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Defining Traditional American Indian Identity through Anishinaabe Cultural Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Joshua E Maudrie wrote *Defining Traditional American Indian Identity through Anishinaabe Cultural Perspective* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Cross-Disciplinary Master's Degree in Sociology and Ethnic Studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Minnesota, 2014.

This study addresses the question of American Indian Identity, specifically, what makes an Indian an Indian from a traditional Anishinaabe Indian cultural perspective? Perspectives were gained through life experiences as an active member of Anishinaabe Indian communities in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan, as well as traditional cultural ceremonies. There are two primary reasons for this study: first to provide insight into the traditional cultural perspective of American Indian identity for non-Indians and its relevancy in present day; and second, to start a discussion within tribal nations about utilizing their traditional culture in governance and membership issues. For this Qualitative study, experiential ethnographic research was used. The primary data collection method was observation of Anishinaabe communities, individuals, traditional people, and ceremonies over the course of the researcher’s lifetime. The second method was a review of literature related to American Indian Identity. For the purpose of this study, there are five categories used to define an American Indian person: law, blood, culture, self-identification and physical features.

The author contends there is a misunderstanding of what the traditional culture is and that it is relevant in current times for Indian people. As both this study and Alfred (1999) show, traditional culture is relevant and can be utilized to transform identity and Native communities. The traditional perspective is necessary to understand who Native Americans are culturally.

Once the traditional culture is understood, discussions can be held on the other definitions of "Indianess" and their impact on communities and reservations. American Indian people are different because of WHO they are, culturally and spiritually, which is more important than WHAT they are or look like. The identity of the Anishinaabe lies in their traditions and culture. Concepts of race, blood quantum, and physical appearance are not important within traditional culture. Any American Indian tribe that has assimilated culturally, as a way of surviving, no longer exists as a traditional culture.

Defining Traditional American Indian Identity through Anishinaabe Cultural Perspective

A Thesis Presented By

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To

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This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

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Boozhoo. Aaniin. It takes a village to raise a child, especially this child. I am forever indebted to those who have mentored me throughout my life. I have traveled many miles and lived many places in my short life and I feel as though I have lived a thousand years in that time. My path has not been easy and I could never have made it without those who have been there to guide me, teach me, mentor me and extend the unselfish hand of true friendship. I am truly humbled every time I stop to think of all those who have taught me so much about myself, each of them in their own beautiful way. This research and who I am is a continual process. The list of people I have to thank is lengthy and will continue to grow. I would like to point out that I consider the information in this research a gift that was given to me and now to you, the reader. I use the term "gift" because the Indian individuals I have the privilege to know and the wisdom they have shared both in words and actions have undoubtedly shaped who I am in every way as a human being and as an Anishinaabe ininii (Ojibwe man). The gift of life in the wisdom of their teachings is something I am forever thankful for and honestly there are no words in the English language that could ever come close to allowing me to express how I feel about these individuals and the gratitude I feel towards them. Miigwetch.

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the Elders and traditional Indians for without them this study and our identity as Anishinaabe people wouldn't exist. Miigwetch for preserving our way of life and living the values of our beautiful culture. I want nothing more than to name them all so the world can acknowledge them appropriately. Out of respect to them and their communities I will not. They know who they are and so does the Creator.

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DEFINITIONS

Indianess—"Indianess means different things to different people. And, of course, at the most elementary level, Indianess is something only experienced by people who are Indians. It is how Indians think about themselves and is internal, intangible and metaphysical. From this perspective, studying Indianess is like trying to study the innermost mysteries of the human mind itself" (Peroff 1997, 487).

Gitchii Manidoo—Ojibwe word for the Great Spirit, the Creator, *the* Mystery.

Manidoog—Ojibwe word for spirits. This is the plural form of the word.

Doodem—Ojibwe word for clan or clan system.

Indian/American Indian/Native/Native American/Indigenous/Aboriginal/Primitive—used interchangeably for the purpose of this research to refer to the original inhabitants of Turtle Island (North America).

Anishinaabe, Ojibwe, Chippewa (one in the same)—meaning "From whence lowered the male of the species" (Benton-Banai 1988, 3). These words are used interchangeably with each other to represent these nations on Turtle Island (North America).

Elder—any Indian person who is traditional and over the age of 50; the author is choosing the age of 50, but the age of an Elder has different meanings for different people, tribes, etc. Being an Elder in Anishinaabe culture does not mean just an older person. It has a specific, respectful connotation. A term that is similar would be *old*

people. Referring to the "old people" is a sign of deep respect because anyone being referred to as an old person or Elder in Anishinaabe culture is also traditional and their life, words and actions have significance for the Anishinaabe.

Traditional—"Tradition is the stories, teachings, rituals, ceremonies, and languages that have been inherited from previous generations. Without specific reference to a particular form or structure, something is authentically indigenous and traditional if it draws on what is indigenous to the culture to honor the values and principles of the inheritance. If it fails in its primary reference to inherited ways, beliefs, and values, it is not traditional or authentically indigenous" (Alfred 1999, 147-148). To build on this the author, has taken liberty to explicitly define this concept, since it is very important to understand it in terms of this research.

The author realizes that in using the term *traditional*, it is implying that not every Indian is traditional. As opposed to before contact all Indians were traditional as there was no other way to be. Using the term *traditional* in relation to American Indian culture is a relatively new term. It comes as a result of identity and cultural loss. Five hundred years ago every Indian was identified as traditional and making a distinction otherwise would have been ludicrous. Defining who or what is traditional with Anishinaabe people is, in itself, debatable. For the sole purpose of this research, the author is defining *traditional* or *traditional culture* as follows:

- Not Christian or another religion.
- Believe in the old ways, tribal teachings and ceremonies.
- Believe in tobacco and utilize it according to tribal teachings.

- Believe in and living the tobacco way---people first, ceremonies, prayer, pipe, drums, etc. Perhaps everything isn't done perfectly or ceremonies aren't attended regularly, but the beliefs are maintained.
- Live their lives according to the four seasons and Anishinaabe traditional timeline for living.
- Identity doesn't exist when culture, ceremonies and language are taken away.
- May or may not know their tribal language but recognize the importance of it and try to learn it.
- To be traditional is to be a servant to the people. There is no greater sacrifice than to give up one's life/wants/needs for the needs of the people.

CHAPTER BEZHIG (ONE)

INTRODUCTION

It was once very simple being Native American, but it has become progressively complex. As Grande (2004, 95) states, “The ‘crisis’ of American Indian identity is perhaps better articulated as an identity paradox.” A different world has been closing in around Indian people and is consuming them at all costs. This has been devastating to their cultural identity.

Why is it important to know and decide who a Native American is? Why is it getting so much attention? Regulating Native American identity needs to be studied because their future depends on it. The destruction to their communities, culture, family structure and individuals is immeasurable. As a result of the United States involvement in identity regulation Indian people are suffering at the emotional and social levels, resulting in a dysfunctional community and family life, in addition to cultural and tribal language loss.

With a topic as broad as identity it is difficult to carve out a piece and focus on it without sampling or acknowledging others. All is connected and woven together. “The topic of indigenous identity opens a Pandora’s Box of possibilities, and to try to address them all would mean doing justice to none” (Weaver 2001, 240).

There are many ways to approach the subject of identity with Indian people. Most of the literature on American Indian Identity focuses on blood quantum and defining

legal membership pertaining to tribes. The voice of the traditional cultural perspective is lacking and almost non-existent. By having an understanding of the traditional perspective it will help frame the identity issue more holistically and lead to a better understanding of Indian people.

It is commonly said, that there are always two sides to every story. When it comes to defining Indianess there are more than two. Is being Indian a racial, ethnic, cultural, legal, political or genetic identity? It is one or all of the preceding, depending on why one wants to be Indian and who is asked. Defining who is and isn't an Indian is inescapable in modern times. There must be a definition if only for tribal, state and federal programing and resource allocation.

The majority of social issues faced by Indian people today are attributed to cultural identity loss. The problem goes far beyond the blood quantum issue; it's beneath Indian skin and in Indian spirits. The wounds are deep and the pain is excruciating. There are so many levels of destruction to American Indian identity that it's maddening to think about let alone to experience personally. The inspiration for this study came from the author's experience as a mixed blood Anishinaabe Indian. He watched how others like him were treated by non-traditional Indian people and that led him to question why it was happening. Discovering how radically different traditional people treat someone and learning more about traditional culture led to the question of what makes someone an Indian.

There are two primary reasons for this study. First to provide insight into the Indian identity issue for non-Indians on what it means to be traditional, its relevancy, and who Indian people are from a cultural perspective. Second, to start a discussion within tribal nations about utilizing their traditional culture in governance and membership issues. Most tribal nations are using oppressive means to determine membership, namely blood quantum. This is adding to the destruction of their nations, culture and individual Indian people. It is encouraging cultural assimilation into the larger society, which will lead to their demise.

Traditional culture brings healing, understanding and provides a roadmap for modern times through cultural values and perspectives. It is not the author's plan to create a situation where there are right and wrong perspectives or answers. The traditional approach is but one solution. "Because race is not an adequate indicator of culture, identity is something that should be assessed rather than assumed" (Weaver 2001, 248).

This study addresses the question of American Indian Identity, specifically, what makes an Indian an Indian from a traditional Anishinaabe Indian cultural perspective? Perspectives were gained through life experiences as an active member of Anishinaabe Indian communities in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan, as well as observing and participating in a variety of traditional cultural ceremonies.

What follows is a review of the relevant literature surrounding American Indian Identity and a description of the research methods, findings, discussion and a final

reflection of the study. In the final reflection chapter, considerations for further research are discussed.

CHAPTER NIIZH (TWO)

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The author places this research study within the existing literature. There is currently very little written on the traditional cultural perspective, especially in defining it and its meaning in daily life. The following pages will examine the literature that does exist on American Indian identity. The discussion includes six sections: (I) Historical Background and Timeline (II) Historical Background on the Anishinaabe (III) Categories of Definition (IV) Theories on Indigenous Identity Development (V) Final Thoughts and (VI) Reflections on Indianess.

Terminology referring to Indian people has always been a controversial topic. Throughout this study, the author will use various references to American Indian people: Indians or Indian people, Native Americans, Indigenous or Aboriginal are used interchangeably. Ideally it would be appropriate to reference the individual or tribe by name, if known. As Pewewardy (1993, 4) states, "It should be pointed out that the specific tribal identity is the key question in intratribal and intertribal affairs and communication." It's how tribes refer to themselves and other tribes; it is appropriate for others to do likewise. "Before contact, indigenous people identified themselves as distinct from other indigenous people and constructed their identities in this way. Indeed, this is still the case for many who see themselves as members of their own nations rather than members of a larger group represented by the umbrella term *Native American*" (Weaver 2001, 242).

Utter discusses the first contact made with Indians as the initial point for understanding Indian identity. “Before first European contact, the answer to “Who is an Indian?” was easy. Nobody was. “Indian” is a European-derived word and concept. Prior to contact, indigenous people were not Indians but were members of their own socio-political and cultural groups—Lakota, Makah, Yurok, Tlingit, or Chugach, for example or sub-groups thereof—just as there were Frenchmen, Germans, Englishmen, and Italians in Europe. With the landing of the Europeans, an immediate dichotomy arose that was previously unknown in the hemisphere. Instantly the Native people lost some of their identity when they were all lumped together under a single defining word. The distinction between Native and non-Native peoples resulted in a highly significant legal, political, and social differentiation that remains with us today and is embodied in the first question” (Utter 2001, 25).

Utter goes on to emphasize that the problem of identity is rooted in the U.S. Constitution. “No single definition of “an Indian” exists—socially, administratively, legislatively, or judicially” (Utter 2001, 25). “Since the U.S. Constitution uses the word *Indian* in two places but defines it nowhere, Congress has made its own definitions on an ad hoc basis. A 1978 congressional survey discovered no less than thirty three separate definitions of Indians in use in different pieces of federal legislation. These may or may not correspond with those any given tribe uses to determine its citizenship” (Garroutte 2003, 16).

I. Historical Background and Timeline on American Indian Identity

Deloria in *American Indians, American Justice,* explains the value that a historical context can provide in comprehending American Indian life.

> It is impossible to understand American Indians in their contemporary setting without first gaining some knowledge of their history as it has been formed and shaped by the Indian experience with Western civilization. Many of the customs and traditions of the past persist in the minds and lives of Indians today and have been jealously preserved over several centuries of contact with non-Indians as the last remaining values that distinguish Indians from the people around them. Indians must continually choose to follow the dictates of their traditions or to accept the values of the outsider. History, therefore, cannot be divorced from an analysis of American Indian life. But it must be tempered with a knowledge of the Indian perspective, which provides it with the substance for understanding the cultural conflict it represents. (Deloria 1987, 1-2)

Deloria's (1987) six periods of federal Indian policy gives a historical analysis of the Native American experience in this country since contact.

- Discovery, Conquest, and Treaty Making (1532-1828)
- Removal and Relocation (1828-1887)
- Allotment and Assimilation (1887-1928)
- Reorganization and Self-Government (1928-1945)
- Termination (1945-1961)
- Self-Determination (1961-Present)

Each period has had a unique impact on American Indian identity and needs to be factored into any real discussion on identity. How their identity as Indian people changed as a result of each of these periods of history is very important. The damage and change to traditional culture is a direct result of history.

What makes Indians in America different than everyone else, including other minorities and ethnic groups can be understood partly through the difference in their relationship legally with the United States government (Grande 2004). Some of the distinct differences of being an Indian are as follows. (Grand 2004, 98-99)

- Sovereignty vs. Democracy
- Treaty Rights
- Dual Citizenship

- Federal Recognition
- Economic Dependency
- Reservations

No other population or ethnicity has a relationship with the federal government like American Indians. This is an element of their identity that is often overlooked. The author can verify that unique relationship does affect Indian people's identity in how they view themselves and their lives.

II. Historical Background on the Anishinaabe

In order to have a frame of reference for who the Anishinaabe are as a people, both past and present, including ceremonial/traditional the author recommends the following: Benton-Banai 1988, Johnston 1990, Densmore 1979, Peacock and Wisuri 2006, Warren 1984, James 1956, Kohl 1956, Danziger 1978. These resources provide a foundation for historically understanding the Anishinaabe.

III. Categories of Definition

For the purpose of this study, there are five categories used to define an Indian person: law, blood, culture, self-identification and physical features. Typically, these categories overlap, since identity is multi-faceted. In order to frame the study appropriately, these five categories are explained with examples.

A. Law: *tribal membership, state/federal recognition, state/federal acts and other bodies of law*

Indian identity for legal purposes can be radically different from cultural or social definitions. It is necessary to recognize what is important for all concerned when defining legal membership. The government's role in defining identity determines financial

amounts and access to natural resources. The tribe's role in defining legal identity is to protect inherent sovereign rights and support for families and communities. Determining identity from a financial standpoint is much different than from a cultural standpoint. The problem lies in the fact that tribes have to determine the balance. This becomes difficult, especially, as tribes gain money through casinos. The casino issue is addressed in Chapter Niiwin (Four).

"Being Indian and being tribal---Status, registered, treatied, or enrolled---are not necessarily the same thing" (Valaskakis 2005, 239). To be recognized by the United States government or State governments and to be a "card carrying" Indian by legal status does not insure social recognition by other tribal members or even the public at large. The author knows of many individuals that are enrolled members of tribes but are not accepted socially and vice versa. The idea of legal status membership by blood quantum is a form of oppression and incongruous with any tribe's traditional sense of membership. Thus, there must be a legal definition, if only for resource allocation purposes.

Garroutte in *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America* provides additional details regarding identity and legality. "Most federal legal definitions of Indian identity specify a minimum blood quantum—frequently one-quarter but sometimes one-half—but others do not. Some require or accept tribal citizenship as a criterion of federal identification, and others do not. Some require reservation residency, or ownership of land held in trust by the government, and others do not. Other laws affecting Indians specify no definition of identity, such that courts must determine to whom the laws apply. Because of these wide variations in legal identity definitions and their frequent departure

from the various tribal ones, many individuals who are recognized by their tribes as citizens are nevertheless considered non-Indian for some or all federal purposes. The converse can be true as well" (Garroutte 2003, 16).

Two Eagles (2011) in *What is an Indian? A Legal Definition, Part 1, 2* lists some of the legal definitions that exist regarding Indian identity through various pieces of legislation and government entities. He cites definitions used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, Indian Education Act, Indian Arts and Crafts Act, United Nations definition, American Indian Law definition among others. These are important when considering legal membership and identity.

Lawrence in *"Real" Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* explains the issue of reclaiming tribal identity. "Even as mixed-blood Native people insist on the primacy of a tribal identity, being legally disqualified from the life of their Indigenous nation through loss of Indian status makes a thorough reclaiming of a tribal identity very difficult" (Lawrence 2004, 11). Lawrence's view has been substantiated by the author's observations and participation in Indian communities. It is dangerous to ignore legal status when determining identity. It has negative effects on those not included, and the author has seen this in every community he visited. Being a recognized legal member of one's community is important for the individual. The psychological validation of membership for some is all they have. Garroutte (2003, 30) validates this view when she quotes an Indian woman who said, "There are a lot of people that I see…who didn't grow up around Cherokee [culture], but know they're Cherokee or learned they're Cherokee. [And they] have something….A lot of people who are what I call marginal Cherokees in terms of [having] that [traditional]

culture…really are in pain from not having that in their lives. It's kind of like a search that lasts all your life…And for those people…having that tribal membership, having some kind of a connection, even if it's by paper, to the tribe, is tremendously significant."

Intertribal marriage was common for centuries, and tribes never had a problem with identity because they had their own way of determining who they were traditionally (Churchill 1999). The children of intertribal marriages were never labeled as half-breeds or judged for having a lower blood quantum of one tribe or another. Cultural traditions, like *doodems*, would determine tribe membership. The author can attest to this issue personally. His daughter is enrolled in his tribe but actually has more blood quantum in her mother's tribe. It was a personal preference where to enroll her, but the example verifies the complexity of tribal membership and blood quantum when determining identity.

George-Kanentiio (2007) discusses the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and tribal membership issues. The Mohawk example is important because the author believes they have devised one of the most traditional and effective membership criteria models in all of Indian country. It combines elements that preserve distinct biological basis, protects tribal cultural values and reinforces the role of family within an aboriginal society. If tribes in the United States implemented a model like this, the social problems in their communities would diminish to a functional level, replacing the status quo.

A final thought on the legal aspect of determining Indianess is provided by Valaskakis: "The colonial policies regulating Indian that fuse recognition and identification in the codes of tribal enrollment have displaced or erased the cultural

criteria through which Indians have historically identified each other and themselves" (Valaskakis 2005, 239). The colonial policies have damaged cultural identity.

B. Blood: *quantum, lineage and genetic testing*

Blood quantum is, without doubt, the most analyzed topic pertaining to American Indian identity. There are numerous scholars, both Indian and non-Indian, that have written about blood quantum, facets of its history and effects on American Indian people. Some of the many authors addressing the subject include Schmidt 2011, Lewis 2006, Foster 1997, Snipp 2002, Pewewardy 1993, Churchill 1999, Spruhan 2006. Many of the sources provide the history of how and why blood quantum was developed and applied to Native Americans. Blood quantum is illogical in determining cultural identity. How can identity be determined by a fraction on paper? As a result, identity becomes a product of money and greed, ultimately eliminating tribes. Some examples of its use and impact follow.

Presently, a person with mixed ethnicity needs to make daily choices because of being identified by society in one way, while identifying oneself as another. Family and friends may have different views, depending upon their identity. There is no right or wrong answers regarding identity, yet, it feels much like being fixed in a straightjacket of history (Owens 1998). In the United States, the identity choices are limited to Indian or non-Indian. In-between is not a choice (Owens 1998). In the United States, generally, there is discrimination against those claiming a mixed ethnicity. 'White America' and Indians are jealous and envious of mixed-bloods for different reasons (Owens 1998). The author has personally experienced the jealousy from both sides, and it is based on the fact

that people of one ethnicity feel they are trapped identity-wise, while mixed-bloods have a choice. This causes jealousy and mistrust. The author agrees with Lewis (2006) when he states, “I think a mixed-blood Indian is just an Indian.” This issue is discussed in Chapter Niiwin (Four).

“In pre-contact times, of course, all natives of this continent were ‘full-blooded Indians,’ although the meaning of this is a bit nebulous. Insofar as indigenous North Americans defined themselves in terms of specific socio-cultural and political membership – that is, as Mohawks or Muscogees or Gros Ventres – rather than in terms of a racial category, the issue seems moot. This is all the more true in that ‘intertribal’ marriages were always rather common; meaning that ‘mixed-bloodedness’ – at least in traditional Indian terms – has always been normative. Traditional native societies were able to accommodate the regular influx of members of other indigenous nations, often adapting certain aspects of the newcomer’s material and philosophical life to their own needs, without becoming culturally diluted. The mainstay of this timeless equilibrium had to do with the cohesion of Indian societies as discrete socio-cultural blocs, primarily because of the linkages of these blocs with specific geographical settings. All this changed with the European invasion, introduction of the concepts of race as the definitive dimension of cultural membership, and obliteration of the traditional relationships between native peoples and the lands they occupied” (Stiffarm and Lenore, 40).

“Unquestionably, mixed-bloods and persons lacking even the pretense of a Native gene stood among the foremost exemplars of patriotism in a number of indigenous nations during the nineteenth century (and earlier). Such matters were well understood in

traditional societies, which is precisely why they never considered blood quantum to be a useful factor in determining citizenship or cultural identity" (Churchill 1999, 45). Every tribe with whom the author is familiar has stories relating to this issue. It indicates that someone can be identified as an Indian culturally but cannot be identified as Indian legally or by blood.

In the state of Virginia, Native Americans face a unique problem (Wikipedia 2014). Virginia has no federally recognized tribes, largely due to Walter Ashby Plecker. In 1912, Plecker became the first registrar of the state's Bureau of Vital Statistics, serving until 1946. Plecker believed that the state's Native Americans had been "mongrelized" with its African American population. A law passed by the state's General Assembly recognized only two races, "white" and "colored." Plecker pressured local governments into reclassifying all Native Americans in the state as "colored," leading to the destruction of records on the state's Native American community. The author is prompted to pose a question: Doesn't it seem ironic to anyone that only a drop of "black" blood is required to identify someone black, yet, a good amount of Indian blood is required to be identified as Indian (Owens 1998)?

Orrin Lewis (2006) authored an excellent article on American Indian identity, and in it he addresses more than the blood quantum issue. The author believes it is excellent because Lewis is almost full-blooded but talks about the ridiculousness of blood quantum and other means of determining Indianess. He says there are four problems with blood quantum regulation: First, it pressures Indians to not marry any other race or their children face loss of heritage; second, if some ancestors are not in the records, one can be

denied Indian identity; third, it's wrong for outsiders to tell someone if they can or can't be a member of an ethnic group; forth, it guarantees the extinction of the American Indian. Throughout he gives examples and ends with a discussion about non-Indian people wanting to be Indians today could possibly be making up for all the Indians they have lost historically. Lewis states he doesn't see any harm in non-Indians and lower quantum Indians being members that he would rather see five non-Indians get Indian status before one Indian loses theirs.

"Since the 19th century, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has maintained records about the blood quantum ancestries of the American Indian population. Blood quantum was once believed to convey information about people's cultural assimilation as well as about their ancestry" (Snipp 2002, 6). The assumption was that the higher the blood quantum the greater the likelihood they were more traditional by today's standards. This reasoning couldn't be further from the truth. The amount of Indian blood has nothing to do with how much of their identity is Indian. This issue is discussed by Garroutte (2003) and is also addressed in Chapter Niiwin (Four).

Churchill (1999, 59) explains it convincingly, when he states "Probably the most succinct observation on this matter I ever heard was made by the revered Oglala Lakota leader, Frank Fools Crow, then ninety years old, during the 1981 Wounded Knee Memorial conducted in the village of Manderson on the Pine Ridge Reservation. He did not know who might be a "full-blood" Lakota, Fools Crow said, before observing that he doubted there were any. His reasoning? He himself admitted to having a Cheyenne grandmother, a matter which in his opinion made him a "mixed-blood" in terms of his

biological “Lakotaness.” It should be noted that the Elder’s statement was clearly intended to impress the younger members of his audience about the ridiculousness of their preoccupation with blood quantum.”

As if there weren’t enough ways to determine who is an Indian, there is one more. Another method that non-Indians have devised to determine who is Native American is by genetic analysis. Like other methods of determining identity, this has flaws and is not conclusive, even on scientific terms (Shelton and Marks 2002). These genetic tests yield false positives, false negatives and none of the genetic markers are exclusive to Native American populations since all can be found in other populations in the world (Shelton and Marks 2002). The tests are so riddled with problems, that if the tests were medical diagnostic tests, they would never be approved or adopted (Shelton and Marks 2002). Additionally, this method does not take into consideration the cultural aspect of being an Indian. “One is Native American if one is recognized by a tribe as being a member. And one is not necessarily a member of a tribe simply because one has Native American ancestors” (Shelton and Marks 2002, 53). This method does not allow for tribal uniqueness either as there is no tribal differentiation. A Lakota is not a Cree and so on. However, with genetic analysis, there is no concern about tribes; the focus is, supposedly, on determining if one is an Indian. The most important aspects of being an Indian is not written in our genetic code; “our traditions make us who we are, not just our biology” (Shelton and Marks 2002, 55).

Using genetics brings more issues to the table, regarding ethics and cultural respect with Tribes. The details are explained by Harmon (2010). Arizona State

University had permission to do genetic testing for the Havasupai people in regards to Diabetes, but they found out later their DNA was being used without their consent for multiple purposes, including mental illness and theories of the Tribe's geographical origins (Harmon 2010). The Havasupai Nation sued and won to have their DNA returned to them (Harmon 2010). This is just one example of the types of issues that can happen when genetics are used.

To even imagine that this might be a factor in tribal communities is disgusting to this author. This is a small pox blanket in terms of identity regulation, and is far worse than blood quantum. It is the ultimate disrespect to a human being, having their identity and culture/ethnicity regulated by genetic testing, especially when it is littered with problems. Currently, this is not being considered by any Anishinaabe Nation, and the author prays it never will be.

Blood quantum determination is still the dominant way to determine Indian identity in the United States, and it is a continuing trend, as a result of Indian communities not discussing it, even though Elders and Indian people constantly say it's not a traditional way to determine who they are. The system of blood quantum was designed for the sole purpose of eliminating Indian people. "Defining ourselves by blood quantum not only further divides tribes but serves to play into the hands of those who want to terminate tribes" (Two Eagles 2011, Blood Quantum). Despite this, it is still being used by Anishinaabe communities with no other option being discussed. To the author this is maddening. How can a community proclaim to be traditional, yet use blood

quantum to determine membership? The two views–traditional and blood quantum–are in opposition to see other.

C. Culture: *community involvement/acknowledgement/acceptance, ceremonies, social acceptance, value system, spirituality*

Traditional culture has effects on those that have lived in it and around it. Many researchers have noted the connection between the power of Native American culture and identity (e.g., James 1956, Churchill 1999, Montagu 1997).

The narrative of John Tanner (James 1956) is one of the most pertinent examples for this research, since it is about the power of Anishinaabe traditional culture perspective and identity and the effects on a non-Indian person. Tanner's story is tragic on many levels. He was taken by Shawnee Indians at the age of nine and later sold to the Anishinaabe, where he lived until his adult life. He was an Anishinaabe Indian in all ways and could no longer speak English. As an adult, Tanner tried to go back into white society and found he could not, since he was too Indian. He spent the later years of his life going back and forth between cultures, trying to find his identity. He was always looked upon as more Indian than white, and this is an important example. If humans are genetically meant to be separated by race or biology, why did Tanner have such an impossible time going back to his own people? Culture is the main component in identity formation not race or genetics. Traditional Indian culture is interesting because of the many examples of captives, such as Tanner not wanting to leave the tribes that took them (Churchill 1999, James 1956, Montagu 1997). It is not only children who wanted to stay

with their captives, adults wanted to stay more often than not. That speaks to the beauty of traditional culture. How can Indians and their culture be so evil and savage, as history has portrayed them, if non-Indian children wanted to stay living with them rather than going back to their own people?

Siek (2012) uses the example of Renee Holt, a member of the Nez Perce tribe. Holt states that cultural affinity was more important for membership in her tribe. Knowing the tribal language and practicing the culture and ceremonies was more important than blood quantum. She also gave the example of her uncle who was adopted as a boy by her great-grandmother. He was fluent in Nez Perce, had a traditional tribal name and participated in ceremonies and rituals. He was a member of their tribe and even given a traditional burial when he died. She asks, how could someone tell him he wasn't Nez Perce because he didn't have any blood quantum? This is an example why the author wanted to do this study. Adopting people from neighboring tribes and non-Indians was common practice, as explained by a number of sources: Churchill 1999, Lewis 2006, Garroutte 2003, Lawrence 2004, Manuelito 1996, Utter 2001. There was no distinction between the adoptees and anyone else in the tribe because they were all culturally the same. Culture is what ties humans together socially, not biology.

Anishinaabe culture is connected to their land base, since they were led to the land by the creator. This is a commonly held belief among traditional culture in all tribal communities of which the author is aware. Land, spirituality and cultural attachment are inseparable within Anishinaabe culture. The author has heard many Elders talk about the fact that their ceremonies cannot be separated from the land. These perspectives come

from a spiritual mindset and stem from the migration story of the Anishinaabe (Benton-Banai 1988). As Deloria (1992) points out, Indian people can't do their ceremonies without being on their land. This is an important subject that that needs to be acknowledged in regards to traditional identity. The author devised the simile that Indian people away from their own people and communities are like frogs. Frogs can be out of the water for a period of time, but they must return to where they belong, or they will slowly die. Indian people must return to be around other Indians and their homeland, in order to maintain who they are and stay alive spiritually and culturally. If not, they will slowly kill the Indian in them. An Indian can't be Indian alone or in isolation, at least in a cultural or spiritual sense. An Indian needs to be a part of a community, even if for short periods of time. The importance of tribal community is discussed in depth by Alfred (1999).

D. Self-Identification: *Bodies of law and in general*

You can't truly be Anishinaabe or Indian, in general, without your identity intact. If one fails to acknowledge who one is, then one is just a person with Indian blood, and it means nothing. Being Indian starts with the individual and then resonates to being a community. If one doesn't acknowledge oneself as Indian, then being a part of a community is irrelevant. Yet, even with self-identification, you may or may not be accepted by others, either Indians or non-Indians.

The United States Census Bureau, most universities, colleges and the education system in general, accept Indian self-identification. If one doesn't self-identify, being Indian will mean nothing on a personal and legal level. Yet, if one does self-identify, one

may not be able to be Indian for legal purposes; these are not the same. “Given the strong emphasis on the collectivity in indigenous cultures, it is problematic to have an individual who self-identifies as indigenous yet has no community sanction or validation of that identity” (Weaver 2001, 247).

A modern example of self-identification, or in this case non-identification, is Fritz Scholder. He is an American artist whose work was controversial as a result of his stance on his identity. According to the official website for Fritz Scholder (2014) he is one-quarter Luseino, a California Mission tribe. Scholder is interesting because he often said he was not Indian (Smithsonian 2008). He stated that his family lived off reservation and he grew up in a house that contained no Indian objects (Smithsonian 2008). On his website, he looks Indian in his pictures. Fritz became very controversial in his life because many Indians and non-Indians felt he owed his success to being Indian, yet he resisted being categorized as an Indian, or as an Indian artist (Smithsonian 2008). The issue for this research is not whether he was successful as an artist, but that he was obviously Indian by blood and lineage. Yet, his identity was non-Indian by choice, so much so, that he did not want to be affiliated with being Indian in any way. Self-identification is obviously a personal choice; the effects after self-identification are not.

E. Physical Features

The biology of appearance is important; how important depends on the person and the situation. The physical attributes of looking stereotypically Indian is a beautiful thing. It should be a source of pride for anyone with the appearance. Yet, appearance alone,

partially or totally, does not mean that is all that it means to be Indian. Appearance is arguably the most important factor for many non-Indians in the United States.

Nerburn (2002, 259-266), a non-Indian, lays out a situation that happened to him, bringing to life the non-Indian misunderstanding of race, blood quantum, inter-racial mixing and physical features in determining who is Indian. For the author, it is the best explanation he knows regarding the difference between Indian and non-Indian perspectives on those issues. It entails a Lakota Elder's conversation with Nerburn regarding the Elder's grandsons and how they look physically. The Elder's grandchildren are all dark haired, dark eyed and look Indian, except for one who has blond hair and blue eyes. The Elder noticed Nerburn paid more attention to and talked to the lighter skinned child more than the others. The Elder pointed out that non-Indians are that way and that is what they see as important in being Indian. Then the Elder explains that the blond child has been raised on the reservation his entire life and has never left; he even speaks Lakota. The other children who look Indian grew up in the city with their mothers away from the culture. This issue will be discussed in Chapter Niiwin (Four).

Physical features are the key issue in "The Big Game" by Weaver (2001, 241-242). It is an analogy of what happens regularly on reservations.

> The day had come for the championship game in the all-Native basketball tournament. Many teams had played valiantly, but on the last day the competition came down to the highly competitive Lakota and Navajo teams. The tension was high as all waited to see which would be the best team. Prior to the game, some of the Lakota players went to watch the Navajos practice. They were awed and somewhat intimidated by the Navajos' impressive display of skills. One Lakota who was particularly anxious and insecure pointed out to his teammates that some of the Navajo players had facial hair. "Everyone knows that Indians don't have facial hair," he stated. Another Lakota added that some of the Navajos also had suspiciously dark skin. They concluded, disdainfully, that clearly these were not

> Native people and, in fact, were probably a “bunch of Mexicans.” The so-called Navajos should be disqualified from the tournament, leaving the Lakota team the winner by default. That same afternoon, some Navajo players went to watch the Lakota team practice. The Lakotas had a lot of skillful moves that made the Navajos worry. One Navajo observed, “That guy’s skin sure looks awful light.” Another added, “Yeah, and most of them have short hair.” They concluded, disdainfully, that clearly these were not Native people and, in fact, were probably a “bunch of white guys.” The so-called Lakotas should be disqualified from the tournament, leaving the Navajos the winners by default.
> The captains from both teams brought their accusations to the referee just before game time. Both teams agreed that Native identity must be established before the game could be played and that whichever team could not establish Native identity to everyone’s satisfaction must forfeit. The Lakota captain suggested that everyone show his tribal enrollment card as proof of identity. The Lakotas promptly displayed their “red cards,” but some of the Navajos did not have enrollment cards. The Lakotas were ready to celebrate their victory when the Navajo captain protested that carrying an enrollment card was a product of colonization and not an indicator of true identity. He suggested that the real proof would be a display of indigenous language skills, and each Navajo proceeded to recite his clan affiliations in the traditional way of introducing himself in the Navajo language. Some of the Lakotas were able to speak their language, but others were not. The teams went back and forth proposing standards of proof of identity, but each proposed standard was self-serving and could not be met by the other team. As the sun began to set, the frustrated referees canceled the championship game. Because of the accusations and disagreements that could not be resolved there would be no champion in the indigenous tournament.

The author has experienced the scenarios like those in “The Big Game” many times and has been directly involved with all of them. Nobody wins when Indians attack themselves over petty identity issues, especially involving physical appearance. There is no end to that argument, and everyone loses because it causes dissention, division and negative feelings among the people, which are issues already prevalent in Indian communities. Solidarity and unification are needed instead.

The social realities of identity are much different than the physical realties. All too often, people in the United States are taught to judge others by appearance. Intermarriage with non-Indians and within neighboring tribes is a social reality to

consider when examining American Indian identity. Intermarriage happened and still continues, requiring the need to reconsider issues of identity. Writers addressing this issue include Manuelito (1996), who gives a history of intermarriage with non-Indians, and Churchill (1999), who points out examples of historical intermarriage within all tribes in North America before contact.

IV. Theories on Indigenous Identity Development

The main focus of this study is not traditional identity construction; rather it is traditional identity perspectives from traditional people. Identity development is not discussed at length in this study, although this is an important issue. The following sources deal with American Indian identity development research, and Weaver confirms the complexity of the subject: "It is misleading to assume that all indigenous people experience a Native cultural identity in the same way just because they were born into a Native community" (Weaver 2001, 243).

Emergent Behaviors/Properties and Spatial vs. Aspatial Indianess—
Systems theory and Complex Adaptive Systems (Peroff 1997, 2002)

Life Stages
Adapted Black Power model (Mihesuah 1999)

Self-definition/Recognition of Being
Adapted Black Feminist model (Anderson 2000)

Self-conscious Traditionalism
Indigenous (Alfred 1999)

Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity
Adapted Black individual ethnic identity scale model (Gonzalez and Bennett 2011)

Radical Indigenism

Indigenous (Garroutte 2001)

V. Final Thoughts: The value of this research as an addition to present literature

This study fits into the American Indian identity literature as a reference point in understanding what the traditional perspective and culture are about from a personal standpoint from those who live it currently. This is a perspective that has rarely, if ever, been utilized in academia or in the identity argument. Alfred (1999) has done the most effective presentation of traditional culture and how it can transform Native communities, when utilized effectively and collectively, especially in a leadership and political sense. The traditional perspective is invaluable and necessary to truly understanding who Native Americans are culturally. Once the traditional culture is understood, discussions can be held on the other definitions of Indianess and their impact on communities and reservations.

The author agrees with Gonzalez and Bennet (2011, 22), when they state, "The topic of American Indian identity has not been extensively studied." The author's views on the traditional cultural perspective are a contribution to the current literature on this complex issue, specifically on Anishinaabe and Indian identity. It will also provide insight into the role that tradition has played historically and in present day identity of Indian people.

> Rather than determining where someone fits on a continuum between two cultural identities or worlds, it may be more accurate to say that indigenous people live in one complex, conflictual world. In the end, although it is clearly inappropriate to make assumptions about an individual's cultural identity based on appearance or blood quantum, most attempts to measure identity are of questionable adequacy and accuracy: "Indianess means different things to different people. And, of

> course, at the most elementary level, Indianess is something only experienced by people who are Indians. It is how Indians think about themselves and is internal, intangible, and metaphysical. From this perspective, studying Indianess is like trying to study the innermost mysteries of the human mind itself (Weaver 2001, 249).

A discussion of the author's methods will follow in the Chapter Niswi (Three).

VI. Reflections on Indianess

There is no right or wrong answers when determining Indianess, only perspective and opinion. As a parting sentiment for this chapter, the author shares some thoughts from various Indian people of their personal views on Indianess.

> Crow poet Henry Real Bird offers his own definition, An Indian is one who offers tobacco to the ground, feeds the water, and prays to the four winds in his own language (Bordewich 1996, 67).

> Pulitzer Prize-winning Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday gives a definition that is less spiritual but still based in the traditions and experience of a person and their family, An Indian is someone who thinks of themselves as an Indian. But that's not so easy to do and one has to earn the entitlement somehow. You have to have a certain experience of the world in order to formulate this idea. I consider myself an Indian; I've had the experience of an Indian. I know how my father saw the world, and his father before him (Bordewich 1996, 67).

> I have Indian blood in my veins, am I not an Indian, too? Because you have more Indian blood than I, do you have the right to call me White, and then to call yourself, Indian?...In the veins of my grandfathers ran as much Indian blood as ran in the veins of your grandfathers. All my grandfather's blood was Indian (if there ever existed any such thing as "Indian blood")…I choose to be an Indian. That is my right, the right my grandfathers have given me….My grandfather's past is your grandfather's past. If you are Indian, I am Indian too. Though my skin is White, I too have a heritage in the past of our grandfathers. The past belongs to me as it does to you….Our grandfathers were brothers. They made the past what it was together. We are also brothers (Valaskakis 2005, 239).

> If we're stark white, we're still going to be Apache, said Darrow, 70. It's not so much blood as it is you know who you are, and you feel in your heart and your spirit that you belong to this group (Foster, 1997).

Being Cree is not having this skin—that is superficial. It is having a connection with the past, with the land (Mercredi and Turpel 1994, 19).

Ladoona Harris (Warren 2013) has this to say I can't define the Indian any more than you can define what you are. Different government agencies define him by amount of blood. I had a Comanche Mother and an Irish Father. But I am Comanche. I'm not Irish and I'm not Indian first. I'm Comanche first, Indian second. When the Comanche took in someone he became Comanche, he wasn't part this, part that. He was all Comanche or he wasn't Comanche at all. Blood runs the heart. The heart knows what it is.

Elizabeth Hallmark, an Ojibwe (Warren 2013) says just because an individual has a tribal enrollment number entitling him to certain services, does not, in my mind, define this person as an Indian. It is the heart of this person that speaks to me. That's where my Indianess is –in my heart.

John Fire—Lame Deer (Warren 2013) associated Indianess with the heart also. His beliefs in the concepts symbolized in the pipe identified him as an Indian. He realized that to truly understand what it meant to be Indian was to understand the Pipe. Even as an old man he was still learning.

To be Indian is a way of life, a looking within and feeling a part of life, an allegiance to, and a love for this earth. Historically we did not judge individuals by the color of their eyes or the color of their hair, but how they conducted and lived their lives (Warren 2013).

Being Indian, from whatever tribe, is more than an intellectual exercise, an emotional choice, or the discovery of an Indian ancestor in the immediate Indian family structure. Being Indian is a process, a becoming. It's an emerging cultural identity that transforms in one's journey through life. Being Indian is as much behavior and attitude, life style and mind-set, as a consequence of history or bloodline. It may mean placing people above the possession of things (Pewewardy 1993, 5).

A respondent from Garroutte (2003, 32) says I think one of our Elders, my adopted grandmother, put it real well. [She] said, Unless a person knows their language, and they know the songs and they know their culture, they can have all the pieces of paper in the world and still not be Native American. Because it [identity] is not just a legal document; it's a way of life, it's a way of thinking, a way of living, a way of worship that you can't instill on someone with a notarized legal document. And I feel that too many times we get into looking at things from a legalistic standpoint and really lose the idea of what it is to be Native.

A citizen of the Osage nation says in general, when I say someone is an Indian…I [mean] they're like me. Not necessarily in appearance, but in spirit. They have a "Indian heart." Somebody is like me because somebody has taught them like my

teachers have taught me, on how to live and how to look at other people. How to feel about other people….I imagine myself sometimes if I was blind, and I couldn't see the color or the tones of someone's skin. But just talking with them, [I] could feel that they-they thought, or they sensed, the same (Garroutte 2003, 76).

A Cherokee/Choctaw Elder states it doesn't matter how much blood they are or how much this or that, but if they are of the old, of the spiritual, way; if their heart is Indian,…their minds and their thoughts are Indian, then they're…they're going to be enveloped in some family, in an Indian family that will take them and teach them even more. So I think what…what makes an Indian has nothing to do with amount of blood…I think it's their thinking, their mind, their soul, and their heart (Garroutte 2003, 77).

N. Scott Momaday, Kiowa says part of survival is how to remain Indian, how to assimilate without ceasing to be an Indian. I think some important strides have been made. Indians remain Indian, and against pretty good odds. They remain Indian and, in some situations, by a thread. Their languages are being lost at a tremendous rate, poverty is rampant, as is alcoholism. But still there are Indians, and the traditional world is still intact….It's a matter of identity. It's thinking about who I am. I grew up on Indian reservations, and then I went away from the Indian world and entered a different context. But I continue to think of myself as Indian, I write out of this conviction. I think this is what most Indian people are doing today. They go off the reservations, but they keep an idea of themselves as Indians. That's the trick (Nabokov 1991 p. 438).

A Creek and Osage grandfather stated "If I look at a person, and he's actin' and he's doin' and he's thinkin' in the direction of an Indian, then he's Indian, regardless [of his other characteristics]. My dad told me, he said "I can tell you how to tell an Indian from a white person---is [to] get in a teepee, or a dark place at night and talk to 'em for fifteen minutes, and you can tell whether [he's] Indian or not. You don't have to see what color they are. (Garroutee 2003, 73)"

CHAPTER NISWI (THREE)

METHODS

As previously stated in Chapter Niizh (Two), there are numerous ways to determine American Indian identity depending on the purpose for being Indian. Within existing research, traditional culture has not been sufficiently addressed, which results in a gap within the literature. This study will focus on defining traditional American Indian identity through Anishinaabe cultural perspective.

The information for this study was obtained as an active member in Anishinaabe communities, spending years learning traditional culture. It is important to note that the author does not assume to know and understand the totality of Anishinaabe traditional ways and ceremonies; however, he has spent sufficient time experiencing traditional people and culture over extended periods of time to have gained a respect for both people and culture, which reaches far beyond all else in life. The information that follows is a sample of the author's experiences and observations; they do not apply to any specific tribe, Indian community, or his own family. The author's perspectives are his and his alone, which the reader is invited to respectfully consider.

Data Collection Methods

For this Qualitative study, the author used two research methods. The first is experiential ethnographic research. In retrospect, he recognizes that he has been doing ethnography since birth in his Native community. At the time of submitting this research,

the author is thirty five years old. His primary data collection method was the observation of Anishinaabe communities, individuals, traditional people and ceremonies throughout his life as an Anishinaabe person, as both participant and non-participant. The second method of data collection was a review of documents and literature related to American Indian Identity.

The research was experienced in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan. Some experiences were with traditional Dakota people from South Dakota and Minnesota and Canadian Elders. A narrative is included in Chapter Niiwin (Four), to aid the reader in understanding the author's place as a researcher in this study.

The situations in the research were experienced through the author's observation and participation through random sampling, which was required, since the observations and participatory experiences were from a large geographic area encompassing three states and over six distinct reservations and communities of Anishinaabe tribal nations.

All the situations referenced are from people considered "traditional" unless noted. In general, those observed included differences in gender and age: male and female; ages 30-85, including some younger traditional people. For the purpose of this study, age is not considered a key factor; being traditional is the key factor. An equal number of traditional women and men where included, based on the fact that men and women have differing roles in Anishinaabe and Dakota traditional societies. It is important to note that the observations and participations were done in reservation settings, ceremonial settings, settings populated by Indian people, and general settings. There were a multitude of observations and participations in both ceremonial and non-ceremonial settings for cross reference purposes, in order to provide research credibility.

This allowed the author to observe individuals in different settings. The issue of tribal enrollment for those observed is irrelevant, as will be explained in Chapter Niiwin (Four).

In order to conduct realistic and accurate research pertaining to a traditional cultural perspective, this author believes that it can only be achieved through qualitative methods. He contends that the nature of traditional culture can't be properly assessed by surveys or other quantitative methods, since Native American culture has been transferred through oral tradition and ceremonies for thousands of years. Thus, in order to understand the traditional cultural perspective, one must utilize the same approach to learn them. The author contends that spending time in American Indian communities, including time with traditional Elders, as well as with people participating in ceremonies, are the means to gain access to the traditional cultural perspective, which is alive, like the tribal languages themselves. One must actively experience the traditional culture, in order to accurately assess what it is. Only then, can one achieve an informed opinion.

This study could be duplicated by an Indian or non-Indian researcher, after spending adequate years immersed in the traditional culture, both as participant and non-participant. This author believes it would take no less than three years, preferably five years or more, to gain an understanding of what is witnessed, since traditional culture and spirituality includes more than what is quantitatively evident. Proper time is required to reflect and to digest the observations and participation. Accessibility to traditional Elders is vital, since their explanations can provide a holistic frame of reference for traditional cultural perspectives. Additionally, learning the tribal language of the community becomes a means to cultural and spiritual understanding, resulting in a grasp of the traditional cultural perspective. A discussion of findings will follow.

CHAPTER NIIWIN (FOUR)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The focus of this chapter is on the author's observations and experiences while being immersed in Anishinaabe communities and traditional culture. The findings of the research are discussed in four sections: (I) Anishinaabe Traditional Perspective: Situations and Concepts (II) Biology (III) Contemporary Issues Facing Indian People (IV) Narrative.

I. Anishinaabe Traditional Perspective: Situations and Concepts

A. Selflessness in Anishinaabe Culture

A trusted mentor of the author once told him a true story about a situation between his mother and another woman, a sworn enemy. The two women despised each other and never spoke or dealt with each other for many years. Then, something happened to the woman, and she needed help that only the mentor's mother could provide. The situation was dire, and the woman had no choice but to go to the mentor's mother for help. When she did, the mentor's mother helped her without hesitation, since she was in need. After the woman received what she needed, the two went back to despising each other again, and the dislike continues to this day. This story taught the author an important principle about Anishinaabe people: Always give compassion to others in need, despite feelings, since no one can predict who or when help will be needed. The woman was in a pitiful state and needed help; she did not need to be judged,

ridiculed or shamed. The story's lesson is that the Anishinaabe don't have to like everyone, Indian or not, but do need to respect and have compassion for others, especially, in times of need.

B. The Humbleness Factor

Humbleness is a word often heard in contemporary society. The definition may be known, but the concept may not. In traditional Anishinaabe culture, the concept is inseparable from who they are. It is evident in multiple ways, as shown in the following examples.

Hand-stitched beading is a cultural tradition of the Anishinaabe, and the process of beading includes the concept of *humbleness*. Beading is time consuming and requires patience and skill. Each bead is hand sewn into the design and may be considered a marvel of mankind. When closely examining traditional Anishinaabe beadwork, it becomes evident that one bead is an odd color and does not match the rest of the design. It is not a mistake. The author has heard non-Indian people see this and immediately pass judgment, saying that someone made a mistake. It is not a mistake; it is done on purpose. The 'mistake' is a reminder of the artist's humbleness, acknowledging imperfection and acceptance of the same. It brings balance to the work. The author has not heard anyone explain this concept explicitly but observed it and was taught to do this by a traditional person. There was little talk or explanation, but like many concepts in Anishinaabe traditional culture, the meaning will eventually be understood through an open mind and spirit. The beadwork becomes a powerful concept to learn and to understand. This is indicative of Anishinaabe traditional culture as a whole: what appears like a simple,

meaningless object may hold a valuable teaching, if time is taken to slow down and to understand it.

C. Being in a Good Place

The author has observed this concept in multiple settings with many traditional people. Anytime an Anishinaabe person makes something for a ceremony, whether it be a cultural item, food or tobacco ties, they are to always make these items when they are in a good place with their feelings, heart and mind. It is taught that when an item is made, feelings and thoughts of the maker are projected into the item. This concept is used in everyday life but has a much deeper meaning with ceremonial items, since these items are meant for the Manidoog. It is important to note that food is considered a traditional item in ceremonies and is treated differently in such settings. When preparing food for ceremonies, it is very important for the person making it to be in a good place. The author has observed numerous times when a traditional woman has asked someone else to cook for her, since she was not in a good place. The same has been observed when making tobacco ties, which are little prayer bundles, with small amounts of tobacco tied in a small piece of cloth. As the reader can imagine, when making something like this as an offering to the Manidoog, positive feelings are necessary. For example, the author has been in Anishinaabe homes and heard the women talk about how their frybread would probably not taste good or have the wrong texture because they were in a bad place.

D. The Dead-Fish Handshake

The greatest men and women the author has ever met had the weakest, wimpiest, dead fish handshake imaginable; it feels like holding onto a dead fish or grabbing a towel. It will get one's attention immediately because in the general United States culture, a weak handshake is typically looked upon as negative. According to United States culture, it is a sign of weakness and insecurity, among other less-favorable qualities. In Anishinaabe culture, it is the sign of a humble and honest person. This is the hallmark of a traditional person. The author has never asked a traditional person why it is done; however, from a perspective of Anishinaabe traditional culture, it is logical. There is no need to impress someone with a handshake; it is just a gesture in meeting, not an Indian gesture. In Anishinaabe culture, an aggressive handshake is unwelcome and improper, when initially greeting someone. The author personally interprets a very firm handshake as a sign of insecurity and an over-compensation. From an Anishinaabe perspective, why would one want to crush someone's hand when meeting or greeting. An Anishinaabe could interpret the handshake as intimidating and showing a false sense of power. The author believes this is important to understand because it communicates a comfort level with identity if they can do this knowing how it will be interpreted. Traditional people are very comfortable in their own skin. They like being who they are, which is a result of being centered as a spiritual person. And a simple handshake in itself, may communicate a traditional cultural perspective.

E. *The Giveaway Principle*

In Anishinaabe traditional culture, giving precedes taking; for example, when asking for something, one gives before asking. This explains why the Anishinaabe always

offer tobacco when harvesting anything from nature. This is also practiced when praying to the Manidoog or when asking another person for something of cultural significance. The use of tobacco in Anishinaabe culture is discussed by Johnston (1990); he provides a frame of reference within an historical perspective. The concept of giving or sharing is explained by Pewewardy (1993, 5): “Sharing is the main element of Indian life. People bringing together items for all to share and heal.” This occurs generally and in ceremonies.

If someone shows a strong attachment to something owned by another, it would probably be noticed, and the item would be given to the individual, even if the person giving it feels an attachment to it. The author has witnessed this and been involved in it multiple times. The author has never heard anybody speak about this, but it is, without a doubt, a cultural trait. The author believes it comes from the Anishinaabe belief that “things happen for a reason.” If there is a strong attachment to something, the Anishinaabe believe that it is meant to belong to that person. This could happen anywhere and with anything. The author has even seen pets given away in this manner. This giving and receiving is unique; it must be witnessed to grasp the true beauty of the concept.

In a ceremonial sense, giving things away is an important value for the Anishinaabe. It may be witnessed at the conclusion of powwows, especially in Wisconsin and Michigan, and may include simple items like towels, washcloths, or socks; it is usually something useful for people in their everyday life. It is a token of appreciation and another embodiment of the selflessness in Anishinaabe culture. With certain ceremonies, there are instructions to gather specific items for the giveaway aspect of the

ceremony. Giveaways are practiced in other ways, with an example offered by Johnston (1990, p. 59): "…the worth of a man (Ojibwe) was measured by his generosity and by his skill in the hunting grounds…"

F. Indian Time

Ceremonies are at the heart of Anishinaabe culture, beginning with birth, continuing throughout life and at death. Each ceremony has a purpose and serves to strengthen, assist and heal the Anishinaabe in their life path, walking the red road. Traditional people organize their lives around ceremonies and traditional activities, not the reverse. Traditional people are servants of the people and their traditional practices and ways of living. This is an enormous sacrifice, especially in present society, where the strain of everyday life is pulling in every direction; this becomes even more intense when having a family.

Many of the aspects of being traditional relate to the seasons and natural environment. These are elements that can't be controlled; thus, when something is happening, appropriate action is required. There is no other option it can't wait. Whether it be harvesting medicines or food, the window of opportunity is limited. Certain ceremonies are related to the seasons and natural environment. Some occur at specific times of the year and must continue until finished. This is the origin of the saying, "Indian time is on time." People make jokes about Indian time, but it is real. It is a result of time being viewed differently in the traditional way of living. Time is irrelevant. Doing what needs to be done is finished when it needs to be done, for as long as it takes. When this is understood, it becomes easier to comprehend how this fast paced world is affecting

Indian people and their traditional cultural identity. Traditional people work with the planet, not against it. This requires a different way of thinking, and it explains why some employers are unreceptive to “Indian time.” It affects Indian people at the identity level.

Interpretation of the Traditional Perspective

The Anishinaabe must find a way to balance their traditional identity and culture with modern times. There is a reluctance to admit this among many traditional people. The author has witnessed hypocrisy in words and actions, and as a result, believability of the traditional culture is fading in modern times. In the author’s opinion, the younger generation is having a difficult time understanding the value of their tribal language and traditional culture because they can’t make a connection with it to their everyday life. They lack sufficient role models. The author believes the younger generation misunderstands the Anishinaabe traditional culture, since it is relevant and plays a crucial role in Anishinaabe identity and nationhood. The author’s hope is that this research will be influential in clarifying the traditional Anishinaabe culture and how it applies to the lives of the Anishinaabe.

The distinct difference between mainstream America and Native people is that traditional Native societies were spiritually run and motivated. That was the frame work for every decision. With traditional Anishinaabe, cultural actions have always been more important than words. The emphasis is on actions. It’s walking the talk.

In traditional Anishinaabe culture, everyone has the right to their own opinion, and it is respected. The Anishinaabe view of the world and people is vastly different from most cultures. It is more human and humane. There is a level of respect given to others

when they are met; it is obvious and felt immediately. Whatever a traditional Anishinaabe is thinking about another will never be known, unless they actually state it. Assumptions cannot be made by watching an Anishinaabe or trying to read them and their actions, unless they want it known. Traditional people, especially Elders, are masters at controlling their emotions and reactions to people and situations. It is both a cultural trait as well as a by-product of being spiritually centered and balanced. Traditional people have the ability to see true intentions, regardless how much effort is given to hide them. When asked questions, traditional people have a way of answering, resulting in an answer that is needed, rather than wanted or expected. This may be frustrating at first, but the truth in what is said or not said will be realized.

This author has found that there is usually an apprehension with traditional people to talk about certain subjects, in order to avoid what is said to be taken out of context and have it used against them. Receiving a definitive response on certain questions is impossible. Generally, Anishinaabe don't want to be put in a position where they are seen as authoritative or an expert on something. The basis for this is their humbleness. The author believes that the Anishinaabe are comfortable having conversations but not having them recorded. Of course, this may vary from person to person, and this author has not experienced this subject in a discussion, but has witnessed it in one way or another with most traditional people with whom he has conversed. Often, there are no English words to explain. Many concepts and understanding of traditional culture have to be lived and experienced to derive the meaning and knowledge. The author has not heard a traditional person say this, but he has come to understand it. Most traditional people don't know what to say on certain issues, since they don't think about issues in the way that the rest

of society does. One can see from their reaction that it is difficult for them to answer, not for lack of knowing, but because the answer sought can't be explained in words, at least not in English words. Or the answer being sought is better experienced than heard. The author has found this to be true for many concepts. Traditional Anishinaabe will allow one to experience something and understand it, rather than talk about it. The author is uncertain about the reason but knows it is effective. Spiritually balanced, traditional individuals, especially Elders, always appear to be ten steps ahead of you in knowledge. Elders at times may seem to answer without actually using words, yet provide understanding. It's quite amazing. Consequently, Anishinaabe traditional culture is not aggressive or forward with communication. If one wishes to talk, they will allow it and just listen. They will not interrupt. If they are interrupted, they will just stop talking. They won't make an issue of it.

The author has heard traditional Elders say that the purpose of a traditional person's life is to become the best human possible. It is the easiest way to explain being traditional. This is mirrored in a statement by Utter (2001, 136) "Simply stated, traditional Native cultures (beyond the basic issues of survival) generally have had the acquisition of wisdom, the support of the community, and the development of spiritual awareness as their philosophical goals."

Traditional people have a deep seated respect for all living things, cultures and people. Therefore, there is no such thing as a hard and fast definition as to what is always right or always wrong. Life exists in grey. There is no black and white. All things have a time and place. Traditional people are not judges or juries, nor judgmental; they are deeply profound, emotionally-centered human beings. They are the definition of

humbleness, and it is implied in their lives. They do not pretend to be something they are not or know things they don't. The true beauty with traditional people is that they are who they are for the right reasons. It is not to impress anyone or gain anything from it. Traditional people take only what they need, not what they want. They have no profit motive or greed; it is always about the people, first.

From a traditional cultural perspective there is no distinction between cultures of people. According to Alfred, "Indigenous traditions include all human beings as equal members in the regimes of conscience" (Alfred 1999, 20). This is important to understand. A healthy traditional person will be open to helping anyone with respect and an open heart. On many occasions, the author has witnessed non-Indian people attend ceremonies, and being treated as equals and as valued guests. The author personally knows non-Indians who take comfort in Anishinaabe or Dakota traditional culture and ceremonies, and are allowed to participate without judgment. The author has noticed that when a traditional person speaks critically or negative towards non-Indian people, it is based on the non-Indian's criticism and negative behaviors and actions toward others.

There is a common misbelief that Indian people hate and despise all non- Indians. That couldn't be further from the truth. Is there reluctance at times? Yes, given the history of treatment by non-Indians, but any judgments that are made against non-Indians by traditional Indians are a result of the non-Indian's behaviors and actions of disrespect toward others, environment, spirituality, and other traditional values. Traditional Indians do not live their lives based on hate or negativity. If one were meet a devoted traditional person, one could come to no other conclusion than what the author has stated. The author has seen traditional people in multiple situations and has observed their reactions

and behaviors. Many traditional people have been through horrible tragedies in their own lives and witnessed even more with their families and communities, yet have maintained the beauty of their culture and who they are. The author has found no explanations for this traditional response, other than it being attributed to their faith in their traditions and spirituality. They are truly and unequivocally living their belief system as Anishinaabe. In the author's professional opinion, traditional people are examples for mankind to follow: capable of achieving true balance and understanding the meaning of respect.

Human beings are separated by culture and perspective, not race. As human beings, despite having distinct cultures, share a common thread in this life. A belief that there is one creator but many spirits is often found with traditional people. A hallmark of traditional people is the belief that each individual has the right to believe and approach the creator in whatever way desired. In traditional Anishinaabe culture, other religions and beliefs are respected.

Despite all the literature on Anishinaabe culture, spirituality and ceremonies are discussed in the works of a variety of authors, including Benton 1988, Johnston 1990. Many Indian communities have unique cultural practices. For example, the practice of setting nets for fishing. The author knows a community in Minnesota that has a cultural teaching that nets are not to touch the bare ground directly. This is strictly followed, and their tribal natural resource workers enforce it. In the author's community in Michigan, he has never heard or seen this. Even in the Ojibwe language, each community has their own way of cultural expression and dialect.

Traditional identity is based on *who* is Indian, in ways that matter: spiritually, culturally, and socially. The legal/political definition and blood quantum is *what* is Indian

for specific purposes: tribal membership, money, programs, access to natural resources, etc. In order to be Indian one must have a blood tie; to be accepted by Indians one needs to be a part of a community and **be** Indian. Each is possible independent of each other.

A traditionalist is someone living the embodiment of their culture, including morality and character. It is not memorizing every part of every teaching and every ceremony, and then repeatedly reenacting them. That is religion, not spirituality. Religion is structured and rigid with little room for change or growth. Spirituality is alive, fluid and adaptable to change and the individual's journey in life. Religion often requires conformity. Spirituality is open for growth and available to anyone because it is a relationship with all things and the creator. Religion creates separation, often through differing interpretations, which lead to arguments and disagreements, not healing and balance. Spirituality has no firm boundaries. It is wielded by the individual and their unique gifts, and their culture is the guiding means. Cultures adapt and change over time. Religion rarely does. The tradition of Anishinaabe culture has existed for thousands of years. And in spite of five-hundred years of attacks, it continues to exist and is relevant to people's lives. Anishinaabe culture is a source of life, healing, wisdom and peace available to everyone willing to open their hearts to understand. Most importantly, Anishinaabe traditional culture does not seek followers or try to convince.

II. Biology

A. The Many Marvels of Biology

This section includes examples pertaining to biological issues that arise when determining who is Indian.

The author knows of an individual whose appearance would be judged as anything but Indian: blond curly hair and no discernible Native physical features. His is from South Dakota and is a Sioux Indian. He is not enrolled and doesn't belong to any distinct community, yet he attends ceremonies and has a gift for singing songs, especially sweat lodge songs. He also runs sweat lodges and claims he was taught by the "old people." It is impossible to prove or disprove his story; yet, he is accepted in certain circles of Indian people, many of whom, the author knows personally. This is an example of Indian identity in a traditional sense. There is no rationale, just a man's story and who he is. It is ultimately up to each Indian person that meets him to decide for themselves. Any details into his background are irrelevant, because they don't matter? If other Indian people accept him for who and what he is, there is no issue. Readers, especially non-Indians, may wonder how this could happen and why Indian people would tolerate it. In short: it does happen and happens often with traditional Indians.

The author knows people who are undeniably Indian by blood and physical features; yet, deny they are Indian. They are not enrolled, yet easily could be. They want no part of being Indian.

The reverse also occurs. For example, the author experienced it in the workplace. A man appeared to be Indian. After getting to know him, the author found that he was Irish. It seemed questionable. After some time, the author discovered that he was in fact Indian and was denying it. It was none of the author's business and was disregarded. In another situation, a man was Dakota by blood, appeared to be so, but did not like to admit it and never talked about it. He had very strong negative feelings about Native people, as a result of his father leaving when he was young. His father went back to the reservation;

the son was raised in a non-Indian, Christian household and despises other Indians, including his father. He has nothing positive to say about Indian people; yet, he himself is undeniably Indian. He feels so strongly, that even though he could be enrolled in a tribe in South Dakota and receive many benefits and casino money, he refuses to have anything to do with them. This is an example of someone having the physical features of an Indian, but not accepting it. And judging him to be Indian would be a mistake. His identity is non-Indian. This example reinforces the point that blood quantum, physical features or membership in a tribe do not determine who is Indian. Ultimately, being Indian is a choice first. This issue is emphasized because denial is common for those with little cultural knowledge.

A closing example illustrates the point that a high blood quantum does not insure that one is Indian in the traditional sense. Dave Anderson of Famous Dave's restaurant franchise is American Indian and has the stereotypical physical features. He is enrolled in a Tribe in Wisconsin, yet he is Christian and does not support or believe in traditional ceremonies or culture. In fact, he contends that tradition holds people back. Dave Anderson is an example of someone having a high Indian blood quantum, with related physical features, but an identity not matching 'traditional cultural perspectives.'

B. Interpretation of Biology in Relation to Identity

An Elder was overheard saying that tribal membership and the blood quantum issue could be addressed by having all tribes create a policy stating that all members have 100% blood quantum, and from that point on, they will be recognized as such. He said that would solve the blood quantum issue.

The Elder's idea is logical, when considering that carrying a card does not insure social recognition by other members or the public at large. The most important aspect of membership is recognition by one's own people. The idea of legal status membership by blood quantum is a form of oppression and has no relationship with a traditional sense of membership. The need for change regarding blood quantum becomes evident and is supported by the changing views of Elders, as explained in the following examples.

Elders are changing their view regarding skin color, since some of their grandchildren are light-skinned. The author has often witnessed this with certain Indian people who were adamant Indian appearance, in order to be Indian; now, they are more open to the issue of accepting light-skinned people, since their own families are affected. In regard to blood quantum, an Elder stated that she "didn't have any faith in it." She went on to explain situations on her reservation where blood quantum requirements became a hindrance, rather than a help, since it prevented some from getting jobs on the reservation. In some instances, individuals being questioned were viewed as Indian by Elders, but based on the blood quantum, they were not. Thus, individual perceptions did not match the legal membership or blood quantum. This is common.

A traditional female Elder the author knows is strict regarding traditional cultural ceremonies. She believes that anyone who doesn't attend ceremonies is not Indian, regardless what their physical features are. She never mentioned blood quantum. She believes that one must be Anishinaabe, not just look like one; what one believes and how one lives is far more important than appearance. She is sometimes critical of light-skins, but her criticism concerns actions not appearance. This is a typical viewpoint of many Indian people, traditional and non-traditional, in regard to light-skinned and non-Indians.

What makes an Indian an Indian? For many people in the United States, it begins with physical appearance. For the Anishinaabe, it begins with actions.

The focus on values and behaviors relates to spirituality and cultural significance. Being a mixed-blood is not an issue for traditional people, and the author has not heard them discuss it, unless asked. The traditionalist perspective on identity is clear: You are either Anishinaabe or you are not. There are not degrees of being Indian, and the author has heard this from many traditional people. The author has heard traditional Elders maintain that blood quantum: (1) is of no importance to being Anishinaabe, (2) is oppressive, (3) is not congruent with cultural teachings. They say that to be Anishinaabe is spiritual, first. One Elder, a healer and medicine person, stated that only one drop of Indian blood is needed to be an Indian, he said he has heard the Manidoog say this on different occasions, while in various ceremonies.

III. Contemporary Issues Facing Indian People

A. A Note on Tribal Language

Knowing the tribal language is important to traditional Anishinaabe people. It affects the culture and identity. Discussions of traditional culture must include tribal language, since it is an essential part of the culture. The author has heard Elders from numerous reservations talk about its importance, along with traditional people saying that knowing the tribal language is not only important but required, if one wants to be an Indian. For example, the author knows a Minnesota Ojibwe woman that looks Indian that visited a Canadian Ojibwe reservation and was scoffed at by an Elder from that community for not knowing Ojibwe language. On this particular reservation, language

was a key component to being Anishinaabe. Physical features were not an issue. Knowing Ojibwe language was a requirement. This is an example of community differences in Anishinaabe identity and language.

Separating Ojibwe language from traditional culture is impossible: Anishinaabe ceremonies can't be done in English. The author has heard this in numerous communities and by many Elders and first-language speakers of Ojibwe. Thus, understanding the language is of extreme importance, not just culturally, but in an identity sense because the ceremonies are conducted in it; without the language, ceremonies will not be understood. Basil Johnston (Peacock and Wisuri 2006, 30) states, "No longer would they think Indian or feel Indian [if the Indian people lost the Ojibwe language]."

Tribal language is becoming a novelty in many communities and reservations. It is only being used in ceremonies and when praying, not in everyday conversation. The author is uncertain why this is happening, but it is. As stated previously, Elders have said that knowing the language is important, but understanding the language is more important now because understanding what the Elders are saying is basic to learning to speak later.

Some nations have already lost their language or are very close to losing it. Consequently, the author has tried to imagine a solution: tribes establish law that requires candidates for council or political offices to be, at least somewhat, fluent in their native language. All meetings would be conducted in the language, and the councils and board of directors would serve as living examples of the servant leadership that has carried Indian people for thousands of years. Something like that would obviously not happen overnight, but it could easily be a long term attainable goal for most tribes,

especially the Anishinaabe. The author also understands that it's very easy for him to sit here and say such things not even being fluent in the language himself yet. But he can assure you the day is coming where that will be a reality. Imagine what sovereignty would mean to tribal nations if they all spoke their language again. The author believes that many of the identity issues would be fixed instantly. Having that connection to your people and the Manidoog is a powerful thing. Being a part of an Indian nation and not knowing the language is comparable to living in China and saying you are Chinese and can't even communicate with the very nation you claim to be a member.

The next section is the other side of the coin. It examines some of the realities in contemporary Indian life and identity and the impacts of them on identity.

B. The Belly of the Beast

The intention for this section of the discussion is not to be critical. Rather, it is to bring balance to the research and show that American Indian people are just as human as others. In order to discuss the beauty of traditional culture and people, the ugly needs to be examined.

Just because someone is a traditional Anishinaabe, does not mean that they are perfect or without fault. While doing this research, the author did not want to create an image showing traditional people and culture as a utopia and symbol of perfection. This may sound like common sense, but during the research process, Indian people were often observed as being in denial and hesitant to acknowledge this fact. There are just as many

scammers, liars, thieves, greedy and power hungry individuals in Indian nations as anywhere else.

In that regard, American Indian people are no different than any other culture or ethnicity; they do not like to admit there is anything wrong with them, their beliefs, culture. But internally, there are beliefs and practices that don't fit the present, and these issues are unrelated to spirituality. Instead of asking why certain practices are still being done, there must be a recognition that the world is much more complicated. To deny that fact is to be blind to the truth. The sooner Indians face that fact, the sooner solutions can be adapted, not assimilated, which arguably is more of what is happening. When Indians don't deal with issues and problems themselves, someone else will. That 'someone else' almost always does not have the best interests of Indians in mind. It doesn't matter if the issues are identity or any other social problem.

Many of the social issues on reservations would make national news if they were in some non-Indian neighborhood or town, but because they are just "Indians," it goes unnoticed and people turn a blind eye. The people who live on or near reservations become numb to the violence, abuse, greed, drugs, lies, scams, stealing, etc. It is tragic but true. It becomes difficult to deal with any social problem when destructive behaviors are not recognized as destructive and are even considered as normal.

The author is tired of the non-Indian blaming by Indian people for every problem that American Indian people have. The history is there for everyone to see: the tragedies, the lies, theft of land and resources, boarding schools, destruction of culture, language

and community are all there and very real. Yet, Indians are living in a time of self-determination, but are terrorizing themselves more than non-Indians by hurting, stealing, lying, backstabbing, raping, abusing and destroying themselves on their reservations. Presently, politics is being used to hurt; power and control are the game. Despite the reasons, it is real and Indians must determine their own way; however, these issues must, first, be acknowledged by Indians. There is a blind eye to the majority of social problems in Indian communities at the tribal level. As a result, it is crippling the people. There is no one to go to for help. Indian communities must find a way to problem solve. This research contends that getting back to and following the traditional culture is a large part of the solution. Discussions on contemporary problems need to be addressed by the Anishinaabe, and for Anishinaabe identity.

C. Inclusivity

While inclusivity was forced upon Indian people, Indian people feed into this willingly with the help of oppression. Indian people tend like to think that they can still hide from the world and continue to be who they were a hundred years ago and be untouched. This is obviously not possible. They are surrounded by non-Indians in geography; and now the internet has drastically changed how people relate to the world. Social media has altered human social life permanently, including Indians. In addition to all the other issues facing Indians, the internet has created its own dilemma. The author decided to address inclusivity because some communities the author visited are still in the mindset of being separated from the rest of the world. It is very damaging and cripples them if they believe they are apart from the outside world. They need to come to

understand that things have changed, so they can prevent themselves from changing negatively with it and maintain who they are. There is no need to be secretive anymore and act as if they have to hide from the world.

D. Casinos

With the advent of casinos, the tribal nation's that have them are facing a set of issues to confront. Addictions to gambling are not acknowledged at the tribal level, even though everyone that lives on the reservation knows it is an enormous issue. This affects the young, the old and everyone in between.

Tribes with casinos are becoming more like corporations. They are less humane and people oriented, focusing on profit over people, and policies over culture. The author has witnessed this on numerous reservations through work and observations in them. The people on reservations often discuss it. The author once worked in a position when he witnessed a scenario where an individual tried to relinquish membership in one tribe to try and join another, only to find he didn't have enough blood quantum from the other tribe and, consequently, was not enrolled anywhere. The reason for switching tribes was clearly motivated by money and a per capita payment. This is very common in tribes with casinos. There are many Indians changing their membership to a tribe that receives more per capita or benefits. Whether change in membership is positive or negative is secondary to the fact that it is occurring often and has consequences when determining someone's identity. It raises more questions on what makes someone an Indian. Obviously, blood quantum is the main factor in this type of issue, but the author would argue there are a

few underlying issues at play, including loyalty, community, and character, to name a few.

Without doubt, the number one reason why tribal membership is a heated issue today is a result of tribal gaming and casinos. The author has witnessed this more than he cares to admit. Some Indians, like some other humans, are attracted to money, especially, if it's free. Per capita payments, as a result of casinos, is a major reason why some people want to be Indians. This has also caused a rift within Indian communities and families because tribal membership on reservations has changed as a result. For example, some tribes are keeping family members out because the number of members affects the per capita payment amounts. This is completely anti-Indian from every perspective. Whether it is right or wrong is not of interest for the moment; the importance of the subject in this discussion is that it affects Indian identity.

Whether a tribe has casinos is irrelevant because non-Indians have learned they could get a casino at any time. It pays, sometimes literally, to be Indian in modern times. This has complicated Indian identity on all levels. The author has witnessed this personally on his own reservation and many others he has observed. Every Anishinaabe tribe in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota has at least one casino. The casino culture is greatly affecting the Anishinaabe; whether that is good or bad is not the issue for this research.

Indian reservations, like most rural towns and areas have certain families that have been there for many years. With the sudden creation of casinos, there are people coming from everywhere and nowhere to claim they are members and descendants of

tribes. This creates dissension and negative feelings. It's difficult to disagree with that. It is insulting, demeaning and disrespectful for people to come forth, claiming to be Indian and receiving a benefit for it, when previously they never spoke to another Indian, nor suffered for it at any time, when life for Indians was bleak. Twenty years ago, these individuals would never have spoken to another Indian, but now claim to be proud descendants of great and mighty chiefs. This is an intensely debated issue on reservations, and the effects on identity occur on many levels.

E. Colonization/Internalized Oppression

One of the most important, if not the most important, aspects of Native American identity is the effects of colonization, which has led to internalized oppression. There are numerous resources that cover the issue of colonization and its devastating effects on Native American identity (Lawrence 2003, 2004, Valaskakis 2005, Churchill 1999, Grande 2004, Weaver 2001). For the purpose of this research, the author is not going to dissect this issue in detail, but it should be noted that colonization and internalized oppression are the blanket that covers the whole identity issue. It is inescapable and inarguable to think that this is not the truth. The devastating effects of colonization and internalized oppression on American Indian identity in the last five-hundred years, is laced into the very fabric of who they are as Indian people today.

If this is a new topic to the reader, then it may be helpful to gain understanding and appreciation. This is a critical issue and is a part of every person in North America who has a drop of Indian blood, whether known or not. It is that important. This is being addressed in some Indian communities but not nearly enough. If traditional Elders on

Turtle Island were asked about this concept and its effects on their culture and identity, it is probable that all would acknowledge it. Much of the bitterness and anger that consumes so many Indian communities stems from this. As Mander (1992, 6) states, "There is no way to understand the situation of Indians, Eskimos, Aborigines, island peoples, or other native societies without understanding the outside societies that act upon them. And there is no way to understand the outside societies without understanding their relationships to native peoples and to nature itself."

A topic that must be discussed in Indian history regarding colonization and internalized oppression is the boarding school era. This is a disastrous part of Indian identity that can't be omitted. The boarding school experience and the effects of it are inescapable for Indian people of all tribes. It was devastating to the traditional culture and identity, in general. It warrants discussion, even if briefly, out of respect to those who experienced it and the families of those victims. The author's family was a part of this as were many Anishinaabe people. The damage caused during this horrific period staggers the mind.

The author witnessed a similar cultural situation while in Costa Rica, that further explains the issue of colonization/internalized oppression. The Indian people in Costa Rica are on remote reservations pushed deep into the mountains and other rural areas. It was interesting to observe that the so-called non-Indian people are as dark skinned as those they call Indians. Because of colonization, the majority of people do not associate with their traditional relatives. The only real difference between them is culture. The author found this to be strange, since they are all biologically related. Their identities

were obviously non-Indian to such a degree that they acted as if they were unrelated to the Indian people in their country. These are two completely different societies of people in their identity, yet share a bloodline. They have a fascination with Indian culture and objects but want nothing to do with the people themselves, which is very similar to Indian and non-Indian relationships in the United States. The moral of this real-life story: the effects of colonization.

F. Politics of Power and Control

The abused have successfully become the abuser. On reservations that have casinos, this is far worse. Where there is a lot of money, there is always a fight to gain control of it. Indian people are no different. Of course, with money comes nasty politics in order to control the money. When the money is controlled on reservations, the money controls people's homes, jobs, schools, and healthcare. Every aspect of life is literally in the palm of those who control the money. Most of the people are poor, uneducated and have nowhere else to go. This develops a captive audience, keeping people in their place and developing a nation of dependency, resulting in a welfare state. This is becoming commonplace in tribes with casinos. The author has observed and has been a part of numerous examples. The issue is discussed here because of the negative effects on people's identities. Families that have been a part of tribes since their existence have family members that are being dis-enrolled. This problem is addressed by Alfred (1999, 81) when he states, "It is precisely when the traditional social system has broken down that individuals skilled at manipulation wield the most influence."

G. Loss of Culture/language

The core principles and value system of the Anishinaabe traditional culture is eroding in the younger generations. This issue is upsetting to the Elders; and some talk about it, but most don't. Traditional culture, language, medicines, values, etc. are becoming a relic to be put on a pedestal and observed and revered rather than active, alive and a normal part of everyday life. They are becoming more of a museum piece. Anishinaabe culture has gone from valuing those with spiritual gifts to valuing those with knowledge of ceremony and language. There has been a radical shift, and the people's identity is greatly affected.

Traditional forms of governing and social structure are no longer being used. For example, the Anishinaabe Doodem (clan system) was an elaborate and purposeful social structure that helped communities deal with many social issues (Benton-Banai 1988). The clan system is no longer followed or utilized at a tribal level on any Anishinaabe reservation known to the author. The failure to use a clan system negatively affects identity, community and family structure.

H. Cultural Cops/Identity Police

Reverse racism exists; it is alive and well. In the author's opinion, the attacks on identity from Indian to Indian are often far worse than from non-Indian to Indian. This was witnessed by the author many times, when children as young as four in reservation schools would bully and call their light-skinned peers names such as "white boy." A child that young does not understand what they are saying, but obviously they are learning that

behavior at home. “Through internalized oppression/colonization, we have become our own worst enemy” (Weaver 2001, 252).

The author has noted that, generally, an American Indian with prominent Indian features and with little cultural knowledge is more apt to attack light-skinned people for the way they look. The author has seen and experienced this enough to formulate the opinion that this is a result of jealousy, insecurity and the individuals own identity issues. Nothing seems to get a dark-skinned Indian more upset than when someone lighter-skinned knows more about the culture, ceremonies or language than they do. This happens both with traditional and non-traditional people. The author believes this occurs because their physical features are the only identity they have, and as a result, they feel empty and threatened because of their lack of knowledge about their own culture. Internalized oppression also plays a major role in situations such as this. It is a major issue on many reservations. The author heard it on a daily basis—ceremonies, powwows, at work, etc. Judging others appeared to be rooted in identity. It was constant, negative and unhealthy. How are Indian people supposed to heal, when members in their own communities are being attacked and ridiculed for who they are? Many non-Indians are unaware of this issue, unless they live near a reservation or know someone experiencing it. The commonality of this behavior is evident on a daily basis in Facebook websites.

I. Culture/Ceremonies for Money

The current level of fakes, scammers and con artists performing ceremonies for money is increasing, and this subject saddens the author and others who have become

aware of it. Individuals requesting absurd amounts of money to help or be at ceremonies is increasing. As a result, the value of sharing and helping others has often become based on money. A point to be made is this happens more often in communities that are more affluent with casino money than poorer tribes. The author has witnessed situations at funerals where families needed help. There were a number of people in the community that could have helped but didn't because a person they didn't like was conducting the funeral, and they knew they wouldn't be paid for helping. Funerals are a community event on reservations, and a death affects everyone because it's a small, close-knit community. Culturally, that is how it is experienced and always has been. A family struggling at a funeral because someone is not getting paid does not reflect traditional Anishinaabe culture.

Using knowledge of tribal language and ceremonies in order to be paid is another common issue. The amounts of money requested for ceremonies or an opening prayer in the language is becoming large in certain communities. The author has witnessed evidence of this when individuals have quit their jobs to help traditional people in ceremonies because it paid well. The author contends that practices such as this do not reflect traditional Anishinaabe culture. Another issue that goes hand-in-hand with issues related to money is the use of traditional culture for power and control. Traditional culture is highly valued on most reservations. As a result, certain individuals have seen this as a way to cash in and also gain power. The culture and language has become a badge on the shoulder of some, and they use it as a shield to hide behind to justify their unethical behavior and harmful decisions. The author has observed this often.

J. Mistreatment of non-Indian Employees/Reverse Racism, Negative Workplace

Apparently it's acceptable for Indians to dislike non-Indians, but non-Indians are not allowed to dislike Indians in return. The author has experienced this double standard constantly on certain reservations. The professional abuse of employees that are non-Indian and Native from other tribes is very common. There is an attitude in some communities that non-Indians can be viewed as slaves. They are expected to keep their mouth shut, keep their head down and know their place, do the work, and ultimately become expendable. Talented and educated people are viewed as a threat. There will be no longevity for a positive person with creativity and great ideas. The author contends that using history to punish all non-Indians is unhealthy and unacceptable by traditional cultural standards. The hurt experienced by Indian people is understandable, but those living today are not responsible for what happened in the past. Willingly hiring people and basically abusing them emotionally and professionally, and blaming them for personal problems is not going to help Indian people heal and move forward.

IV. Narrative: Confessions of a Blue Eyed Indian (The Author's Story)

If you were to meet me you would surely notice one thing. I don't look like Sitting Bull or any other stereotypical American Indian, you may have seen in books or in movies. I look like a *chimookaman* (white person) is supposed to look: light skin, hair and eyes. I have long hair, but so do hippies and rock stars, and they aren't Indian. How is it possible that I can label myself as an Indian, with confidence and a straight face? I am happy to explain.

I am an enrolled member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. My Indian blood originates from both sides of my family; both mother and father have Indian blood. My father is an enrolled Indian and my mother is not. Therefore, in regard to blood quantum, I can only legally count my Fathers blood. (Even if my mother was enrolled, I couldn't count her blood quantum, based on how the blood quantum is determined). Interestingly, my grandfather on my mother's side was darker skinned than my grandfather that is enrolled. If physical characteristics were to be considered, my grandfather that is not enrolled was more Indian than the one who is enrolled. Additionally, the reason my grandfather on my mother's side is not enrolled, is not because of blood quantum, but lineage issues, since it is difficult to trace where his family was Indian. This is a typical issue for many families, especially those looking to presently enroll. My family has been enrolled since they began enrolling Indians, we are not new Indians. There is no way to know how much Indian blood I have. Does it matter? Not to me. It is also important for me to explain that my great-grandmother and all her brothers and sisters were put in a boarding school in Mount Pleasant, Michigan as children. Since boarding schools were established to obliterate traditional culture and language, my family was directly affected. For example, all my family members are Christians, as were my great-grandmother and her siblings. The primary connection for my family with Indian culture has been through commercial fishing. My family has been tribal fisherman for thousands of years. Even many on the non-Indian sides were fisherman. I have tracked this back to before we signed the treaties.

My grandfather's situations can appear as non-sense. Here is an example where appearance has no bearing on whether someone is legally Indian or not. Does that make

him and others in the same situation (non-enrolled) not Indian? The answer depends on the purpose for which one 'needs to be Indian.' As far as the creator and traditional Indians are concerned, it seems he is Indian enough. For legal purposes and defining modern day membership in a Tribe, the answer is no.

Here is another way to view how ridiculous blood quantum and physical characteristics become at the individual level, especially from a traditional perspective. For example, we gather the appropriate paperwork that shows the bloodline of my grandfather being Indian. Suddenly, I am more Indian than before because I have proof on paper. Does that mean I would be more deserving to be labeled an Indian at that point? My appearance would still be the same; nothing else would change about me but possibly a fraction on a piece of paper. From a human being standpoint, how does that change anything? From a cultural standpoint how does that change anything? From an identity standpoint how does that change anything? Would I suddenly feel more empowered as an Indian? Identity is many things, but it is not blood quantum.

Being Anishinaabe does not depend on a percentage or fraction on a piece of paper. Where does this place me and others like me on the 'Indianess' scale? I don't look that Indian; yet, I am enrolled in a tribe and obviously have Indian blood. I believe in our traditional Anishinaabe teachings and way of life. My value system is Anishinaabe, and I am learning our language. I pray with tobacco and attend our ceremonies and spiritual gatherings. However, I see the way non-Indian people look at me when they hear I am Indian. I no longer try to explain when asked. I am who I am, as a result of my heritage and my personal choice to identify with that heritage. From there, I am who I am because others with whom I identify are members of the culture and recognize me as such.

Finally, it is clear to me from my time spent in ceremonies, the Creator agrees with who I am.

Who I am is intimately tied to being Anishinaabe. Despite this, no one, and I do mean no one in my family, believes in the traditional culture but me. None of their identities are Indian and most of them have very negative perspectives of Indian people, speaking down about them. At this point it should be obvious that I was not raised to be traditional. I knew very little of traditional Anishinaabe culture and spirituality until I became an adult. When I was first exposed to traditional people and culture, I was immediately skeptical. I believe this was primarily due to being a Christian at the time. After observing traditional people for a period of time, it was obvious that being Indian is what I needed and wanted to be. It may sound strange, but if you ever met a traditional Anishinaabe person you would understand. The spiritual peace that surrounds them is infectious. They radiate beauty, balance and healing. There is no judgment on any level toward you or anyone else. They project true beauty from within. I realize how this may sound, but I assure you it is true. One cannot help but be affected. For me personally, it represented what I have always wanted in life, but never knew what it was or where to look. It just felt right, actually perfect. I felt at ease, and I was truly home. I wanted to have or be a part of whatever they were. That is how it began for me on my path to learn our traditional Anishinaabe culture and language. No one recruited me or told me to do anything.

I never felt at ease or at peace as a Christian, and I was one for years. There was always something missing, and no matter how much I prayed, I could not understand it. Now, I know what the answer is. Another aspect that was amazing to me was the fact that

traditional Anishinaabe people do not have a religion, and they do not recruit others. It is a belief of spirituality, a relationship with the creator and all things. Traditional people just live their life according to the ways we were given by the creator when he made us Anishinaabe. They don't preach or persuade and don't have an agenda or politics. They just are. It is really something to behold. They are not trying to prove a point or get anyone's attention; in fact, just the opposite is true. They are just trying to achieve being a human being the way the Gitchii Manidoo showed us, through living our Anishinaabe value system, humbleness, ceremonies, prayer and respect.

It is always interesting when people ask me how much Indian I am. Wait, did I say interesting? I meant disgusting. It makes me want to vomit every time I hear it, since I claim to be Indian because it is who I am not for the monetary benefits or to get any attention from it. I do not receive a per capita check for being me. I do receive balance and spiritual peace from the creator.

If non-Indians can begin to understand what it means to be an Indian for cultural and spiritual reasons, then I believe it will alleviate many issues regarding discrimination and racism between us. My experience with Christianity taught me that it will not be easy, because Christianity, in its root, does not respect or accept any faith that is different.

If I were to lose my tribal membership, it would not affect my identity. It would upset me from a sovereignty perspective. I am part of an inheritance my ancestors fought to protect, and no one has the right to take that away. I am Anishinaabe, whether the government, non-Indians or their God recognizes it. My nation, my people, my Elders and the Gitchii Manidoo know who I am and that's all that matters. They have never asked to see my tribal membership card. A final question makes my point: How

important is blood quantum and political tribal membership in terms of being Anishinaabe from a traditional cultural perspective?

CHAPTER NAANAN (FIVE)

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Indian people have solved issues for thousands of years by sitting in a circle and smoking the ceremonial pipe. The pipe was passed to everyone present, insuring that all participants had the opportunity to speak. If the problem wasn't solved then and there, they kept talking until it was solved, regardless of time, or it was tabled and discussed later until a solution was achieved. Wouldn't it be practical, if we could do that in present times? Oh wait, we can. The author offers up this humble study as his part of the conversation on Native American identity. The final reflections are discussed in four sections: (I) A Note on Findings (II) Recommendations: What Does it all Mean (III) Considerations for Further Research (IV) Closing Thoughts.

This study sought to educate non-Indians and as a call to action for tribal governments. There were two primary reasons for this study: First, to provide insight into the American Indian identity issue for non-Indians based on what it means to be traditional, its relevancy, and who Indian people are from a cultural perspective and second, to start a discussion within tribal nations about utilizing their traditional culture in governance and membership issues. Specifically, what makes an Indian an Indian from a traditional Anishinaabe Indian cultural perspective? The author contends there is a great misunderstanding of what the traditional culture is and that it is relevant in current times

for Indian people. As the study and Alfred (1999) shows, it is relevant and can be utilized to transform identity and Native communities.

The methodology used to gather information for this study included two primary methods: (1) Ethnographic research of the author's observation and participation in Anishinaabe communities and traditional ceremonies. (2) Data review of literature related to American Indian identity.

I. A Note on Findings

The issue of identity and its effects bleeds into every individual Indian's life whether they know it or not. It affects everything they think and do and what others perceive of them. The results of the study provide a deeper insight into the traditional cultural perspective and definition as well as an understanding of the various purposes of determining Indianess. There are no correct answers in the definition of American Indian identity, only differences in opinion. It is a fact that there are multiple facets to Indian Identity. "Rather than determining where someone fits on a continuum between two cultural identities or worlds, it may be more accurate to say that indigenous people live in one complex, conflictual world" (Weaver 2001, 249).

This study has determined that there are many ways to determine who is and isn't Indian, which depends on the purpose for wanting to know. Being Indian means 'living' as an Indian. There is no other way to state it. This concept cannot be understood, unless time is spent living with Indian people in their communities. Even then, it may not be comprehended, until seen through the lens of the individual's spirit. It lies beneath the

surface of human life. Indian people are different because of WHO they are, culturally and spiritually, which is more important than WHAT they are or look like. The physical aspects and biology of being Indian are obvious, but what is less obvious, and misunderstood by most, is who Indian people are culturally or spiritually.

The ways individuals become Indian are by birth (blood tie), self-identification, association (social acceptance), ceremonies (culturally/spiritually), and politically (legal membership in tribe). Genetics mean nothing in determining who is an Indian, especially culturally. To be accepted as Indian socially, culturally and spiritually is unrelated to blood quantum, but related to the spirit. One need not be an Indian, biologically, to be Indian. To be accepted as an Indian, culturally and socially, is the highest honor and respect one can receive. If that is desired, it requires leading with heart and spirit, rather than mind and selfishness. This is the path that traditional people accept in determining identity. Concepts of race, blood quantum, and physical appearance are not important with traditional culture. In the traditional perspective physical appearance becomes more flexible than who one is.

All tribes face extinction if they are using blood quantum to determine Indianess and legal membership. In the traditional perspective it could be viewed as, 'the more the merrier' when it comes to being Indian. However, regarding political/membership, less is best, which results in more money per person. One perspective is based on spirituality and the other is based on greed.

The study specifically examined traditional Anishinaabe perspectives on identity. The true identity of the Anishinaabe lies in their traditions and culture. Without the

culture, they are just a blood quantum of a forgotten people. To truly understand an issue that's affecting them, especially identity, there must be a grasp of the traditional perspective. When determining who is and isn't Anishinaabe, the author believes that the traditional culture should be at the forefront of the argument and/or a framing point for the argument. If the Anishinaabe can't look at what made them who they were for thousands of years and see any value in that today, then the author would question their future as a distinct culture of people.

Anishinaabe culture and language was given to them by the Creator to keep them alive (Benton 1988). Traditional people and their faithfulness to their ceremonies and traditional culture/language are the very foundation and cement that holds them together as Anishinaabe. If they forgo it for something else, they will not exist as Anishinaabe. They may still have a blood tie but will be something other. Every tribe that has assimilated and forgone their traditional culture does not exist. There is a clear distinction between tribes that are seeking to be more like the dominant culture and those that are not.

When tribal nations face issues, a traditional cultural perspective is required to attain lasting solutions. "It is a fundamental tenant of Indian perception that the spiritual aspect of life is inseparable from the economic and the political" (Mander 1992, 208). It is an essential part of who Indian people are historically and currently. "Tribes that can handle their reservation conflicts in traditional Indian fashion generally make more progress and have better programs than do tribes that continually make adaptations to the white value system" (Deloria 1971, 28). Alfred (1999) states that when traditional culture

and values are followed and utilized effectively it will bring healing and empowerment to their communities. Any tribe that has assimilated culturally, as a way of surviving, no longer exists. Obviously, the more traditional the culture of a tribe, the greater chance for their survival.

II. Recommendations: What Does it all Mean

"Some kind of determined and lasting cultural renewal must take place to help resolve the question of Indian identity in the modern world" (Deloria 1984, 245). Anishinaabe communities are suffering from an identity crisis as they try to figure out who they are. Living in wigwams and using birch bark canoes is not what the author is proposing, when he speaks of traditional perspective and culture. Rather, he proposes maintaining the traditional cultural value system, structure for nationhood and community formation. These traditional concepts are relevant and are a necessity, not only from a functional standpoint, but from an identity standpoint. The concepts work for them and their way of life. It provides a template for Native communities to infuse their culture into a system that works for them and they can believe. "Indigenous traditions are the repository of vast experience and deep insight on achieving balance and harmony" (Alfred 1999, 21). Traditional perspectives and culture encourage a healthy Indian community and nation, while supporting cultural identity, not destroying it. Pewewardy (1993, 5) says it best: "Indian people who are well grounded in their traditional ways of life already know they are Indian."

Humbleness and emotional restraint are not valued qualities in general population of the United States, as is often evident in movies, by the military and in schools.

Mahatma Gandhi faced this and so does any human or group of humans that actually live in a humble way, like traditional American Indian people. This is a major culture clash that hasn't found a balance point in the United States. Aggressive cultures like the majority population of the United States, look down upon humble cultures like Indians. This is historically obvious as well. This is an element effecting the identity of Indian people above all else. They can't be who they are culturally, without facing dire circumstances for it. One only needs to look at the history of this country to see the evidence.

As a result, Indian people must take responsibility for their own thoughts and actions, and the United States, as a general population, has to admit it's wrong-doing and allow the Indian nations to begin rebuilding themselves in the fashion of their own traditional cultural perspectives, which includes regulating their own identity and who they are as Indian people.

> The primary goal and need of Indians today is not for someone to feel sorry for us and claim decent from Pocahontas to make us feel better. Nor do we need to be classified as semi-white and have programs and policies made to bleach us further. Nor do we need further studies to see if we are feasible. We need a new policy by Congress acknowledging our right to live in peace, free from arbitrary harassment. We need the public at large to drop the myths in which it has clothed us for so long. We need fewer and fewer "experts" on Indians. What we need is a cultural leave-us-alone agreement in spirit and in fact (Deloria 1971, 34).

The words of Alfred (1999, 21) provide a summary of the importance of this study:

> Challenging mainstream society to question its own structure, its acquisitive individualistic value system, and the false premise of colonialism is essential if we are to move beyond the problems plaguing

> all our societies, Native and white, and rebuild relations between our peoples. A deep reading of tradition points to a moral universe in which all of humanity is accountable to the same standard. Our goal should be to convince others of the wisdom of the indigenous perspective. Though it may be emotionally satisfying for indigenous people to ascribe a greedy, dominating nature to white people, as an intellectual and political position this is self-defeating. It is more hopeful to listen to the way traditional teachings speak of the various human families: they consider each one to be gifted and powerful in its own way, each with something different to contribute to the achievement of peace and harmony. Far from condemning different cultures, this position challenges each one to discover its gift in itself and realize it fully, to the benefit of humanity as a whole. It is just as important for Europeans as it is for Native people to cultivate the values that promote peace and harmony.

III. Considerations for Further Research

There must be more. More voices, more opinions, more Indians talking about these issues. Based on his experiences in his own community while growing up and in the communities he visited to conduct his research, the author proposes that a study done with Indian people cannot have a 'conclusion.' The circle of knowledge continues; it never stops. Attainable solutions are needed, and the means to attainment are through ongoing study.

Further research is needed, including interviews with individual Indian people, especially in reservation settings. That is the cultural voice that understands the actual problems Indian people face and the dire need for change. Tribal governments, as an entity, have different motives; it's the people who need to talk, since that is how the traditional culture operated. The people had the voice and the opinions that mattered. Indian people will not be culturally different than the dominant society, if the people continue to be alienated by their own tribal governments. Such alienation can be seen in

the United States government, which does not involve the people; it operates by a group of privileged individuals that are disconnected from the people and their everyday problems. Tribal governments are becoming cookie-cutter examples of that. The Indian people need to be brought back into the realm of politics in tribal nations; social problems will improve as a result.

Defining membership and identity is the future for Indian people. As intermarriage increases, the question of identity and the lines that define it are constantly in question for a majority of tribes, including the Anishinaabe. Is blood quantum going to continue to be the defining factor? If so, how do tribes deal with the lower quantums? The idea of looking ahead at future generations is a core value of the Anishinaabe. And what are tribal governments doing to address the issue of identity and its effects on their people? This needs to be addressed.

Another area for further research is traditional identity formation and traditional nation building. In depth conversations are needed to identify the characteristics of traditional perspective for each tribe, according to their culture, both on an individual and nation level.

Indian people and their nations need to begin healing from the last five hundred years. That will only happen through traditional cultural means. If culture is unimportant, then all that remains is blood quantum or genetics to determine Indianess, which becomes biological factors. As already stated in this study, tribes that use biological methods will cease to exist, it's a matter of simple math. If tribal governments fail to act, the United States government certainly will. Nations don't build themselves; people do. Without the

people thinking from a traditional cultural perspective, the possibility of a traditional government and nation are impossible, an issue needing to be addressed.

Sufficient work remains to be done in the study of American Indian identity. Identity issues continue to plague Indian communities on every level in their societies. The issues that need to be studied are too numerous to mention. Some pertinent issues include:

- **Compare:** reservation by reservation of the same Indian nation, traditional people vs. non-traditional on the same questions, youth vs. Elders on the same questions, assimilation vs. change meaning to Elders, tribal language vs. identity component and United States vs. Canadian tribes on same issues relating to identity and tribes with per capita payments vs. those without and cultural identity effects, language loss with tribes with casinos vs. those that don't.
- Utilize sociological theory to analyze Native communities. This would be very interesting if done by the right researcher who truly understands Native communities and sociological theory.

What needs to done for Indian people to maintain their identity is to be recognized as actual nations, not semi-sovereign lapdogs of the present. Tribes are not actual nations. They are essentially wards of the state and answer to the federal government, and many times, state and county governments. That fact alone has an enormous effect on identity. Many Indian people are unsure who they are and where they belong.

There needs to be a combination of membership criteria in tribes. One portion to address monetary concerns such as per cap, insurance, program funding, etc. and another part to address cultural concerns and recognition of members. Legal acknowledgement and recognition as Indian is important for identity and community. We are all made by the same Creator, Indian or non-Indian, despite ethnicity or race; this is a traditional cultural belief. If this is the belief, how is blood quantum even a part of the discussion? It has no place, and when viewed in that perspective, it is insulting, demeaning and disrespectful on every level.

IV. Closing Thoughts

Over time, this study has become more personal than the author would have known. The journey to get to this point has been filled with frustration and beauty. To address the issues in this study has not been an easy task. The hope is that through this study the author has brought honor to all traditional Anishinaabe people everywhere.

There will never be an accurate way to measure the damage done in Indian country at the identity level as a result of history and identity regulation. What can be done is to gain an understanding of the identity issue, including the traditional perspective, and then determine solutions to balance the past with the present to plan for a better future. This is attainable, and it is attainable sooner than most realize, if Indian people can just get along for a sufficient period of time, in order to finish a meaningful discussion. The day Indian people can look past history and the immediate to embrace the next seven generations, even for a few hours, real solutions can happen. It is

impossible to build a nation living in the past or being stuck in the present. Both are to be recognized, learned from, never forgotten, and Indian people must, then, move on. “The lesson of the past is that indigenous people have less to fear by moving away from colonialism than by remaining bound by it; in their resistance, they demonstrate an inner strength greater than that of the nations that would dominate them” (Alfred 1999, 33).

They say everything changes. Whoever ‘they’ are, they didn’t have much to say after that apparently. As things have not changed much since that time, as Lawrence states, “At present formal regulation of Native identity in Canada and the United States must be seen as having an overarching primary goal: to set the legal parameters by which indigenousness can be said to be eliminated” (2004, 16). The bottom line is if tribes didn’t have tracks of land, natural resources or casinos to exploit for profit, the United States government and most of its citizens would not care about Indian people, let alone what makes an Indian. At the end of every day, it’s always about money and power for the United States in general. That is how the Native American relationship began: with non-Indians, and it seemingly will always continue to be. Being Indian in present day becomes an issue only when there is something of value at stake (money, resources, land, children, rights, etc.). Otherwise why does it matter who labels or defines themselves as Indian? There is no harm.

Indians exist in an eternal grey area in the United States. The government really doesn’t want to acknowledge they exist because it’s a painful reminder of the hypocrisy in United States politics and governance since contact. The United States has attempted to build a nation on top of hundreds of nations on Turtle Island and, up to this point, has

failed. Indians still exist and maintain their traditional culture and language. They resist the greater society on every level. Has there been great damage and effects to their societies and nations as a result? Obviously, but they are still here, still fighting daily with every pinch of tobacco offered, every ceremonial pipe that's smoked, every ceremony, every drumbeat, every song sung, and every word of their tribal language that gets spoken in place of English.

The American Indian war has never stopped; it has only changed forms. The author challenges any reader of this study to spend a year living on a reservation, any reservation, and then say the war has ended. Trying to maintain a traditional cultural identity and understand where they fit in this world is but one reality for Indian people of the ongoing war. It seems obvious to the author the only place Indians belong in the United States is either dead or to drop their cultural identity, assimilate and drink the "Kool-Aid." The author can say without regret that for him and others, who believe in the traditional culture of their respective nations, that death will come first.

Tribes in the United States and Canada, including the Anishinaabe, could argue indefinitely about methods to determine identity in tribes. What they need to be doing as sovereign nations is to look at traditional ways of defining membership and return to what has kept them alive since their creation, including the past five hundred years of war. They need to remember what makes them unique as Indian people. Skin color and physical features of ethnic cultures is beautiful, but not near as beautiful as their cultural teachings, their language and their spirituality. Indian people can build a million casinos, live in solid gold houses and have swimming pools full of one hundred dollar bills and

yet never find happiness, peace or balance in their lives. The only way to achieve peace and balance is to come face to face with themselves as Anishinaabe and admit they are good, admit they are beautiful and embrace what it truly means to be who and what they are through their traditional culture. Put down the distractions in this life and pick up their tobacco.

Let's close with a teaching that someone close to the author, told him. "When the day comes, that the Manidoog pass over our communities and see that no one is using the sacred pipe, not practicing our ceremonies and not speaking our tribal (Ojibwe) language then that will be the end of the Anishinaabe." With this in mind, and with the findings of this study, the author would like to extend many thanks to the reader for interest and patience. Now, the real work begins. Mii'iw minik. Miigwetch.

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