations and, more importantly, the environment, as environmental assessment was changed from protecting 32,000 lakes and rivers to 97 lakes and 62 rivers. Ten different pieces of legislation have changed the political, social, and environmental landscape of the First Nations and Canada.

First Nation citizens have staged flash mobs, round dances, and blockades throughout Canada, and the movement has spread into the United States and globally. At the same time, Chief Therese Spence has been on a hunger strike in a teepee on an island in the Ottawa River in Ottawa. As the movement challenges Canada, the gatherings become learning experiences, and challenging questions are being asked. What does this all mean as Indians lose their rights? As I watched the dialogue in the news, among native people, and amongst the leadership, there remained an empty box of rights that include treaty rights, human rights, original rights, and a struggle to understand inherent rights.

I view inherent rights as the higher ground in this struggle with settler governments that have exhibited little respect for the integrity of Indigenous Nationhood. The following description of inherent rights was at the time of this writing a draft that is being circulated amongst Haudenosaunee thinkers and our allies. I felt compelled to present a definition of inherent rights that expresses the cultural integrity of the Haudenosaunee while at the same time providing the movement with goals to achieve, standards to remind us of the parameters of our presence in the world community, and removal of the notion that our rights come from treaties and assisting the teaching of Indigenous people in the origin of rights within a cultural context.

HAUDENOSAUNEE INHERENT RIGHTS

According to the teachings and laws of the Haudenosaunee inherent rights have been defined within the cultural teachings, history, Great Law, and ceremonies of the longhouse. These are rights that exist as long as we exist and evolve from the Haudenosaunee's long-standing

relation with the land, including the whole natural world. Inherent rights are about the practical implementation of a spiritual worldview fulfilling obligations and responsibilities to ensure that the country of the Haudenosaunee is preserved for the future generations.

WHAT ARE THEY?

The aim of document is to facilitate a practical understanding of this knowledge and to encourage the passing on to the next generations the wisdom of inherent rights.

Our inherent rights begin at the time of our Creation and can be traced back to the arrival of Sky Woman and have grown and evolved ever since. One symbol of their existence is the wampum belt we call the “Ever Growing Tree of Peace.” As long as we exist, our inherent rights exist.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

As Indigenous people, it has become increasingly important that the people know their real rights.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INHERENT RIGHTS AND TREATY RIGHTS?

Treaties have been at the forefront of the rights discussion, and treaties are simply agreements with settler governments that were negotiating for access to the territories of the Indigenous Nations. In some instances, treaties recognized certain inherent rights, but inherent rights were never negotiated or put into treaties. As we have learned, our inherent rights are often ignored or breached. One thing that Indigenous people must understand is that our rights do not flow from the treaties; rights flow from our existence as Indigenous Nations and peoples.²³ Treaties only provide acknowledgement of some of the rights and outline the obligations of the settler governments to the Indigenous Nations. Some of the more common rights we are all familiar with are tax-free status; health care, including dental and optical; education support; and access to lands reserved for Indians. These have come to be viewed as Indian rights but are benefits of the treaty relations, the occupation of our territories, and the extraction of natural resources from Indian lands.

The following is a listing of inherent rights as understood from the cultural teachings and practices of the Haudenosaunee:

INDIVIDUAL

Each person has a right to an Onkwehónwe name.

Each person has a right to a place in the world.

Each person has a right to access to land for the use of cultural and natural presence.

²³Underlining is to note the importance of this idea in understanding the source of Indigenous rights.

Each person has a right to his or her original language.

Each person has a right to ceremonial and cultural practices.

Each person has a right to learn.

Each person has a right to the best health care.

Each person has a right to voice concerns to the government.

Each person has a right to protect his or her nation, people, land, and resources.

Each person has a right and obligation to relations with similar clans of other Indigenous Nations.

FAMILY/CLAN

Women have a right to head the family/clan and to choose the leader of the family/clan.

Each person has a right to clan membership.

Each person has a right to a safe and secure place in his or her family.

Family members have the right to gather medicines for the health of their family/clan.

Family members have a right to hunt for food for their family/clan.

Family members have a right to fish for food for their family.

Family members have a right to gather natural resources for the needs of their family/clan.

The clan has a right to select their leadership.

Families have a right to a safe and secure home.

NATION

The Nation is the sovereign expression of the political, cultural, social, economic, and spiritual unity of our families/clans.

The Nation, through the chiefs and Clan Mothers, has been given the sovereign powers necessary to exercise governance, jurisdiction, and authority within their country granted to us by Creation.

The Nation has the inherent right to grant citizenship.

The Nation has the right to adopt individuals and families within the nation.

The Nation has the right to authorize and regulate the right to hunt, fish, and gather food and medicines within the original territories of the Nation.

The Nation has the inherent right to authorize, regulate, and set standards of human behavior within their jurisdictions.

The Nation has the inherent right to regulate, authorize, and develop their economies for the economic well-being of their citizens.

The Nation has the right to represent relations with other nations and determine how those relations will be jointly beneficial.

CONFEDERACY

The Confederacy is the sovereign expression of the political, cultural, social, economic, and spiritual unity of the six member nations and the 49 families/clans of the Haudenosaunee.

Haudenosaunee Nations have the right and obligation to fulfill the higher purpose of peace and justice.

The Nations have the right to council with other nations of the Haudenosaunee to secure and protect the territories of the Haudenosaunee.

Haudenosaunee Nations have the right to condole and raise the chiefs of the Nations on the other side of the fire.

The confederacy has the right to make treaties with other Nations.

International Standards

Free Enjoyment

Free enjoyment is a critical principle of inherent rights and is recognized in international law. Free enjoyment includes principles of:

- Non-interference – nations and governments do not have the right to interfere in the internal matters and workings of other nations and governments. We highlighted this beginning with the Two Row Wampum and in successive treaties with England and the U.S.
- Free, prior and informed consent – consent is an inherent right that is never relinquished. “Free” means the absence of any coercion or attempts to influence the decision-making processes. “Prior” means that nothing can be done without, first, the consent and, second, the participation of the other party.
- Citizens of the Haudenosaunee have the right to determine the Haudenosaunee future.²⁴

²⁴ I wanted to acknowledge Brian (Mike) A. Myers, wolf clan, Seneca, for his contribution to assisting with the document on inherent rights. He is one of the most gifted thinkers in the Haudenosaunee who has over the decades contributed to writing position papers for the Oneida Nation. This draft document was also supported by the Chiefs and Clan Mothers of the Oneida Nation in a meeting on January 14, 2013.

Occupied Territories

The Indigenous Nations' original territories are heavily occupied by settler governments that have instituted laws and policy to denigrate the inherent rights of the Indigenous Nations since the signing of treaties and, more specifically, since the Creation of the Indian Act in 1867. As a result, in direct relations with an adversarial opponent, such as the settler government of Canada, the broader definition of inherent rights has to be upheld, including the following:

- Indigenous people have a right to protest the violations of the inherent rights of their Nations.
- Indigenous people have an inherent right to protect their lands, children, families, and nations.
- Indigenous people have an inherent right to seek restitution for the unresolved crimes committed by the settler governments.
- Indigenous Nations (not Indian Act-created band councils) have an inherent right to make new treaties that are based on free, prior, and informed consent.
- Indigenous people have an inherent right and obligation to protect and defend against the abuse of the natural world.
- Self-determination is another inherent right that is never relinquished; no one but a citizen of the Haudenosaunee has the right to determine the Haudenosaunee future.

This document is being circulated among the various leaderships across the Haudenosaunee for their input and acknowledgement. As an observation of this movement from an Indigenous perspective, it clearly demonstrates that the Indigenous worldview of the relationship to Mother Earth is still a powerful cultural impetus.

For me, as a practitioner of traditional ways, this dissertation has evoked a deeper sense of Haudenosaunee fortitude and a more realistic accommodation of those in our midst. We will always be surrounded by other cultures, but it is in our own hands to determine how much of the other cultures invade our thoughts and actions. By understanding our own way of thinking and conceptualizing ideas and transforming knowledge into practical social, political, and cultural applications, we move the decolonizing agenda. The presence of the Punisher – the cultural representation of colonialism – is a fair analysis of settler governments. The Haudenosaunee needs to

decolonize the influence of the serpents while we rally the moral strength of our communities in our struggle for transformative nation-building.

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