Anishinaabekwewag Teachings of Self-Determination

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ABSTRACT

Since being excluded from decolonization efforts in the mid-twentieth century on the grounds that they were not colonized peoples but minorities living within sovereign states, Indigenous peoples have called for a broader understanding of self-determination. The Indigenous self-determination debate has become characterized by a spurious dichotomy between its collective and individual aspects, with the argument from leaders often being grounded in trickle-down logic that collective self-determination is a prerequisite for individual, so the former must be addressed first. As a result of such arguments and the heteropatriarchal ideologies implemented through the Indian Act, Anishinaabekwewag have been largely excluded from self-determination discourse. However, in order for self-determination to be realized in a meaningful way, a more holistic and inclusive understanding is necessary.

Anishinaabekwewag occupy a unique space from which to contribute to the development of such an understanding. In this thesis I will explore and apply a framework informed by *ikweism*, a concept derived from Anishinaabekwe thought and conceptualizations within the context of Anishinaabe cosmologies, ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies regarding the strength of femininity and its inherent connections with ideas regarding Anishinaabe sovereignty and self-determination. In doing so, I will demonstrate that Anishinaabe philosophies have long worked to empower Anishinaabekwewag and provide a strong foundation on which Anishinaabe self-determination discourse can find meaning going forward.

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INTRODUCTION

Positionality

I am a Canadian woman of primarily Belgian, French, Scottish, and Russian descent. My ancestors on my mother's paternal side emigrated from Belgium to northern Alberta in the early twentieth century. My earliest known French ancestors—my father's paternal family—arrived on the east coast some time prior to the Great Upheaval out of Acadia in the mid-eighteenth century. My ancestors were expelled to the Thirteen Colonies, following which some returned to what became Canada. Unfortunately, I know very little about this side of my family. Nor do I know much about either my mother or my father's maternal sides, beyond that they came to Canada in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. It has always been my plan to explore my family history further following the completion of my degree.

I was born in Kelowna, British Columbia but I have spent most of my life in rural northern Alberta and consider myself an Albertan. I am fortunate enough to have been raised within a large network of extended family, and still remain close to grandparents and cousins. While I love to travel and have been away from home for extended periods of time for schooling, I still very much consider northern Alberta to be my home and look forward to returning there to be closer to my family again.

My post-secondary education journey started at Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE) in a Bachelor of Arts program where I had a concentration in History and a minor in Psychology. I had decided the spring before entering university during a trip to the United Kingdom that I was going to pursue spending a year abroad there. I ended up doing just that during my second year, both semesters of which I studied at Coventry University.

My original intention when entering CUE's B.A. program was to complete my three-year degree and apply to the university's after-degree elementary Education program. For as long as I could remember, I had never faltered in my answer to the oft-ask question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Without a doubt, I wanted to be a teacher. However, in the early weeks of my final year, my friend Shannon Tyler asked me why I wanted to become a teacher. I realized then that I didn't have a good reason other than "because that's always been my plan." Shannon challenged me to explore other options for further education after graduation, and I will be forever grateful to her for that.

While I researched possible graduate studies options, I was taking classes that focused on Western Canadian history, the history of interactions between Indigenous peoples and Christian institutions and missionaries, and the history of the relationships between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples in what became the prairie provinces. These classes were what initially drew my interest to Indigenous studies. With CUE being a small university, each of these courses were taught by Dr. Tolly Bradford, with whom I had also taken my introductory history courses in my first year of university. I consider Dr. Bradford one of my greatest influences on my development as a young scholar with a passion for Western Canadian and Indigenous histories. In one of my final courses—that which focused on the history of interactions between Indigenous peoples and Christianity, particularly in Canada's west—I completed a research paper on the mechanisms, both ideological and policy-based, that worked to redefine residential school students' conceptualizations of gender. This was the first time in my university career that I had amalgamated my interests in history and Indigenous and gender studies.

In my search for graduate studies programs, I had briefly considered pathways such as law or gender studies; however, my growing interest in Indigenous history soon had me set on Indigenous studies programs. I ended up applying to a couple of universities and chose the University of Winnipeg's Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance program because I was seeking out applicable knowledge that I could use in a career beyond academia and research. Once I began the program and had to finalize my thesis topic idea, I knew I wanted to write about Anishinaabe women and the issues that they face as a result of colonization. However, I struggled to focus my interests on a particular topic. Once again, the classes I was taking greatly influenced the direction I eventually took with my own research. In an Indigenous Self-Determination class, I wrote a paper on the ways in which colonization constricted Indigenous women's self-determination on the axis of race and gender. At the same time, I was in a Pathways to Indigenous Wisdom course, learning about primarily Anishinaabe ontologies and epistemologies. The influence of these two courses came together in the ultimate decision on my thesis topic.

What follows is what I believe to be true.

Context

Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island have always asserted their ability to live according to their own political, economic, and social ways of being and knowing. However, in the inter-war era (1919-1939) of geopolitical decolonization when self-determination and sovereignty were recognized for many former colonies, particularly those in Africa, Indigenous peoples globally were excluded under the presumption that they were not colonized peoples, but rather minorities located within sovereign states.[1] In other words, by limiting the scope of self-determination as a collective right vested in peoples and not nation states,[2] international law

denied Indigenous nations their inherent rights and responsibilities that they had lived by for

millennia by failing to acknowledge their status as "peoples."[3]

Beginning in the 1970s, Indigenous peoples from around the world began to resist the

UN's narrow understanding of self-determination and call for their recognition as distinct

peoples with autonomy and political will.[4] Debates revealed different understandings of the

scope, content, and application of self-determination from state- and Indigenous-based

standpoints.[5] Efforts to correct this gap in understanding culminated in the creation of the

Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982, and, ultimately, its *United Nations*

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in 2007.

Debates regarding Indigenous self-determination typically divide the concept into

collective versus individual rights. This dichotomy has acted as a framework for self-

determination discourse in international, national, and community fora. It has also influenced the

experiences of Indigenous women.[6] Men dominate Indigenous governance in Canada, and in

grounding self-determination discourse in rhetoric of collectivity, push to the forefront issues and

governance approaches that fail to include Indigenous women's concerns and understandings.

Such prioritizing of collective over individual self-determination is typically justified by the

trickle-down logic of "what is good for the nation is good for women."[7]

Meanwhile, Indigenous women's calls for individual self-determination are disregarded

and vilified as infiltrations of Western individualism and detrimental to the efforts for so-called

collective self-determination.[8] At worst, individual self-determination is completely rejected; at

best it is described as an outcome of collective self-determination.[9] However, Indigenous women

have put forth different understandings of self-determination that demonstrate the inextricable

relationship between its individual and collective dimensions. Many argue that meaningful self-

determination is simply not possible without addressing the individual dimension.[10] These holistic and comprehensive conceptions of self-determination are often defined by characteristics such as relationality, autonomy, and freedom from violence.

Anishinaabekwewag living under *Indian Act* regimes, like other Indigenous women in Canada, have been consistently underrepresented in self-determination discourse. Specific legislation and court rulings that have addressed them are largely based on ideologies and frameworks established to deal with issues facing Indigenous men or non-Indigenous women. Such hegemonic thinking fails to take into account the double-sided impacts of colonization that Anishinaabekwewag face as both Anishinaabe and female.[11] For example, before its revision in 1985, section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act*, the "marrying out" rule, dictated that Anishinaabekwe legal identity as "Indians" would be derived from her nearest patriarch—or father or husband.[12] Therefore, Anishinaabekwewag who married non-status men lost their Indian status and its associated rights; men with Indian status were not subject to such marriage-based status determinants.

While some nations had previously organized through patrilineal structures, many utilized matrilineal and matrilocal frameworks. For example, Omashkego-Anishinaabe culture is matrilineal. In contrast, Ojibwe-, Odaawaa-, and Bashkodewadomii-Anishinaabe governance structures were largely defined by a patrilineal clan system. However, patrilineality and matrilineality did not denote domination of men over women or vice versa. As Métis-Anishinaabekwe social work professor Patricia D. McGuire from MacDiarmid on Lake Nipigon points out, Anishinaabekwewag "had authority and power…equal to that of men."[13] She illustrates her argument with the story of her grandmother, whom the French referred to as Queen Anne because her husband, a community leader, insisted that she be present for any

meetings. McGuire's grandmother was also the keeper of spring ceremonies, including making offerings to the water before the ice was gone each year. Both these matrilineal and patrilineal traditions demonstrated more egalitarian values in comparison to the gender-based hierarchy that has tended to characterize Western cultures.

The *Indian Act* failed to acknowledge this diversity in governance structures and imposed blanket hegemonic thinking on Anishinaabeg. When Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, an Ojibwe-Anishinaabekwe from Wiikwemikong First Nation on Manitoulin Island, challenged section 12(1)(b) in the early 1970s on the grounds that it violated the 1960 Bill of Rights, the trial judge in the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) ruled that no such violation had occurred as Lavell was equal to other Canadian women who also derived their status from their husbands. Indeed, if a non-Indigenous woman married a man with Indian status, his status would be extended to her. However, as Sharon Donna McIvor—a Nlaka'pamux woman from the Lower Nicola Band and Aboriginal rights activist who has fought against the continued sex discrimination in the post-1985 *Indian Act*—points out, had the trial judge compared Indigenous women to Indigenous men, his conclusion on equality would have been much different.[14] This ruling demonstrates the extent to which patriarchal structures and ideologies have become hegemonic in Anishinaabekwewag lives, in that the ruling was grounded in Western assumptions about gender roles and position in families and society.

The issue of silencing Anishinaabekwewag within patriarchal governance regimes has also been exacerbated by funding allocations that presume that the male-dominated Indigenous organizations can speak for and act on behalf of all Indigenous peoples. Doing so effectively excludes Anishinaabekwewag voices from various political, legal, and economic forums.[15] For example, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) was unable to obtain government

funding or passes to participate in Constitutional meetings leading up to the Charlottetown Accord in 1992. Meanwhile, the Assembly of First Nations, the Native Council of Canada, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, and the Métis National Council—all male-dominated organizations—received $10 million and seats at the table. The NWAC pursued legal action after failed negotiations with these "malestream" groups, when they—in particular, the AFN—refused to incorporate the NWAC's concerns in to their constitutional agenda.[16] The SCC ruled against the NWAC's efforts to obtain equal funding for participation in the talks on the basis that the predominantly male groups provided equal representation for both Indigenous men and women.[17]

These broad, systemic failures to engage with Anishinaabekwewag issues in discourses of self-determination are directly related to the everyday experiences of Anishinaabekwewag. As McIvor argues, the exclusion of Indigenous women from political realms in Canada reflects their exclusion from smaller scale domains via discrimination and poverty.[18] Further, she asserts that without the capacity to meaningfully participate in governance, their standard of living is greatly impacted.[19]

Anishinaabekwewag have also experienced exclusion and paternalism in academic research and policy making. Much of the scholarly literature on Anishinaabekwewag —written by Anishinaabe and non-Anishinaabe authors alike—has tended to construct them as victims of cross-sectional oppressions of gender and race. This construction of *victims* then opens the responsive possibilities of *saving*, usually via colonial policy or prescription most often designed by non-Anishinaabe academics and/or governments. Within the Canadian colonial structure, a significant barrier to Anishinaabekwewag —and Anishinaabeg in general—is the insistence by non-Anishinaabe peoples that they hold the solutions to Anishinaabe issues. This tendency

towards outgroup representation, in tandem with patriarchal values and structures that have permeated male-dominated Indigenous governance, has led to the misrepresentation and silencing of women in Anishinaabe governance. However, Anishinaabekwewag have been anything but passive victims of colonialism. While there is no denying their long-standing and cross-sectional oppression, they have also long asserted their self-determination in the face of colonial laws, policies, and ideologies.

Purpose and Questions

Existing understandings of Indigenous self-determination rooted in heteropatriarchal governance models are narrow and exclusive. The failures of self-determination and self-government for Anishinaabeg in Canada—for example, Anishinaabekwewag rejection of self-government measures as laid out in the Charlottetown Accord[20]—at least partially stem from the limited understanding of collective self-determination as separate from individual self-determination, and largely defined by predominantly male leadership. Such conceptualizations are demonstrative of the partial assimilation of male-centric Indian Act governance structures in Canada to heteropatriarchal worldviews. This is not to say that Anishinaabe men's experiences and resultant points of view are not of value, or that collective self-determination is not a priority. Rather, that for self-determination to be realized in a meaningful way for all Anishinaabeg, individual and collective self-determination must go hand in hand. This requires a more inclusive vision of self-determination discourse that incorporates Anishinaabekwewag understandings. Self-determination cannot truly be for any collective when it is defined by a relatively homogenous subgroup of the collective.

Anishinaabekwewag occupy a unique space in which they have the potential to contribute to the creation of a more meaningful and holistic understanding of self-determination. The cross-

sectional marginalization of Anishinaabekwewag has given them privileged insights into the scope, content, and application of self-determination. These insights can broaden and strengthen existing conceptualizations of self-determination, making its realization more likely. In this way, Anishinaabekwewag double bind has provided them with double the opportunity to contribute to comprehensive self-determination for all Anishinaabeg.

Any discourse of Indigenous self-determination that is not inclusive of every individual is flawed and illogical; indeed, Law professor Val Napoleon of Saulteau First Nation in Treaty 8 territory of northern British Columbia asks, if self-determination is to be designed by only men, "do we want to work toward a vision of self-determination that only includes half the population?"[21] Indeed, Anishinaabekwewag are concerned that conceptualizations and analyses of self-determination have marginalized their experiences and concerns by failing to address the differential impacts of colonization.[22] Without the inclusion of their empowered roles and voices, Anishinaabekwewag have reason to question the legitimacy and viability of collective self-determination.[23]

If autonomous, self-determining nations are the goal of Anishinaabe politics, then Anishinaabekwewag must be included in the process. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine the conceptualization of women and femininity in Anishinaabe philosophies, and the resultant capacities for self-determination Anishinaabekwewag hold as a result. Further, I will examine the ways in which this foundation for self-determination has been undermined within the Canadian colonial context, and how Anishinaabekwewag have continued to ground themselves in their worldviews in their responses. In doing so, I will develop and apply a culturally-based framework—*ikweism*—for understanding Anishinaabekwewag self-determination. Further, I will explore the ontological, epistemological, and axiological basis for

the interdependent relationship of the individual and the collective within Anishinaabe worldviews in order to demonstrate the precedent that exists for doing so within self-determination discourse.

In order to do so, this research will answer the following questions:

1) What ontological and epistemological differences between Anishinaabe and Christian conceptualizations of women are revealed in Creation stories?

2) How have colonial structures and ideologies worked to constrain ambition for Anishinaabekwewag self-determination in Canada?

3) How has ikweism[24] responded to challenges to Anishinaabekwewag self-determination?

Significance of Discussion

Understandings of Anishinaabe self-determination in governance and politics to date have been incomplete, given their tendency to exclude Anishinaabekwewag and their calls for recognition of individual self-determination. Therefore, this research has the potential to contribute to a comprehensive but flexible theory of Anishinaabe self-determination relevant to individuals, communities, and nations. Such a holistic understanding would be more likely to garner support from Anishinaabeg beyond predominantly male leadership and effect positive change towards inclusive participation in decision-making and governance. This bolstered internal legitimacy via inclusion would also be reflected on a larger scale, as it would likely increase support from the international arena.[25] Further, self-determination is an important precursor for the enjoyment of a number of rights and capacities, as well as for decolonization.[26]

While existing literature on Anishinaabekwewag largely focuses on the losses endured and relationships disconnected, this research will focus on the strength and resilience of Anishinaabekwewag who have challenged colonialism and sexism and have fought to empower

themselves and their communities. Non-Anishinaabe scholars have tended to conduct research

on Anishinaabeg rather that *with* them. They have also conducted much research with a

diagnostic or prescriptive purpose; in other words, telling Anishinaabeg what issues are

important and how to fix them. However, there have always been Anishinaabekwewag who have

addressed the issues they face in contextually relevant and culturally grounded ways. I, as a non-

Anishinaabe scholar, have no authority to speak for these empowered women or to produce a

"how-to" guide for Anishinaabekwewag expressing or seeking to reclaim their self-

determination. I simply aim to create space in which their stories and teachings can be told.

Notes for Chapter One

[1] Rauna Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations: Indigenous Self-Determination, Governance, and Gender* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 26; Iris Marion Young, "Two Concepts of Self-Determination," in *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Minority Rights*, eds. Stephen May, Tariq Madood, and Judith Squires (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 177, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/lib/uwinnipeg/detail.action?docID=283610.

[2] Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations*, 25.

[3] Patrick Thornberry, *Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 26, 29; also see 33-60.

[4] Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations,* 27.

[5] Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations,* 25-27.

[6] Val Napoleon, "Aboriginal Self-Determination: Indigenous Self and Collective Selves," *Atlantic* 29, no. 2 (2005): 31-35, https://www.fpic.info/media/library/resources/aboriginal-self-determination-individual-self-and-/1046-1317-1-PB.pdf; Karen Engle, *The Elusive Promise of Indigenous Development: Rights, Culture, Strategy* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 72.

[7] Jo-Anne Fiske, "The Womb is to the Nation as the Heart is to the Body: Ethnopolitical Discourses of the Canadian Indigenous Women's Movement," in *Feminism, Political Economy and the State: Contested Terrain*, eds. Pat Armstrong and M. Patricia Connelly (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 1999), 312, https://www-deslibris-ca.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/ID/412305.

[8] Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations,* 50-51.

[9] Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations,* 51.

[10] For example, see Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations,* 50.

[11] Sharon Donna McIvor, "Aboriginal Women Unmasked: Using Equality Litigation to Advance Women's Rights," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 106 (2004): 112-119, https://heinonline-org.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/HOL/Page?lname=&public=false&collection=journals&handle=hein.journals/cajwol16&men_hide=false&men_tab=toc&kind=&page=106.

[12] Joyce Green, "Balancing Strategies: Aboriginal Women and Constitutional Rights in Canada," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Green (Black Point: Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 145.

[13] Patricia D. McGuire, "Wiisaakodewikwe Anishinaabekwe Diabaajimotaw Nipigon Zaaga'igan: Lake Nipigon Ojibway Métis Stories About Women," in *First Voices: An Aboriginal Women's* Reader, eds. Patricia A. Monture and Patricia D. McGuire (Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education Inc., 2009), 68.

[14] McIvor, "Aboriginal Women Unmasked," 113.

[15] McIvor, "Aboriginal Women Unmasked," 126-129, 131.

[16] Joyce Green, "Balancing Strategies," 150.

[17] McIvor, "Aboriginal Women Unmasked," 126-127.

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[18] McIvor, "Aboriginal Women Unmasked," 126.

[19] McIvor, "Aboriginal Women Unmasked," 108-109. Also see Brenda L. Gunn, "Self-Determination and Indigenous Women: Increasing Legitimacy Through Inclusion," *Canadian Journal of Women and the* Law 26, no. 2 (2014), 244-257, https://muse-jhu-edu.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/article/564330.

[20] McIvor, "Aboriginal Women Unmasked," 112-119.

[21] Excerpt from an interview with Val Napoleon, in Rauna Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations*, 53.

[22] Gunn, "Self-Determination and Indigenous Women," 257.

[23] Sharon Donna McIvor aptly summarizes these fears by asking, "Why would neo-colonial Aboriginal governments, born and bred in patriarchy, be different from Canadian governments?" McIvor, "Aboriginal Women Unmasked," 128; also see Gunn, "Self-Determination and Indigenous Women," 241-275.

[24] Ikweism refers to the ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies within Anishinaabe traditions that act as the foundation for women's self-determination. This foundation for self-determination is based on Anishinaabekwewag relationships within Creation. This concept will be further explored in later sections.

[25] Gunn, "Self-Determination and Indigenous Women," 266-267.

[26] Gunn, Self-Determination and Indigenous Women," 265-266.

CHAPTER TWO:
METHODOLOGIES

Locating Self: Indigenous v. Indigenized Research

Non-Indigenous researchers have had a troubled history of conducting research *on* Indigenous peoples.[1] Beginning in the late twentieth century, Indigenous scholars from around the world began to criticize this colonial relationship and call for the voices of Indigenous peoples to be heard in culturally relevant ways. Cree scholar Shawn Wilson of Opaskwayak Cree Nation describes four stages of the development of Indigenous research paradigms: stage one saw Indigenous researchers operate within Western research paradigms; stages two and three saw the convergence of Indigenous and Western paradigms, with an increasing focus on decolonization in stage three; and stage four, which had begun by the time Wilson described this timeline, has seen Indigenous researchers articulate and explore within their respective cultural paradigms.[2] A number of authors have begun to explore and develop what Indigenous research paradigms and methodologies look like, with particular regards to primary research.

A potentially contentious space to occupy is being a non-Anishinaabe researcher attempting to apply Anishinaabe epistemologies and methodologies in conducting research. As such, I begin my discussion on my research methodologies by locating myself and my place within my research. Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux-Anishinaabekwe scholar Margaret Kovach of Pasqua and Okanese First Nations and Anishinaabekwe and English scholar Kathleen Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe) of Flying Post First Nation have called for all researchers to take part in such self-reflection for a number of reasons, including to be congruent with epistemologies that understand the subjective nature of interpretation,[3] and to acknowledge power differentials in academia and broader society.[4] Therefore, I began this introduction with my positionality, and I now acknowledge my limitations as a non-Anishinaabe researcher.

I contend that while researchers such as myself should make every effort to conduct research in respectful and accountable ways that benefit Indigenous peoples—two pillars of Indigenous research as identified by Metis scholar Cora Weber-Pillwax[5]—it is imperative that we acknowledge our limitations in conducting research for/with Indigenous peoples or through Indigenous lenses, as will be done here. If Anishinaabe research is to be centred around Anishinaabe cosmologies, ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies, then we are inherently limited in our understanding as non-Anishinaabe. Learning about a culture of which we are not a part places limits on understanding that may not be present when one is of that culture.

However, acknowledging the inherent limits on the endeavour does not mean that every effort should not be made to conduct research in a good way. As such, I describe the following not as "Indigenous" research but as "Indigenized" research: I seek to interpret and present my conclusions based on many of the tenants of Indigenous research put forth by Anishinaabe scholars, while recognizing my limitations as a non-Anishinaabe researcher. I do so through the use of *ikweism* and story as framework and methodology, as explored below, through positioning myself within the research, and through privileging the voices of those about whom I write.

In drawing on Anishinaabe interpretations, teachings, and voices, I make an effort to specify the identities and nations of those who I reference. In cases where I cite non-Indigenous scholars whose identity or land roots are not specified; I identify their area of expertise within Western academia in order to maintain efforts of locating contributing voices. The first time that an individual is specifically discussed or referenced in the body of the text, I will provide this information about her/him. Further mentions will simply refer to them by their name.

In her exploration of Indigenous research methodologies, Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe) has found respect to be a core value of Indigenous research. She describes respect as being

enacted through the acknowledgement and validation of Indigenous philosophies and the positioning of those philosophies and knowledges at the centre of the research.[6] These are principles and interpretive strategies that I apply throughout.

Language Use and Terminology

Unless a term is used within the context of a direct quote, I have aimed to standardize my use of Anishinaabemowin terms, under the guidance of Ojibwe-Anishinaabe knowledge keeper and Ojibwemowin speaker Darren Courchene of Sagkeeng First Nation, and Ojibwe-Anishinaabekwewag Elders Beverley Courchene and Margaret Smith.

Below is an overview of terms that will be commonly used throughout the remainder of the thesis and my reasoning for utilizing them.

Indigenous, *Indian*, *First Nations*. Throughout the research, I will use a variety of these terms, as contextually appropriate. For example, while Indian is decreasing in use and carries certain negative connotations, it remains relevant in contexts related to status under the *Indian Act*. Indigenous will be used to refer broadly to the First Peoples of what is now Canada and, in certain specified contexts, globally. First Nations is used solely in the context of referring to the names of the communities from where referenced authors and Elders hail, as demonstrated above.

Heteropatriarchal. This term refers to the hegemonic thinking in Canada and other Western societies that values heterosexuality and patriarchy as the inherent frameworks from which to govern and live. Further, as they are normalized and considered natural states, they are elevated above other conceptualizations of gender and governance structures, which are often dismissed as "abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent."[7] Heteropatriarchy relies on relatively narrow

and rigid understandings of gender and gender roles. Some of the foundations for this framework in Christian Creation stories will be explored more in chapter one.

Anishinaabe, *Anishinaabekwe(wag)*. There are two overarching ways in which the term Anishinaabe is applied. In mainstream academia it refers to specific nations of people. According to Courchene, based on their similar Creation stories and autonyms, Anishinaabe nations include the following: Anishininiwag (Oji-Cree), Baagwaagamiig (Montagnais), Ininiweg (Illinois), Maameg (Miami), Misi-zaagiwininiwag (Mississauga), Odagaamiig (Algonquin), Omanoominiig (Menominee), Omashkegowag (Cree), Ozaagiig (Sauk), and Ozhaawanoog (Shawnee), together comprising the Great Lakes Anishinaabeg; Ayaaj-ininiwag (Blackfoot), Gaa-nii'inaweshiig (Arapaho), and Nii'inaweshiwag (Cheyenne), together comprising the Western Anishinaabeg; and Baawating (Pohawtan), Omishoomisag (Delaware), Ma'iinganag (Mahican), Miigis-ogimaag (Mi'kmaq), and Waabanakiig (Abenaki), together comprising the Eastern Anishinaabeg. However, in Anishinaabemowin, Anishinaabe translates to mean human being; for example, an Ojibwe-Anishinaabe would refer to an Ojibwemowin-speaking human being.[8]

For the purposes of this research, I will adopt elements of both understandings in my use of Anishinaabe and the examination of Anishinaabe cultures. As such, in introducing specific authors, I will identify each as their specific nation, followed by *-Anishinaabe* in the sense of Anishinaabe meaning human being. Further, in order to maintain a focused scope for this research and to ensure that it is done in a good way, I will focus on Omashkego-, Ojibwe-, Odaawaa-, and Bashkodewadomii-Anishinaabekwewag.[9]

Whereas Anishinaabe(g) refers to the people of the nations or the nations themselves, Anishinaabekwe(wag) is specifically Anishinaabe woman (women). The forms given here—with and without the g/wag, are singular versus plural forms of each term.

Self-determination. Self-determination is often framed within political, economic, and social terms. For example, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples defines self-determination as Indigenous peoples having the right to "freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."[10] However, in creating an inclusive discourse in which Anishinaabekwewag voices, experiences, and points of view are taken into consideration, it is important to adopt a broader understanding of self-determination. Mainstream definitions of self-determination tend to adopt Western discursive understandings of governance and autonomy, as well as Western tendencies towards generalization of theory, as reflected in the development of a universal definition of self-determination. In order to contribute to a conceptualization of self-determination that is relevant to Anishinaabeg and grounded in traditional ways of knowing, being, and doing, self-determination here also recognizes elements of relationality, reciprocity, and respect that are absent in mainstream definitions. As such, self-determination is also understood to refer to capacities to operate in a good way within the relationships that Anishinaabeg have engaged in for millennia. As will be explored throughout, these relationships provide the basis for self-determination. Without the inclusion of capacities to participate in these relationships in meaningful and respectful ways, any definition of self-determination is incomplete. It is this missing element of self-determination that will be the focus throughout this research.

A Nation-Specific Approach

   Evolutionary ecologist Raymond Pierotti argues that while there are differences in the ontological and epistemological specifics between individual Indigenous nations, certain universal concepts can be identified across virtually all nations. He also questions why there is so much critique of a pan-Indigenous approach when the pan-European (i.e., Western) approach is so widely accepted and its alleged universality considered a strength.[11] In contrast, Kovach argues that tribal- or nation-specific epistemologies derive their merit and esteem by being rooted in relations of kinship and place.[12] Given this organic foundation from which Indigenous epistemologies find their root, they are inextricably tied to place and peoples' experiences with their respective lands; therefore, they cannot be generalized.[13]

   The perceived strength of the universal application of Western thought is reflective of the tendency of the Western worldview to separate theory and praxis—an argument that will be explored further in chapter one. Within Western thought, theory is understood to be objective and applicable in variety of contexts. Therefore, the separation of theory from praxis enables and bolsters the pan-European approach. However, in Anishinaabe epistemologies, theory and praxis are inseparable. Their strength lies not in the broad applicability of perceived objectivity, but in the subjectivity that is grounded in land-based ontologies that root theory and praxis in physical place. In other words, whereas the strength of Western worldviews is understood to be in detachment and universal application of a singular truth, the strength of Anishinaabe worldviews is derived from nation- and lands-specific knowledges. Therefore, in this research I aim to resist a pan-Indigenous approach and adopt a specific focus on Omashkego-, Ojibwe-, Odaawaa-, and Bashkodewadomii-Anishinaabekwewag.

Using *Ikweism* to Make Meaning

My research will adopt an interpretive framework based on *ikweism*, a term derived from the Anishinaabemowin term for woman: *ikwe* that has guided my understandings as I conducted my research. Ikweism was first discussed in the literature by Ojibwe-Anishinaabekwe social worker and scholar Rose Ella Cameron from northwestern Ontario regarding the identities of Anishinaabeg involved with the child welfare system. She describes ikweism as a theory based in Anishinaabe ideologies and worldviews[14] that exists in the collective consciousness of Anishinaabekwewag.[15] It seeks to examine and understand the contexts and experiences of Anishinaabeg, with an aim towards challenging the colonial political structures that Anishinaabekwewag experience.[16] These are the foundational elements of ikweism. I offer further refinement of the approach with regards to Anishinaabekwe thought and understanding of self-determination.

Ikweism is the recognition that Anishinaabekwewag carry inherent gifts and power as women, as illustrated in Creation stories. It is the acknowledgement that relationships that Anishinaabekwewag have with Creation—with lands, waters, animals, plants, and other Anishinaabeg, together in an intertwined and holistic web—act as the foundation for their self-determination. These relationships reflect and are derived from the gifts and capacities that they have. The relationships have also given them responsibilities to fulfill in order to maintain balance and harmony in their families, communities, and nations; as such, their capacities and responsibilities to be self-determining are based in these relationships. With this ontological, epistemological, and axiological base, Anishinaabekwewag have valued positions from which to contribute to self-determination discourse.

Absolon and Kovach both refer to processes of making meaning through interpretation in Indigenous—or, in my case, Indigenized—research.[17] More specifically, Kovach discusses the difference between interpretation and analysis. She defines the former within mainstream research processes as "a subjective accounting of social phenomena as a way of giving insight or to clarify an event. It involves an inductive way of knowing."[18] She describes the latter as "reducing a whole to the sum of its parts in order to explain a phenomenon…Analysis works to *decontextualize* knowledge through the organizational act of sorting data."[19]

I agree with Kovach when she argues that this understanding of analysis is not congruent with Indigenous epistemologies. Rather, she contends that analysis from an Indigenous perspective, given an understanding of knowledge as relational, holistic, and contextual, "means observing patterns and behaviours and making sense of those observations."[20] It is often the knowledge-keepers that have the experience to do so that conduct such analyses, which is done so within the broader understanding that knowledge cannot be decontextualized or universalized.[21]

To adopt a mainstream understanding of analysis would be to attempt to apply Western methodology to Indigenous epistemology, and, therefore, continue colonial patterns in academic approaches to research. To adopt an Indigenous understanding would similarly be to arrogantly continue such colonial patterns, as I am not an Anishinaabe knowledge-keeper. Therefore, my research will rely on interpretation as defined by Kovach. While I make every effort to ground interpretations in what I have come to know about Anishinaabe cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies, I do not claim to do so from an objective standpoint. Anishinaabe knowledge is understood to be contextual, relational, holistic, and subjective. This is a significant divergence from Western epistemologies that strive to create knowledge that is objective, fragmented, and

generalizable.[22] I also do not make any interpretations lightly. In order to alleviate some of the ethical concerns of a non-Anishinaabe interpreting Anishinaabe stories,[23] I have worked to ground my interpretation and arguments in teachings, interpretations, and frameworks previously provided by Anishinaabe scholars, Elders, and knowledge keepers.

Story as Methodology

Conducting Indigenized secondary research is inherently difficult as Indigenous methodology is relational and therefore demands engagement and physical interaction with people, communities, and other entities in Creation. Therefore, secondary research must adapt and apply Indigenous research principles and methodologies to suit the context of secondary research. I make an effort to carry out my responsibilities to those Anishinaabeg that I learn from and draw upon, and, therefore, with whom have established conceptual rather than tangible relationships.[24] In order to do so, I will adapt a methodological framework based on story.

In Anishinaabe cultures, there are two overarching types of stories: *aadizookaanan* 'sacred narratives,' including Creation stories, and *dibaajimowinan* 'personal reminiscences.' Both have long provided the necessary philosophical foundations from which Anishinaabekwewag have derived their roles and authority in their families, communities, and nations, and have acted as pedagogical tools for the intergenerational transmission of those knowledges. Despite the assertion of the superiority of Western Christian liberal philosophies, aadizookaanan and dibaajimowinan represent voices that ensure the survival of Anishinaabe cultures and traditions. They are also a vital aspect of Anishinaabe epistemologies from which to base resurgence and resistance.

I use story as methodology here in two ways: (1) through the use of Creation stories as the cosmological, ontological, and epistemological foundation from which I came to understand

the framework of ikweism; and (2) through applying the methodology of understanding stories themselves to make meaning. As such, I apply the teachings provided by Michi Saagiig-Anishinaabekwe scholar Leanne Simpson of Alderville First Nation and other Anishinaabe authors who discuss the flexibility and inherent context-dependency of stories.[25] Like ikweism, Anishinaabe stories are both of the collective and the individual, in that they are contextualized to those who tell them—stories are relational and cannot be separated from the speaker.[26] At the same time, they are grounded in and reflect cosmologies, ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies that connect and unite Anishinaabeg. Omashkego-Anishinaabe scholar Michael Hart of Fisher River Cree Nation aptly summarizes this epistemological understanding in stating that, "[t]he journey you and I would take wouldn't necessarily be the same, but they are all part of being Cree."[27]

In applying these understandings in my research, I aim to interpret and make meaning based on the stories and teachings provided by the Anishinaabe scholars, authors, activists, and artists on whom I rely within a framework informed by Creation stories. I intend to do so with the utmost respect for those authors that I have cited and their families, communities, and nations; and for readers.

I chose story as a framework and methodological approach as part of my overarching goal of understanding and examining the literature within a culturally informed and -relevant approach. Because story is relational, it is inherently cultural.[28] Further, using story as a methodological pathway and as a framework is congruent with Kovach's argument that stories cannot be properly understood through a Western lens. Thus, my application of story methodology and an ikweist framework looks to story to understand how to approach interpretation and meaning making, and grounds such interpretation in Creation stories and the

knowledges found within them. The use of ikweism and story as framework and methodology in my research also seeks to fulfill the decolonizing ethic that has been established as a key component of Indigenous/Indigenized research.[29]

Water as a Common Thread

Anishinaabekwewag relationship with water is an example of one of the sacred relationships that contribute to and ground their self-determination. As such, teachings, interpretations, and stories regarding water are weaved throughout the following chapters in order to provide contextual examples of the principles and themes present in the discussion. In doing so, I draw on understandings that water holds knowledge and is a teacher.

Notes for Chapter Two

[1] Shawn Wilson, "Progressing Toward an Indigenous Research Paradigm in Canada and Australia," *Journal of Native Education* 27 (2003): 161-178, accessed March 30, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259822767_Progressing_Toward_an_Indigenous_Research_Paradigm_in_Canada_and_Australia.

[2] Wilson, "Progressing Toward an Indigenous Research Paradigm in Canada and Australia," 168-170.

[3] Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 110; Kathleen Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe), *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know* (Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2011), 71-76.

[4] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 110.

[5] Cora Weber-Pillwax, "Indigenous Researchers and Indigenous Research Methods: Cultural Influences or Cultural Determinants of Research Methods," *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health* 2, no. 1 (2004): 80, accessed April 2, 2020, http://www.pimatisiwin.com/online/?page_id=485.

[6] Kathleen Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe), *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know* (Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2011), 65-66.

[7] Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections Between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 1 (2013): 13, accessed March 27, 2020, https://muse-jhu-edu.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/article/504601/pdf.

[8] Jerry Fontaine, personal communication with the author, April 8, 2020.

[9] Darren Courchene, personal communication with the author, December 3, 2019.

[10] UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: resolution/adopted by the General Assembly*, October 2, 2007, A/RES/61/295, article 3, accessed March 31, https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf.

[11] Raymond Pierotti, *Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 4-5.

[12] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 37.

[13] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 61.

[14] Rose Ella Cameron, "What Are You in the Dark? The Transformative Powers of Manitouminasuc Upon the Identities of Anishinabeg in the Ontario Child Welfare System." (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2010), 216-217, https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/26156/1/CAMERON_Rose_E_201011_PhD_Thesis.pdf.

[15] Cameron, "What Are You in the Dark?" 34.

[16] Cameron, "What Are You in the Dark?" 35-38.

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[17] Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe), *Kaandossiwin*, 33-34; Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 129-132.

[18] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 130.

[19] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 130, emphasis mine.

[20] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 130-131.

[21] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 131.

[22] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 76-79; Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe), *Kaandossiwin*, 71, 73-74; Wilson, "Progressing Toward an Indigenous Research Paradigm in Canada and Australia," 171-172..

[23] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 141-142.

[24] Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe), *Kaandossiwin*, 101.

[25] For example, see Leanne Simpson, *Dancing On Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2011), 43.

[26] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 94.

[27] Michael Hart, quoted in Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 112.

[28] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 97.

[29] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 79, 80-81, 103.

CHAPTER THREE:
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to examine recent and major published contributions to understandings of Anishinaabekwewag roles, the impacts that they have experienced as a result of colonization, and their theorizing self-determination. As such, it examines: (1) ontological and epistemological foundations for precolonial Anishinaabe and Western women's roles, (2) attempts to dismantle women's roles in Omashkego and Anishinaabe societies and stifle their ambition for self-determination, (3) philosophical and theoretical models for reclaiming self-determination from within colonial contexts. Each section provides a contextual foundation on which the following respective chapters extends through the application of and ikweist interpretive framework.

Finding Roots in Creation: Understandings of Women in the Literature

Much of Anishinaabekwewag authority and status in their families, communities, and nations stemmed from their roles in the creation of new life. As Cree/Métis scholar Kim Anderson of Ottawa, Ontario demonstrates, this spiritual power is largely derived from Creation stories as they are understood to be inherently feminine in nature given the main role that female figures play in them, and the material understanding of women as the creators of new life.[1] Creation stories reflect the status, power, and authority that Anishinaabekwewag traditionally have had within their families, communities, and nations. As such, their self-determination prior to colonization was founded in processes of Creation: creation of life, food, lodgings, etc.

Also connected to this relationship is women's responsibility to care for water. Anishinaabeg have always had the profound understanding that water is key to both human and nonhuman life. Earth and women's bodies are both predominately water-based, and the significant role that water plays in the creation of new life by the two implies an inherently

intimate relationship between them. This relationship gave women the knowledge and responsibility to protect their waters and those of the Earth.[2]

Anishinaabekwe law professor and environmentalist Deborah McGregor of Whitefish River First Nation explores this relationship, drawing on the work of Odaawaa-Anishinaabe scholar and Elder Cecil King of Wikwemikong First Nation to examine various aspects of natural law, including *enendagwad* 'law of the orders', which includes *ginamadawinan*, a 'code of conduct' that outlines appropriate and forbidden behaviours and associated responsibilities within the relationships of Creation.[3] Protocols for the protection of water and the maintenance of the relationship between it and the Anishinaabeg are derived from these natural laws, and ensure that life can continue.[4] Given Anishinaabekwewag intimate relationship with water, these protocols often focus on the role of women.

Kim Anderson, consultant Barbara Clow, and Margaret Hawthorn-Brockman interviewed Grandmothers from a variety of Indigenous nations across Canada and found similar themes regarding the connection between women and water, particularly that the water women carry in their bodies is to carry life from the spirit world to the physical one.[5] Elderly women also play a role in this movement to and from the spiritual and physical worlds, as they have traditionally acted as midwives in many cultures, as well as those responsible for washing the dead and preparing their bodies.[6] Given this intimate and sacred relationship with water and the connection it establishes between the physical and spiritual realms, women are its keepers.[7]

Based on ontological foundations that mandated equality between all entities of Creation, Anishinaabekwewag traditionally held roles of vital social, economic, and political importance in their communities and nations. As Anderson demonstrates, they often held authority over significant aspects of community survival. Their roles included responsibilities such as the

conversion of raw materials into food and other material resources, and the maintenance of goods supplies to ensure that their communities could sustain themselves while allowing the men to engage in trade.[8] It was also not uncommon in for Grandmothers to be responsible for teaching children, both boys and girls, their first hunting lessons. Grandmothers were often responsible for caring for children, and, given their closer positioning to the spirit world,[9] were the ones to provide children those first lessons in taking life.[10]

Creation story-based Anishinaabe ontologies and epistemologies also provided foundations for women's roles in the political realms of their communities and nations. Using examples from across Turtle Island, Anderson demonstrates that, contrary to European systems of democracy that only acknowledged male voices in politics, sovereign Anishinaabe nations recognized the importance of ensuring that all members, including women, contributed to political processes.[11] Leanne Simpson similarly points out that conflicting opinions, particularly those from women, the elderly, or children are considered to be of great value in decision-making processes, given those individuals' closer positioning to the spirit world.[12]

Anishinaabekwewag roles, authority, and reverence are grounded in Anishinaabe cosmological and ontological understandings, as expressed through Creation stories. Their relationships with various entities in Creation and the processes in which they engage to maintain these relationships have been established in the literature as the foundations on which their prominent roles in their families, communities, and nations lie.

Women's roles and perceived nature in Christian European society were underpinned by significantly different ontologies than were Anishinaabekwewag roles. Themes that seem to dominate Anishinaabe philosophical discourse such as equality and relationships of co-existence

between all entities of Creation are virtually absent from Western philosophies. In their place are notions of hierarchy and separation of humans from nature.

Omashkego-Anishinaabe playwright and author Tomson Highway of Barren Lands First Nation argues that linguistic structures reveal ontological differences between Western monotheism and Indigenous pantheism, in this case with reference to conceptualizations of men and women.[13] Highway asserts that Christianity, a monotheistic religion with a linear phallic superstructure, creates space only for one capital-M Male, leaving no room for a female counterpart: "the male has complete power over the female."[14] Not only are male and female separated and placed on a hierarchy in monotheistic superstructures like Christianity, but, as Highway argues, the determination to maintain separation between the two is obsessive.[15] He also argues that in such a conceptualization, nature—"it"—is placed at the bottom of the hierarchy.[16] In comparison, he describes the pantheistic superstructure as circular—specifically, "yonic" or "womb-like."[17] Using Cree, Ojibwe, and Dene as examples, he argues that many Indigenous languages across Turtle Island do not have words for "he" or "she," rather nouns are separated based on animacy and inanimacy.[18] This reflects the understanding of the universe and its entities as equals.[19] Highway's conceptualization of the monotheistic and pantheistic superstructures provides a foundation on which to understand the differences in conceptualizations of gender and their appearance in linguistic structures.
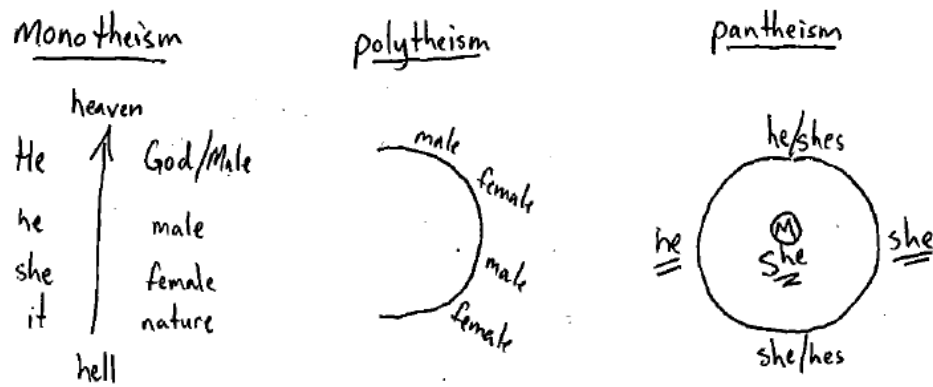
Figure 1: Tomson Highway's visualizations of the linear/fallic monotheistic model in comparison to the circular pantheistic model (and the half-circular polytheistic model).

A significant difference also arises between Anishinaabe and Western epistemological understandings of equality. Raymond Pierotti describes the key difference between the two as being a matter of who is considered to be a part of community. He describes a Western understanding of community based in Aristotelianism: within this view, values are learned from one's fellow community members—an understanding not unlike that found in Anishinaabe philosophies. However, Aristotle's conceptualization of community and its comprising members was much more exclusive than those of Anishinaabe cultures.[20]

In Aristotle's comparatively narrow understanding of community, politics and ethics were strictly the domain of humans. Therefore, humans—particularly men—were at the forefront of political and ethical life and discourse, thus creating no reasonable mandate to be concerned about the wellbeing of those outside of the community, such as animals and land.[21] In comparison, Anishinaabe ontological foundations imbue many entities of Creation with animacy, creating an inherent equality between all beings.[22] Mohawk (Bear Clan, Six Nations) and Anishinaabekwe scholar Vanessa Watts makes a similar argument, contending that Anishinaabe understandings of society are defined by the interactions between the feminine, animals, and the

spirit world and the physical world. The basis for these interactions is derived from and reflected in Creation stories.[23]

Such views and their relationships to ontologies regarding women is illustrated in an examination of the common tendency within both Western and Anishinaabe cultures to understand nature as inherently feminine. In the Aristotelian tradition, women are excluded from the realms of political and ethical life on two fronts: as non-males and as intrinsically tied to nonhuman nature, which is kept at a distance from the activities of humans. In comparison, Anishinaabe ontologies are comparatively inclusive in their understandings of community and who is to be involved in political and ethical relationships, thus women both as humans and as linked to nature hold positions of power and authority. In other words, Aristotle disregarded women based on their femininity and ties with nature, whereas Anishinaabeg held them in high esteem for those same reasons.

Anishinaabekwewag have traditionally experienced autonomy and authority as based in ontological and epistemological assumptions made within their cultures. Within these cultures, self-determination for all individuals and nations was based on the concepts of relationality and responsibility within those relationships. While Western, Christian philosophy developed on the basis of women as lesser than men and a strict separation of hierarchical entities, Anishinaabe philosophies developed principles of equality, respect, and responsibility for all entities of Creation. Such assumptions and the resulting governance systems were inherently antithetical to the heteropatriarchal capitalist system introduced by Western Europeans. Therefore, they were targets for deconstruction.

"when the god met the goddess":[24] Examining the Impacts of Colonization on Anishinaabekwewag

Anishinaabekwewag have experienced a double-sided dismantling of their self-determination as a result of colonial practices that have impacted them on the axis of both race and gender. A number of scholars argue that this dismantling of Anishinaabekwewag roles and autonomy was the result of concerted efforts made by government authorities. According to this school of thought, government officials recognized the vital role that women played in their societies and saw it as antithetical to colonial goals. Therefore, state policies specifically aimed to undermine Anishinaabekwewag roles and their philosophical foundations.

For example, Watts argues that undermining Indigenous women's roles in their communities acted as a means to undermine the broader community. She describes Indigenous women in their inherent positions of power as access points to infiltrate their nations and facilitate changes at all levels of society.[25] Dane-Zaa and Nehiyaw-Anishinaabekwe social worker and activist Helen Knott of Prophet River First Nations makes a similar argument, asserting that government authorities recognized the significant role that women played in the governance of their communities, specifically regarding land governance. Therefore, government policies were designed to undermine their self-determination as part of the overarching goal of dismantling collective Indigenous self-determination and acquiring ownership of their lands.[26] Coast Salish author Rachel Flowers from Leey'qsun First Nation more explicitly establishes a connection between women's bodies and their peoples' lands. She argues that Indigenous women's bodies are understood to be a "microcosm of Indigenous lands[,]" connecting Indigenous sovereignty with that of females' bodies and land.[27]

In a similar vein are those that assume that those government officials understood the significance of women as the physical reproducers of their peoples, and, therefore, the reproducers of their cultures. According to these scholars, Anishinaabekwewag autonomy was targeted as their physical bodies represented the reproduction of their peoples and, therefore, their nations.[28] As argued by Muscogee scholar Sarah Deer, without autonomous individuals in control of their own bodies, it is impossible for a nation to have full sovereignty and self-determination.[29] Flowers also describes the political significance of Indigenous women's bodies, arguing that they are metaphors for Indigenous governance structures and authority and traditional ways of knowing, as well as the physical reproducers of their peoples.[30]

Such arguments deconstruct the specific ways in which Canadian Indian policy has worked to undermine the foundations on which Anishinaabekwe self-determination rests. However, there are important caveats to note. For example, these arguments often rest on the arguably bold assumption that government Indian policy was both organized and carried out systematically, and based on policy-makers' knowledge of Indigenous philosophies. Historian Sarah Carter's examination of nineteenth century federal Indian policy demonstrates that, rather than a concerted effort directed through firm official policies and legislation, Indian affairs within the contemporary governments were guided more by ideology or the "official mind of the bureaucracy."[31] More so than a knowledge of Anishinaabekwewag roles and positions within their societies, what guided Indian policy for decades was colonial arrogance and ignorance.

Further, there is a failure to address the limited understanding that government officials would have had of the specific ontological foundations for women's roles in their societies. State authorities did recognize that women were key in the physical reproduction of a peoples. This is perhaps most strongly evidenced in the *Indian Act*'s infamous "marrying out" rule by which a

woman would lose her Indian status and its associated government rights should she marry a non-status man. It could be argued that this policy acknowledged not just women as physical reproducers of their peoples but also the significance of their roles as mothers in sustaining cultures, even those structured around paternal lineages.

However, this does not necessarily indicate an insight on the part of government officials into mothers' specific roles in Indigenous cultures or the ontologies behind them. More likely, this reflects their own understanding within Western Christian tradition regarding the role of mothers and women. The expectation that mothers remain at home to raise children also reflects the significant role of women in shaping future generations in Western cultures. Therefore, the "marrying out" rule likely reflects the application of Western understandings of the importance of mothers more so than it implies government understanding of Anishinaabe ontologies and conceptualizations of women's nature and roles. Women's ability to physically reproduce their peoples did make them targets of cultural genocide. However, to assume that policy makers enacted systematic destruction of Anishinaabekwewag self-determination on the basis of a fundamental understanding of Anishinaabe philosophies is perhaps an overestimation.[32]

British and Canadian authorities did not target Anishinaabekwewag self-determination on the basis of deep understanding of the ontological foundations for women's autonomy and roles in the community. Assimilationist ideologies and policies nevertheless had the effect of dismantling these philosophies and their applications. Anishinaabekwewag positions and roles were relegated in order that they might assimilate to roles adhered to by Victorian British women. Such assimilationist processes were largely representative of British-Canadian ethno-centric assumptions that considered Western Christian liberal philosophies, culture, economics, etc. to be superior to those of Anishinaabeg. These efforts were embodied by a number of

policies and praxis initiated in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Four significant measures put in place to assimilate Anishinaabekwewag to the Victorian-Canadian ideal were the residential schooling system, the *Indian Act*, the imposition of the colonial heteropatriarchal marriage construct, and the manipulation of cultural imagery.

Residential Schools

Beyond the specific policies of individual schools, the system as a whole had a detrimental impact on the governance structures and transmission of knowledge in Anishinaabe families, communities, and nations. According to Cree/Métis-Anishinaabekwe Elder, author, and filmmaker Maria Campbell, who draws on the teachings of late Anishinaabe Elder Mash-ki-ki-i-ni-ni of O'Chiese First Nation, Anishinaabe communities can be conceptualized as a four-ring concentric circle. The inner-most ring represents children, moving outwards through the three rings representing Elders, women, and men, respectively. Such a conceptualization provides insight into Anishinaabe operational governance structures as children were valued as the centre of the community. Those in the next ring, the elderly, were responsible for the children. Women managed community resources to ensure well-being and cared for familial and community social relations. Finally, men, in the outer ring, were responsible for procuring a number of resources and protecting their communities. This is not to say that individuals in one ring held ultimate authority over any of the others, or that roles were inflexible. Rather, each individual and group was equal, valued and had their own responsibilities with regards to others in the community.[33]
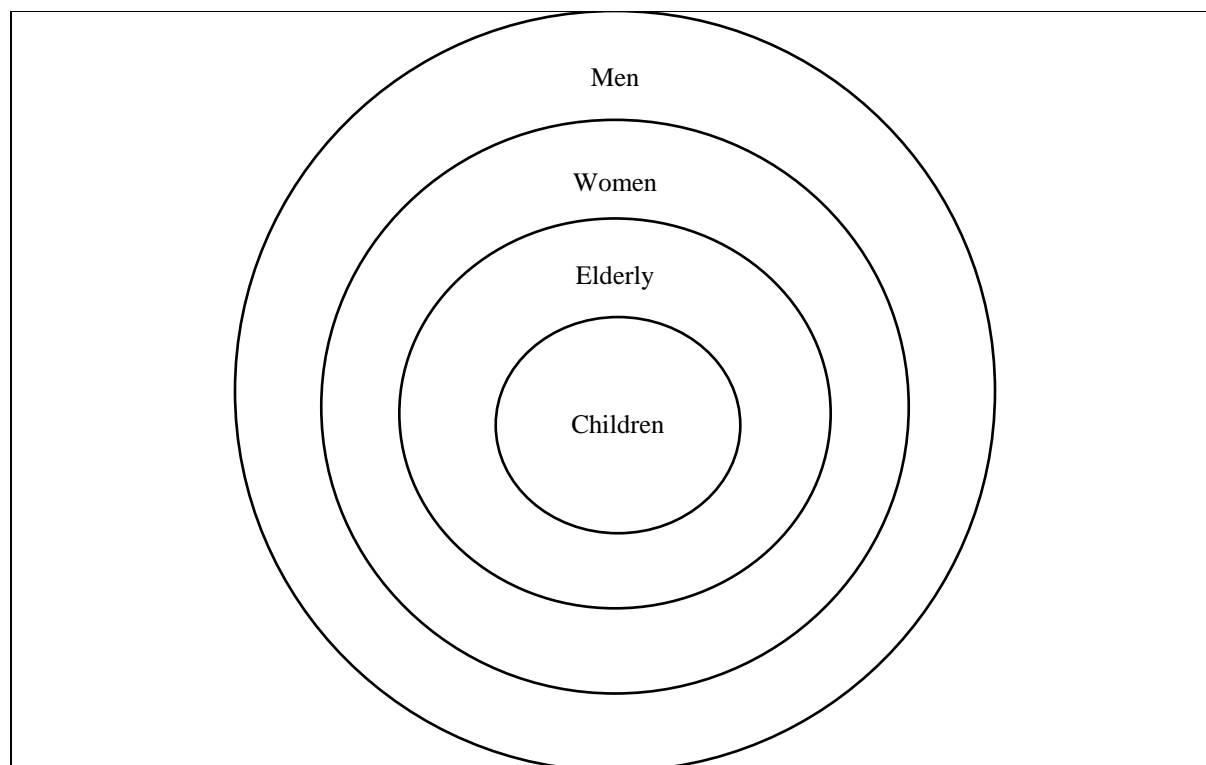
Figure 2. Concentric circle model of Anishinaabe social organization, as described by Elder Maria Campbell.

Ojibwe-Anishinaabekwe Elder Niizhoosake Copenace of Onigaming First Nation

similarly speaks of a concentric circle model of Anishinaabe national organization, in which

children are at the centre, followed outwards by family, community, and nation. She describes

this model as representing the holistic, interconnected nature of Anishinaabe worldview.[34] While

these models differ in some respects, they are similar in their representation of Anishinaabe

philosophies as based on relationships, and, importantly, both place children in the centre. The

residential school system greatly disrupted these structures through the removal those in the

centre of their communities, creating a ripple effect impacting not just women but all members of

their societies.
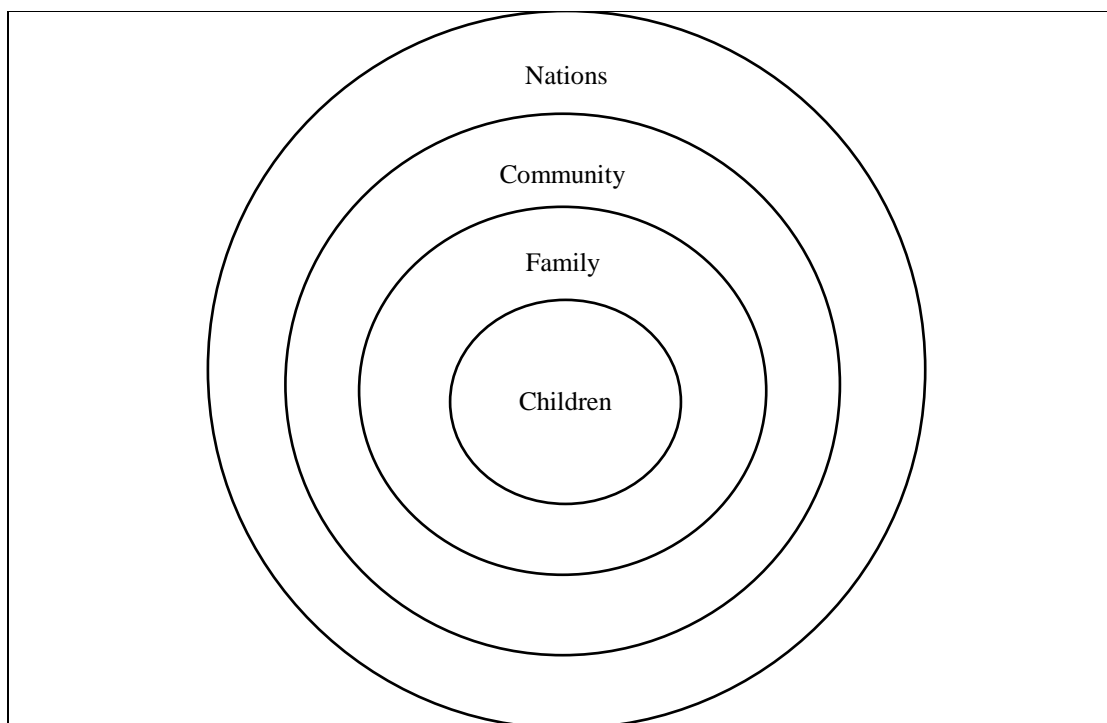
Figure 3. Concentric circle model of Anishinaabe social organization, as described by Elder Niizhoosake Copenace

Indian Act

Lunaapewa-Anishinaabekwe scholar Joanne Barker describes the *Indian Act* as a legal mechanism by which patrilineality was established as the system for determining Indian status, thereby contributing to the creation and solidification of sexism within Indigenous communities. Such a process was gradual and characterized by the simultaneous elevation of men and devaluation of women, thus normalizing sexism over an extended period of time.[35] This also represented a significant disconnection from Indigenous cultural history given that, as described above, Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies mandated gender equality within Indigenous nations.[36] Sámi scholar Rauna Kuokkanen of Ohcejohka (Utsjoki), Finland identifies similar trends, arguing that the *Indian Act* introduced racism against and sexism within Indigenous communities, a process that has directly contributed to high rates of gendered violence within Indigenous communities in Canada.[37]

In examining the role of the state in colonial violence against women, Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson from Kahnawake argues that the state works to disappear those who pose a threat to its legitimacy and authority.[38] She describes the *Indian Act* as one mechanism by which the Canadian government did so, as it worked to disappear Indigenous women as significant sources of intergenerational transmission of Indigenous governance and power:[39]

> An Indian woman's body in settler regimes…is loaded with meaning—signifying other political orders, land itself, of the dangerous possibility of reproducing Indian life and most dangerously, other political orders. *Other* life forms, other sovereignties, other forms of political will.[40]

Anishinaabekwewag bodies came to represent hypersexualized barriers to settler colonialism. That is, Simpson argues, part of effective settler colonialism became the erasure of those physical bodies that came to represent what the Canadian government sought to eliminate.[41] The *Indian Act* became one legal framework within which such elimination occurred.[42] Simpson describes this legal elimination as a form of femicide, not of the physical body per se, but of the political will and structures that Anishinaabekwewag represented.[43]

Imposition of a Heteropatriarchal Marriage Construct

Prior to European contact and colonization, Indigenous marriage traditions were diverse. In her examination of marriage traditions in Canada's west, Sarah Carter describes Indigenous marriage practices as including same-sex marriages, monogamy, polygamy, and remarriage to various extents.[44] Divorce also operated in such a way in Indigenous families as to ensure the balance of power between individuals,[45] thus reflecting ontological and axiological assumptions of women as equal, autonomous members of their families and communities. However, the state and other colonial actors worked to enforce a heteropatriarchal model of marriage in the region as the foundational familial relationship of the civilized society they envisaged.

Enforcing the model also contributed to the development of a distinctly British-Canadian identity and to the consolidation of the Canadian government's power in its western region.[46] What is identified as the heteropatriarchal model here is described by historian Adele Perry as "Christian conjugality—by which I mean lifelong, domestic, heterosexual unions sanctioned by colonial law and the Christian church.[47] Further, the "proper" heteropatriarchal model of marriage would be intraracial, specifically as a mechanism to separate settlers from Indigenous peoples and aid in forging strong settler identity.[48] By implementing such a model on Anishinaabeg, the balance of power between individuals that had characterized many traditional marriage models was replaced with a standard that was predicated on the subjugation of women to men. This implemented structural and ideological shift was but one in a collection of assimilationist measures.

Manipulation of Cultural Imagery

The fourth mechanism by which the Canadian government undermined Anishinaabekwewag self-determination was not related to any one piece of legislation or policy. Rather, the manipulation of cultural imagery—how Anishinaabekwewag were constructed in colonial discourse and popular culture—reflected ideologies that shaped how the government and settlers viewed and treated Anishinaabekwewag.[49] For example, Ojibwe-Anishinaabekwe scholar Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark of Turtle Mountain argues that the Canadian government sought to establish a narrative entrenching its legitimacy and legality. In doing so, it developed a counter-narrative of Indigenous ways of living as illegal and, therefore, illegitimate. As such, she argues that this discourse of illegality that became associated with Indigenous law, politics, and cultures distracted from the Canadian government's own illegal activities.[50] Stark goes on to argue that some of the rhetoric of illegality was targeted specifically towards

Anishinaabekwewag, limiting their intellectual and physical mobility. This undermined their

roles in their families, communities, and nations, and increasingly restricted them to the domestic

roles in which the Canadian government sought to confine them.[51] Stark alludes to the irony in

the Canadian colonial ideology, as it was argued that leading a domestic life was a vital part of

the liberation of Anishinaabekwewag from their alleged state of savagery. In reality, domesticity

physically and intellectually restricted them.[52]

These assimilationist mechanisms are just four of the ways by which law and policy

impacted Anishinaabekwewag autonomy and roles in their communities. Ontologies,

epistemologies, and axiologies that ensured Anishinaabekwewag equal treatment and

participation were largely replaced with Western Christian ideologies that worked to relegate

women to the confines of race- and gender-based hierarchy. Although these efforts realized

various degrees of success, this shift was nevertheless a cultural genocide as it represented a

significant loss of traditional ways of living and understanding the world.

Reclaiming Anishinaabekwewag Self-Determination

Despite government ideologies, legislation, and policies, many Anishinaabekwewag have

been and remain empowered and strong. Many have always fought to remain empowered to

solve their own problems and resist those who work to undermine their place in their families,

communities, and nations. Contemporary Anishinaabekwewag have developed a variety of

theoretical and praxis-based pathways for doing so. While these pathways often differ in terms of

aspects such as the role of tradition and culture, they all operate parallel to one another. Each

pathway may be as unique as she who conceptualizes it, but many seek a similar outcome: the

self-designed reclamation of Anishinaabekwewag inherent right to self-determination.

One such pathway in the discourse of Anishinaabekwewag resurgence—and one that is of imperative value to ikweism—examines the role of story/storytelling. A number of Anishinaabe scholars and authors have spoken to the importance of storytelling within Anishinaabe philosophy. For example, the multifaceted understanding of stories and storytelling is reflected in the organizational structure of Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark's edited collection *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World Through Stories*. The editors organized the contributions under the themes of stories as roots, relationships, revelations, resiliency, resistance, reclamation, and reflections.[53] Stories are thus understood to be the source of Anishinaabe ways of knowing and being in a variety of contexts. They are the roots to understandings and ethics that motivate the resistance and resurgence of many Anishinaabekwewag.

In her examination of the revitalization of storytelling and other forms of oral history, Cree/Métis-Anishinaabekwe scholar Shalene Jobin from Red Pheasant Cree First Nation argues that to engage with oral histories and storytelling is to resist the colonial mechanisms that try to erase Indigenous peoples from history and disconnect them from their lands. Jobin argues that residential schools applied a tripartite process of "separation, resocialization, and assimilation" in order to reshape children in their behaviour and their understanding of the world.[54] The system, she argues, worked to dismantle people's agency, forcing them to assimilate in order to obtain recognition.[55]

In her examination, she applies W.E.B. Du Bois' notion of double consciousness, described as the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others,"[56] as an analytical framework. She argues that residential schools made Indigenous children view themselves through the same lens through which white people viewed them.[57] From this point of

view, Jobin argues that storytelling is a social activity and form of resistance that contributes to collective memory and a sense of connectedness to culture and kin; counters mainstream, documented Canadian history by presenting Indigenous histories and experiences; and ensures the survival of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning.[58] Particularly, she argues that more Indigenous women's stories need to be told, as they affirm Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and women's roles in land stewardship and governance.[59]

Conclusion

Prior to the active colonization of Turtle Island, Anishinaabekwewag were active, autonomous members of their communities and nations. Their specific roles were founded in cosmologies, ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies that acknowledged the significant role feminine figures have had in the creation of Turtle Island and the continuation of human and nonhuman life. Despite the efforts of state authorities to unearth these roots, they remain. They have been greatly damaged and elements lost, but Anishinaabekwewag continue to assert their self-determination by solving their own problems and resisting efforts to undermine their authority and place in Indigenous societies.

Moving Forward: Gaps and Chapter Overviews

From the above literature, three gaps can be identified:

1) There is lack of comprehensive comparison of the ontologies and epistemologies of Western and Anishinaabe philosophical traditions with specific regards to the women's nature, roles, and authorities. This gap will be addressed with the first research question: what ontological and axiological differences between Anishinaabe and Christian women are revealed in Creation stories? In answering this question, I will also develop further understanding as to the cosmological and ontological foundations of ikweism. I have

chosen to conduct this comparison with specific regards to Christian cosmologies and ontologies as a pragmatic narrowing of the research scope. Given that I am utilizing story as methodology—and in particular regards to chapter one, Creation stories—I specify my focus on Christianity in order to acknowledge and differentiate from the influences of other traditions, particularly Christianity's fellow Abrahamic religions.

2) There is discussion of the observable impacts of the colonial assimilationist policies and ideologies and analyses of how these mechanisms worked to undermine Anishinaabekwewag. However, there is little examination of the ways in which ikweism as the foundation to Anishinaabekwewag self-determination was undermined and dismantled by government authorities. As such, this research examines this gap through the second research question: how have colonial structures and ideologies worked to constrain ambition for Anishinaabekwewag self-determination in Canada? In answering this question, I will adopt an ikweist interpretive lens to examine the impacts of colonization on Anishinaabekwewag self-determination.

3) While there has been much theoretical examination of various potential pathways towards self-determination for Anishinaabekwewag, a gap exists with regards to actions undertaken by them to assert their culturally-grounded self-determination in spite of government and patriarchal efforts. There are, indeed, stories of resistance and resilience in various contexts throughout the literature. However, relatively little space exists in which these stories are told within an Anishinaabe framework that places focus on women's autonomy and self-determination as based in the principles of ikweism. Therefore, this research seeks to create such a space by examining the third research question: how has ikweism responded to challenges to Anishinaabekwewag self-

determination? Within the context of this research, pathways to self-determination will be re-conceptualized as pathways *of* self-determination, in that self-determination is not a goal or a state of being that must be reached, as such an understanding could potentially give rise to assertions of an essentialized and universalized prescribed sense of being Anishinaabe or, more broadly, Indigenous. Further, this understanding alludes to Leanne Simpson's emphasis on Indigenous philosophies and ways of being as being process oriented rather than goal oriented,[60] and as based on the creation of meaning rather than its discovery.[61]

Notes for Chapter Three

[1] Kim Anderson, *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood* (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2000), 71.

[2] Jo-Anne Lawless, Dorothy Taylor, Rachael Marshall, Emily Nickerson, and Kim Anderson, "Women, Diverse Identities and Indigenous Water and Wastewater Responsibilities," *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Chaiers De La Femme* 3, no. 2/3 (2013): 81, accessed March 27, 2020, https://search.proquest.com/docview/1806416583/fulltextPDF/6752025131B04%20FACPQ/1?accountid=15067.

[3] Terms from Cecil King, *Balancing Two Worlds: Jean-Baptiste Assiginack and the Odawa Nation, 1768-1866* (Saskatoon: Cecil King, 2013), 2 and 5, cited in Deborah McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin*," *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme* 30, no. 2/3 (2013): 71-72, accessed April 2, 2020, https://search.proquest.com/docview/1806416896?pq-origsite=gscholar%20.

[4] Deborah McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin*," *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme* 30, no. 2/3 (2013): 72, accessed April 2, 2020, https://search.proquest.com/docview/1806416896?pq-origsite=gscholar%20

[5] Kim Anderson, Barbara Clow, and Margaret Hawthorn-Brockman, "Carriers of Water: Aboriginal Women's Experiences, Relationships, and Reflections," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 60 (2013): 13, accessed March 27, 2020, https://www-sciencedirect-com.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/science/article/pii/S0959652611003945..

[6] Anderson, Clow, and Hawthorn-Brockman, "Carriers of Water," 13.

[7] Anderson, Clow, and Hawthorn-Brockman, "Carriers of Water," 13.

[8] Anderson, *A Recognition of Being*, 60-61.

[9] Kim Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women: Memory, Teachings, and Story Medicine* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 166-167.

[10] Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women,* 163.

[11] Anderson, *A Recognition of Being,* 65.

[12] Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2011), 69.

[13] Tomson Highway, "Repairing the Circle: A Conversation with Tomson Highway," in *Masculindians: Conversations About Indigenous Manhood*, ed. Sam McKegney (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014), 22.

[14] Highway, "Repairing the Circle," 22.

[15] Highway, "Repairing the Circle," 23.

[16] Highway, "Repairing the Circle," 23.

[17] Highway, "Repairing the Circle," 25-26.

[18] Darren Courchene notes that while many Indigenous languages do not have gender-specific pronouns, and nouns are not gendered as they are in many European languages, there are linguistic mechanisms within the

former to denote male and female. For example, in Anishinaabemowin, there is *inini* 'man,' *ikwe* 'woman,' *naabe* 'male,' and *nookwe* 'female'; however, gender neutrality of nouns is assumed until one of these specific terms is used.

[19] Highway, "Repairing the Circle," 24-25.

[20] Raymond Pierotti, *Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 8-9.

[21] Pierotti, *Indigenous Knowledge*, 31.

[22] Pierotti, *Indigenous Knowledge,* 30-33.

[23] Vanessa Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought & Agency Amongst Humans and Non-Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman go on a World Tour!)," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 2, no. 1 (2013): 21, accessed February 21, 2020, https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/19145/16234.

[24] Highway, "Repairing the Circle," 26.

[25] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 31.

[26] Helen Knott, "Violence and Extraction: Stories from the Oil Fields," in *Keetsahnak/Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters*, eds. Kim Anderson, Maria Campbell, and Christi Belcourt (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2018), 153.

[27] Rachel Flowers, "Refusal to Forgive: Indigenous Women's Love and Rage." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 4, no. 2 (2015): 41, accessed April 17, 2020, https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/22829/19320.

[28] Laura Harjo, Jenell Navarro, and Kimberly Robertson, "Leading with Our Hearts: Anti-Violence Action and Beadwork Circles as Colonial Resistance," in *Keetsahnak/Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters*, eds. Kim Anderson, Maria Campbell, and Christi Belcourt (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2018), 282.

[29] Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), xvi, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/lib/uwinnipeg/detail.action?docID=4391837.

[30] Flowers, "Refusal to Forgive," 41.

[31] Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 51.

[32] The argument could be made that centuries of fur trade and other economic and political relationships between Europeans and Anishinaabeg would have provided policy makers with insights into Anishinaabe cultures. However, adhering to certain practices in order to ensure peaceful and efficient trading relationships does not necessarily imply an understanding of ikweism or other aspects of Anishinaabe philosophies. Therefore, the arguments that attribute deeper understandings of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies to British and later Canadian government authorities are grounded in somewhat optimistic assumptions.

[33] Maria Campbell, citing teachings provided to her by Elder Mash-ki-ki-i-ni-ni, cited in Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women,* 99.

[34] Niizhoosake Copenace, quoted in Aimée Craft, *Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin Report: Reflecting the Water Laws Research Gathering Conducted with Anishinaabe Elders June 20-23, 2013 at Roseau River, Manitoba* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba's Centre for Human Rights Research and the Public Interest Law Centre, 2014), 9, accessed March 27, 2020, http://create-h2o.ca/pages/annual_conference/presentations/2014/ANI_Gathering_Report_-_June24.pdf

[35] Joanne Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, Rights: Native Women's Activism Against Social Inequality and Violence in Canada," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2008): 262-263, accessed March 27, 2020, https://muse-jhu-edu.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/article/239700/pdf.

[36] Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, Rights," 262-263.

[37] Rauna Kuokkanen, "Gendered Violence and Politics in Indigenous Communities: The Cases of Aboriginal People in Canada and the Sámi in Scandinavia," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 17, no. 2 (2015), 275-277, accessed March 27, 2020, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14616742.2014.901816?casa_token=gvsNkImBs%20f4AAAAA:957GdGqash3gXzYE0O_y8UyRx7dgxWrfdME4OsiaCAqSFVsNhge-BRW6iC2S7pZqHZMIGG-SsZHs.

[38] Audra Simpson, "The State is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (2016): para. 3, accessed March 27, 2020, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/633280?casa_token=RFm%20FlXHdTQQAAAAA:rcXyzzELP-TUEXNML_hncbAojckib0NhDLrMPZmKe9ghDJazI7B3irWVrfzruz6Oywviy%20KCNIg.

[39] Simpson, "The State is a Man," para. 10.

[40] Simpson, "The State is a Man," para 15.

[41] Simpson, "The State is a Man," para. 11.

[42] Simpson, "The State is a Man," para. 12.

[43] Simpson, "The State is a Man," para. 12.

[44] Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton and Athabasca: The University of Alberta Press and Athabasca University Press, 2008), 5, 10.

[45] Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous,* 10.

[46] Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous,* 6.

[47] Adele Perry, "Metropolitan Knowledge, Colonial Practice, and Indigenous Womanhood: Missions in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past*, eds. Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), 115, ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/lib/uwinnipeg/reader. action?docID=3412111.

[48] Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous,* 6.

[49] Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), xiv.

[50] Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, "Criminal Empire: The Making of the Savage in a Lawless Land," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (2016): para. 4, accessed March 27, 2020, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/633282.

[51] Stark, "Criminal Empire," para. 31-33.

[52] Stark, "Criminal Empire," para. 31.

[53] Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World Through Stories* (East Lansing and Winnipeg: Michigan State University Press and University of Manitoba Press, 2013).

[54] Shalene Jobin, "Double Consciousness and Nehiyawak (Cree) Perspectives: Reclaiming Indigenous Women's Knowledge," in *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understanding of Place*, eds. Nathalie Kermoal and Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2016), 45.

[55] Jobin, "Double Consciousness and Nehiyawak (Cree) Perspectives," 45.

[56] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8, https://books.google.ca/books?id=budNO8K-k2QC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f =false.

[57] Jobin, "Double Consciousness," 49.

[58] Jobin, "Double Consciousness," 51-54.

[59] Jobin, "Double Consciousness," 56.

[60] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 51; also see 42-43, 49.

[61] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 92-93.

CHAPTER FOUR:
CONCEPTUALIZING WOMEN AND THE FEMININE IN ANISHINAABE AND
CHRISTIAN CREATION STORIES

Examination of the ontological and epistemological foundations regarding women reveals a significant divergence between Anishinaabe and Christian conceptualizations of women's nature and, by extension, their authority and roles in society. However, while the two differ in their concluding notions, the source of such conceptualizations have some epistemological similarities. For example, both have long relied heavily on knowledge codified in metaphors and stories, namely, Creation stories and other sacred narratives. It is the interpretation of these codifications that reflects the significant ontological and axiological differences between the two philosophies. These differing interpretations result in ideologies with seemingly incompatible notions of women's natures and their roles in their families, communities, and nations.

While many Western societies have become increasingly secularized over the last few centuries, like Anishinaabe traditions, many of their governance structures and ideologies have been path-dependent. Similar to how Rauna Kuokkanen describes institutions as following a "certain, persistent trajectory"[1] once established, today's ideologies and structures have many ontological and epistemological roots in Creation stories. Lawrence Gross of the Minnesota Chippewa tribe of the White Earth reservation also aptly summarizes this ethnogenetic pathway: "[b]efore all the other aspects of a religion can be put into place, the story underlying the belief system must be established. In other words, religion starts with a story."[2]

Creation stories can be understood as an expression of philosophy. Philosophy is an exploration of a culture. By considering Creation stories and analyses and interpretations of these stories, I will examine the roots of understanding women's roles and natures in these various

traditions. Such an examination will also further reveal the philosophical basis for ikweism as the foundation for Anishinaabekwewag self-determination.

Understanding Anishinaabe Creation Stories

A starting point from which to begin any discussion of Creation stories within Anishinaabe philosophies is to acknowledge that all Creation stories are understood to be true.[3] Unlike Christian Creation and re-creation stories that are typically held singularly and with authoritative status, no single version of any Anishinaabe Creation story is taken as dogmatic truth, nor hierarchically superior. They are flexible and ever present, and the context in which they are told often influences their details.[4] Gross argues that the variations present in Creation stories are representative of continuing cultural sovereignty. In this way, the maintenance of tradition and culture in the context of resistance to what he describes as post-apocalyptic stress syndrome demonstrates Anishinaabeg assertion of the continuation of their cultures. He asserts that the importance of Creation stories lies in their communicated values rather than their meaning; as such, a variety of iterations and interpretations are possible, as long as they function within the boundaries of Anishinaabe philosophies.[5]

A number of Anishinaabe authors and scholars have examined the significant role that Creation stories play in Anishinaabe cultures.[6] Leanne Simpson argues that Creation stories provide philosophical foundations on which Anishinaabe theoretical and interpretive frameworks are based,[7] as it is through the culturally-informed lens of Creation stories that other *aadizookaanan* 'sacred narratives,' including Creation stories, and *dibaajimowinan* 'personal reminiscences' are interpreted and understood.[8] Further, Jerome Fontaine explains that "Creation stories represent Ojibway-anishinaabe nah-nahn-gah-dah-wayn-ji-gay-win (epistemology) on which everything that we are, think, see, taste and touch as Ojibway-anishinaabeg rest."[9]

Vanessa Watts similarly describes Creation stories as providing "a theoretical understanding of the world via a physical embodiment—*Place-Thought*."[10] Spirituality and femininity are foundational to Creation stories, in which intersections between the mineral, plant, and spirit worlds, animals, and the feminine provide the basis for nations and communities that acknowledge the relationships between these worlds.[11] As such, Watts describes Place-Thought as follows:

> the non-distinctive space where place and thought were never separated because they never could or can be separated. Place-Thought is based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts.[12]

Watts points to an important distinction between Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe and Christian philosophical and ideological frameworks. She argues that Western approaches to frameworks theorize in abstract terms, and only when this abstract is expressed in action does it become praxis. In comparison, Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe cosmological frameworks are derived from animate figures and beings in Creation stories. Therefore, they do not silo and distinguish between theory and place. In other words, Western frameworks establish a very clear delineation between theory and praxis; Watts argues that such a separation is impossible within Place-Thought based frameworks.[13]

Deborah McGregor, too, discusses the intertwined relationship between knowledge and lands within an international context, arguing that Indigenous peoples globally have described the two as inseparable.[14] Therefore, knowledge and theory are context-dependent and inextricably linked with place.

Creations stories represent and provide the cosmological, ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations on which ikweism and other interrelated tenants of Anishinaabe philosophy rest. As will be examined in the following section, Anishinaabe conceptualizations of

and reverence towards women and the roles and responsibilities they hold are rooted in Creation stories. It is from this basis that ikweism and Anishinaabekwewag self-determination are inextricably linked. From the relationships described in Creation stories come responsibilities, roles, and knowledge that ensured that Anishinaabekwewag were active members engaged in their families, communities, and nations. Their self-determination was expressed through these capacities.

Creation Stories and Anishinaabekwewag[15]

Watts discusses a common feature found in Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe Creation stories: the understanding that humans originated from interactions between the feminine and spiritual.[16] In the story of Sky Woman, for example, as explained by Watts, Sky Woman plays an important role in Creation as she was lowered down on to the back of the Great Turtle. While Watts describes this as a Haudenosaunee Creation story, Ojibwe-Anishinaabe Elder Ken Courchene of Sagkeeng First Nation tells a similar story in which *Ichitwaakwe* 'sacred woman' used the bit of earth collected by Muskrat from the bottom of the waters to create Turtle Island, using her own breath to spread the earth over the Great Turtle's back. The land created by Ichitwaakwe was then gifted to her children, the first Anishinaabeg.[17] In this Creation story, a female figure uses part of her own physical body—her breath—to create Turtle Island. There is an inherent parallel between Ichitwaakwe's actions in creating these lands and women's ability to bear children: Anishinaabeg relied on her physical body for their creation and ability to survive and thrive, as they have and always will rely on women's bodies to ensure their people's re-creation and survival.

Watts also describes the Anishinaabe Creation story of the Seven Fires of Creation to further exemplify the role that women are understood to have played in Anishinaabe

cosmologies. She draws on the Odaawaa/Ojibwe-Anishinaabekwe Elder Edna Manitowabi's (Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island) telling of this Creation story.[18] Manitowabi describes *Dibiki-Giizis* 'the nighttime sun,' or the moon as "the Grand woman of the universe" given to Anishinaabeg to govern natural seasons and cycles on earth. In other words, Dibiki-Giizis is responsible for the renewing processes that are essential in the creation of new life[19]—once again, reflecting the relationship that Anishinaabekwewag have with Creation as creators of life, with particular reference to the cycles of women's bodies necessary for that creation. Further, *Gizhe Manidoo* 'loving spirit'[20] made Mother Earth, giving her a heart taken from the First Fire of Creation, inherently imbuing it with emotion and giving Mother Earth the capacity to proceed with the next Fires of Creation:

> And so from her breast, from her, came all that there is, and all that there will be; the winged of the air, the swimmers, the four legged, the flowers, the plants, the crawlers, the trees, and the seas that moved across the land.[21]

It was then from the elements—soil, air, water, and fire—that Gizhe Manidoo formed the first human body, a "vessel" in which s/he breathed his/her own breath to give life.[22]

Similar to Elder Courchene's Creation story, Elder Manitowabi demonstrates the significant role that female figures play in Creation as the governors of seasons and givers of life, both of which are necessary for the survival and organization of Anishinaabeg. Within such stories, Watts argues, animacy is "the literal embodiment of the feminine, of First Woman."[23] In the story of Ichitwaakwe, she is lowered on to Earth and uses her agency, physical body, and interactions with animals and water to create land. Therefore, Place-Thought becomes an extension of her agency. Through such agency she designed what Western science identifies as habitats and ecosystems, further intertwining the relationality between human and non-human entities and, therefore, how societies would be structured.[24] The Seven Fires of Creation, Watts

proposes, also relate directly to her conceptualization of Place-Thought and the inextricability of theory and praxis, in that in the Fifth and Sixth Fires, respectively, Gizhe Manidoo placed her/his thoughts into seeds and created Mother Earth—the First Woman—for those seeds to grow.[25]

Watts' understanding of the inherent femininity of the Earth is intertwined with the idea of sovereignty and self-determination as such concepts in Anishinaabe traditions are derived from relationships with other beings in Creation.[26] In this way, ikweism becomes relevant for self-determination for all Anishinaabeg. Femininity is a strength and source of knowledge for Anishinaabekwewag and their communities and nations, and also a powerful representation of agency.[27] Ichitwaakwe used her agency to extend her physical body to create lands—to create the relationships on which Anishinaabeg governance is based—grounding Anishinaabeg self-determination in the feminine: "[s]he is present in the relationships between humans and humans, humans and non-humans, and non-humans and non-humans." [28] If agency is understood both as an embodiment of the feminine and as a characterizing element of self-determination, then Ichitwaakwe's extension of her physical body is the action on which ikweism as the foundation for self-determination is based.

Manitowabi maintains that the Seven Fires Creation story is re-enacted each time a woman creates new life, when she creates an extension of herself like Gizhe Manidoo and Mother Earth did.[29] Simpson similarly contends that it is through this process of inserting one's self into these and other Creation stories that individuals can identify their responsibilities in their relationships according to their individual gifts and capacities.[30] Gross also explores this approach, describing it as respectful individualism that arises out of Creation stories and the pluralistic nature of interpretation. He argues that individuals are allowed the freedom to interpret and express stories and teachings as they apply to her/himself, as there is an assumption

that self-interest will not be the guiding factor in decision making and actions, but rather the values and needs of the collective.[31]

Elder Niizhoosake Copenace similarly addresses the role of individual interpretation of stories and the teachings derived from these differing interpretations: "[e]ach of the stories has a law or teaching; we may hear or receive them differently, but each interpretation is true."[32] The roles and responsibilities identified within Creation stories are not determined by the human collective, but rather bestowed according to individual gifts and relationships.[33] However, as Simpson notes, Anishinaabekwewag value is not determined solely by her ability to give birth.[34] For example, regardless of whether women give birth, their capacities and obligations to care for waters remain.[35]

While Anishinaabekwewag are understood to have inherent and sacred relationships with Creation that imbue them with particular authority and status, they are not bound to any singular interpretation of what femininity means or how it should manifest. Ikweism is thus a flexible framework that acknowledges both the individual and the collective within Anishinaabe ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies.

Edward Benton-Banai, an Ojibwe-Anishinaabe of the Fish Clan from the Lac Court Orielles Band speaks about the original family in his Ojibwe Creation story. He describes the Moon and the Sun as the Grandmother and Grandfather, respectively, of the Earth.[36] Further, he discusses the ontological understandings reflected in the calling of the Earth as specifically Mother Earth, as it is understood to be the source of all the life upon it.[37] Gizhe Manidoo took each of the Four Sacred Elements from Mother Earth, uniting them with his[38] breath through the Sacred Shell to create the Original Man.[39] Given that the Earth is understood to be a woman, it is known then, that in the ordering of Creation, woman preceded man. Man was made from the

four elements of Mother Earth and was the last entity of Creation to be lowered on to Mother Earth.[40]

After traversing the entirety of Earth giving names to all the entities of Creation,[41] Original Man is told by Gizhe Manidoo to go in search of Original Man's grandmother, Nookomis. On his journey and throughout his time with Nookomis, Original Man learned through observation and reasoning that the animals and environments that surrounded him had a great deal to teach him about living in harmony with everything in Creation. He also learned through stories told to him by Nookomis about the origins and mysteries of the universe.[42] Therefore, some of Original Man's first teachers were the land, understood as a feminine entity, and his grandmother. It was from these feminine beings that Original Man learned about the relationships that would form the ontological and epistemologies bases for Anishinaabeg philosophies and governance structures.

In Benton-Banai's story, feminine beings are not only featured predominantly in Creation processes but are also Original Man's first teachers. This points to a significant responsibility that Anishinaabekwewag have undertaken in their families, communities, and nations in the transmission of knowledge. While both Anishinaabe men and women hold this responsibility, they each also have responsibility for certain knowledge within their respective jurisdictions.

For example, Anishinaabekwe scholar Renée E. Mzinegiizhigo-Kwe Bédard of the Marten Clan of Dokis First Nation discusses the role of Anishinaabekwewag as a primary role model for young women and girls to learn about their responsibilities and identities. She describes an interdependent relationship in which Anishinaabekwewag rely on each other to understand their roles and responsibilities within their families, communities, and nations, and as sources of strength.[43] Elder Manitowabi similarly asserts the importance of Anishinaabekwewag

in teaching young women, particularly regarding their first menstrual cycles and the relationship they have with Mother Earth.[44] Further, for Anishinaabekwewag, their role begins prior to men's as it is understood that learning begins in utero.[45]

Anishinaabekwewag Roles

Creation stories provide Indigenous cultures across Turtle Island with the spiritual history from which to derive systems of governance at all levels and in all realms—personal, social, economic, and political—of their nations. According to Anishinaabe traditions, this included governance of relationships between human and nonhuman beings. These ontological and epistemological foundations for equality in Anishinaabe cultures provided the theoretical framework that ensured women's authority and autonomy within their families, communities, and nations.

Various authors have alluded to this idea, arguing that Anishinaabekwewag were not subjected to the same patriarchal oppression that Western women experienced. Kim Anderson describes governance structures as set up in such a way that women were protected against what she calls the "'isms--sexism, racism, ageism, heterosexism."[46] She argues that such ontological and epistemological protections and assurances created a balance between men and women in which power was shared.[47]

Laguna Pueblo scholar Paula Gunn Allen makes a similar assertion, arguing that there was a degree of variety in how women were viewed, but never did these conceptualizations include notions of women being oppressed or helpless.[48] Simpson contends that this balance ensured that individual agency was honoured and respected as a mechanism by which to produce a diverse culture of self-sufficiency, a vital aspect in a community's adaptability and survival.[49]

While social, economic, and political roles were often determined by one's gender on the basis of practicality, such allocations were not rigid. It was not uncommon for gendered role lines to be flexible and, therefore, easily crossed based on the needs of a family, community, or nation.[50] While Western societies tended to enforce hierarchical notions of gender roles as being divided between the public versus private (i.e., male versus female) spheres, such strict delineations and ranks were not present in Anishinaabe societies.[51] As Simpson demonstrates, in Anishinaabe cultures roles were determined by factors other than just gender. Other factors included one's clan, family relations, skills and gifts, and particularly one's agency in choosing a role in the community.[52] Similarly, Anderson points out that age was another important determining factor in an individual's roles.[53] While the division of roles occurred on a number of axis, men's work was never placed in higher esteem than women's work.[54] Precontact Indigenous societies very much embodied the notion of "different and equally significant":[55]

> Men and women often make use of different spaces and resources and, for this reason, they are knowers as well as keepers of specific knowledge. Differences between men and women's knowledge result not only from their specific activities and responsibilities but also from the historical and contemporary social context in which this knowledge is produced and mobilized.[56]

While Anishinaabe men and women had what Saulteaux-Anishinaabe Elder Danny Musqua from the Keeseekoose Saulteaux First Nation describes as "jurisdictions" over various aspects of politics, economic, and everyday life, these jurisdictional lines were fluid and designed in a way that ensured balance and well-being.[57]

Anthropologist Carole Lévesque, Denise Geoffroy and researcher Geneviève Polèse similarly examined gendered roles in Naskapi culture, identifying four "organizing principles" of skills and knowledge of both men and women: (1) differentiation, in that there was generally a distinction between men's work and women's work and passing down of knowledge; (2)

complementarity, in that while one gender would possess the knowledge of a particular domain , the other would often have at least an operational knowledge within the domain; (3) transfer, in that one gender would teach the other how to accomplish tasks of the former in order to ensure that they would be completed in a change of circumstances; and (4) integration, or the "necessary combination of knowledge and skills to which men and women contributed in more or less equal measure."[58] The categories conceptualized by Lévesque, Geoffroy, and Polèse reflect similar themes observed by other authors in the context of other nations as well, in that they describe knowledge and skill systems in which roles are gendered but by no means hierarchical nor rigid.

While relationships and responsibilities derived from Creation stories were often gendered based on jurisdictions, this did not necessarily imply inequality. Rather, governance systems revolved around these relationships and the equally important roles that each individual played within them. One of the roles that was considered to be within Anishinaabekwewag domain was the protection and maintenance of Anishinaabeg relationship with water.

Water

Two of the fundamental guiding principles within Anishinaabe *inaakonigewin* 'law' and ways of being and knowing are relationships and responsibilities, both of which are active processes requiring maintenance.[59] In order to engage with these processes, Anishinaabeg developed conventions, customs, and roles that adhered to natural laws and, as Anishinaabe legal scholar John Borrows of the Chippewas of the Nawash First Nation explains, became the foundation for Anishinaabe governance.[60] These natural laws and the actions and roles taken to uphold them are understood to be necessary in the continuation of Creation.[61] Further, it is not just Anishinaabe that have responsibilities to natural law, but rather all beings in Creation: "[t]he laws apply to Creation, and [Anishinaabeg] are simply part of Creation."[62]

One important role that Anishinaabekwewag derive from the original instructions[63] found in Creation stories is their relationship with and responsibilities to *nibi* 'water'. In Anishinaabe traditions, nibi is understood to include a variety of waters, including drinking water, *gimiwan* 'rain', *mikom* 'ice', and *zoogipon* 'snow'.[64] Others speak of the four types of nibi being fog, saltwater, fresh water, and the water in which babies grow.[65] Whatever the four types, nibi is understood in a holistic manner in which all water is sacred.

Within Ojibwe-Anishinaabe cosmology, there are four orders of Creation, or the order in which beings on Mother Earth were created: (1) elements, including fire, water, earth, and air (2) plants, (3) animals, and (4) Anishinaabeg. According to Darren Courchene, each of the orders can exist and survive without those that come after it but cannot exist without those that come before it. In other words, each order is dependent on those that precede it and independent of those that follow. Water is thus considered an elder sibling to Anishinaabeg in the orders of Creation.[66] Like the other orders that came before them, Anishinaabeg are dependent on water for survival, not only directly but also indirectly, as plants and animals rely on it as well.[67] This dependent relationship brings with it certain responsibilities.

Nibi is also understood to have a transcendental quality in that through both time and space on earth, the waters that ancestors experienced over the previous millennia are the same ones that are experienced now and will be in the future, assuming they are taken care of properly.[68] As these waters flow, they also collect knowledge from their experiences.[69] Nibi is also considered alive and sentient and, as such, part of reciprocal relationships with other forms of life.[70]

Such a connection reflects what Raymond Pierotti describes as two of the fundamental ontological assumptions of Indigenous cultures: that everything, both human and nonhuman, is

connected and related.[71] Speaking broadly about Indigenous cosmologies, Anderson further

characterizes them as having similar roots in understandings of balance between various entities

of Creation.[72] She describes the balance between male and female as being constitutive and

representative of the balance between Brother Sun and Grandmother Moon, and between fire and

water. Both fire and water, associated with male and female, respectively, are necessary for

survival. Given that one can overpower the other, the relationship between the two necessitates

balance.[73] Water in itself also has an inherent duality, in that it can both give and take away

life.[74] This duality, too, necessitates balance, respect, and protection.

 Anishinaabekwe Susan Chiblow (Ogamuh annag qwe) of Garden River First Nation

explains that Anishinaabe knowledge is experiential, dynamic, and process based.[75] As such, in

men and women's complementary roles, they engage with different relatives—or, as they are

known in Western cultures, resources—and thus develop specific knowledge.[76] According to

Ojibwe-Anishinaabe Elder Andrew Medler, nibi is a relative that has generations of memory and

knowledge to teach.[77] Given Anishinaabekwewag special relationship with nibi and the specific

responsibilities that come with it, they are understood to be the primary keepers of nibi

knowledge.

 While women are water keepers, men are fire keepers. Anishinaabekwe scholar and artist

Debby Wilson Danard of the Sturgeon Clan of Manitou Rapids, Rainy River First Nation

explains this role as follows: "[t]he role of men is to understand their relationship to the fire

(vision) and keep the sacred fire burning strong. The fire is at the heart of Mother Earth and

represents the vision to see ahead seven generations."[78] By working in tandem, Anishinaabe men

and women maintain balance between fire and water. Together they ensure the protection of

Earth and its waters, and, therefore, Anishinaabeg.[79]

Courchene further demonstrates the interconnected relationship between men and women as fire and water keepers as being reflected in the Ojibwemowin word for fire, *ishkode*: ish- from *ishpiming* 'above', -kw- from *ikwe* 'woman', and -de- from *ode* 'heart'. From this, he concludes that the roles of men and women are inextricably linked: "the role of men is to take care of women who are the heart of our sovereignty, nation, and family."[80] These gendered roles represent interdependent relationships on which Anishinaabe governance have long been predicated.

Anishinaabe ontologies and epistemologies are largely based in relationships. Each relationship is understood to come with certain responsibilities, rights, and obligations, exercised at individual and collective levels.[81] These responsibilities are the foundation of Anishinaabe inaakonigewin[82] and governance. For example, Ojibwe-Anishinaabe Elder Fred Kelly of Onigaming First Nation describes one of the functions of the Ojibwe, Odaawaa, and Bashkodewadomii clan system as being to identify the responsibilities of family groups.[83] The proper functioning of these interdependent relationships is predicated on individuals and clans fulfilling their responsibilities.[84] The group-specific responsibilities and roles around which Anishinaabe governance is based is both rooted in and ensures the continuation of interdependent relationships.[85]

Nibi is a common feature in Anishinaabe Creation stories, in which reciprocal relationships between nibi and Anishinaabeg are established. For example, in the story of the Great Flood, nibi acts to cleanse the Earth for Anishinaabeg.[86] The dependency that Anishinaabeg have on nibi—based on the orders of Creation—is a key factor in the relationship between the two.[87] As such, all Anishinaabeg have responsibilities to ensure the wellbeing of

nibi. McGregor refers to Anishinaabeg place in the order of Creation and argues that this place necessitates adherence to certain responsibilities.[88]

However, Anishinaabekwewag have an extended or a special relationship with it based on the life-giving capacities that they have, similar to Grandmother Moon and other waters of Mother Earth.[89] In another Creation story, spoken of by Patricia D. McGuire, women are given the responsibility to take care of nibi as they are the ones gifted with the capacity to create water in their bodies in the creation of new life. This capability also gives Anishinaabekwewag the honour of interacting with the spirit world, as spirits choose to enter the world through women and their waters.[90] Elder Copenace speaks to this relationship and the role that other community members also must play in protecting and honouring nibi: "[w]hen we do things, we do them with the support of the people—all people. It's the women's responsibility to lift that water but need support from men, children, Elders—can't do it by ourselves."[91]

Taking care of nibi and maintaining balance, as obligations derived from Creation stories and sacred law, are understood to be essential in realizing *mino-bimaadiziwin* 'good life' for Anishinaabeg.[92] Water is understood to be the lifeline and medicine for Anishinaabeg and all other living entities of Creation,[93] and as such certain responsibilities must be adhered to in its protections and maintenance. For example, Anishinaabekwewag may make offerings to nibi, such as songs or tobacco,[94] the latter of which is a powerful expression of respect.[95] Female Elders also carry and teach nibi knowledge and ceremonies, with the support of men.[96] Anishinaabekwewag not only have responsibilities to water for current generations, but also to those to come: '[w]e each need to fulfill our duties—for us, our children, our grandchildren, and those yet to be born."[97] Given women's relationship with nibi, their self-determination was and

continues to manifest in their decision-making authority regarding it.[98] Indeed, as they are its caretakers, Anishinaabekwewag have an inherent rights and responsibility to govern waters.[99]

Reflections on Christian and Anishinaabe Creation Stories

Within Anishinaabe cosmologies, ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies, both human and nonhuman beings are known to be animate and to have inherent agency—understandings derived from and reflected in Creation stories.[100] In contrast, Christian-based Western philosophies acknowledge nonhuman entities as living beings, but incapable of perception and limited only to instinctual behaviours.[101] This understanding separates humans from nonhumans and places them both in hierarchical relationships, with humans consistently at the top.[102] Using Creation stories as her framework, Watts compares the epistemological conclusions regarding these human-nonhuman interactions made in Christian and Mohawk and Anishinaabe cultures. In order to do so, she examines the story of Adam and Eve in comparison to Ichitwaakwe and the Great Turtle. From these Creation stories, Anishinaabeg developed understandings of femininity and relationships with nature—which would act as foundations for governance systems—as sacred.

In comparison, Western philosophy developed understandings of women as the architects of the fall of man; resentment lingers for Eve's primary role in humankind's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. As a result of Eve's interaction with the Serpent, humans were forcibly separated from nature and communication with nonhumans became abhorrent and associated with witchcraft. In being cast out of the Garden of Eden, humans were no longer a part of their surroundings but forced outside of them. This separation facilitated the hierarchical demarcating of humans as above nature. Further, it was after the story of Genesis that Christians began to

understand dynamic characteristics such as thought and perception as being in contrast to an allegedly inert natural world.[103]

Christians would go on to build their societies intentionally separated from nature and nonhumans based on this notion that colluding with nonhuman beings came with potential danger.[104] This "diminutive agency"[105] or "diluted formulations of agency"[106] for lands and other entities of Creation as described by Watts confronted Anishinaabe traditions and disrupted the relationships between humans and nonhumans.[107] This hierarchical separation from non-human beings stands in stark contrast to cosmological understandings such as the Ojibwe-Anishinaabe orders of Creation, discussed above, that describe humans as responsible to and dependent on those on Mother Earth that preceded them. It is this separation from nature and understanding of land as feminine that has justified hundreds of years of colonial violence against both Anishinaabe lands and women.[108]

Watts uses the term "elemental female" to describe the feminine entity on which ontological assumptions about femininity and women are based in Mohawk and Anishinaabe versus Christian worldviews. Anishinaabe cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies consider Mother Earth to be the elemental female with thought, perception, and feeling—she is alive.

In contrast, the elemental female in Christianity is responsible for the shame and excommunication of man, and such failures have provided spurious justification for the violence against and the silencing of her.[109] Biblical scholar Phyllis Trible aptly summarizes the impact of the Genesis Creation story as sacred justification for patriarchy and the subjugation of women: "[t]hroughout the ages people have used this text [i.e., Genesis] to legitimate patriarchy as the will of God. They maintained that it subordinates woman to man in Creation, depicts her as his seducer, curses her, and authorizes man to rule over her."[110]

Whereas Anishinaabe cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies recognized the holistic, relational nature of the feminine, the tendency in Christian traditions has been the dichotomization of the feminine, represented through the infamous Mary-Eve or Madonna-Whore framework. Comparative Literature professor Vladimir Tumanov describes this dichotomization as a result of paternal uncertainty, or biological anxiety experienced by men over their inability to guarantee that they are the father of their offspring. He argues that throughout history men have tended to respond to such anxiety in one of two ways: (1) promiscuity, or the maximization of probability of reproduction, or (2) mate guarding, or the minimizing of the possibility of women reproducing with another man.[111]

Christianity and many of its precursors responded to paternal uncertainty in a heavy-handed manner via mate guarding. Theologians throughout time have placed varying degrees of importance on virginity and sexual purity, thus giving rise to the dichotomy between Mary/Madonna, associated positively with purity, and Eve/Whore, associated negatively with sexuality. More specifically, Mary represented paternal certainty, and Eve represented women's sexual agency and, therefore, paternal uncertainty.[112] This dichotomization manifested in order to avoid the approach-avoidance conflict: the anxiety caused by "being attracted, and repelled by, the same goal or activity. Attraction keeps the person in the situation, but its negative aspects cause turmoil and distress."[113] In applying this concept to the dichotomization of Mary and Eve and resolving paternal uncertainty, Tumanov argues that the two women represented women's alleged natural states: purity and sexuality, respectively.[114] For men, this dichotomy is reflected in the approach (Mary)-avoidance (Eve) conflict; the intersection of the two is where conflict arises.

Evidence in first-century Christian writings—for example, the books of Matthew and Mark—demonstrate continuing anxieties regarding the true nature of Mary's conception of Jesus, revealing doubts in the earliest days of Christianity that a true separation approach and avoid could be achieved.[115] Tumanov argues that the dichotomy between Mary and Eve is a manifestation of men's anxieties regarding paternity and their need to resolve those anxieties.[116] The dichotomization of Mary/Madonna and Eve/Whore mythologized a binary already present in the male psyche,[117] thus solidifying Christianity's solution to the anxiety caused by paternal uncertainty: in its true form, the dichotomy avoids the intersection between approach and avoid.

Tumanov concludes by asserting similar patterns to those that Kuokkanen discusses regarding path-dependent institutions. In describing the dichotomy as an ideological materialization of male anxieties, he argues that it was "subject to a runaway process" that would go on to justify women's oppression, from the firm insistence on purity and devotion to the burning of accused witches.[118]

The Mary-Eve dichotomy became a defining feature in the experiences and portrayals of women throughout Christendom. This dichotomization of women's bodies was not a solitary phenomenon, but rather representative of broader tendencies in Western culture to reason according to either/or thinking. For example, while women were placed in to a hierarchical relationship with each other based on their perceived purity or lack thereof, they were also often portrayed as being the opposite of and lesser than men: whereas men were concerned with the eternal, women were concerned with the temporal; whereas men "[rule] by nature, women [obey] by nature."[119] Further, women were responsible for the fall of humanity and were particularly susceptible to sin, and they needed men's help in regulating the insatiable desires of their comparatively weak bodies.[120]

Women's bodies themselves came to represent wickedness, sexuality, sin, and shame in Christian traditions. The dichotomy between men and women and their hierarchical relationship was also present with regards to roles involving physical reproduction. In Anishinaabe traditions, reproduction is a sacred feminine capacity. In comparison, Aristotelian biological reasoning, which once again became prevalent in the Middle Ages, understood men to contribute soul to offspring, whereas women contributed the less-valued body.[121] According to this view, women's role in reproduction is simply to provide a vessel—they play a comparatively passive role compared to men's active role. Further, females themselves were viewed as a "deviation from the norm," a deformity only necessary for the reproduction of the race.[122]

In his analysis, Tumanov describes mythology as the "symbolic manifestation of our two key biological concerns—survival and reproduction[.]"[123] Through this framework, comparisons between Anishinaabeg and Christian cultures can be made. To identify Creation stories within the realm of mythology for this purpose is not to imply a sense of falsehood of any tradition's Creation stories, but simply to apply another lens to the knowledge derived from them. For example, in Anishinaabe Creation stories, survival and reproduction are clearly delineated as within the domain of the feminine. Within Tumanov's model for understanding mythology, then, Creation stories are stories of the feminine. Femininity thus becomes a source of strength, knowledge, agency, and governance structures. It is the fundamental aspect of the survival and reproduction of Anishinaabeg. In comparison, from the story of Adam and Eve, the elemental female becomes a source of blame, shame, and paternal anxiety.

Differences between the Creation stories of Christian and Anishinaabeg traditions are also revealed in pedagogical terms; in other words, who has had the primary responsibility for the intergenerational transmission of the stories and the knowledge they hold both gives way to

and reflects ideas about femininity and the nature of women. Throughout the last two thousand years of Christian tradition, it has been predominantly males telling the stories and analyzing scripture. It was not until the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries that women in the Western world began to call into question the dominance of male voices and the dearth of women's perspectives on such issues.[124] Both the traditional and, more recently, the academic approaches to Christianity tended to exclude women from telling and analyzing the stories that culminated in the ontological and epistemological foundations for Western societies.

Conversely, both Anishinaabe men and Anishinaabekwewag have played active roles in the telling of Creation stories and other aadizookaanan. Two possible conclusions could be drawn from this comparative observation. First, that it is the predominantly male voices in Christian traditions that have developed versions of Creation stories that portray women in largely negative terms, often as scapegoats for the plights of man. Meanwhile, having female voices present in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge in Anishinaabe traditions ensured that women were never relegated in such a way in their stories. The other possible conclusion is that the nature of the Creation stories themselves dictated the extent to which both male and female points of view were included. In this way, the story of Adam and Eve worked to immediately undermine women's voice and act as justification for their silencing. In comparison, Anishinaabe Creation stories such as that of Sky Woman or the Seven Fires of Creation make clear the importance of women in the survival of Anishinaabeg, placing inherent value in their voices and their perspectives. Rather than it being a linear causal relationship, it is likely elements of both that have played a role, in that Creation stories feed into ideologies regarding the nature and status of women, and the presence or absence of their voices reinforced the understandings put forth in the stories.

Conclusion

Creation stories have provided the foundations for cultural, political, and economic development in both Christian and Anishinaabe traditions. By examining these stories in both traditions, it is evident that understandings of women and their status and roles in the respective societies have firm roots in these stories and their interpretations, and that the assumptions made differ drastically. Ikweism is grounded in Anishinaabe Creation stories that acknowledge Anishinaabekwewag positions in the most fundamental aspects of Anishinaabe ways of being and knowing. Anishinaabwekwewag have a sacred relationship with Creation and other feminine beings within it. These relationships provide them with the knowledge, responsibilities, roles, and authority that they have possessed and exercised for millennia.

Notes for Chapter Four

[1] Rauna Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations: Indigenous Self-Determination, Governance, and Gender* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 6.

[2] Lawrence Gross, "Cultural Sovereignty and Native American Hermeneutics in the Interpretation of the Sacred Stories of the Anishinaabe," *Wicazo Sa Review* 18, no. 2, The Politics of Sovereignty (2003): 128, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1409540.pdf.

[3] Aimée Craft, *Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin Report: Reflecting the Water Laws Research Gathering Conducted with Anishinaabe Elders June 20-23, 2013 at Roseau River, Manitoba* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba's Centre for Human Rights Research and the Public Interest Law Centre, 2014), 9, http://create-h2o.ca/pages/annual_conference/presentations/2014/ANI_Gathering_Report_-_June24.pdf.

[4] However, there are some communities that continue traditions that dictate who can tell certain Creation stories, how, and when. Paul W. DePasquale, Introduction to Louis Bird, *Telling Our Stories: Omushkego Legends and Histories from Hudson Bay*, eds. Jennifer S.H. Brown, Paul W. DePasquale, and Mark F. Ruml (North York, ONT: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 64.

[5] Gross, "Cultural Sovereignty and Native American Hermeneutics," 128-129.

[6] For example, see Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, eds., *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World Through Stories* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013).

[7] Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg ReCreation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2011), 69.

[8] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 40.

[9] Jerome Fontaine, personal communication with the author, February 23, 2020.

[10] Vanessa Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought & Agency Amongst Humans and Non-Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman go on a World Tour!)," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 2, no. 1 (2013): 21, https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/19145/16234.

[11] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 21.

[12] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 21.

[13] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 22.

[14] Deborah McGregor, "Anishinaabe Environmental Knowledge," in *Contemporary Studies in Environmental and Indigenous Pedagogies: A Curricula of Stories and Place*, eds. Andrejs Kilnieks, Dan

Roronhiakewen Longboat, and Kelly Young (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013), 80, https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-94-6209-293-8.pdf.

[15] Details of the stories in this section are my paraphrasing of stories shared in various published texts.

[16] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 21.

[17] Elder Ken Courchene, "Creation Stories," in D'Arcy Linklater et al.,eds., *Ka'esi Wahkotumahk Aski: Our Relations with the Land—Treaty Elders' Teachings Volume 2*, (Winnipeg: Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba and Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Secretariat, 2014), 14-16.

[18] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 21.

[19] Elder Edna Manitowabi, "Grandmother Teachings," in Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2011), 38.

[20] Translation provided by Darren Courchene, personal communication with the author, February 23, 2020. Manitowabi translates this term to mean Creator or Great Mystery. Manitowabi, "Grandmother Teachings," 37.

[21] Manitowabi, "Grandmother Teachings," 38-39.

[22] Manitowabi, "Grandmother Teachings," 39.

[23] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 22.

[24] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 22-23.

[25] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 21.

[26] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 27.

[27] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 28.

[28] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 23.

[29] Manitowabi, "Grandmother Teachings," 39.

[30] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 41.

[31] Lawrence Gross, "Cultural Sovereignty and Native American Hermeneutics," 129.

[32] Niiahoosake Copenace, quoted in Craft, *Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin Report*, 15.

[33] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 41.

[34] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 60.

[35] Jo-Anne Lawless, Dorothy Taylor, Rachael Marshall, Emily Nickerson, and Kim Anderson, "Women, Diverse Identities and Indigenous Water and Wastewater Responsibilities," *Canadian Woman Studies* 30, no. 2-3 (2015-2016): 81, https://cws.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cws/article/view/37452/34000.

[36] Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 2.

[37] Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book*, 2.

[38] It is largely understood that Gizhe-Manidoo does not have a specific gender. When spoken of in English with the use of masculine and feminine pronouns, the gender of Gizhe-Manidoo often reflects the gender of the speaker. Here I have kept the masculine pronouns in referring Gizhe-Manidoo that Benton-Banai used in his telling of this Creation story.

[39] Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book*, 2-3.

[40] Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book*, 2-3.

[41] Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book*, 5.

[42] Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book*, 13-16.

[43] Renée E. Mzinegiizhigo-Kwe Bédard, "Role Models: An Anishinaabe-kwe Perspective," *Canadian Woman Studies* 26, no. 3/4 (2008): 191, https://search.proquest.com/docview/.217444108/fulltextPDF/6B2C8D184344B42PQ/1?accountid=15067.

[44] Edna Manitowabi, "Grandmother Teachings," 36.

[45] Nicole Bell, "Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin: Living Spiritually with Respect, Relationship, Reciprocity, and Responsibility," in *Contemporary Studies in Environmental and Indigenous Pedagogies: A Curricula of Stories and Place*, eds. Andrejs Kilnieks, Dan Roronhiakewen Longboat, and Kelly Young (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013), 91, https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-94-6209-293-8.pdf.

[46] Kim Anderson, *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood* (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2000), 57.

[47] Anderson, *A Recognition of Being*, 57.

[48] Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 44, https://books.google.ca/books?id=dZD24n0YtlwC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false.

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[53] Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women,* 5-7.

[54] Anderson, *A Recognition of Being,* 60.

[55] Kahente Horn-Miller, "Distortion and Healing: Finding Balance and a 'Good Mind' Through Rearticulation of Sky Woman's Journey," in *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understanding of Place*, eds. Nathalie Kermoal and Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2016), 32.

[56] Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez and Nathalie Kermoal, "Introduction: Indigenous Women and Knowledge," in *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understanding of Place*, eds. Nathalie Kermoal and Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2016), 3.

[57] Danny Musqua, cited in Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women,* 99.

[58] Carole Lévesque, Denise Geoffroy and Geneviève Polèse, "Naskapi Women: Words, Narratives, and Knowledge," in *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understanding of Place*, eds. Nathalie Kermoal and Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2016), 69-71.

[59] McGregor, "Anishinaabe Environmental Knowledge," 78-80.

[60] John Borrows, *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 47, cited in Deborah McGregor, "Anishinaabe Environmental Knowledge," in *Contemporary Studies in Environmental and Indigenous Pedagogies: A Curricula of Stories and Place*, eds. Andrejs Kilnieks, Dan Roronhiakewen Longboat, and Kelly Young (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013), 79, accessed April 2, 2020, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-6209-293-8_5.

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[66] Darren Courchene, "Stewardship," GIS-7021-050: Pathways to Indigenous Wisdom (class lecture, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB, October 23, 2017).

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[80] Darren Courchene, personal communication with theauthor, February 23, 2020.

[81] Craft, *Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin Report*, 8.

[82] Peter Atkinson and Allan White, quoted in Craft, *Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin Report*, 11-12.

[83] Fred Kelly, "Anishinaabe Leadership," December 14, 2005, quoted in Vanessa Watts, "Towards Anishinaabe Governance and Accountability: Reawakening our Relationships and Sacred Bimaadiziwin" (M.A. Thesis, Trent University, 2004), 52, https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/handle/1828/2222.

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[104] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 24-25.

[105] Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought," 24.

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CHAPTER FIVE:
CONSTRAINING IKWEIST AMBITION FOR ANISHINAABEKWEWAG SELF-
DETERMINATION IN CANADA

Post-1876 Indian policy—both formal and informal—was characterized by ideologies of

assimilation to Western heteropatriarchal values, relationships, and other ways of knowing and

being. Women and gender studies scholar Karen Stote argues that assimilation was one pathway

adopted by the Canadian federal government as a part of the two overarching goals of

colonization: gaining access to lands and resources and reducing the obligation it has to

Indigenous peoples "either through bureaucratic means or other assimilative methods."[1] Further,

she specifies that assimilation was, similarly, a twofold process characterized by the enforcement

of Canadian ideologies and ways of living and the simultaneous dismantling of those of

Indigenous peoples.[2] While these are both broad generalizations, they encapsulate the

complexities and nuances of colonization and assimilation, and state in clear terms the

overarching mechanisms by which these processes have occurred. However, to clearly

differentiate between "bureaucratic means" and "assimilative methods" is problematic in that it

overlooks the fact that it was often through bureaucratic means such as legislation and policy that

the Canadian government worked to assimilate Anishinaabeg. For example, the *Indian Act*, first

enacted in 1876, was the Canadian government's heavy-handed legislation intended to

operationalize its colonial goals.

In this chapter, I will examine the Indian Act as perhaps the most significant of colonial

mechanisms in Canadian law, economics, and politics. This will provide an understanding of the

ideological contexts within which Canadian settler colonialism and Indian policy have

functioned. Further, I will examine broad trends that have impacted Anishinaabekwewag as a

result of these processes. While colonization has undoubtedly impacted Indigenous women

across Canada, this chapter will continue to explore these issues with specific regards to Anishinaabekwewag.

Legislative and Ideological Foundations of the Indian Act

The Indian Act was a consolidation of prior legislations enacted since 1850 that sought to regulate, among other things, Anishinaabe identity, community membership, and authority. Two acts passed in 1850 represented the first time that the federal government assumed the authority to construct definitions of who was "Indian," removing the official legal and political power to do so from Anishinaabe nations,[3] and blurring lines between distinct peoples and ways of being. Reserves were also established for the first time as a mechanism by which settler rights to land were affirmed on the basis of confining Anishinaabe to specific regions.[4] Mi'kmaw scholar Bonita Lawrence argues that, in addition to paternalistic ideologies that aimed for the eventual removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands, such actions demonstrated Canada's efforts to assert its independence and nation-building capacities as part of an assumption of authority from the British government.[5]

These efforts would continue to be demonstrated in further acts, such as the *Gradual Civilizing Act* of 1857, which introduced a set of government-determined parameters for Indian men to shed their status and become enfranchised Canadian citizens. If an educated Indian man over the age of twenty-one was able to read and write in either English or French and was debt free and of good moral character, he could choose to become enfranchised and would receive a parcel of privately-owned alienated land from his reserve and a share of treaty annuities. Enfranchisement was a mechanism intended to parcel reserve lands into privately-owned plots, reduce band member lists, and facilitate the assimilation of Anishinaabe men into mainstream Canadian society.[6]

It is also important to note that enfranchisement was only an option for Indian men; women could pursue no such course of action, and should a man have become enfranchised, his wife and children would have lost their Indian status along with him. In such a scenario, the involuntarily enfranchised woman would not receive a plot of land. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People asserts that this inequality is demonstrative of how Indian policy had developed by the late-nineteenth century: "in keeping with prevailing Victorian notions, maleness and the right to possess and live on reserve lands were becoming fixtures of Indian policy."[7]

In 1869, the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* further codified and restricted who the government considered to be "Indian," and established divisions within Anishinaabe communities and nations.[8] It established the band council system, as part of which only men could vote and run for council,[9] greatly inhibiting Anishinaabekwewag participation in official governance processes. It tied band membership to Indian status as well, meaning that those who lost their status lost their band membership. It also further entrenched Anishinaabekwewag dependency with regards to identity and status on their husbands: if an Anishinaabekwe were to marry an Indian man from another band, she would lose membership in her home community and assume membership of her husband's; and if she married a non-Indian, she would lose her status altogether,[10] and the associated rights and resources that came with it.[11] Any children resulting from these marriages would also derive their status from their father.[12]

Human rights and Indigenous relations advocate and author Wendy Moss explains that some who tried to rationalize this gender discrimination in the following decades argued that the impact on Indigenous women was an indirect effect and that the intended target was actually non-Indigenous men as a protective measure for reserve lands and assets. In other words, it was

reasoned to be a preventative measure to ward off the perceived threat that non-Indigenous men who married Indigenous women posed to the economic integrity of reserves.[13] Indeed, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples confirms this intention. Not only was the assumption that reserve lands needed to be protected from encroaching non-Indigenous men, but that in marrying a non-Indigenous man, an Anishinaabekwe would acquire property rights similar to those of Canadian women and would thus no longer be in need of the protection offered by Indian status and the property rights that came with it.[14]

The assumptions made in this argument are indicative of broader contemporary ideologies and tendencies of prioritizing economic over social and cultural concerns, and of developing policy and legislation within a male-centric framework that fails to take into account the experiences and roles of women. Further, it indicates a presumption of patrilineal frameworks to the detriment of matrilineal nations. The *Gradual Enfranchising Act* imposed Western bureaucratized understandings of patrilineal descent on Anishinaabeg with diverse familial structures. It based a woman's status strictly on that of her nearest patriarch, being either her father or, upon marriage, her husband.[15] It ignored the positions of authority and respect that Anishinaabekwewag had long held and instead applied Victorian systems of heteropatriarchy within which women are dependent on their relationships with men rather than active participants in them.

These antecedent acts demonstrate the ideological foundations on which the *Indian Act* were based: government control over Anishinaabeg as wards of the state, and their eventual assimilation into heteropatriarchal Canadian society. As Lawrence points out, they represent the shift in Indian policy from a nation-to-nation relationship to a paternalistic ideology of erasure that occurred with the transition of jurisdiction over Indian matters from the British Crown to the

Canadian government.[16] To demonstrate the blurring of lines between Stote's methods of colonization: the Indian Act has been the most significant bureaucratic means of assimilation of Anishinaabeg. Assimilation remained the official foundation on which Canadian Indian policy stood until Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chrétien's infamous 1969 White Paper.[17] Throughout this policy era, with each set of amendments to the Act, the Canadian government solidified their power over status Indians while diminishing the authority and power held by band councils,[18] and overriding and dismissing traditional governance and legal structures.

Impacts of the Indian Act on Anishinaabekwewag

The Indian Act has been described in the literature as cradle-to-grave legislation given its extended reach into the lives of all those it designates as "Indian" under its authority. However, sexism encoded in the Act has created a double impact on Anishinaabekwewag, as women with Indian status were left with fewer rights than any other group in Canada.[19] Whereas the impact of the Indian Act on Anishinaabe men was based on their status as "Indians," many sections of the Act had further effects on Anishinaabekwewag based on their being both "Indian" and women. For example, the definition of an Indian within the 1876 parameters was "any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band," his children, and his lawful wife.[20] Sex-based requirements for this legal identity and its associated rights were carried over from previous legislation and throughout numerous amendments.

This legislated sexism had a number of impacts on the everyday lives and experiences of Anishinaabekwewag. Beyond the specific parameters of the Act discussed above that pushed Anishinaabekwewag out of positions of economic and political authority, the Act instigated significant social, economic, and political changes in Anishinaabe communities that continue to

impact Anishinaabekwewag. In this section is an examination of three related and overarching shifts that have been instigated and enabled by the Indian Act: the internalization and naturalization of heteropatriarchy in Anishinaabe communities, the shift in political and social discourse, and altered relationships. As such, these trends are shown to be overarching elements of settler colonialism in Canada that have worked to undermine ikweism and the relationships on which it is based.

Heteropatriarchy

The Indian Act has been instrumental in an overarching process of weaving heteropatriarchal values and norms into the fabric of Anishinaabe societies. This imposition of Western hegemonic thinking in the form of heteropatriarchy represents what Joanne Barker has described as a process of simultaneously elevating the status, authority, and power of Indigenous men to the detriment of women.[21] This naturalization and internalization of heteropatriarchy in Anishinaabe communities represents a significant divergence from traditional ontologies and epistemologies. Whether matrilineal Omashkegowag or patrilineal Ojibwe, Odaawaa, and Bashkodewadomii, Anishinaabekwewag have long been considered leaders in their families, communities, and nations. It is important to note here that, with regards to pre-colonization Anishinaabe governance structures—whether in the individual, social, political, or economic realms—patrilineal is not to be confused with patriarchal. For example, the Ojibwe-, Odaawaa-, and Bashkodewadomii-Anishinaabe clan system is derived from relationships with lands, animals, and other entities of Creation. While this structure is patrilineal in that individuals derive their clan membership from their fathers, within it Anishinaabekwewag participated to similar extents as men.

For example, in her research examining the roles of Anishinaabekwewag leaders up to 1871, Anishinaabekwe scholar Colleen McIvor of the Northern Lights Clan of Long Plain and Sandy Bay First Nations describes Anishinaabe governance structures as extensions or representations of Anishinaabeg relationship with the earth. Like many other Anishinaabe authors, McIvor argues that Anishinaabekwewag are leaders based on their strength and their likeness to Mother Earth.[22] She identifies two overarching roles that they could have: *Ogichidaakweg* 'women warriors'[23] and *Ogimaakwe* 'woman civil leader'.[24]

In an interview with Turtle Clan Anishinaabekwe Tricia McGuire Adams of Bingwi Neyaashi and Anemkii Wekwegong First Nations, Anishinaabekwe Elder Ogimaabiik of Nicickousemenecaning First Nation describes "three ways of being Ogichitaakwe: in the home, as keepers of the drum and an elder's council."[25] From this description, it is clear that the strength and knowledge that Anishinaabekwewag leaders have is valued in all realms of Anishinaabe life—as mothers, as spiritual leaders, and as political leaders. It is interesting to note that McIvor argues that the role of Ogichidaakweg arose post-contact. Based on this understanding, the emergence of Ogichidaakweg is a powerful example of Anishinaabekwewag utilizing their positions of strength as based in Anishinaabe philosophies to assert their self-determination in the face of colonization.

Over time and amongst other impacts, the gradual naturalization and internalization of heteropatriarchy has worked to exclude Anishinaabekwewag from political organization and participation. As mentioned above, for decades after the creation of band councils, women were prohibited from voting or running in elections, thus constricting their capacities to formally lead and participate in increasingly-Westernized community governance. Further, Rauna Kuokkanen explains that, in response to the 1969 White Paper, extra-governmental Indigenous organizations

across Canada became increasingly political, grounding themselves in collective rhetoric of sovereignty, self-government, and nationhood. However, Anishinaabekwewag were largely excluded from this mobilization due to the patriarchal structures and values that had by then largely been entrenched—a process in which the Indian Act and its exclusion of Anishinaabekwewag from political life played a significant role.[26] In this way, Anishinaabekwewag political exclusion and heteropatriarchy are linked in a self-reinforcing cycle, in which each is both a catalyst and an outcome for the other. In this way, heteropatriarchal governance structures have excluded women, enabling heteropatriarchy to further take hold, thus increasing exclusion, and so on.

Another mechanism by which the Indian Act worked to embed heteropatriarchal norms and values was mandatory residential school attendance. Prior to 1884, the decision to send a child to a school remained with the families; however, an amendment to the Act further and significantly extended the Canadian government's reach into the lives of Anishinaabe families by removing that choice.[27] The goal of the schooling system was to "civilize" and "Christianize,"[28] or, in other words, to assimilate Anishinaabe children to Canadian cultural, political, and economic values. Therefore, the reorienting of students' conceptualizations of gender, family, and other governance processes to fit within a heteropatriarchal framework was an inherent characteristic of residential schools and a defining feature of students' experiences. Given the assumptions made regarding femininity and strict ideals women are expected to adhere to within this framework regarding cleanliness (both of one's self and the home), sexual purity, and behaviour, Anishinaabekwewag students' experiences were largely shaped by their identities both as Anishinaabe and as ikwewag.[29]

Many scholars have examined the relationship between the Indian Act, heteropatriarchy and the contemporary issues that Anishinaabekwewag face. For example, Kim Anderson argues that the Indian Act stripped Anishinaabekwewag of their political and community authority, as well as their authority within their families through the implementation of gender-based political rights and patriarchal marriage and property regulations.[30] She explains that women had long held decision-making authority and were powerful voices in community affairs, and assimilative patriarchal measures dismantled these roles, replacing them with ones that reflected Western Christian assumptions about the relegated status of disempowered women.[31]

Political science scholar and Ktunaxa/Cree-Scot Métis-Anishinaabekwe Joyce Green similarly argues that patriarchy has been encoded in Canadian Indian policy, namely the Indian Act.[32] The assumption of Western Christian superiority and the development of a colonial conscience that relegated Anishinaabekwewag as hypersexual, incompetent, and immoral continues to provide justification for the abuses and socioeconomic disparities that they face.[33] Canadian constitutional lawyer Mary Eberts describes the Indian Act as "a powerful and still operating instrument of colonialism and patriarchy" that has placed Anishinaabekwewag outside of the protection of the law and separated them from their families.[34] She argues that, in doing so, the Act has placed them in positions of heightened risk.[35] Similar to Green, Eberts states that the Indian Act encoded centuries-old stereotypes, ensuring their persistence for over a century and a half, and legitimizing the abuse of Anishinaabekwewag.[36]

One of these abuses or issues that Anishinaabekwewag face that stands in particular relief is that of gendered violence. Gendered violence and the related phenomenon of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in Anishinaabe communities has been examined through a number of different lenses, typically interconnected and under the umbrella

of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy. For example, Cree-Anishinaabekwe academic and activist Robyn Bourgeois provides an overview of the role that colonization has played in increasing Indigenous women's vulnerability to violence. Drawing on the works of American academic and activist Andrea Smith, Cree/Métis-Anishinaabekwe scholar and author Emma LaRocque of northeastern Alberta, and postcolonial feminist scholar Sherene H. Razack, Robyn Bourgeois argues that violence against women is a colonial tool in itself that works to establish domination over Indigenous peoples and lands and creates a hierarchy that sustains the privilege of white masculinity—i.e., patriarchy.[37]

She goes on to argue that, in dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their lands, the Canadian state has created structures on which they have become economically dependent and, therefore, are put even more so under the control of the state. She connects this with the issue of gendered violence against Indigenous women and girls, stating that poverty—of which Indigenous peoples in Canada experience high rates—is often acknowledged as a contributing factor to such violence.[38] In exploring this connection, Bourgeois looks specifically to the Indian Act, which disconnected generations of Indigenous women from their communities in a legislated attempt to reduce the number of people to whom they had to be accountable. She argues that being physically disconnected from family and community and losing the rights and supports that came with status and treaties exacerbated the economic hardships and social isolation that Indigenous women experienced and placed them in precarious situations in which they were even more vulnerable to violence.[39]

Bourgeois also speaks to the impact of residential schools, which, as discussed above, sought in formal and informal ways to assimilate Anishinaabe children to heteropatriarchal understandings of gender and family and the operationalization of these in mainstream society.

She argues that generations of abused children in residential schools established a social model for interpersonal relationships based on violence. Further, she argues that alcohol and drugs have become coping mechanisms for many residential school survivors and have also been identified as risk factors increasing Indigenous women's vulnerability to violence.[40]

The impact of the trauma of residential schools cannot be understated in such a conversation and needs to be understood within the specific context of Anishinaabeg. Psychiatrist Sandra L. Bloom concisely summarizes the impacts of trauma:

> Child are traumatized whenever they fear for their lives or for the lives of someone they love. A traumatic experience impacts the entire person—the way we think, the way we learn, the way we remember things, the way we feel about ourselves, the way we feel about other people, and the way we make sense of the world are all profoundly altered by traumatic experience.[41]

Lawrence Gross elaborates on the impact of trauma and contextualizes it to the experiences of post-contact Anishinaabeg collectives. Whereas individuals who have experienced trauma may be inflicted with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Gross describes a parallel condition within the context of a collective: Post-Apocalyptic Stress Syndrome (PASS).[42] He describes the stress associated with PASS as intergenerational and impacting both the individual and institutional levels.[43] Further, he specifies Anishinaabe experiences in boarding schools— residential schools in Canada—as a significant contributing factor to the destruction of the Anishinaabe world. Therefore, Gross links the individual and institutional effects of PASS, such as increased substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness; loss of hope; and weakening or collapse of family, governance, education, religious, and health care structures and processes, to the trauma experienced at residential schools and to the increased risk of violence that Anishinaabekwewag face.[44]

Bourgeois goes on to explore a number of other processes that act as or catalyze other factors contributing to gendered violence against and disappearance of Indigenous women, including the disproportionate rate of child apprehension by the state[45] and the "over-criminalization and under-protection" of Indigenous women and girls in the judicial system.[46] She argues that the Canadian state has been invested in, relies on, and continues to benefit from domination over Indigenous women.[47]

Kuokkanen has also spoken to the issue of gendered violence in Indigenous communities in Canada, arguing that heteropatriarchal intracommunity dynamics depoliticize and normalize violence against women.[48] Further, while poverty is often considered a risk factor for such violence, Kuokkanen reveals in a comparative analysis of Indigenous communities in Canada and Sámi communities in Scandinavia that community attitudes and responses to violence do not appear to be dependent on socioeconomic positions: "[w]hether it is relatively well-off Sámi women or low-income and impoverished Aboriginal women, the violence they face in their own communities is regularly silenced or dismissed."[49] She argues that this intragroup oppression is a manifestation of internalized patriarchy and the subordination of women that it both enables and relies upon[50]

Bourgeois and Kuokkanen's analyses make clear that heteropatriarchy is an underlying structure in the commonly identified factors that increase Anishinaabekwewag vulnerability to violence. Heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism are inextricably linked. This is not to say that gendered violence was nonexistent prior to European contact or that there is any one singular cause of the issue. Rather, gendered violence against Anishinaabekwewag is a complex, multi-layered matter with roots in numerous colonial/heteropatriarchal structures and processes—one of them being the Indian Act.

This imposition of foreign norms and values regarding women has largely occurred to the detriment of ikweism. To use Barker's description, this shift in the balance of power in Anishinaabe communities through the elevation of men at the expense of women has brought about a complex web of social, economic, and political factors that have enabled violence to become a very real and present threat against Anishinaabekwewag.

Ikweism is to Anishinaabe philosophy as heteropatriarchy is to Western colonial philosophy in that both are fundamental ontological and epistemological bases on which governance structures operate. As explored in chapter one, Anishinaabeg recognize the value of women and, therefore, have structured Anishinaabe relationships and processes around the full and equal participation of Anishinaabekwewag in their families, communities, and nations. Conversely, heteropatriarchy has rested firmly on assumptions of the inherent subordination of women, thus compelling societies structures around gender-based hierarchies. In other words, the functionality of heteropatriarchy is predicated on the dominance of men and the relegation of and the control over women through strict moral codes derived from mythologized sexism, their exclusion—whether formal or informal—from decision-making processes, and violence. Resultant ideologies have operationalized these views in Anishinaabe communities through governance processes and structures that have worked to redefine Anishinaabe discourse and relationships.

Altered Discourse

In the last half century of Indigenous political mobilization, when Anishinaabekwewag have mobilized in their own organizations and movements to address their concerns and structural marginalization, they have often been criticized for being selfish and adopting Western ideas of individualism.[51] This is perhaps most notably represented in Anishinaabekwewag calls

for the removal of sex-based discrimination in the Indian Act, which culminated in Bill C-31 in1985.

Sharon Donna McIvor examines Indigenous women's use of the Canadian court system to bring about an end to sex discrimination, beginning in 1969 with Lavell v. Canada. McIvor explains that the use of litigation has been viewed by many as using the "master's tools."[52] Women's Studies Professor Jo-Anne Fiske highlights a similar trend in collective, nationalistic rhetoric, as it maintains that "any appeal to an outside authority diminishes the autonomy of the community/nation, imperiling the struggle for self-determination and diminishing the traditional culture and decision-making processes."[53] Such an approach to chastising Anishinaabekwewag is a somewhat ironic and shortsighted criticism given that it was largely through the master's tools—i.e., the Indian Act—that Anishinaabe male leadership came to garner the significant political power that they have in comparison to Anishinaabekwewag.

Lawrence utilizes a framework informed by identity to examine the impact of the Indian Act in shaping the reactions of many First Nations communities and leadership to Bill C-31. She describes the Indian Act as a "regulatory regime,"[54] "a discourse of classification, regulation, and control,"[55] and a "social engineering process"[56] that has largely shaped the identities of Indigenous peoples to operate according to government-designed parameters of Indianness.[57] For over a century, the government expanded its assumed authority over Anishinaabeg, and implemented structures, regulatory policies, and, by extension, ideologies that have come to be defining aspects of identity for many individuals and communities. Indeed, even many of the Bill C-31 registrants who sought Indian status did so on the basis of identity and the sense of belonging that came with it.[58] The Indian Act created a new grammar in which a discourse was

developed to discuss Anishinaabeg and their identities and politics.[59] This new lexicon continues

to shape discourse on topics such as Anishinaabe rights, identity, and self-determination.

The calls for amendments to the Act also came in the wake of resistance to the 1969

White Paper and an increased emphasis by Indigenous political organizations to protect

government-specified Indian rights.[60] In this context, Lawrence contends that resistance to Bill

C-31 was to a great extent informed by government-based conceptualizations of Anishinaabe

sovereignty and identity. Therefore, Lawrence concludes on the matter that the changing of the

definition of who was considered "Indian" was, for many, a violation of internalized and

naturalized understandings of Indigenous identity as based on the Indian Act.[61] Moss similarly

argues that the Indian Act has been understood to be protective of Anishinaabe lands and culture,

and that without constitutionally-entrenched self-government, federal government involvement

has been viewed as a "necessary evil" to protect the special position that "Indians" hold.

However, such an equating of government control with protection and preservation, she asserts,

is at the very least questionable.[62]

As Indigenous women began to call for amendments to section 12(1)(b)—the marrying-

out rule—of the Act in order to address sex discrimination, many men spoke out against this

proposition. For example, the National Indian Brotherhood argued that such calls threatened the

integrity of the Act, as it could open it up to criticisms based on racial discrimination.[63] Moss

argues that the movement to end sex discrimination against Anishinaabekwewag and the

resistance it met marks the turning point since which women's concerns regarding sex

discrimination have been understood as being in conflict with collective rights.[64] Therefore,

resistance to Bill C-31 demonstrates the dichotomization and relegation of Anishinaabekwewag

rights in a hierarchical conflict with Anishinaabe men's rights as a result of the internalization

and naturalization of Indian Act ideologies. By shaping the discourse of issues such as rights, identity, and self-determination within a framework of paternalism and patriarchy, the Indian Act works to limit the conceptual bounds within which these conversations take place to Canadian colonial understandings.

The Indian Act has effectively altered Anishinaabe rights discourse, replacing rhetoric of inherent rights as pre-existing sovereign nations with so-called Indian rights based on the Act and treaty relationships with the government.[65] In other words, it bureaucratized Anishinaabeg rights and placed the authority of rights recognition in the hands of the federal government while legitimizing its extending colonial reach in to the lives and on to the lands of Anishinaabeg. It has also enabled the dichotomization of so-called "collective" and "individual" aspirations that have challenged Anishinaabekwewag self-determination from some of the earliest days of post-Indian Act political organization. The dichotomization of Anishinaabe agendas has many names, but ultimately follows the same logic. Whether "collective versus individual," "Aboriginal rights versus human rights," "political versus social," or "public versus private," by categorizing pursuits in this way, the relationships between Anishinaabe political, social, and economic concerns are fractured and forced into hierarchies, in which Anishinaabekwewag matters tend to sit at the bottom.

More than that, the Indian Act altered Anishinaabeg identities by working to redefine their relationships with one another and Creation. Over a century and a half of colonial control through the Indian Act and its predecessors has worked to dismantle and reshape Anishinaabe ways of knowing, being, and doing. At the microlevel it claimed more authority over and regulated Anishinaabekwewag capacities and identities to a greater extent than it did for men,

and at the macrolevel it altered the governance processes and structures of Anishinaabe communities and nations that had for so long upheld and relied upon ikweism.[66]

The entrenchment of heteropatriarchal values, norms, and governance structures devalued Anishinaabekwewag and undermined their relationship with each other and with lands and other elements of Creation. The parallel shifting of Indigenous rights and self-determination discourse to fit within Western colonial grammars and, by extension, worldviews, has hindered Anishinaabekwewag efforts to assert ikweism and, therefore, has inherently limited the efficacy of the discourses themselves to realize decolonization and Anishinaabe self-determination. Anishinaabekwewag physical removal from their lands, families, and communities and the social and economic isolation that resulted; and the importation of foreign ideologies and governance structures that relied on heteropatriarchy to function in its intended manner have severed many relationships on which ikweism and, therefore, Anishinaabekwewag self-determination finds its base.

Altered Relationships

Ikweism is grounded in interconnected relationships, namely those that Anishinaabekwewag have with each other; other non-human beings in Creation including lands, animals, and waters; and Anishinaabe children, Elders, and men. At its core, the Indian Act and other colonial mechanisms have worked to undermine those relationships. Canadian colonization superimposed an imported value system that contained assumptions regarding the nature of women and femininity that conflicted with those that Anishinaabeg held. The foreign governance structures put in place and the ideological shifts that followed have worked to undermine these relationships and remove Anishinaabekwewag from or alter the roles in which they have long been active participants.

This section was originally entitled "severed relationships." However, to describe Anishinaabeg relationships with Creation—with lands, waters, animals, plants, spirits, and each other—as "severed" would imply that settler colonialism in Canada has been successful in the disappearance of Anishinaabeg. To sever these relationships entirely would be to bring about an end to Anishinaabe ways of knowing and being. Despite decades of policies, ideologies, and legislation that have worked towards such an end, Anishinaabeg are still very much present and active participants in these relationships.

However, as inaccurate as it would be to describe colonialism in such terms, it would be equally naïve to suggest that these relationships have not, at the very least, been altered by the imposition of foreign value, legal, and political systems. As will be explored further in chapter six, while settler colonialism has undeniably impacted virtually every aspect of Anishinaabe life, the relationships that define Anishinaabe social, economic, legal, and political ways of knowing and being are still there in stories and teachings.

In the following section, I will examine how the relationship Anishinaabekwewag have with water has been negatively impacted by settler colonialism in order to support my claim that settler colonialism has undermined ikweism and worked to constrict Anishinaabekwewag self-determination. In doing so, I will show that the hegemonic application of conflicting views on water, law, and governance have undermined this very fundamental relationship on which ikweism and, therefore, Anishinaabekwewag self-determination, have for so long been based.

Water

As discussed in chapter one, Anishinaabekwewag are intrinsically connected to nibi, and from this have responsibilities to it. This is indicative of a broader understanding that overarching Anishinaabe nibi *inaakonigewin* 'law' is sourced from relationships and primarily

concentrated on responsibilities.[67] It is understood that, regardless of one's culture, occupation, or where they live, all humans are dependent on water—as is all life—and thus have a relationship with it.[68] A fundamental aspect of Anishinaabe ways of being and knowing are derived from this and other relationships in Creation, in that generations have governed and have been governed on the basis of maintaining these relationships in a good way.[69] However, Western cultures have a significantly different understanding of law, water, and humans' relationship with and the governance of it. The Western approach to law, water, and relationships is in inherent conflict with that of Anishinaabeg and has had destructive effects on Anishinaabekwewag capacities to fulfill their obligations to nibi. Further, it has constricted the self-governance of nibi itself and its capacities to execute its responsibilities within Creation.[70]

The separation of theory and praxis in Western cultures and the linking of the two in Anishinaabe cultures is reflected in their respective understandings of law. For example, Western conceptualizations of law believe itself capable of being applied in virtually any context—such is a foundation of settler colonialism: the application of foreign political, economic, value, and legal systems. The colonial employment of Western hegemonic legal systems is in direct contrast to land-based Anishinaabe inaakonigewin that has organic foundations in Anishinaabe relationships with Creation.

Westerners tend to view water as an inanimate "subject or an object, often to be *owned* and *used.*"[71] Like the Christian tradition in response to which science was created, both have separated humans from nature. Gitxsan/European artist and author Michael Blackstock argues that, in doing so, Western cultures have created a dichotomy between the two in which water is understood to be an inanimate aspect of nature and a vital element in the proper functioning of ecosystems.[72] However, it detaches water from the proper functioning of a society.[73] Further,

Blackstock provides evidence in the works of Greek philosophers Thales, Empedocles, and

Aristotle that Western thought once grappled with the understanding of water as the foundation

of life; yet, it has since largely been framed within a scientific discourse bounded by a grammar

of its physical and chemical properties as an inert, non-thinking, unwilful particle.[74] It has been

this discourse framework that has guided water governance in Canada and led to the exploitation

of water for human benefit and profit.

As calls for inclusion of Anishinaabekwewag nibi knowledge in water governance

increase, it is also important to also identify what "governance" implies with respect to water.

This distinction in itself once again reveals the different ontological and epistemological

foundations and relationships with nature present in Anishinaabe and Western cultures. Water

governance in Canada has largely been defined in terms of how humans can control and utilize

water—water is the thing that has been governed. Indeed, Canada has fallen behind a number of

other nation-states that have begun to formally acknowledge the rights and capacities of water,

such as Bangladesh, where, in 2019, the Supreme Court granted legal rights to all the country's

rivers;[75] or Aotearoa/New Zealand, where the Whanganui River was formally acknowledged as a

living being, and gained the rights of a legal person in 2017.[76] In comparison, within

Anishinaabeg worldviews nibi is understood to be self-governing; therefore, it is human

behaviours towards nibi that need to be governed.[77] According to Susan Chiblow, Anishinaabe

water governance is rather about listening to nibi and maintaining relationships with it.[78]

Recall that in Ojibwe-Anishinaabe cosmology, nibi is amongst air, fire, and earth as the

first order of Creation; therefore, the remaining three orders—plants, animals, and humans,

respectively—are all increasingly dependent on water. Leanne Simpson describes a similar

cosmological understanding in which all beings in Creation are relatives in interdependent

relationships in the web of life.[79] As such, she contends that interference with any relative in this web, or any of the orders of Creation, will have repercussions on all others.[80] Therefore, in exploiting waters purely for human benefit, relationships throughout Creation are disrupted.[81]

As such, settler colonialism and the application of Western understandings of law, water, and water governance have worked to undermine the relationships on which ikweism is based, both directly through detached water governance approaches and the exclusion of Anishinaabekwe understandings of water, and indirectly through the disruption of other relationships as a result of contamination and physical disruption. The separation in Western cultures of humans and the environment has allowed people to have a detached understanding of and relationship with water—to turn on their taps and not know where that water comes from. Through settler colonialism, this altered, detached relationship has been enforced on Anishinaabe communities.

Odaawaa-Anishinaabekwe Elder Shirley Ida Williams of the Bird Clan from Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation describes the alteration of the Anishinaabe relationship with water as being poignantly demonstrated in the increasing need for Anishinaabeg to boil water or purchase chemically-treated water stored in plastic containers due to the contamination of their traditional water sources.[82] Simpson, too, aptly summarizes this undermined relationship in stating that "[i]n the past, the water we drank was considered medicine, but now it is hard to say whether it is a medicine or possibly poison we are putting in our bodies."[83] Canadian water governance has disrupted water's natural self-governing capacities, such as its ability to self-clean.[84] Given their still-intimate relationship with water, Anishinaabeg and, in particular, Anishinaabekwewag experience the full impact of this detached approach that has come to define Canadians' relationship with water.

If nibi is understood in a holistic sense, then protecting nibi and fulfilling the sacred relationship between it and Anishinaabekwewag is also about teaching young women about their own cycles and capacities that connect them to water. Elder Edna Manitowabi speaks to this issue, arguing that this is vital in raising future generations of Anishinaabekwewag to understand that they are sacred and that they need to take care of themselves, and to ensure that they have the capacities to be good role models for future generations of young women.[85] In this way then, Anishinaabe water governance is also about fostering a sense of strength and respect amongst Anishinaabekwewag. For Elder Manitowabi, this is also a necessary step in the re-creation of strong Anishinaabe nations.[86]

While it is acknowledged in the literature that waters in Canada and around the world are in distress, Deborah McGregor proposes an understanding of this distress as intergenerational trauma, similar to that experienced by Anishinaabeg. She contends that as Anishinaabeg have undergone trauma through displacement, relocation, and alienation—all processes that have undermined their relationship with water—so too have waters been subject to the same experiences.[87] Such processes constitute an injustice to water, and only through allowing it to heal from its trauma and once again fulfill its responsibilities to Creation will justice be restored.[88] McGregor goes on to argue that restoring balance, reciprocity, and, ultimately, justice is not feasible through simple redirection of the political and legal routes that are responsible for the trauma against water.[89] In other words, the worldview and the grammar that have bounded the discourse in Canada of water as a resource and commodity are not capable of realizing water justice. Rather, she argues, it is through the principles of power, loving responsibilities, and vision for future generations that justice can be restored.[90]

Structural impediments such as denying Anishinaabeg participation in water governance and social barriers in the form of heteropatriarchal exclusion of Anishinaabekwewag have worked in tandem to alter their relationship with water. This is not to say that Anishinaabekwewag have not maintained their nibi knowledge and ceremonies, which will be explored in the next chapter. However, by removing authority and decision-making capacities regarding water in both formal political and informal social realms, the Indian Act and other Canadian government mechanisms have had immeasurable destructive impacts on Anishinaabekwewag relationship with water. The undermining and dismantling of such significant relationships have worked to erode the foundations on which Anishinaabekwewag self-determination rests.

Conclusion

Settler colonialism in Canada and its related paternalistic approach to Indian policy has tended to exclude Anishinaabekwewag from decision-making processes, either outright or in a meaningful way.[91] In doing so, it has also both facilitated and relied upon the internalization and naturalization of heteropatriarchy within Anishinaabe communities, to the detriment of Anishinaabekwewag. One such impact of heteropatriarchal governance structures and ideologies is the disproportionate rates of gendered violence to which Anishinaabekwewag are vulnerable. Further, the superimposition of imported ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies, and resultant governance and social processes gradually established control over mainstream discourse surrounding topics such as Anishinaabe rights and self-determination by establishing a colonial grammar within which these issues are understood. This discursive control has undermined the capacity for ikweism to exist and function in mainstream political, economic, or social realms in contemporary Anishinaabe societies. The relationships that comprise ikweism

act as the foundation of Anishinaabekwewag self-determination in that relationships with

Creation give Anishinaabekwewag capacities and responsibilities on which to act through their

various roles and authorities in their families, communities, and nations. Therefore, undermining

these relationships has been to undermine Anishinaabekwewag self-determination.

Notes for Chapter Five

[1] Karen Stote, *An Act of Genocide: Colonialism and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women* (Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2015), 130.

[2] Stote, *An Act of Genocide,* 29.

[3] These two acts were *An Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of Indians in Lower Canada* and *An Act for the Protection of Indians in Upper Canada from Imposition, and the Property Occupied or Enjoyed by Them From Trespass and Injury, both* passed in 1850.

[4] Bonita Lawrence, "Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States: An Overview," *Hypatia* 18, no. 2 (2003): 7, https://onlinelibrary. wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2003.tb00799.x.

[5] Lawrence, "Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States," 7.

[6] Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, vol. 4: *Perspectives and Realities* (Ottawa: The Commission, 1996), 24, http://data2.archives.ca/e/e448/e011188230-04.pdf.

[7] Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,* vol. 4, 25.

[8] Lawrence, "Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States," 7-8, 9.

[9] Brenda L. Gunn, "Self-Determination and Indigenous Women: Increasing Legitimacy Through Inclusion," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 26, no. 2 (2014): 245, accessed February 26, 2020, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/564330/pdf.

[10] Canada, *An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian Affairs and to Extend the Provisions of At 31st Victoria Charter*, SC 1869, c 6, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/a69c6_1100100010205_eng.pdf.

[11] Gunn, "Self-Determination and Indigenous Women," 246-247.

[12] Canada, *An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian Affairs and to Extend the Provisions of At 31st Victoria Charter*, c 6.

[13] Wendy Moss, "Indigenous Self-Government in Canada and Sexual Equality Under the *Indian Act*: Resolving Conflicts Between Collective and Individual Rights," *Queen's Law Journal* 15, no. 2 (1990): 280, https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/queen15&id=285&collection=journals&index=.

[14] Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, vol. 4, 26.

[15] Joyce Green, "Balancing Strategies: Aboriginal Women and Constitutional Rights in Canada," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Green (Black Point: Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 145.

[16] Lawrence, "Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States," 7.

[17] After resounding backlash to the Trudeau government's Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy—also known as the White Paper—the official focus of federal Indian policy shifted from assimilation to self-government. However, rather than functioning within traditional governance structures, the Canadian idea of self-government more resembles self-administration or devolution within rules and outcomes dictated by the Canadian government; therefore, it can be argued that such an understanding of self-government is more akin to assimilation than to true Anishinaabe self-government.

[18] Gunn, "Self-Determination and Indigenous Women," 245-246.

[19] Stote, *An Act of Genocide*, 32.

[20] Canada. *An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws Respecting Indians*, SC 1876, c 3, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010252/1100100010254.

[21] Joanne Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, Rights: Native Women's Activism Against Social Inequality and Violence in Canada," *American Quarterly 60*, no. 2 (2008): 262-263, accessed March 4, 2020, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/239700/pdf.

[21] Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, Rights," 262-263.

[22] Colleen McIvor, *Gikinoo'amaagowin Anishinaabeg (Teaching the Anishinaabe People* (Master's Thesis, University of Winnipeg, 2013), 60-61.

[23] McIvor, "Gikinoo'amaagowin Anishinaabeg," 9.

[24] McIvor, "Gikinoo'amaagowin Anishinaabeg," 14.

[25] Tricia McGuire Adams, "Ogichitaakwe Regeneration." (Master's thesis, Lakeheda University, 2009, 24, https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/thesescanada/vol2/BVIV/TC-BVIV-3111.pdf.

[26] Rauna Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations: Indigenous Self-Determination, Governance, and Gender* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 71-72.

[27] Karli Robertson, "Indigenous Women's Experiences of the Canadian Residential School System," *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research at Trent* 1, no. 1 (2018): 46, accessed March 4, 2020, http://ojs.trentu.ca/ojs/index.php/jmrt/article/view/276/177.

[28] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, part 1, origins to 1939—The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, volume 1* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 200, http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Volume_1_History_Part_1_English_Web.pdf.

[29] Robertson, "Indigenous Women's Experiences of the Canadian Residential School System," 47-50.

[30] Kim Anderson, *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood* (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2000), 68-69.

[31] Anderson, *A Recognition of Being*, 70.

[32] Joyce Green, "Taking More Account of Indigenous Feminism: An Introduction," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, 2nd ed. ed. Joyce Green (Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2017), 9.

[33] Green, "Taking More Account of Indigenous Feminism," 10.

[34] Mary Eberts, "Being an Indigenous Woman is a 'High-Risk Lifestyle'," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, 2nd ed. ed. Joyce Green (Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2017), 69.

[35] Eberts, "Being an Indigenous Woman is a 'High-Risk Lifestyle'," 69.

[36] Eberts, "Being an Indigenous Woman is a 'High-Risk Lifestyle'," 70-71.

[37] Robyn Bourgeois, "Generations of Genocide: The Historical and Sociological Context of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls," in *Keetsahnak/Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters*, eds. Kim Anderson, Maria Campbell, and Christi Belcourt (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2018), 69-70.

[38] Bourgeois, "Generations of Genocide," 71-72.

[39] Bourgeois, "Generations of Genocide," 72-73.

[40] Bourgeois, "Generations of Genocide," 73-74.

[41] Sandra L. Bloom, "Trauma Theory Abbreviated," in *Final Action Plan: A Coordinated Community-Based Response to Family Violence* (Pennsylvania: Attorney General of Pennsylvania's Family Violence Task Force, 1999), 2, http://iheartenglish.pbworks.com/f/Trauma+Theory+Explained+14+pages.pdf.

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CHAPTER SIX:
RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES TO ANISHINAABEKWEWAG SELF-
DETERMINATION

Theorizing Anishinaabe Decolonization

A significant channel through which Anishinaabekwewag are responding to settler

colonialism and grounding their expressions of self-determination in the relationships of ikweism

is through their contributions to theoretical contemplations and analyses of Anishinaabe

philosophies. These reflections are explored in this thesis and provide the foundation for many of

the arguments contended throughout. While Anishinaabekwewag have proposed numerous

potential pathways to and conceptualizations of self-determination, all of which have points of

merit, the one examined here is one grounded in ikweism. Like other aspects of Anishinaabe

philosophy, ikweism is represented, interpreted, and taught through *aadizookaanan* 'sacred

narratives' and *dibaajimowinan* 'personal reminiscences.' These stories and the teachings,

knowledge, and protocols that emerge from them are the basis for Anishinaabe philosophy and,

therefore, a culturally-grounded pathway to decolonization and realizing self-determination.

This chapter will adopt a framework for understanding Anishinaabe decolonization and

resurgence from the work of Leanne Simpson. Simpson has examined the role of Anishinaabe

ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies in decolonization processes. She describes a pathway

from resistance and survival to flourishment and *mino-bimaadiziwin* 'the good life'.[1] This

process is an inward shift from colonial ideologies and processes to an introspective focus on

one's own indigeneity.[2] In order to do so, she argues, Anishinaabeg must engage with culturally-

relevant processes, of which storytelling is of the utmost importance, in order to realize an

Anishinaabe future. In particular, she describes Creation stories as providing the theoretical

framework from which to learn Anishinaabe philosophy.[3] She asserts storytelling as an act of decolonizing, or *Biskaabiiyang* 'to look back':

> Storytelling is at its core decolonizing, because it is a process of remembering, visioning and creating a just reality where Nishnaabeg live as both *Nishnaabeg* and *peoples*. Storytelling then becomes a lens through which we can envision our way out of cognitive imperialism, where we can create models and mirrors where none existed, and where we can experience the spaces and freedom of justice.[4]

It is by engaging with Creation and other stories that Simpson argues Anishinaabeg find their own processes of resurgence. It is each individual's responsibility to be present and to engage with stories and seek answers to the questions they may have. Through this process, individuals can find meaning in what resurgence is to them.[5]

Simpson argues that engaging with such processes will at the very least physically bring Anishinaabeg together,[6] ground people in their language, culture, and governance structures, and potentially provide an effective pathways to decolonization.[7] She also describes other aspects of this process, including reinvesting in Anishinaabe ways of being such as regenerating political governance and legal structures and traditions, language learning, engaging with ceremonies and spirituality, and using artistic traditions to create.[8] Rather than relying on the seemingly futile mainstream discourse of reconciliation and recognition to realize decolonization, Simpson argues that Anishinaabe philosophy is the foundation for transformation.[9] She conceptualizes this transformation process through the concept of *Aanji Maajidaawin* 'to start over, the art of starting over, to regenerate'.[10] From this perspective, Simpson asserts the importance of encouraging individual self-determination in processes of Biskaabiiyang.[11]

What follows in this chapter are brief case studies that demonstrate inward turns towards Anishinaabe cosmologies, ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies that has motivated action in various forms against settler colonialism and challenges to Anishinaabekwewag self-

determination. The women discussed here have resisted the colonial disruptions to their relationships with Creation by grounding themselves in those relationships and using them to motivate them, give them purpose, and guide their various actions. The stories of these Anishinaabekwewag will demonstrate the tenants of ikweism that have been explored throughout the previous two chapters. Further, they will show that while colonization has certainly damaged many relationships, these relationships are integral parts of Creation on which Anishinaabekwewag continue to act on.

Responding to Challenges to Self-Determination

In these stories of resistance and resurgence are glimpses of the traditional ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies that have motivated and guided Anishinaabekwewag actions for millennia. Relationships with their families, communities, nations, lands, waters, and other entities of Creation continue to provide Anishinaabekwewag with the knowledge and responsibilities necessary to guide them in living *mino-bimaadiziwin* 'the good life.' With this foundation, Anishinaabekwewag resist colonial restraints on their self-determination.

Walking with Our Sisters

A powerful example of these efforts is the Walking with our Sisters (WWOS) project. The WWOS was a travelling commemorative art installation comprised of over 1,700 moccasin vamps, or tops, and sixty songs. It began with a public call for the creation of the vamps in June 2012 and ended in August 2019 with a closing ceremony in Batoche, Saskatchewan.[12] The installation honoured missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, as well as children that never returned from residential schools. The vamps were specifically chosen over completed moccasins in order to represent the incomplete lives of disappeared Indigenous women across Turtle Island.[13] The WWOS project was guided by three overarching goals: (1) to honour and

commemorate the lives of Indigenous women murdered or otherwise disappeared in Canada and the United States, (2) to acknowledge the grief from which families of disappeared and murdered women suffer, and (3) to raise awareness and initiate dialogue about the disproportionate rates of violence and disappearance that Indigenous women face across Turtle Island.[14]

Exceeding beyond the goal of six hundred vamps, the project also inspired the formation of sixty-six beading groups across Turtle Island, and one in Aberdeen, Scotland that received guidance and mentoring via Skype.[15] The installation was supported by a collective of volunteers who provided guidance to hosting communities, each of which presented the installation in unique ways as per specific cultural and contextual influences.[16] For example, when on view in Thunder Bay, Ontario in the autumn of 2014, the vamps were assembled to resemble a turtle lodge.[17] The WWOS collective, 83% of which is comprised of women, included Kim Anderson, Métis-Anishinaabekwe artist and author Christi Belcourt, and Elder Maria Campbell.[18] In expanding upon the commemoration project, Anderson, Belcourt, and Campbell also co-edited *Keetsahnak/Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters*, a collection that examines the colonial roots and impacts of sexual and gendered violence against Indigenous women across Turtle Island.

In their contribution to *Keetsahnak*, Mvskoke scholar Laura Harjo, Ethnic Studies associate professor Jenell Navarro, and Mvskoke activist and Women's Studies assistant professor Kimberly Roberston discuss the significance of WWOS as a community-centred project rooted in Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. They argue that it was an important contribution to both anti-violence movements and broader decolonization efforts. Specifically, they describe community mobilization paired with beadworking as invoking traditional

ontologies, epistemologies, and ways of being in a way that bolsters the installation's

significance as an anti-violence and decolonizing project.[19]

Here, storytelling acts as a framework from which to understand the significance of both

the beadworking process and the finished products. Beadworking is a time during which

communities were brought together in a space made sacred by storytelling, thus contributing to

the broader multigenerational exchanges of knowledge and culture.[20] The process of installation

also provided modes for community development and cultural revitalization, as communities

presented the vamps in tandem within their specific cultural contexts.[21] Harjo, Navarro, and

Robertson calculate that up to forty people from each community were required in order to host

the installation,[22] from making the vamps to organizing the ceremonies and sacred spaces that

allowed for the multigenerational transmission of stories and knowledge.

The vamps themselves are also a part of storytelling in that they are imbued with a "sense

of being or life"[23] and act as mnemonic devices prompting storytellers to recollect histories and

stories of resistance. Harjo, Navarro, and Robertson use the story of the 1613 Two Row

Wampum Belt as told by Onondaga Nation Chief Irving Powless Jr. to demonstrate the potential

of beadworks and their stories as modes of resistance. The authors describe Powless' story as a

narrative of treaty between two nations—i.e., the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch—as well as one

of resistance against colonial failure to uphold the treaty. In this way, the vamps of WWOS also

told a narrative about centuries of violence against Anishinaabekwewag and other Indigenous

women, and the resistance with which it has always been met.[24] Both the process of

beadworking and the finished products, then, create space for sacred knowledge transfer.

Beadwork was and remains a representation of Anishinaabe ways of doing, knowing, and

being. Their functions in different contexts point to the variety of ways in which they are

understood and utilized. For example, Ojibwe-Anishinaabekwe author Malinda Joy Gray describes beads as displaying and revealing cultural values and knowledge in ceremony, dreams, and visions; as communicating histories; and as symbols of resiliency.[25] Further, many of the colours, patterns, and symbols used reflect meanings embedded in nation- and community-specific knowledges passed down for millennia.[26] Each of these elements tells a story that contributed to the overarching narratives of the WWOS project that aimed to give voice to and assert visibility of Anishinaabekwewag. For example, Harjo, Navarro, and Robertson discuss the meaning of the portrayal of hummingbirds on a number of the vamps:

> The hummingbird has often stood for hope, or the bird that announces good news in Indigenous communities. If taken in the context of our [missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls], this is a powerful message of resistance—that we can still have hope in the face of horrendous violence. Furthermore, different Indigenous groups deme hummingbirds sacred because of their great resiliency, given their small size, the distances they travel, and their ability to fly forwards and backwards. Thus, the hummingbird vamps represent a symbol of resiliency and strength in regards to Indigenous women and girls. The hummingbird designs in WWOS underscore a relentless hope that this violence will end and our women and girls will one day be afforded the bodily integrity and safety they all deserve.[27]

The beadwork thus also created space in which the stories of murdered and disappeared Anishinaabekwewag and their families and communities were told through the use of culturally-embedded practices. Moreover, the process of beadworking and the vamps as a product of these efforts reflect Creation stories themselves: the creation of new life through the infusion of *bagidanaamowin* 'breath' into an object.[28]

The process of beadworking also creates space in which ceremony and healing can take place. Darren Courchene translates the Ojibwemowin term for bead, *manidoominenz*, as 'little spirit berry.' He proposes that WWOS participants engaged in *manidokemowin* 'ceremony' and the process of *ominjimenimaan* 'remembering collectively.'[29] Gray puts forth a similar argument, stating that time spent together beadworking has potential cultural value in that it invokes

identity and brings together generations of community in a "therapeutic display of cultural resiliency."[30] Indeed, engaging with traditional art forms has been identified as a mode through which to reconnect with Anishinaabe identity and, therefore, heal.[31] Therefore, beadworking creates space for engagement with Anishinaabe philosophies in a way that reconnects individuals with their communities and cultures and provides opportunity for healing.

The processes and products involved with each step of the installation engaged traditional ways of being and knowing in a way that bolstered the narratives of resistance and resilience. Further, relationships were renewed and maintained in the coming together to create and present the exhibit. In this way, the WWOS embodies the foundations on which ikweism rests. It also demonstrates the process of individuating and collectivizing philosophies discussed above by Simpson. She encourages Anishinaabeg to engage with traditional stories and teachings in a contextual and personalized way, in that each individual finds their own meaning within the collective context of being Anishinaabe.[32] The WWOS enabled Anishinaabeg and other nations in Canada to engage in these processes. It built upon Anishinaabekwewag relationships with and within Creation to speak out against the violence that they have faced within the context of settler colonialism.

Shoal Lake 40 and Freedom Road

For the last century, the city of Winnipeg has received its water from Shoal Lake on the border of Ontario and Manitoba. In response to increasing health and economic concerns in the growing urban centre that brought the need for clean, soft water in to stark relief in the early twentieth century,[33] the city utilized the sweeping authority taken by Canadian governmental powers through the Indian Act to purchase fertile and abundant lands from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation (SL40) and begin construction on the Winnipeg/Shoal Lake Aqueduct.[34] Adele Perry

describes the discourse surrounding Shoal Lake as Winnipeg's water source as framing the issue "as an area of white, male, and largely professional knowledge, [which] saw the water as a commodity that might be learned about, managed, and possessed."[35] In this way, the construction of the Aqueduct is an overt example of aforementioned Canadian approaches to water governance and the stark contrast in which they compared to those of Anishinaabeg.

The lands purchased for construction included where the SL40 village was located, so it was relocated to a peninsula elsewhere on the lake. The construction of the Aqueduct and, in particular, the dyke required to obtain the clearest of water,[36] altered the landscape of the area, effectively stranding the SL40 community on a man-made island with no road access for over a hundred years. The cruelest of ironies of this project has been the inaccessibility to clean drinking water in the community. While a water treatment plant for the community was announced in September 2019 and is slated for opening December 2020, the community has been on a boil water advisory since 1997.[37]

Journalist and communication and media specialist Rick Harp from Peter Ballantyne Cree First Nation offers an examination of the Aqueduct in his foreword to Adele Perry's *Aqueduct: Colonialism, Resources, and the Histories We Remember*. His analysis of government approaches towards Indigenous rights with particular regards to the Aqueduct prompts further consideration of the discursive understanding within which this topic is to be considered. He argues that "to say the municipal, provincial, and federal governments and bureaucracies of the day disregarded the rights of the peoples of Shoal Lake presumes the former had much, if any, regard for the concerns of the latter to begin with."[38] Here, Harp reminds us that in describing colonial acts, it is problematic to say that Canadian governments have "dismissed" or "disregarded" Anishinaabeg rights without first specifying about which rights are being spoken.

In terms of government-allocated and -recognized rights, this terminology is arguably inapplicable in many contexts and historical examinations as, in the eyes of the government, "Indians" did not have many of the same rights as Canadians—particularly, of property-owning men. Therefore, there was nothing there for them to "dismiss" or "disregard." However, if one is speaking about the inherent rights held as Anishinaabeg, as stewards of the land, as humans, then perhaps this terminology becomes more appropriate. Even more suitable may be terms such as "ignored" or "were willfully ignorant of."

Harp goes on to elaborate that "Indigenous peoples' interests or preferences—basically, their very existence—never seriously registered on the radar of any level of government."[39] However, this lack of attention paid to Indigenous peoples also extended beyond governments to mainstream Canadian thought. This was demonstrated in a 1906 Manitoba Free Press article on the exploration of Shoal Lake as a reliable water source for the city of Winnipeg: "There is practically no habitation with the exception of a few Indians and an odd mining camp."[40] In her examination of the Aqueduct, Perry argues that this strategic and self-serving denial of Indigenous presence is an example of standard settler colonial discourse that separated Anishinaabeg from their lands both physically and discursively in order to obtain desirable lands.[41] Indeed, in the expanding discussion regarding the potential of Shoal Lake to meet Winnipeg's growing water needs, Shoal Lake Anishinaabeg in general or Anishinaabekwewag in particular and their relationship with their waters received little to no consideration.[42]

Therefore, the use of terminology such as "disregard" and "dismiss" implies that governments and other Canadians were aware of and acknowledged Anishinaabeg rights and decided that they were of little concern. However, in building off of considerations presented in Harp's discussion, it becomes clear that these terms often do not apply in the Canadian colonial

context, as Anishinaabeg presence and relationships with lands were not a factor in decision-making, let alone their rights. Such has been the case with the construction and century of use of the Aqueduct.

In her films of the *Freedom Road Series*, Anishinaabekwe filmmaker Angelina McLeod of SL40 provides insight from her community members on the struggles that they endured for over a century as a result of their relocation and the physical alteration of their landscape. In one of the series segments, she interviews Anishinaabekwewag, who spoke to issues such as the safety of children and Elders having to walk across often precarious ice, the community's dependency on bottled water, and the struggles that came with being cut off from essential services. The only access out of the community was by crossing the lake—either by ice in the water or barge in the summer—then driving roads through Shoal Lake 39 First Nation that connected to the Trans-Canada Highway. When Shoal Lake 39 began to give notice to SL40 community members that they wanted financial assistance in maintaining their shared road, it was the women who spoke out and began to create awareness of their situation. Anishinaabekwewag from SL40 organized a walk from their community to The Forks in Winnipeg in May 2007, eventually stopping at the future site of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR). This direct action was aimed at the federal government for having let the situation continue on for generations.[43]

The walk from SL40 to Winnipeg demonstrates the significant role that Anishinaabekwewag have in their communities as leaders. The 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) noted "the leadership being demonstrated by Aboriginal women" throughout numerous communities. Anishinaabekwewag are often referred to as vital in community processes related to healing, development, and self-government. Nongom Ikkwe, a

former Aboriginal women's organization in south east Manitoba, opened their submission to

RCAP with the following statement:

> Our people will not heal and rise toward becoming self governing and strong people both in spirit and vision until the women rise and give direction and support to our leaders. That time is now, the women are now actively participating in insuring the empowerment of their people. … We are responsible for the children of today and those of tomorrow. It is with pure kindness and our respect for life that allows us to gladly take up this responsibility to nurture the children, to teach of what we know, from what we have learned through trial and error.[44]

This statement reflects not only the understanding that Anishinaabekwewag are leaders, but that

this role has been shaped by and in turn shapes relationships with others—here, namely children.

Kim Anderson further elaborates on this relationship-based leadership, arguing that the skills and

strength Anishinaabekwewag develop is interdependently informed by their roles as mothers,

activists, and community leaders.[45]

A common theme spoken about by female interviewees in McLeod's film was concern

for children growing up in SL40. Understood within Elder Maria Campbell's aforementioned

teaching of the concentric-circle model of social organization, Anishinaabekwewag are the

"protectors and providers" to children and Elders—described by Kim Anderson to be most

important groups in a community.[46] In this way, Anishinaabekwewag consciousness and

execution of their roles function largely within this understanding that they are to consider the

impacts of decision-making on the next seven generations. As such, Anderson describes this

fundamental motivation as placing Anishinaabekwewag in a unique space to speak out against

injustice.[47] This motivation was clearly demonstrated in the walk to Winnipeg and the concern

the women expressed for the future generations of their community. After generations of

frustration over the community's isolation, it was the women who said, "that's enough."[48]

As has been stated throughout, ikweism is grounded in Anishinaabekwewag relationships with Creation. It is these relationships and the skills, strength, roles, and responsibilities developed through them that empower Anishinaabekwewag to advocate for their people in various leadership positions and processes. The relationships that they have with each other, their children, Anishinaabe men, and non-human beings in Creation inform and inspire Anishinaabekwewag to such actions as the protest walk to Winnipeg in 2007.

Josephine Mandamin and Autumn Peltier: Water Carriers, Protectors

As explored in chapters four and five, Anishinaabeg have a sacred relationship with water as a teacher, source of medicine, and the foundation of all life. Anishinaabekwewag have an even more intimate relationship with water as it is through the waters carried in their bodies that they create new life. In describing Anishinaabekwewag as the "carriers of the water," the late Elder and founding member of the Mother Earth Water Walkers Josephine Mandamin of Wikwemikong First Nation and Thunder Bay, Ontario taught the following:

> As women, we are carriers of life. Our bodies are built that way. Men are not built that way. We are special. We are very special and unique in how our bodies are made that way. And the water that we carry, is that water of unity, that unites all of us. It unites all women. It unites all men. It unites all families, all nations all across the world. That little drop of water.[49]

This relationship with water coupled with their aforementioned leadership ethic have empowered Anishinaabekwewag to take action and raise awareness about the need to protect water as the source of life. Elder Mandamin and her great niece, Autumn Peltier, also of Wikwemikong First Nation, are two examples of Anishinaabekwewag taking up their roles as water keepers, carriers, and warriors as based in ikweism.

Like so many stories about Anishinaabekwewag standing up for change, the Mother Earth Water Walkers led by Elder Mandamin began with a group of women. In discussing

women's traditional roles, teachings, and water songs, these women asked: "What can we do to bring out, to tell people of our responsibilities as women, as keepers of life and the water, to respect our bodies as Nishnaabe-kwewag, as women?"[50] This question demonstrates not only the responsibility that Anishinaabekwewag carry with regards to water, but also the connection that is understood to exist between their bodies and their lands and waters. As carriers and protectors of waters they are responsible to it, and it is this relationship that acts as a foundation to their self-determination. Within the understanding that water is to be respected as the source of life, women, as carriers of water, are similarly held in sacred esteem.

In response to continuing and increasing post-contact contamination rates in the waters of the Great Lakes, Elder Mandamin led a walk around Lake Superior in 2003. In this act of unity amongst women and men, the walkers sought to raise awareness about the sacred relationship between humans—especially women—and water, in calling for its protection.[51] Over the next fourteen years, the Mother Earth Water Walkers trekked around Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Ontario, Erie, Monona, and Winnebago; and the Menominee and St. Lawrence Rivers. They also organized cross-continental walks, such as that in spring 2011with weeks-long walks starting in Winnipeg; Gulfport, Mississippi; Machias, Maine; and Aberdeen, Washington—each representing a cardinal direction.[52] Throughout each walk, Anishinaabekwewag carried water in a copper pot from each of the Great Lakes, and shared prayers and water songs along the way;[53] the men primarily carried an Eagle Staff.[54]

Carrying on the legacy of Elder Mandamin's work is her niece, Autumn Peltier. At just fifteen years old, Peltier has met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Assembly of First Nations, and made her message internationally known in addressing the United Nations twice and attending the Children's Climate Conference in Sweden. Peltier describes her Aunt

Josephine as one of the most important people in her life, particularly in regards to her teachings about water and being Anishinaabekwe: "[ever] since I was a little girl, she taught me everything I needed to know about the importance of water and becoming a woman."[55] In this statement, Peltier speaks to the significance of intergenerational transmission of knowledge as a mechanism of ensuring the continuation of Anishinaabe ways of knowing and being and the inextricable links that exist between women and water.

Before passing away in February 2019, Elder Mandamin encouraged Peltier to continue her work in protecting water.[56] That year, Peltier succeeded her aunt in becoming Chief Water Commissioner for the Anishinabek Nation, a political advocacy group for forty First Nation communities in Ontario. As a water warrior, Peltier has spoken to issues of universal access to clean drinking water—it was this issue on reserve communities that sparked Peltier's passion when she was just eight years old—and the need to acknowledge the spirit and animacy of water and to treat it as a living being with rights.[57] She has also expressed concern for future generations of Anishinaabeg and all people, and stated that "[o]ne day I will be an ancestor, and I want my great-grand-children to know I tried hard to fight so they can have clean drinking water."[58]

In being transcendent of both time and space, water connects Peltier to her great aunt and past generations of Anishinaabekwewag, as it connects her to those of the future. As explored in chapter one, the waters that are experienced now are those that have been experienced in the past and will be in the future, if they are cared for properly. This connection, Deborah McGregor argues, motivates an ethic of accountability that is expressed in the actions of water warriors.[59] Debby Wilson Danard, too, contends that it is through songs, teachings, and ceremonies in caring for water that Anishinaabekwewag will be remembered to the seventh generation.[60] However, I

propose that participating in and offering songs, teachings, and ceremonies is representative of a larger action: Anishinaabekwewag engaging in the roles and responsibilities as given to them through the relationships on which ikweism is based. As such, whether it be Elder Mandamin walking the perimeter of the Great Lakes or Peltier engaging in community ceremony or speaking to the UN, Anishinaabekwe water warriors are staking their claim in and shifting water governance discourse.

Simpson argues that the Mother Earth Water Walks allowed Anishinaabekwewag to reclaim their place in decision-making processes in protecting water.[61] In doing these walks, they functioned within the frameworks of their relationships with water to empower themselves.[62] Deborah McGregor speaks to similar understandings in asserting that the intention of the walks was not to suit a political agenda, but to act according to the values and teachings that have guided Anishinaabekwewag for millennia, and to retrace the steps of their ancestors.[63] In this way, their actions were as ancient and sacred as the waters they sought to protect.[64] McGregor describes their journeys as acts of "mutual recognition: just as the waters become known to the walkers, the waters come to know the walkers—a connection is forged."[65] Ikweism as derived from Anishinaabekwewag relationships with Creation is the foundation on which these water warriors called for change and enacted their parallel responsibilities to water, future generations, and the rest of Creation.

In their actions, the walkers expressed an alternative to mainstream discourse that attempts to apply the same foundational logic to resolve water's crisis as has been operationalized in generations of injustice against water.[66] McGregor describes the conflicting understandings of water in Canadian and Anishinaabe worldviews as pathways of taking and giving, respectively. As such, she draws on teachings of Wiindigo, "a cannibalistic being that

simple consumes and destroys," from which Anishinaabeg learn that "greed and obsessive consumption are destructive."[67] In contrast, she describes *Minaamodizowin* 'the total state of being well.'[68] Guided by the seven grandfather teachings, Minaamodizowin is to live "on respectful and reciprocal terms with all of Creation on multiple planes (spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical) and scales (family, clan, nation, universe)."[69] Mandmin and the water walkers enacted Anishinaabe understandings of water, relationships, and justice, and in doing so called for a change in pathways from taking to giving, from Wiindigo to Minaamodizowin.[70]

Inspired by Elder Mandamin, Danard similarly calls for a shift in approach to water governance to one that takes into consideration the point of view of water, as made possible through the incorporation of Anishinaabe teachings.[71] In the following poem, Danard speaks to Anishinaabekwewag connection with water, and the impacts that Canadian approaches to water governance have had on it. Further, she reveals the ethics of responsibility, gratitude love, responsibility, and accountability that inform the maintenance of the relationship. She writes:

> I play my tobacco offering in the water
> "What are you asking of me?"
> We do not govern Mother Earth
> She governs us
> She teaches us how to care for her
> When She is sick we must take care of her
>
> Unconditional in her love for all of Creation
> We must also be unconditional in our love for Her
>
> What we do to the water, we do to ourselves
> We see our reflection in the water.
> Water is a warrior
>
> Life brought forth from the waters
> of Mother Earth
> of birth
> the first tears
>
> "Man"-made dams and structures

stagnates her life-blood
Throws her off-balance
straining under pressure.

We thirst from "Man"-made promises
of a good-life rooted in greed and economy
We destroy our past, our present and our future
Leaves us Thirsty

False promises replace
Creators promise
That water would always companion
To bring life

Be thankful
Be grateful

The way of the water teaches us

Love unconditional for all of life
Four ourselves, for each other

The water inside of us
Speaks to the water outside of us
Reflects itself outward
What we do the Water
We do to ourselves
Be the water…[72]

In their goals as water warriors to raise awareness about the trauma water has

experienced and its importance as the basis for all life, Elder Mandamin, Autumn Peltier, and

other water warriors have contributed to the shift in discourse that has been identified as vital to

realizing a balanced reciprocal relationship between humans and waters in Canada. They have

brought public attention to the relationship that humans have with water. They have used their

Anishinaabe stories, teachings, ceremonies, and other ways of being and knowing to empower

themselves to act on the relationships they are a part of within the web of Creation.

Conclusion

Within a pathway to decolonization and Anishinaabe resurgence that is informed by Creation stories and the ways of being and knowing that emerge from them, ikweism provides a useful framework from which to understand Anishinaabekwewag actions and calls against injustices that, at their roots, challenge their self-determination. Self-determination is more than formal political will or economic freedoms; it is also the capacity to engage with ontologies and epistemologies that have guided Anishinaabekwewag for millennia, and engage in ancient and sacred relationships accordingly. The WWOS, women of Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, and Elder Josephine Mandamin, Autumn Peltier, and other water warriors share a common basis in ikweism as both a motivator and a guiding framework.

Notes for Chapter Six

[1] Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2011)*,* 13.

[2] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 17.

[3] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 32-33.

[4] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 33.

[5] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 43.

[6] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 34.

[7] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 17.

[8] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 17-18.

[9] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 19-21.

[10] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 22.

[11] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 51.

[12] "Artwork," Walking with Our Sisters, accessed March 23, 2020, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/; Walking with Our Sisters, "Home," accessed March 23, 2020, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca.

[13] "Moccasin 'Vamps,'" Walking with Our Sisters, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/artwork/moccasin-vamps/ (accessed August 13, 2019).

[14] "The Project," Walking with Our Sisters, accessed March 23, 2020, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/about/the-project/.

[15] "Beading Groups," Walking with Our Sisters, accessed March 23, 2020, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/artwork/beading-groups/.

[16] Laura Harjo, Jenell Navarro, and Kimberly Robertson, "Leading with Our Hearts," in *Keetsahnak: Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous* Sisters, eds. Kim Anderson, Maria Campbell, and Christi Belcourt (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2018), 289-290.

[17] Karyn Recollet, "Glyphing Decolonial Love Through Urban Flash Mobbing and *Walking with Our Sisters,*" *Curriculum Inquiry* 45, no. 1 (2015): 132, https://www-tandfonline-com.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/03626784.2014.995060?needAccess=true (accessed August 13, 2019).

[18] "WWOS Collective," Walking with Our Sisters, accessed March 23, 2020, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/about/collective/.

[19] Harjo, Navarro, and Roberston, "Leading with Our Hearts," 281, 286-287.

[20] Harjo, Navarro, and Roberston, "Leading with Our Hearts," 294-295.

[21] Harjo, Navarro, and Roberston, "Leading with Our Hearts," 290-291.

[22] Harjo, Navarro, and Roberston, "Leading with Our Hearts," 291.

[23] Harjo, Navarro, and Roberston, "Leading with Our Hearts," 294.

[24] Harjo, Navarro, and Roberston, "Leading with Our Hearts," 292-293.

[25] Malinda Joy Gray, "Beads: Symbols of Indigenous Cultural Resilience and Value." (master's thesis, University of Toronto, 2017), 2-3, 16-23. https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/82564/3/Gray_Malinda_J_201711_MA_thesis.pdf.

[26] Harjo, Navarro, and Roberston, "Leading with Our Hearts," 293-294.

[27] Harjo, Navarro, and Roberston, "Leading with Our Hearts," 295.

[28] Darren Courchene, personal communication with the author, April 6, 2020.

[29] Darren Courchene, personal communication with the author, April 6, 2020.

[30] Gray, "Beads," 24.

[31] Linda Archibald and Jonathan Dewar, "Creative Arts, Culture, and Healing: Building an Evidence Base 1," *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health* 8, no. 3 (2010): 6, accessed April 14, 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265675375_Creative_Arts_Culture_and_Healing_Building_an_Evidence_Base_1.

[32] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* 17, 34, 43.

[33] Adele Perry, "Water and City," in *Aqueduct: Colonialism, Resources, and the Histories We Remember*, Semaphore Series (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2016), 35-43.

[34] Adele Perry, *Aqueduct: Colonialism, Resources, and the Histories We Remember*, Semaphore Series (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2016), 58-73.

[35] Perry, *Aqueduct,* 53.

[36] Adele Perry explains that Falcon River and Snake Lake both drained humus-rich, or "dark" water into Shoal Lake. Worried about public reception of this water given the expense of the project and its political ramifications for the city, they had two options for separate this dark water from the desired clear water: spend an extra million dollars to extend the aqueduct by five miles, or $147,000 to build a dyke to divert the dark water of Falcon River. For financial reasons, the latter option was chosen. Perry, *Aqueduct,* 71-73.

[37] The Canadian Press Staff, "First Nation to get new water plant after being under boil water advisories for 22 years," *Global News*, September 6, 2019, accessed March 23, 2020, https://globalnews.ca/news/5866498/shoal-lake-40-new-water-plant/.

[38] Rick Harp, Foreword to Adele Perry, *Aqueduct: Colonialism, Resources, and the Histories We Remember*, Semaphore Series (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2016), 8.

[39] Rick Harp, Foreword to Adele Perry, *Aqueduct: Colonialism, Resources, and the Histories We Remember*, Semaphore Series (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2016), 8.

[40] Manitoba Free Press, "Water Commission Visits Shoal Lake," September 3, 1906, quoted in Perry, *Aqueduct,* 8.

[41] Perry, *Aqueduct*, 47, 55.

[42] Perry, *Aqueduct*, 45-50.

[43] *Freedom Road: Women/Ikwewag--Freedom Road Series*, directed by Angelina McLeod (National Film Board, 2019), online film, accessed March 23, 2020, https://www.nfb.ca/playlists/freedom-road-series/playback/#3.

[44] Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, vol. 4: *Perspectives and Realities* (Ottawa: The Commission, 1996), 7, accessed March 19, 2020, http://data2.archives.ca/e/e448/e011188230-04.pdf.

[45] Kim Anderson, *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood*, Women's Issues Publishing Program (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2000), 213.

[46] Anderson, *A Recognition of Being,* 158-159.

[47] Anderson, *A Recognition of Being,* 213.

[48] Roxanne Greene, interview in *Freedom Road: Women/Ikwewag--Freedom Road Series*, directed by Angelina McLeod (National Film Board, 2019), online film, accessed March 23, 2020, https://www.nfb.ca/playlists/freedom-road-series/playback/#3.

[49] Elder Josephine Mandamin, quoted in Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2008), 99.

[50] Josephine Mandamin, Deb McGregor, and First Nations Youth, "Women, Traditional Knowledge, and Responsibilities to Water," Workshop presented at *Indigenous Women: "Celebrating Our Diversity," 8th Annual Indigenous Women's Symposium,* Peterborough*, ON: Trent University, March 16-18, 2007, quoted in Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2008), 103.

[51] Deborah McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," *Canadian Woman Studies* 30, no. 2-3 (2015-2016): 74, accessed March 20, 2020, https://cws.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cws/article/view/37455/34003.

[52] "2011 Water Walk," Mother Earth Water Walkers, accessed March 23, 2020, http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com/?page_id=2190.

[53] Simpson, *Lighting the Eighth Fire*, 104.

[54] Debby Wilson Danard, "Be the Water," *Canadian Woman Studies* 30, no. 2-3 (2015-2016): 117, accessed March 20, 2020, https://cws.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cws/article/view/37458/34006.

[55] Autumn Peltier, quoted in CBC News, "Autumn Peltier named chief water commissioner by Anishinabek Nation," CBC, accessed March 23, 2020, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/autumn-peltier-chief-water-commissioner-1.5111137.

[56] Autumn Peltier, interview with CBC Up North, *Autumn Peltier Becomes Chief Water Commissioner for Anishinabek First Nation*, CBC, April 25, 2019, accessed March 23, 2020, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/autumn-peltier-chief-water-commissioner-1.5111137.

[57] Melissa Kent, "Canadian teen tells US 'warrior up' to protect water," *CBC*, accessed March 23, 2020, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/autumn-peltier-un-water-activist-united-nations-1.4584871.

[58] Autumn Peltier, quoted in Melissa Kent, "Canadian teen tells US 'warrior up' to protect water," *CBC*, accessed March 23, 2020, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/autumn-peltier-un-water-activist-united-nations-1.4584871.

[59] McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," 72.

[60] Danard, "Be the Water," 119.

[61] Simpson, *Lighting the Eighth Fire*, 104.

[62] Simpson, *Lighting the Eighth Fire*, 105.

[63] McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," 74-76.

[64] McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," 74.

[65] McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," 75.

[66] McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," 76.

[67] McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," 76

[68] McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," 75.

[69] McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," 75.

[70] McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and *Zaagidowin* (Love)," 76.

[71] Danard, "Be the Water," 119.

[72] Danard, "Be the Water," 116.

CONCLUSION

In recent decades, Anishinaabekwewag have been largely excluded from self-determination discourse. Further, mainstream understandings of self-determination have been dominated by Western discursive lenses of dichotomy, rights, and universal application of theory. However, Anishinaabe cosmologies, ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies provide precedence to resist against both of these trends. If self-determination is understood in a relational sense in which the capacities to act on and within relationships is considered a foundational principle, then ikweism provides a strong base from which Anishinaabekwewag self-determination is drawn.

Creation stories and other *aadizookaanan* 'sacred narratives' and *dibaajimowinan* 'personal reminiscences' outline these relationships and provide guidance in how to maintain them in a good way. In fulfilling their responsibilities within these relationships to maintain balance and harmony amongst all beings within Creation, Anishinaabekwewag exercise self-determination. Colonization has worked to disrupt and redefine these relationships, shifting the grammar from one of respect, relationships, reciprocity, equality, balance, and the animacy of all Creation, to one of dominance, separation, and inequality. Within the latter, humans have relationships with lands, waters, animals, and other humans that differ drastically from understandings present in Anishinaabe worldviews.

Understanding self-determination as relational capacities derived from ikweism also negates the dichotomization of self-determination discourse into individual versus collective realms. Operating within a Western grammar of rights and reconciliation, this dichotomy demonstrates the detrimental impact that settler colonialism and the application of foreign value systems has had on Anishinaabekwewag. In placing the individual and the collective in mutually

antagonistic positions in governance structures numerically dominated by men, women's concerns have often been relegated as unimportant or as issues for another day.

Ikweism as a holistic, flexible framework inherently incorporates aspects of the individual and the collective. As explored by a number of Anishinaabe scholars and authors, coming to understand Anishinaabe philosophy within the context of one's own life is about individualizing knowledge within the broader context of the collective, with the well-being of both as a guiding ethic. In this way, the individual and the collective are not mutually exclusive, nor is one a prerequisite for the other. Rather, they are both intertwined in a relationship that requires tending to both for the betterment of Anishinaabeg and their families, communities, and nations.

Ikweism is not just about self-determination for Anishinaabekwewag. If agency is considered an extension of the feminine as interpreted from Creation stories, then the feminine becomes a source of strength and self-determination for all Anishinaabeg. In this way, ikweism provides a framework for creating space for an inclusive and holistic understanding of self-determination. Moreover, it describes elements of self-determination present in Anishinaabe understandings that are often left unaddressed in mainstream universalized definitions, namely capacities to fulfill responsibilities to and within Creation.

An understanding of self-determination based on ikweism also acts as a foundation for Anishinaabekwewag empowerment in a manner relevant to their cultures, families, and communities. Both prior and in response to colonization of Anishinaabe minds, lands, and governance structures, Anishinaabekwewag have long been empowered by Creation stories and the relevant philosophical tenants reflected in them. Such a responsibility- and capacity-based

approach to self-determination focuses on the power and capabilities of Anishinaabekwewag as ikwewag, rather than on the deficits endured as a result of colonization.

While the stories and ideologies that inform ikweism are ancient, the exploration of this approach in academic literature is still in its early stages. As Rose Ella Cameron suggests, ikweism needs to be further refined and applied to other areas of study in order to develop a mode of and a way of understanding resistance against colonial structures from points of view grounded in Anishinaabe thought.[1] Given the prominent role that Anishinaabekwewag played collectively and individually in political, economic, and social realms, there is arguably no research area that could not benefit from analysis through an ikweist lens. Ikweism has the potential to bridge gaps and create a culturally-relevant way of interpreting issues in all areas of Anishinaabe studies.

Notes for Conclusion

[1] Rose Ella Cameron, "What Are You in the Dark? The Transformative Powers of Manitouminasuc Upon the Identities of Anishinabeg in the Ontario Child Welfare System." (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2010), 35, https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/26156/1/CAMERON_Rose_E_201011_PhD_Thesis.pdf.

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