Towards Anishnaabe Governance and Accountability: Reawakening our Relationships and Sacred Bimaadiziwin

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will examine the interrelationships that exist between individuals and collectives in Anishnaabe governance systems. These relationships are defined by roles and responsibilities that ultimately contribute to how governance is expressed amongst Anishnaabeg. Given the current fragmented and assimilatory basis for governing indigenous communities as evidenced through rights-based discourse in Settler society, it is crucial to renew our obligation as Anishnaabeg to *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* (Sacred Law) so as to represent ourselves and our philosophies. This paper will explore four levels of interrelationships and governance – the individual, the family and clan, the community and the nation. These levels of interrelationships will be examined in terms of *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* (The Seven Sacred Gifts or the Seven Grandfather Teachings). The duties and obligations within these identified relationships will be connected to how Anishnaabeg are represented within governance systems that our *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* calls for. Maintaining *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* in the creation and renewal of our relationships is crucial to our obligation to *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* and thereby truly representing ourselves, given the continued imposition of Settler value systems which continue to oppress us.

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ANISHNAABE WORDS AND CONCEPTS

Aabawaadiziiwin	The togetherness
Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan	The Gifts or Principles of the Seven Grandfathers/The Seven Sacred Gifts
Aakde'win	Bravery
Dbadendizwin	Humility
Debwewin	Truth
Gwekwaadsiwin	Honesty
Mnaadendiwin	Respect
Nbwaakaawin	Wisdom
Zaagidewin	Love/Caring For
Eniigaanzid	The one to go first/The first to face danger/The first to face the future/The one that should be acting as protector
Gchi-Naakinigewin	The big decision
Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige	Sacred Law – that which is eternal
Kizhemanito	The Creator/The Great Spirit
Midewe'win	Medicine Society
Ogimaa/Gimaa/Ogimaakan	Chief/Leader
Pagonekiishig	The four concentric circles in the sky
Pimaatiziwin/Bimaadiziwin	Living the Anishnaabe life – the good life
Shkaabewis	Helper
Waawshkigaamagki	The Bend in the Water – Curve Lake First Nation

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

Mkwa ndodem, Niiwin Noodin ndizhnikaaz. Waawshkigaamang (Curve Lake First Nation), Tyendinaga miinwaa Six Nations ndoonjibaag. My family comes from and these three communities. I am Anishnaabe (Ojibway) and Onkwehonwe (Mohawk) and come from the Bear Clan (*Mkwa ndodem)* through my father.

This project was initiated because I strongly believe in developing ways of protecting and regenerating Anishnaabe forms of governance in our communities. It is not only this belief that motivates me to write this thesis, but also the responsibility that I believe we as indigenous peoples carry with regard to Sacred Law and the relationships with our ancestors.

I have heard on different occasions in political debates the term 'collective' used continuously without actually knowing what this truly entails as the usage of it has become automatic and even rhetorical in some political circles. This is evident in the ideological and legislative distinctions of how indigenous peoples are regarded by Canada in terms of the collective or communal interests in terms of cultural practice, spiritual beliefs, land claims, etc. Political considerations are therefore interpreted in the collective context by both indigenous and Settler representatives of indigenous interests. Given this, the tendency of indigenous communities to function politically as collectives has led to particular misrepresentations in Settler society, specifically in the area of rights discourse as it pertains to individual rights, community-specific rights and property rights.

In order to better understand the disconnect between varying interpretations and misrepresentations of 'collective', it is necessary to explore Anishnaabe value systems and philosophies that centre on this idea. Anishnaabe value and governance systems are often portrayed as cultural or spiritual perspectives but they have far-reaching implications as a form of political theory that has been practiced since the beginning of creation. In this way, our 'governance' is not merely a system of government which objectively oversees and manages the operations of society. Rather, 'governance' is intimately connected to even the individual spiritual growth of Anishnaabeg as demonstrated through community leadership and clan roles/responsibilities that one upholds. Thus Anishnaabe governance is not akin to 'governments' (i.e. liberal democracies). These liberal governments, whether they are municipal, provincial or federal, are detached from the private sphere of individual citizens in order to maintain unbiased decision-making.

The complexities of Anishnaabe forms of governance are many as they affect the various interrelationships of not only Anishnaabe people, but of the animal world, the plant world, the spirit world, the sky world, etc. as well. In examining these complexities that comprise Anishnaabe value systems and governance, I hope to better comprehend the intentions behind Anishnaabe governance systems and its implications in terms of practice and relevance in how we represent ourselves as Anishnaabeg into the future.

It is important to note that I do not approach this project with the assertion that the Anishnaabe teachings, stories and philosophies that will be discussed are representative of all Anishnaabeg and systems of Anishnaabe governance. The language, teachings and ideas within this thesis may vary amongst different Anishnaabe people, families, clans

and communities. The intention in discussing Anishnaabe knowledge is to better understand the values and principles that make us who we are. Through this process, with the guidance of our teachings and stories, we will be able to develop ways of regenerating our systems of governance not only to challenge and reject the Settler solution, but also to embrace our responsibilities as Anishnaabeg.

It is this objective which is founded upon the many layers of interrelationships that initiates the discussion of our sacred way of life. It is by no accident that embracing our own values systems and thus practices of governance would necessitate a rejection of the colonial mentality and liberal ideal. This basis for contradiction is emblematic of why there still exists a need to assimilate indigenous peoples into Settler society. Thus attempts to inject our value systems into a society fuelled by individualism continue to be futile. Rather than allow liberal society to dictate how the bounds of individualism can be stretched to accommodate fragmented versions of indigenous governance systems, it is the aim of this paper to examine our own roles and responsibilities as they pertain to revitalizing our *Bimaadiziwin* (sacred way of life).

These roles and responsibilities we carry as individual Anishnaabeg are imbedded in the relationships we have with respect to our family, clan, communities and nation. It is within this dynamic that relational accountability is maintained and thus our purpose in Anishnaabe governance systems lies.

Based upon the above objective, the research question for this thesis project is: *How do Anishnaabe philosophies regard "rights" and/or "entitlements" as they pertain to individual and collective responsibility, and what are the values that underscore this?*

Transcending Individual vs. Collective Dichotomies: Towards Anishnaabe *Bimaadiziwin*

In the following discussion I will give a brief overview of the current literature on liberalism in Canada and how this implicates the notion of individualism versus group or collective rights and its effects on indigenous communities. 'Indigenous sovereignty' within the context of liberal democratic theory is ultimately subsumed into what is deemed as "acceptable" by various notions of liberal tolerance. This tolerance is defined by a rights-based discourse that has propagated an assimilative dichotomy of the individual versus the collective. It is true that colonization occurred on a mass-scale and was justified through large collectives whether they are religious collectives or political collectives. However, it would be remiss to categorize this practice of domination through colonization as a "collective value", given that that this seemingly collectivist approach was used to gain individualistic ends.

The relationship between Settler society and indigenous peoples has been shaped by a rights-based system as opposed to responsibility-based governance, thereby resulting in imposed liberal (and thus individualistic) philosophy through the usurpation of indigenous value systems in government practices. The inception of liberal democratic theory was and continues to be justified by the idea that indigenous governance systems are inept in their ability to practice civilized governance. These special allocated rights are an attempt to assimilate indigenous communities into liberal society and thus 'civilize' the indigenous orders that continue to exist.

In the examination of the following works, I will discuss liberal democratic theory, its emphasis on individualism and how this process is justified. This will be discussed in terms how the individual relates to larger collectives and to the land.

Methods of liberal representation continue to be imposed on indigenous peoples in Canada, and therefore it is necessary to examine the assimilatory nature of this imposition and then reject it. The next section will provide a basis for this contention and therefore will be limited in discussion throughout the crux of the thesis as Anishnaabe philosophies and teachings will be principal.

John Rawls, the famous 20th Century American philosopher and liberal theorist stated that:

> "...three conditions seem to be sufficient for society to be a fair and stable system of cooperation between free and equal citizens who are deeply divided by the reasonable comprehensive doctrines they affirm. First, the basic structure of society is regulated by a political conception of justice; second, this political conception is the focus of an overlapping consensus of reasonable comprehensive doctrines; and third, public discussion, when constitutional essentials and questions of basic justice are at stake, is conducted in terms of the political conception of justice."[1]

The political conception of justice that Rawls speaks of[2] has not been represented in Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples. It may be adequate to address particular injustice in the political realm of a democratic society, but fails to recognize the unjust beginnings of how that democracy came to be. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr. in his book, The White Man's Indian, writes:

> "Only a liberal government beneficial to all in theory and an untrammelled economy offered equal opportunity to every American, and conversely all good Americans ought to take advantage of their opportunities because they supposedly could...Democracy, liberalism, and individualism possessed important implications for understanding frontiersmen and Indians. The frontier acquired greater symbolic importance than ever as the place offering upward social mobility through the acquisition of property and exploitation of resources at low cost. Moreover, the White frontier population gained new respectability under the assumptions of democracy and racism..."[3]

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[1] John Rawls. Political Liberalism. NY: Columbia University Press, 1996. pg. 44
[2] ibid., Lecture I, Section 8.
[3] Robert F. Berkhofer Jr. The White Man's Indian. NY: Random House, Inc., 1978. pg. 155

Berkhofer examines the connection between liberalism and how this justified colonization. He argues that the democratic society which resulted from this remains to be individualistic and thus shapes how 'justice' will be manufactured in Settler society.

Rawls purports that liberalism is able to manage the considerable scope of diverse 'comprehensive doctrines', given that citizens are able to agree on foundational concepts of justice. The idea of comprehensive doctrines is very much alive in today, as Canada continues to pride itself on its multicultural mosaic. Kymlicka examines this in his book, Multicultural Citizenship. He writes, "A liberal democracy's most basic commitment is to the freedom and equality of its individual citizens."[4] Many of Kymlicka's discussion on group-differentiated citizenship involve issues of language, religion, and cultural practices that contribute to this notion of group-differentiation. These issues are also apparent within the multicultural dialogue in Canada. Multiculturalism is defined within the area of group-differentiated citizenship, thus reinforcing how indigenous peoples are often compared to immigrants within Canada. Although Kymlicka describes indigenous nations in Canada as existing at a multinational level,[5] it is evident that the scope of 'rights discourse' within the context of multinationalism is paralleled with Canada's multiculturalist agenda and results in a redirection of any genuine discussion of sovereignty to merely a tolerance of social differences (i.e. religions, languages, etc.).

He distinguishes indigenous groups as having 'special rights or 'community-specific rights' as opposed to solely universal rights which Canadian citizens enjoy.[6] The reason for this he claims is because of a lack of equality in Canadian society with regard

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[4] Will Kymlicka. Multicultural Citizenship. NY: Oxford University Press, 1995, pg 34.
[5] Glen Coulthard. Facing the Challenge of Freedom: Dene Nationalism and the Politics of Cultural Recognition. M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 2000. pg. 80
[6] Will Kymlicka. "Individual and Community Rights." Group Rights. Ed. Judith Baker. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, pg. 19.

to indigenous people and the special historical relationship that Canada has with indigenous communities. Thus, Kymlicka recognizes that the current state of liberalism in Canada is insufficient in terms of addressing indigenous issues.

Kymlicka compares this special historical relationship to the one that exists between Canada and the French Canadians. They too, he claims, have a distinct relationship that exists outside of other communities. I am immediately cautious at this type of comparison, for this implies that indigenous peoples should simply be referred to as another founding body of Canada. It is apparent that part of the reasoning for this comparison is to demonstrate the multilayered understanding of group rights. However, it also evident that Kymlicka's argument does not concern indigenous peoples and our forms of governance. Rather, he is attempting to stretch the boundaries of liberalism to accommodate indigenous peoples. The nature of collective responsibilities is not represented in what Kymlicka deems as community-specific rights as collective responsibility negates what liberal democracy adheres to first and foremost – the individual rights of its citizens. He fails to recognize that indigenous peoples cannot truly represent the values and systems of governance within this context because of the dichotomous nature of individual versus collective that liberalism necessitates.

Furthermore, his discussion on the lack of equality that exists in Canada towards indigenous peoples is only in regard to politics and economics.[7] These notions are devoid of any real assertion of indigenous philosophies and governance systems. Special group rights can only be expressed in various forms of cultural activities and the recognition that indigenous peoples are 'different'. For example, 'activities' such as speaking an indigenous language, participating in indigenous ceremonies, attending pow-

[7] Ibid., pg. 20

wows, etc. and are necessarily defined by rights discourse as existing independently of that which comprises sovereign governance systems. They are viewed by liberalism as a way for individuals to come together as collectives via common practices and/or beliefs. Ultimately this contributes to the multicultural dimension of Canada rather than to the re-emergence of indigenous governance systems. Liberalism by definition cannot theoretically or practically allow for indigenous people to rebuild forms of governance; this would be viewed as a usurpation of power.

Despite the inclusion of said 'community-specific rights' in Settler society and distinguishing indigenous nations as 'multinationals', indigenous peoples will not be any closer to attaining and practicing truly autonomous forms of governance – only a special designation within the general multicultural offspring of Canada. By practicing our cultural activities that stem from our historical presence, Canada argues that we will have the ability to be self-determining. However, this version of self-determination is only autonomous to the extent that any other individual in Canada possesses autonomy. Once again, we return to individualistic ideals of political sovereignty. The development of property rights was intimately connected to the notion of individualism.

Frances Svensson in her article entitled "Liberal Democracy and Group Rights: The Legacy of Individualism and Its Impact on American Indian Tribes", writes the following in regard to the balance of power: "…liberal democratic theory, in its almost exclusive emphasis on individual rights and its neglect of communal interests, has created a context in which no balance has been possible between the claims of individuals and multidimensional communities."[8] Svensson argues that because liberalism is based upon

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[8] Frances Svensson, "Liberal Democracy and Group Rights: The Legacy of Individualism and Its Impact on American Indian Tribes," *Political Studies 27* (1979): pg. 432.

individualism, the individual will always be the central focus of democratic society. Community or collective claims must act competitively with individual ones in order to gain any sort of recognition in the political realm – and even at that, it will always be limited given the nature of liberalism. Relational accountability is not a question as liberal democratic societies are founded upon the notion that central government has no place in the private sphere of the individual and thus the individual is not accountable to government or even other collectives as he/she is guided by his/her perception of what is 'good'.

In a country like Canada, where many culturally, politically and socially distinct groups exist, neutrality by the state may be a means to avoid preferentiality. Yet this does not address the presence of other, distinct nations living on this same land. What the state would regard as 'communal interests' of indigenous collectives is considered exactly that: merely an interest held in common by a community of people. Moulding practices of governance into social and political interests creates a perception of a group trying to actively participate in society. In this way, indigenous nations are regarded by the state as another special group that has an historical stake in Western practices of government.

Avigail Eisenberg in her book, Reconstructing Political Pluralism, argues that political pluralism finds a balance between liberalism and communitarianism. Eisenberg bridges the gaps that exist between these two political discourses through her examination of the many groups/cultures that exist in Canada and the individuals that comprise them. Eisenberg acknowledges that in order to gain political power, an individual can be more successful by operating within a group:

> "The supposition that all institutional structures are neutral between groups is simply untenable. Ideally, one might argue, the institutional context should strive for neutrality among competing groups. But, given the sheer diversity, in terms of culture, gender, race, class, and other characteristics of groups, it is unrealistic to suppose that neutrality can be maintained…Certain structures may favor certain types of interests over others…"[9]

Aside from the obvious problem of preferentiality, if indigenous communities are perceived as one of the "competing groups" in liberal society vying for political power implies that that our position in relation to Settler institutions is one of a voluntary association. Chandran Kukathas in his essay entitled "Are There any Cultural Rights?" describes collectives in the following way: "In the end, liberalism views cultural communities more like private associations or, to use a slightly different metaphor, electoral majorities."[10] Although some liberal theorists acknowledge the historical and thus present-day difference between indigenous nations and multicultural communities in Canada, it would be naïve to assume that this historical difference warrants a special relationship with Canada outside the scope of liberal action. This type of equalization of indigenous peoples with the multidimensional groups that exist in Canada only acts to eliminate notions of responsibility and replaces it with a rights-based discourse based upon the ability to participate competitively.

Yet Eisenberg's point is evident given the institutional and systemic biases that exist in Canada in terms of allocating specific political power – the formation of diverse groups is necessary in order to gain power. However, the danger of operating collectively within this system is that indigenous people will only attain the very coercive, individualistic political power that is used to oppress us. One could argue that

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[9] Avigail Eisenberg. Reconstructing Political Pluralism. NY: State University of New York Press, 1995. pg. 59.
[10] Op. cit., Kukathas, pg. 272

power can be transformed and utilized in different ways, yet ultimately power is derived from the state in Canada's democratic system and can be just as easily taken away by institutions given perceived misuse. Taiaiake Alfred in his book, Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom writes:

> "...Structural change negotiated in a colonized cultural context will only achieve the further entrenchment of the social and political foundations of injustice, leading to reforms that are mere modifications to the pre-existing structures of domination."[11]

Therefore, participating in the political realm as indigenous collectives reaffirms the institutional dominance that controls our governance systems. While indigenous groups may retain a particular type of power through lobbying and organizing (i.e. the Assembly of First Nations), that power is delineated through already pre-existing conceptions of what constitutes power in the first place.

Kymlicka attempts to remedy this problem in his argument for community-specific rights. Yet the universal rights of the individual are always first and foremost in this consideration. David Ingram writes in his book entitled, Group Rights:

> "The protection of group rights against outside interference, however, sometimes conflicts with the rights of dissident members to remain in them, at least insofar as their dissenting behavior interferes with the freedom of association and religion of the majority. So, although group rights are derivative of more basic individual rights, their enforcement sometimes requires restricting individual rights – all for the sake of protecting the individual rights of the majority."[12]

Individualism no matter how one attempts to reformulate, will always be at the centre of liberalism leaving community or collective interests in the peripheral. Special allowances for minimized rights are not the solution to a society that is structured on individual

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[11] Taiaiake Alfred. Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2005, pg. 180.
[12] David Ingram. Group Rights. Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000. pg. 100

pursuits absent of political accountability. Certainly they are not conducive to indigenous nations rebuilding systems of governance. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr. explains,

> "The emphasis on individualism and liberal institutions, moreover, placed Indian tribalism in direct opposition to Americanism even more under democracy that under republicanism. Indians must join American society as individuals in the liberal state and economy rather than as tribes. Cultural assimilation, likewise, must proceed according to the values of individualism and not those of tribalism."[13]

Kukathas continues, "From a liberal point of view the Indians' wish to live according to the practices of their own cultural communities has to be respected not because the culture has the right to be preserved but because individuals should be free to associate: to form communities and to live by terms of those associations."[14] Kukathas captures this point well. Kymlicka would probably agree with this line of thinking as this argument compels one to think that liberalism possesses the ability to be all-inclusive. From an indigenous point of view, it can also be surmised that this sense of 'inclusiveness' is emblematic of yet another attempt to assimilate indigenous peoples into the larger society through a guise of recognition and appreciation.

James Tully in his paper entitled, *"The Struggles of Indigenous Peoples for and of Freedom"*, discusses the ulterior motives of Canada's continued efforts to use the discourse of rights as an opportunity to lure indigenous philosophies into the liberalist ideal:

> "…the right of self-determination is satisfied when indigenous peoples are counted as part of the fictitious, homogeneous sovereign people of a nation state and are able to exercise the same individual rights of participation as other citizens. Here, the reduction of the rights of people to undifferentiated individual rights of participation is used to gloss over

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[13] Op. cit., Berkhofer, pg. 155.
[14] Op. cit., Kukathas, pg. 273.

> the existence of more than one people in an existing nation state and so to legitimise their assimilation."[15]

The apparent benefit of rights that Canada offers indigenous peoples operates on the premise that indigenous ways of governing need to be assimilated into Settler society thereby becoming more civilized. Accepting this standard of injustice moves us further away from regenerating our own ways, as the value system that underpins liberal theory is founded upon individualism and the withdrawal from interrelationships. Berkhofer reiterated this point well in his discussion of 'cultural assimilation' and how this is necessary in order for liberalism to continue to flourish.

John Locke and his Two Treatises of Government[16] continue to be highly influential in Canada's system of government. Liberalism exists as a basis for individual and property rights in Canada and thus is dependent on individualism. Alan Ryan, a Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Oxford, connected some of the great philosophers of the 17th Century to this idea, and informs Settler's society political relationship to the land. Locke ascribes to the notion that an individual is not guided by an 'arbitrary ruler' in terms of property rights, that he only follows his divine and natural right as a human being to acquire property.

Acquisition was not without obligation however: "What Locke argues is that individuals acquire a title to what they need by mixing their labour with the things they acquire."[17] Labour and industry were integral to a person not only having title, but having ownership of what the land produced for profit. It was the estimation of the

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[15] James Tully, *"The Struggles for and of Freedom."* Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Eds. Duncan Ivison, Paul Patton and Will Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 37 – 59, pg. 56.
[16] John Locke. Two Treatises of Government. Cambridge University Press, 1960.
[17] Alan Ryan. Property and Political Theory. NY: Basil Blackwell Inc. 1984. pg. 17

colonizers that indigenous communities did not labour the land due to the lack of exploitive industry when they arrived. Just as many misconceptions and stereotypes developed through the interaction of the Settlers with indigenous peoples, so did the notion that indigenous peoples were 'lazy'. In actuality Anishnaabeg laboured the land, though not in the sense that Settlers perceived. It is because our relationship to the land is so sacred, that a lack of excessive industry existed. It was not as though indigenous people were incapable of creating such exploit. As Anishnaabeg, our way of life comes from the spirit world and the design of creation – it is imbedded in this. To destroy the land for the purposes of excess is tantamount to eradicating the very governance systems we live by.

Robert Williams in his book, The American Indian in Western Legal Thought, quotes Locke in his Second Treatise as he describes the 'Indians of America':

> "…rich in land and poor in all the comforts of life; whom nature having furnished as liberally as any other people with materials of plenty, i.e., a fruitful soil, apt to produce in abundance what might serve for good, raiment, and delight, yet for want of improving of it by labor have not one-hundredth part of the conveniences we enjoy. And a king of large and fruitful territory there feeds, lodges, and is clad worse than a day-laborer in England."[18]

The stereotypical 'lazy Indian' is represented in Locke's justification for appropriation of lands. Locke deduced that because of this apparent laziness, it was not only the right, but the *duty* of the colonizer to exploit these lands and labour them for profit. Williams responds to Locke and writes, "…judging by the Revolutionary era's reception of Locke, the continuity in English colonizing discourse of the thematic of Indian deficiency had been completely integrated into the 'common sense' of the late-eighteenth-century

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[18] Robert Williams. The American Indian in Western Legal Thought. NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1990. pg. 248.

English Americans."[19] In a continued effort to assimilate indigenous peoples, so comes the need to civilize as evidenced through these created falsehoods. This is how the emergence of property rights came to be crucial in the success of colonization.

> "If we cultivate land, and so make it more fruitful than before, the land becomes ours along with its fruits. And if people hit on the invention of money, the process can become much more elaborate: money allows people to pile up property that does not spoil, to employ others, and to acquire so much land that there is, without anyone having his rights violated, no vacant land for the taking."[20]

In the above quote, Alan Ryan makes a strong connection of Locke's philosophy to the present day treatment of the land. Ownership is expressed not only in terms of title, but what the owner can produce from his/her labour. Ownership and title has become such a point of contention that the 'vacant land' Ryan speaks of, is decreasing. Treating land as a potential investment depletes not only the resources within it, but also the spiritual relationship human beings have with it. He quotes John Locke from his Two Treatises of Government:

> "Men have a right to this property by nature, not on the mere say-so of an arbitrary ruler. Men know what natural rights they have by consulting their reason; this tells them that they are the workmanship of one almighty maker, sent into the world about his business, made to last during his, not one another's pleasure."[21]

The God-given right to property is an essential component in the achievement of colonization. Ryan explains further Locke's views on property as it related to Christianity:

> "...Men have those rights over external things which they need to have if they are to use them as God commands. Indeed, the same principle holds for our rights over ourselves; we have those rights which we need to

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[19] Ibid., pg. 249.
[20] Op. cit., Ryan, pg. 17.
[21] Ibid., pg. 15.

> exercise to live as God commands, and no others. These we have by nobody's consent, but by God's commandment."[22]

This approach to property squashes out the middleman (i.e. the government) and creates an individual's direct connection to self-proclaimed ownership through the use of Christian testament. This type of thinking was also reinforced by the biblical duty to "multiply, populate the earth and subdue it".[23]

Another implication of the collective view of indigenous peoples is the application of a pan-indigenous blanket on indigenous nations. Notions of sovereignty are minimized in this way as the political sphere of the Canadian government defines the indigenous identity as Aboriginal issues comprised of housing, economic development, land claims, cultural activities, etc. The indigenous collective is celebrated in this meticulous formation of issues, as Canada is perceived both domestically and internationally as well-intentioned through its efforts at justice. Unfortunately, the justice it seeks is through assimilation so that "Aboriginal issues" will eventually be a memory – a dirty history that Canada cleaned up.

This huge void in literature where indigenous value systems and governance practices are concerned is in and of itself confirmation that liberal democratic theory is not equipped to truly represent indigenous peoples in Settler society. This is evidenced by the disparity in value systems, the arrogance and false representation in rights-based discourse and by the basic contention that no foreign system should dictate to another.

It is not enough to only explore how Settler society has developed and continues to practice rights through the representation of individualism. The examination of the previous works was necessary in order to establish the position from which I will be

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[22] Ibid., pg. 18.
[23] The Holy Bible. *King James Version.* Genesis. 1:28-30; 2:16, 17

referencing Western discourse in this thesis and thus from this point on will be limited. Understanding the deeper relationships that exist amongst indigenous philosophies and forms of governance – specifically the Anishnaabe people, now becomes the task at hand. In order to fully engage Anishnaabe philosophies and teachings in this thesis, it was essential that I frame my methodology throughout this project from an Anishnaabe perspective in order to maintain accountability in how I engage knowledge.

METHODOLOGY – *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan*

The rationale for the design, especially the overarching methodology of *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan,* is justified in relation to how I position myself in the research as an Anishnaabe woman, as well as the context of the central research question itself. As an Anishnaabe person, I am accountable to the teachings that have been given to me and the experience I have had so far. I bring these elements of my life to the thesis; therefore I could not approach the research without subjectivity or bias. In fact, I believe my grounding as an Anishnaabe woman aided the experience with the participants in the interview process, and added to the depth of how I understood the written texts in relation to the thesis. Secondly, the central question of the research concerns the regeneration and embracing of Anishnaabe ways. Therefore, to choose a methodology independent of Anishnaabe values and principles would negate the very purpose of the research.

The methodology I employed is from an Anishnaabe teaching that is fundamental to many Anishnaabeg. It is known as *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* - or the Seven Grandfather Teachings. The seven gifts from this teaching are *Nbwaakaawin* (Wisdom), *Zaagidewin* (Love), *Mnaadendiwin* (Respect), *Aakde'win* (Bravery),

Gwekwaadsiwin (Honesty), *Dbadendizwin* (Humility) and *Debwewin* (Truth). These seven gifts are teachings that describe how we grow and relate to creation. They are principles that we strive to keep in balance and incorporate into all that we do. It is said that this teaching is a life-long process as one strives to maintain balance with all of these gifts. I chose this methodology because of its significance amongst Anishnaabeg, its demanding responsibilities, and the accountability it calls for between the research, the participants and myself. *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* also supports a theme of the central research problem - committing to our sacred way of life.

These seven teachings are far-reaching in their meaning; however, I will briefly outline how the teachings pertain to the research. The teaching of *Zaagidewin* (Love) represents my own personal involvement in the proposed research. Our stories and principles within them are very close to my heart and my upbringing and thus make me as a researcher deeply involved within and accountable to the research. *Gwekwaadsiwin* (Honesty) is both acknowledging my own role in the research and informing the participants of how the knowledge that is shared will be utilized and be significant to the community. *Debwewin* (Truth) encompasses the general research question and the more specific interview questions. It is the space in which I as the researcher want to create to allow this truth to unfold. *Nbwaakaawin* (Wisdom) is the way in which I approach the research. On a grand scale, it represents the methodology that I am upholding and putting into practice. *Dbadendizwin* (Humility) is recognizing that the researcher cannot impress personal points of view or expectations on the participants or the interview questions. *Aakde'win* (Bravery) is being open to hearing responses to questions that I may not expect as the researcher, while validating these concepts/points of view in the

research. Finally, *Mnaadendiwin* (Respect) is having the ability to accept and value difference whether it is opinion or unexpected information. *Mnaadendiwin* requires me to approach the knowledge that is shared carefully and with good intentions.

While this teaching guides me personally as a researcher, it extends beyond an individual process as it is intended to guide Anishnaabeg collectively as well. This teaching informs the many interrelationships that we create and renew with one another. Thus *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* is established upon the idea that maintaining cohesiveness within the larger collective is integral to the notion of accountability. In this way, I as a researcher am not only accountable to the participants but also to the knowledge that is shared, how that knowledge is represented within the thesis and how I continue to uphold this knowledge into the future within the relationships that I have. Therefore this methodology carries collective responsibilities, which further illustrates Anishnaabe perspectives on governance systems given the scope of accountability it represents.

INTERVIEW COMPOSITION AND ANALYTIC TECHNIQUES

Sharing Indigenous Knowledge

The interviews took place during the months of March and April 2006. They were conducted in Ontario at the participants' desired location. The first was with Shirley Williams, an Anishnaabe Elder and teacher from Wikwemikong First Nation. Shirley is widely regarded for her dedication and continued revitalization of Anishnaabemowin (Anishnaabe language). The second interview was with *Gitigaa-Migize* (Doug Williams), also an Anishnaabe Elder and teacher. He comes from *Waawshkigaamang* (Curve Lake First Nation) and is well-respected given his vast

knowledge of Anishnaabe teachings and ceremonies as well as the Anishnaabe language. The third and final interview was with Fred Kelly who comes from Onigaming First Nation. Fred Kelly comes from a family of hereditary Chieftainship and possesses immense knowledge of Anishnaabe teachings, philosophies, language and ceremonies. He has had and continues to have considerable experience and knowledge of Settler politics and how they inform the relationship between Settler government and indigenous communities.

I chose these three people because of my own previous experience with them and their willingness to share their knowledge on Anishnaabe teachings, stories, ceremonies and language. They are respected members of their communities and no doubt will continue to be in the future. *Chi-miigwech* to Shirley, Gitigaa-Migize and Fred Kelly for their amazing insight and knowledge that they shared with me.

As part of the interview process, I offered *semaa* (tobacco) to the participants. This is part of an Anishnaabe teaching and protocol that instructs a person who is asking for knowledge to properly recognize and pay respect to the words and stories being shared by another person through the offering of *semaa*. Of course all interviews took place in person to establish a closer relationship to the participants and the knowledge they shared.

Having experience in speaking with Anishnaabe elders and teachers, I have come to find that there are many occasions in which a direct answer to a question is seldom given. Often, I have had to reflect on stories and/or personal experiences that have been shared by Anishnaabeg. In the research process, I chose not confine the participants and their way of speaking through highly specific questioning. My questions were specific to

a degree in order to relate it to the aim of the research. However, it was also necessary to ask questions in a way that ensures that this way of sharing knowledge is respected and accommodating to the participants in the interview process.

I conducted three interviews with Anishnaabe Elders for the purposes of this project. Initially, I had planned to interview more participants but after finishing the first three I came to the realization that given the amount of knowledge that each participant relayed during the interview process, the knowledge would be better represented in the thesis if I focused solely on these three.

I am infinitely grateful to these three people who chose to share with me some of the knowledge they carry. The interviews informed the entire thesis both in content and structure. This knowledge that was shared was primary in this thesis and informed both the discussion and the literature that was used. All of the participants verified the transcripts of the interviews that were completed and aided me with Anishnaabe concepts that needed further clarification. Drafts of the thesis were sent to them and approved, and I will present final copies to them in person, in a hard copy, and electronic form.

Grounded Theory

Because the research process was based on a qualitative approach, I found that the best qualitative method for analyzing data was Grounded Theory[24]. It married well with the overall methodology of *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan.* I found that Grounded Theory was the most suitable form of analysis because I was guided by the themes that surfaced from the interviews. This is more of an inductive rather than

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[24] Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. 1990.

deductive approach to data as the interviews and the underlying themes directed myself as a researcher and the culmination of the thesis.

Grounded Theory allowed the stories that were shared within the interviews to guide the research and ultimate conclusion of the thesis. For example, one of the common themes that arose from the coding process was the dependence of the individual on a larger collective in order to survive both physiologically and spiritually. This reinforced the research question in how the individual is perceived in relation to a collective.

It is important to note however, that *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* took precedence in areas where Grounded Theory was not as applicable. For example, the depth of relational accountability of the researcher to the participant(s) is not as demanding in Grounded Theory as it is in *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan,* which is beneficial to me as an Anishnaabe woman who is conducting research amongst Anishnaabeg.

Grounded Theory allowed for the development of the interview protocols, in order to account for emerging concepts as the interview process progresses. Based on the nature of the topic, it was reasonable to expect that in each interview that was conducted, I would be uncovering concepts and themes that I had not anticipated. Therefore it was essential for the interview protocols to have the space to evolve and change as need be.

Written text, whether it is archival, legislative, storytelling, etc. was included as part of the qualitative data. Basil Johnston, a respected Anishnaabe elder, discusses the dynamic of the collective and individual in his book, Ojibway Heritage. The story of Loon and Crane is told (and cannot properly be re-told by myself in this context) to

demonstrate how the individual is protected within the collective, and the responsibilities that come with this protection.[25] These are some of the notions that I expect to come of the interview process. 'Individual rights' will be discussed more in terms of responsibilities rather than entitlements or privileges.

In regards to keeping these notions alive and active despite colonial infringements, Anishnaabe Elder Fred Kelly writes the following:

> "In effect, a traditional constitution cannot be abandoned. For the Anishinaabe, it is the supreme law. It is sacred law that comes from the Creator and in which is domiciled the very nature of culture, the spiritual identity as a nation with a traditional government and inherent authority – or jurisdiction, if you will. It is for the Anishinaabe the only source of legitimacy for a governance regime that is capable of addressing modern issues, in my view."[26]

Therefore, governance (and additionally, the collectives within it) is only truly legitimized when it is guided by our sacred laws. Embracing foreign belief systems is thus acting irresponsibly in terms of our purposes as Anishnaabeg. This view resonates very deeply with the intention of the research and will guide the hopeful conclusion of reawakening Anishnaabe governance systems through our sacred law and guiding principles. While the interviews underscored the basis for the paper, written text was also used to augment the research process.

I had stated in the research proposal that if a methodological conflict were to arise between the overall methodology of *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* and the Grounded Theory technique, *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* would take precedence. Fortunately in the research process, I did not encounter any major conflict in

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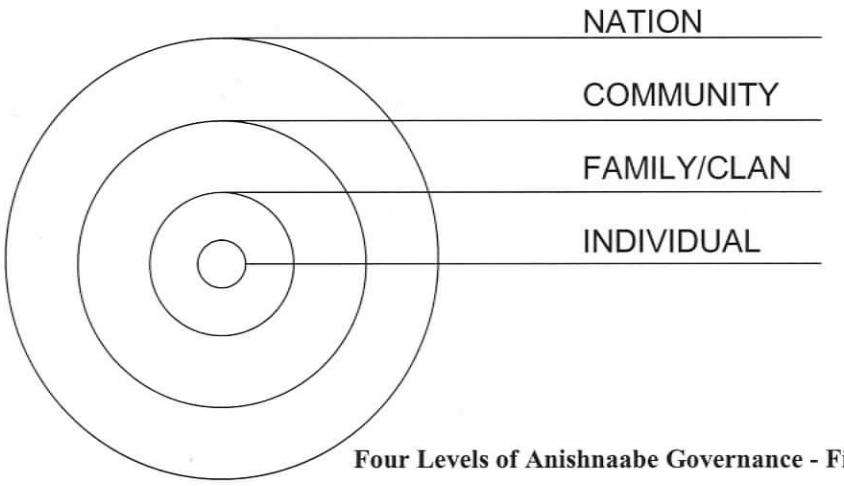
[25] Basil Johnston, Ojibway Heritage. Toronto: The Canadian Publishers, 1976. pg. 63
[26] Kelly, Fred. *"Anishnaabe Leadership"*. December 14, 2005.

conducting or coding the interviews as far as interpreting them from the basis of *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan*, so this was not a problem.

STRUCTURE & CONTENT

The next four chapters of the thesis will be structured based on one of the core teachings that continuously arose during the interview process - the interrelationships between the individual, family/clan, community and nation. This Anishnaabe teaching is fundamental in terms of understanding the roles and responsibilities that Anishnaabeg carry with respect to each of these relationships. It visually and orally depicts how we as Anishnaabeg relate to one another and although it does not have a specific name, for the purposes of this project I will refer to it as the Four Levels of Anishnaabe Governance (Figure 1.1):



Four Levels of Anishnaabe Governance - Figure 1.1

Each of the above four concentric circles represents a scope of roles and responsibilities defined within a particular collective. Shirley Williams spoke about this teaching in our interview together and said:

> "You have to be responsible to yourself first. And then to your family and your clans. Clans are extended family. And then of course your tribes, your community. And then of course your nation. And that's the same thing you know how we have Creator, and then yourself, and

> others, and the land. The Creator gave us the land, the Creator made us, and in order to survive we have to depend on others."[27]

There are many interrelationships that exist within these four levels in different contexts, amongst various people or groups. However, for the purposes of this thesis, I will be discussing these four main levels of relationships and how they are guided by a specific value system and ultimately contribute to governance.

The 'Individual' is not defined in as a position which exists outside of a larger group, but rather is thought of in terms of how an individual maintains his/her relationship to a collective. Thus, the term 'Individual' does not imply isolation or exclusive capacities as it is dependent on collective responsibilities and duties for its context.

'Family/Clan' is defined as the immediate collective that an individual affects in his/her own contributions. 'Family' consists of both immediate and extended family into the 'Clan' system which is also considered a part of core family collective. 'Community' refers to the governance of the people on a specific territory, comprised of various clans and families. The governance of the people is defined by politics, law-making, ceremonies, health, etc. The roles and responsibilities within the community are reinforced through the ever-present contributions of the individual through his/her family and clan. This too could be interpreted as possessing attributes of what is considered a Nation, however it is said that *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* (Sacred Law) was given to the Anishnaabe nation by *Gzhe-Mnidoo* (the Creator or Great Spirit) through our *Bimaadiziwin* (way of life), our language and concepts, philosophies, ceremonies, etc. Thus it is these gifts which are held within the level of Nation that informs how our

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[27] Shirley Williams. *Personal Interview.* April 24, 2006. Peterborough, ON: pg. 16

relationships within the levels of "Individual', 'Family/Clan' and 'Community' are established and maintained.

These four levels are not measured in terms of hierarchy, but rather are interdependent on one another in order to function at the most optimal levels. It is this teaching that will guide the content and structure of the thesis and will facilitate the discussion of the core values and principles that Anishnaabe governance systems are founded upon.

Chapter Two will begin the discussion by examining how the 'Individual' in Anishnaabe philosophies relates to him/herself and all of creation. Thus the duties and obligations an individual has in Anishnaabe societies are not just to herself, but to larger collectives within the nation. In this discussion I will also explore how the individual in Settler society is expected to contribute to the larger community. The differences in value systems that arise are many, and will reaffirm the responsibility we carry as individuals to observe Sacred Law.

This will lead into the discussion of Chapter Three on family and clan obligations. After gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the role an individual has within the collective, we are able to explore the relationship he/she has with the family and clan system. Entering into this level of relationships also increases the responsibility one carries.

Chapter Four continues the discussion of duties and obligations at a community level. I will enter into a deeper discussion of leadership at both a formal level politically, and an informal level within the community. In doing so I aim to show how the accountability of our leadership becomes fragmented when they are responsible to the

Settler government. The relationship one has with his/her family, clan and nation is disrupted by the interjection of Settler values.

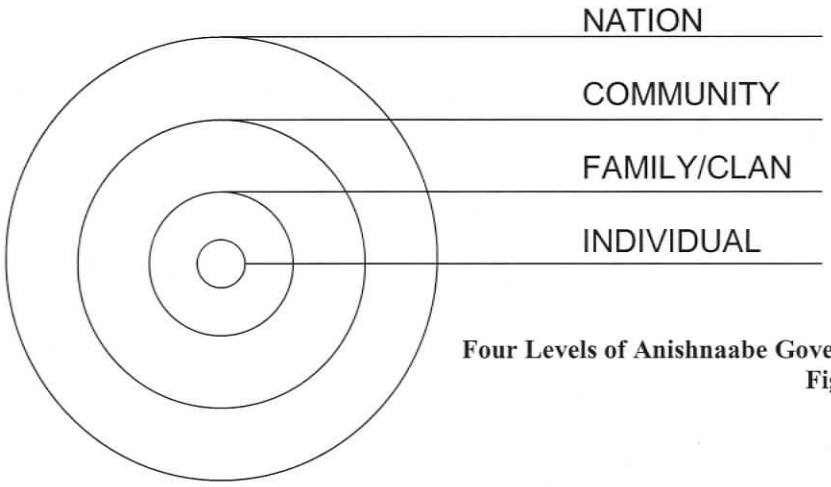
Finally in Chapter Five, the sacred connection that Anishnaabeg have to the land will be explored. It is through this connection that our way of life was first established and continues to exist today. Settler society insists upon the establishment of industry and property rights in how they relate to the land. This system of rights categorically denies the values that we as Anishnaabeg are to hold up. In order to practice our Sacred Laws through our systems of governance, we must re-envision our *Bimaadiziwin* and the values it signifies.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE INDIVIDUAL WITHIN THE COLLECTIVE

Understanding the level of engagement that Settler society provides us as indigenous peoples in terms of cultural and political sovereignty is significant to the extent to which we are willing to act in a foreign government. It has been shown in the previous chapter how Settler ideals and values often negate our core values as Anishnaabeg. It was necessary to explore those minimal and colonial allowances in order to truly understand the fundamental differences in value systems. While this conversation was necessary to an extent, Settler government practices will be placed at the peripheral for the rest of this discussion. It is important now to better understand our own value system and the political context it creates. The next four chapters will be largely informed by interviews that I conducted with Anishnaabe people who are considered knowledge holders and/or elders in their communities.

It is the aim of this Chapter to identify how Anishnaabe practices of governance in terms of value systems affect the relationships that individual Anishnaabeg experience both inwardly and outwardly with creation. To put this into a larger context, I will be focusing on the "Individual" sphere of the diagram listed below (Figure 1.1) throughout this chapter.



Four Levels of Anishnaabe Governance - Figure 1.1

In Section II of this Chapter, I will examine how "rights" and "entitlements" are delineated within Anishnaabe philosophy in terms of individuals within the community. In doing so, the position of the individual within a collective will be explored in terms of the value system that it represents. This demonstrates further how relationships are formed and maintained between individuals and collectives. The duties and the obligations that individuals have to both themselves and the larger Anishnaabe community in terms of personal accountability and responsibility in relation to Sacred Law and *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* (the Seven Grandfather Teachings) will be examined in this context as well. Section III briefly outlines the values that underscore individual development in Western society. Psychologist Abraham Maslow offers a way to interpret this process of personal growth and I will show how his Hierarchy of Needs contributes to only limited accountability in society. Section IV examines how Anishnaabeg experience individual growth and how this factors into both the survival of individual Anishnaabeg and the larger community as a whole.

II. DEFINING 'RIGHTS' AND 'ENTITLEMENTS'

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the individual in Settler society is at the foundation of why and how 'entitlements and 'rights' have developed. The governing principles that guide the 'individual' role in Canada are constructed to protect these entitlements and rights from collective notions of the 'public good'; thus these principles act to anticipate the competitive nature between the collective and the individual and ensure an elevated political position for the individual.

According to Anishnaabe philosophy, the individual must work symbiotically within the collective to maintain his/her role. In Settler society, the collective is always

referenced to a specific group of people. This is important to note because political entitlements are regarded individualistically and only in terms of people-to-people relations. Jeff Corntassel and Cindy L. Holder comment on this in their article "Indigenous Peoples and Multicultural Citizenship: Bridging Collective and Individual Rights":

> "For many, the problem lies in the individualistic nature of existing human rights discourse. The concern is that existing instruments emphasize individual needs and entitlements in a way that inadequately compares the collective nature of groups with non-Western world-views and priorities."[28]

Thus the term 'entitlements' as defined by Western discourse, fails to acknowledge the many indigenous worldviews that inform an alternate conception of how an individual relates to the world. Attempting to inject collective ideals into an already individualistic system does not remedy this disconnect. What is does do is promote individualism even further as any assertions by collectives would necessitate demand for even more power and authority for individuals. Corntassel and Holder emphasize this impediment of individualism in the indigenous conception of rights and entitlements. This too became evident in the interviews that were conducted.

When asked about personal entitlements or rights, Gitigaa-Migize spoke of the modern usage of control. He shared:

> "Now, our people knew of control, of how to control people. But in a way that, I think ultimately the goal is to be able to live in your environment, in harmony, forever…So they wouldn't control people for the sake of control, they would do it because people would feel like they are a part of the community, and that it was done in a good way…"[29]

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[28] Jeff Corntassel and Cindy L. Holder. "Indigenous Peoples and Multicultural Citizenship: Bridging Collective and Individual Rights". *Human Rights Quarterly,* Vol. 24, Number 1. February 2002 The John Hopkins University Press, pg. 127 126 - 151

[29] Doug Williams. *Personal Interview.* April 26, 2006. Peterborough, ON: pg. 2

Conceptualizing control in this manner speaks to the method in which political practice is undertaken in accordance with Anishnaabe philosophies. Gitigaa-Migize acknowledges that with control comes power and thus a power imbalance. Therefore if the usage of control is measured by the cohesion of the community rather than for the purposes of political dominance, then this power becomes disseminated amongst the people of the community.

From this we can begin to see how ensuring individual contentment or satisfaction was dependent on creating a community that he/she feels a part of. So even at a very basic level, the individual was referenced as part of a particular community. The 'environment' that Gitigaa-Migize references include not only the people within the community, but all elements of what comprises that community. That includes the animal world, the plant world and the spirit world. Thus, 'community' is not envisioned solely on a people-to-people basis in Anishnaabe philosophy - it requires living in harmony or balance with respect to all of these elements in creation.

Individual or personal contentment was also related to long-term sustainability in the above quote. Individual contentment is not necessarily only based on a person's perception of what is 'good', but also on a community conception of 'good'. This is connected to living in your "environment, in harmony, forever…" Individuals who live in a way that is considered to be 'good' - not only by their own estimation, but by the estimation of the larger community as well, contribute to long-term sustainability of the community into the future, as the value system representing each is cohesive and symbiotic.

Given the responsibilities of the individual acting within a collective or community, what then of individual rights or entitlements? Basil Johnston discussed this very question; he writes:

> "Regarding the universal question of 'what is man as a man entitled to,' the Anishnaabeg would probably have replied, food, clothing, shelter, personal inner growth, and freedom. To all other matters respecting man's relationship to other men and women and to society in general they would have said, 'inaendaugwat,' it is permitted: or 'inaendaugozi,' he is permitted of himself. Such a term was predicated of many aspects of life, living, and relationships: it was a mode of understanding and interpretation. Events were permitted by forces outside of man himself; the exercise of personal talents and prerogatives permitted by men...Just as a war leader had no control over the outcome of a battle, neither had he much authority or control over the outcome of a battle, neither had he much authority or control over his warriors. By custom he asked and invited warriors to join his expedition. The warriors invited could either refuse or accept. A sufficient number of warriors subscribing to the war party to ensure success was a form of permission; too few accepting was a mode of denying permission..."[30]

The dependence on community for individual action is Basil Johnston's words. Rights were not simply bestowed and acted upon purely on the basis of individual will, but with the consideration of the consequences that will affect the community. Johnston continues:

> "One of the prerogatives of a leader was to speak, but when speaking he did not purport or even presume to speak on behalf of his people without first seeking their guidance and their opinions upon the matters to be discussed. By deferring to custom and the will of the people the spokesman was seeking permission. The people on the other hand in granting permission were deferring to the speaker's eloquence. Finally, the willingness of an assembly to listen permitted a speaker to speak...Daebaudjimod, the great raconteur and man who knew about everything, gradually and eventually lost the confidence of his listeners. Though men and women continued to listen to him, they did not believe his accounts. Listeners used to say of poor Daebaudjimod, 'He knows too much, no man can possibly know as much.' Some even said that 'he talked too much.' And the doubts continued even when events vindicated

[30] Op. cit. Johnston, pg. 78.

> Daebaudjimod. The freedom to speak is related directly to scope and credibility."[31]

There is no doubt that *Daebaudjimod* had the ability to exercise his speech as an individual member of the community, but this ability was not measured simply by him existing as an individual, but how the community received his speech and granted him credibility in this regard. The idea of rights and entitlements are not necessarily viewed as a universal claim, rather they are dependent on an individual's position within the community and the relationships he/she maintains and renews.

If it is true that in some form we as individuals were dependent on a larger community (whether that be people, animals, etc.), were we then able to act autonomously outside the realm of the 'collective'? When asked about this idea, Gitigaa-Migize replied:

> "Our people were necessarily vague, because they didn't understand each other in such a culture-clashing - in a legal environment. And it happens today. So for Anishnaabe, entitlements, rights, individual rights, and community rights may be necessarily vague to the modern Western mind."[32]

This premise for discussion made something much clearer for me. If our worldview and thus systems of governance are fundamentally different than those of Settler society, how is it then possible to parallel how that governance is practiced without comprising our values? If we as Anishnaabeg demand those individual and community rights that the Canadian government has defined for us, then we also must acknowledge that we are participating in a foreign regime of rules and regulations. It has become apparent that in the political sphere, some indigenous leaders (whether intentional or not) are validating the Settler society's rules of engagement while

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[31] ibid. pg. 79.
[32] ibid. pg. 2

simultaneously admonishing the ever-present mechanisms that Anishnaabeg are holding up. Our own methods of governance may appear vague to the scholars, academics and politicians that gauge us. But as Gitigaa-Migize points out, vagueness in the modern Western mind is sometimes necessary.

On this same issue of rights and entitlements, Fred Kelly, an Anishnaabe Hereditary Chief from Onigaming said:

> "Certainly, there were entitlements, and a sense of ownership and a sense of self. But those were secondary. And now, I have to be careful over here that I'm not projecting something over here which is the quaint stories of the noble savage. I have to talk to you about the realities. At the time when Sacred Law, which I am still adherent to and one of the things we're trying to bring back. We are dealing with these in a way that Sacred Law talks more about duties and obligations."[33]

Fred Kelly continues to illustrate this point on an individual-to-individual basis. He states that:

> "You have to understand your duties and obligations first of all. In other words, I must respect you. I have to respect you. So it comes from me to respect you, rather than you claiming that you have self-respect. Of course you have self-respect, you feel that, but it's my obligation to recognize the fact that I have an obligation to you to treat you as my sister."[34]

Relationships with individuals, communities, the animal world, etc. are informed by Sacred Law and our duty to act according to the obligations of Sacred Law is first and foremost. Claiming a sense of ownership or individual rights to certain objects or ideas is nonetheless a part of these interrelationships. However, without responsibility first to oneself and the many levels of collectives, the idea of 'rights' cannot be fully manifested for any one individual.

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[33] Fred Kelly. *Personal Interview.* May 2, 2006. Ottawa, ON: pg. 3
[34] Loc. cit.

The idea of 'rights' or entitlements' has a place in our philosophies; however, they were dependent on not only the recognition, but the practice of duties and obligations or roles and responsibilities as well. Fred Kelly continues, "...the love, the kindness, the sharing, respect, the truth, the courage and humility. These are the seven grandfathers or the seven laws of creation that I just mentioned. I must abide by those. It's my obligation – there is no question that I must abide by those."[35] These seven laws of creation were discussed in Chapter One and are also referred to as *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan.* Our accountability as Anishnaabeg is encompassed in these seven laws and act as a constant reminder in all of the relationships we maintain with each other and creation. Taking into account the responsibility and accountability that must firstly be recognized by Anishnaabeg, a sense of rights or entitlements does not have the same connotations as it does in Settler society. In rights discourse, simply by being a human being in Settler society, rights are immediately granted, thus responsibility becomes an afterthought. We as Anishnaabeg have become accustomed to adopting this line of thinking in order to gain recognition from Settler society, as this is the value system that governs the rules of engagement. Fred Kelly comments on this transition by saying that:

> "...It was only *after* treaties, oddly enough, only after the treaties that our people started to change these (*the seven sacred laws*) when they felt that the promises that had been entered into solemnly had now been breached...It's since then that our people became preoccupied more with a sense of rights and privileges as opposed to duties and obligations. But the first consideration has always been traditionally duties and obligations."[36]

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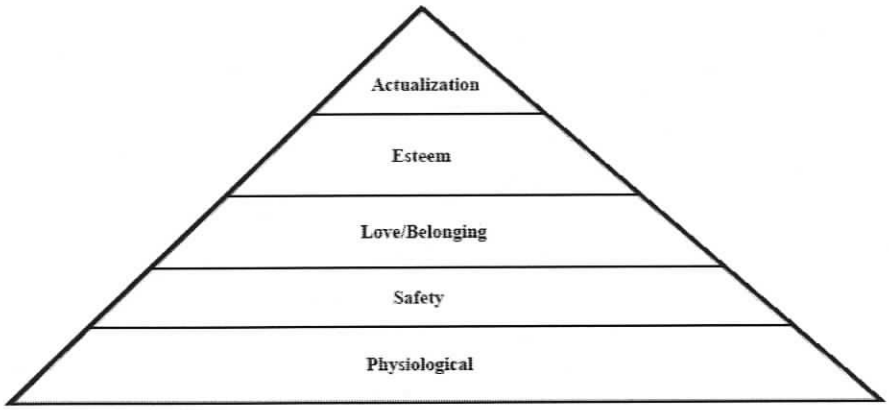
[35] ibid., pg. 4
[36] ibid., pg. 5

Because our value system (i.e. the Seven Sacred Laws or *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan*) began to shift to accommodate Settler society, the accountability to the many levels or interrelatedness also began to shift. We began to operate in a system where our accountability was divided amongst various interest groups and our relationships with the Settler government developed in a hierarchical structure – with the Settler government looking down to us from above.

III. SETTLER NOTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Understanding that Anishnaabe governance systems call for relational accountability of individuals to collectives, and further, an individual's *dependence* on a collective for spiritual and intellectual growth, it becomes more evident that the individualistic foundation for Settler society contradicts the practice of Anishnaabe governance and value systems. The general idea of how an individual develops according to Western philosophy in relation to the value system which underscores Settler notions of entitlements and responsibility makes this point apparent.

Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist, published his Hierarchy of Needs in the 1954. His theory continues to be applied today in terms of explaining how an individual develops within society. The diagram below examines the various stages that an individual undergoes in order to experience his/her potential as a person (Figure 1.2):



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - Figure 1.2

The hierarchal structure of the above diagram speaks to the process of growth – that from a foundation of basic survival individuals can reach an epitome of personal existence (i.e. self-actualization). Maslow has structured his theory in a hierarchical format. Conceptualizing growth in this fragmented and linear fashion contradicts Anishnaabe teachings and principles of governance. For example, the values in *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* work simultaneously with one another and are based upon renewal. For even if this triangle was flipped upside down, the power and importance of the five stages remain divided from one another and are regarded in terms of their completion rather than their constant renewal.

These five stages can be categorized into three main levels of understanding: Physical ("Physiological"), Emotional ("Safety", "Love/Belonging", "Esteem") and Mental ("Actualization").[37] These three conceptions of growth are then measured in terms of importance. For example, it appears with this diagram that the Mental state of a person is the height of potential. In order to achieve this potential, a person must be secure in three Emotional areas or this Mental state cannot occur. And finally to even begin to be emotionally stable or aware, one must be Physically sound or else this growth

[37] Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/maslow.html

will be stunted. There is no explicit discussion of any type of spiritual contribution to this process. Rather, one's ability to maximize their mental capacity is considered to be truly the quintessential act of an individual.

What of the interrelatedness of one individual to another in terms of this type of personal growth? Maslow discusses this issue and explains that physiologically we are dependent on others (i.e. for procreation, shelter, etc.). In terms of 'safety', 'love/belonging' and 'esteem' we are dependent on the contributions that others make to our emotional state in these regards. For example, individuals must first feel safe in order to feel loved or that they belong to society in general. Thus, interrelationships or interconnectivity is only acknowledged insofar as these relationships contribute to one's need to self-actualize. As an individual acquires what is needed in terms of love and belongingness, he/she gains esteem both inwardly (i.e. self-esteem) and outwardly (i.e. status in society). It is at this point that an individual begins the final and most prominent stage in growth.

As stated previously, *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* does not proclaim one aspect of self-growth or collective growth as more important than another. The seven teachings of *Nbwaakaawin* (Wisdom), *Zaagidewin* (Love), *Mnaadendiwin* (Respect), *Aakde'win* (Bravery), *Gwekwaadsiwin* (Honesty), *Dbadendizwin* (Humility) and *Debwewin* (Truth). These principles of growth are interdependent on each other in order to be fully expressed. Because each of these teachings or gifts are never regarded as completed, they exist on a basis of consistent renewal. Thus self-growth is not regarded as being compartmentalized into aspects which reach an ultimate conclusion. The basis for renewal in *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* is amplified as an

individual contributes to a collective as relationships are sustained on these seven gifts and therefore create reciprocal accountability.

Because Maslow's theory capitalizes on status in the betterment of one's self, it is not so difficult to understand why in Settler society individual rights and entitlements are automatic and void of a larger collective/social responsibility. In Maslow's model of how an individual grows and self-actualizes, the relationships he/she has are measured in terms of how other individuals impact his/her sense of self. Otherwise, the process of self-actualization requires isolation in terms of ontological growth. This relates to the former chapter in which I discussed various perceptions of what is "good" and how this is defined intrinsically on individual pursuits, i.e. conceptualization occurs based on individual experience. Leadership roles in Settler society reinforce this conception of individualism by encouraging these individual pursuits – this will be discussed further in chapters Three and Four.

IV. INDIVIDUAL ROLES ACCORDING TO ANISHNAABE PHILOSOPHIES

According to Anishnaabe teachings we are consistently relating to a larger community even within the sphere of the 'Individual'. Ontological growth of an individual in this sense requires many levels of interrelationships in order to fulfill not only one's role within the collective, but even the relationship an individual has with his/herself. For example, when discussing the process of self-reflection with Shirley Williams, I was curious to better understand how an individual is dependent on a larger community even in this perceived need for isolated internal development. I asked Shirley if when we as Anishnaabeg go out into the bush by ourselves to ponder or reflect, if we are ever truly alone. She responded:

> "No you are not alone. Every one of those things is always a part of you. You might have human beings with you - which you *need*, but you also need for yourself - for your individual self-reflection. That is when you need those other things. You need the water, you need the land, and you need the animals. You need to talk to them."[38]

At a physiological level, human beings need water, land and animals for basic survival. However, according to the above quote, not only is our survival as people dependent on the various elements of creation, but our personal growth as individuals as well. Nature then is not viewed as existing for the survival or aesthetic appreciation of humans for their use and disposal. Rather, nature is to be respected and consulted. Survival according to us as Anishnaabeg is therefore not solely physiological, but spiritual as well.

If we are to recognize the sky world, the plant world, the mineral world, the animal world and the spirit world as continually interrelating to both one another and human beings, then our survival is also defined by recognizing these many levels of interconnectedness. Shirley continues to explain, "…some people say that when you go out there (into the bush), you can sing to a flower, and those flowers will answer you back. You can talk to the trees, and the trees will answer you back…you don't need to have proof, because *you* are the one that is experiencing that."[39] Survival then is not limited in definition to physiological needs, but speaks to the more deeply rooted value system that underscores our survival as Anishnaabeg. It is evident from the example that Shirley Williams shared that *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* is necessarily connected to how we relate to the plant world, and ultimately, to our systems of survival.

At a more practical level, survival was discussed in the interviews in terms of living on the land. Gitigaa-Migize related individual rights to methods of survival. He

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[38] Op. cit.: Williams, S., pg. 11
[39] ibid., pg. 12

said, "I think individual rights, if it's measured on the principle of how to survive, you as an individual didn't really stand much of a chance. That's why when we punished, we exiled or banished."[40] This point emphasizes the need for responsibility and accountability when discussing issues of individual rights. Being forced to survive alone was traditionally viewed as a type of punishment that was enforced. The community or collective was so necessary to the notion of survival that without it, one could be faced with imminent death. It is important to note that survival in the context that Gitigaa-Migize discusses is not solely defined on the ability to make shelter and find food, but also to grow spiritually.

He brings up a story of a man named Kiizhigo. Kiizhigo translates to "sky" in Anishnaabemowin.[41] Kiizhigo was from *Waawshkigaamangki* (Curve Lake First Nation) and he did not like the way the government had come into the community and was changing it. He felt that he had to leave, so he left the community by himself in order to keep his way of life intact. Gitigaa-Migize described this as a "self-banishment" – not banishment in the true sense in which the community demands you leave. So he left and went to an island where there was excellent fishing. He lived on that island by himself and grew to be an old man. Someone from the *Waawshkigaamangki* found him dead there sometime later. They now call that place Kiizhigo Island. Gitigaa-Migize spoke of how Kiizhigo was able to survive by himself, saying:

> "He had the gift of survival. I think the gift of survival was taught to him by the community. By his parents…you know this is old knowledge that he had And he would have had spiritual knowledge, he would have had all the knowledge to survive. And that's why he could do it. I would also guess - and I'm not sure, that people passing by would stop and visit him.

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[40] Op. cit.: Williams, D., pg. 5

[41] "Anishnaabemowin" translates to the "Anishnaabe language".

> You know he was still part of the community even though he was banished."[42]

Firstly, Gitigaa-Migize emphasizes the connection between spirituality and survival. He talks about the "old knowledge" – the spiritual knowledge that has been passed down to Kiizhigo by his family. This helped him to live to be an old man and survive without other human beings physically being there with him. Secondly, Gitigaa-Migize explains how even in isolation from others, the community is still active in Kiizhigo's survival. It was his family and the community that not only gave him spiritual knowledge, but basic skills for survival. Thus, by Kiizhigo applying these collective teachings to his own life, the community continues to have a strong presence in the rather solitary nature of Kiizhigo's life.

Thirdly and finally, the reason why Kiizhigo left his community in the first place continues to be relevant in today's political arena. Ironically, Kiizhigo left the community to ensure the survival of his own way of life. He came to see how the underlying value system of the imposing government was acting to enforce a new governing system. Kiizhigo found it necessary to engage in this act of resistance so as to not give up power to a foreign government. We continue to fight this battle in a contemporary context as well. Settler government continues to encroach not only on our lands, but also on the value system that underscores our philosophies and beliefs. For some individuals, disengaging from Settler society completely is the only way to guarantee the purity of our ways.

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[42] Op. cit.: Williams, D., pg. 8

V. CONCLUSION

The idea that individuals are to harmonize with one another in order to sustain a strong and cohesive collective is at the foundation of defined duties and responsibilities. Those who chose to live in solitude outside of the community were not considered to be "alone" in the sense of absence of community influence. They continued to be affected by the teachings and ceremonies of the larger community; without this influence, survival was nearly impossible. Therefore, it was integral to maintain one's role within the community and contribute to the collective in order to achieve growth spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally. Even in the process of self-reflection, community was essential. Not only in terms of people, but all parts of creation were considered to be necessary contributors in this process.

Being responsible to the obligations of one's self is crucial in order to fulfill one's responsibility to his/her family, clan, community and nation. The more responsible an individual is to him/herself, the more he/she can actively participate in the governance of the nation as he/she is represented in the family, the clan and the community.

Individualism is not regarded as the governing relationship between a person and society in this way. The choice to leave the community was not forbidden; in fact it was enforced given certain circumstances. However, if one chose to live amongst a larger collective, the roles that come with that position in the community must be upheld in order to maintain cohesiveness within the community. This was intended not only for survival and practical purposes, but for spiritual reasons as well. The notion of 'rights' and 'entitlements' then, could not truly be claimed if a person's responsibility to the collective was not fulfilled. One cannot claim to be deserving of rights from the

community in absence of contributions to it. The more active a person become in the community, the more responsibility one carried. This is echoed even more so in the next chapter as family and clan systems are examined from a governance perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

GOVERNANCE THROUGH FAMILY AND CLAN SYSTEMS

The families and clans that comprise the Anishnaabe nation were not merely aspects of society, but fully participating entities in the governing process amongst Anishnaabeg. It was crucial in order for these families to contribute to the community and nation, that the individuals encompassed within families were fulfilling their own personal roles and responsibilities so that the families remained strong.

In the next section, I will be exploring how members of family interact with one another to affect governance at community and national levels. The extended family is significant in this function. Prevalent notions of the nuclear family can be detrimental to not only the survival of the family, but its ability to actively engage in society.

The following section will briefly discuss the seven original clans of the Anishnaabe nation and the specific duties and obligations that each clan represented. I would like to note that clan responsibilities cannot be fully understood or explained through either the English language or the written word. Direct experience with the clan system is necessary in order to truly comprehend how duties and obligations unfold and contribute to the governance of a community. This thereby reinforces the idea that individual experience is crucial in how one affects a collective. Given the need for firsthand knowledge of Anishnaabe clan systems, I therefore will only be able to discuss clan obligations at a very basic level. The intent will be to examine the unique roles that each clan has within the community. This will lead into a deeper discussion of how the clan system served the governance of the people. For example, it is important to examine the dynamic between individual clans and how these relationships developed to work

together collectively. While families and clan are often times considered one and the same through ties of kinship, each carry out various functions within the community.

II. THE FUNCTIONS OF FAMILY

As individual roles are continually fulfilled and renewed within communities, these contributions begin to extend outwards into the family. Families, at the core of a community, largely determined the future that the nation would make for itself. It is therefore crucial that the individuals encompassed within each family be balanced and healthy in terms of *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan.* Elder Fred Kelly discusses the various roles that families hold within communities:

> "In terms of governance, decision-making was by consensual democracy and leadership was ultimately responsible to families. Councils were held to reconcile different interest groups and were continued until agreement had been reached or the matter abandoned. Consensual decision-making was absolutely necessary for matters of a national importance such as in treaty negotiations with other indigenous nations or otherwise."[43]

Therefore, even in this seemingly separate and internalized thinking, individuals are at the core of collective deliberation and reflection. Attachment to a large collective's will or governance system would impede the process of growth in the individual. Perhaps a reason for this is because in Settler society, 'politics' and/or 'government' are seen as separate from an individual's own personal life and well-being. Politics exist on a plane of government-constructed systems and thus it becomes detached from the lives of the people in a direct way.

Settler government acts to maintain a system of people in which personal morals and values become disconnected from the acts of government. This is not to say that personal desires should be observed and thus acted upon always by the governing bodies.

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[43] Op. cit.: Kelly, "Anishnaabe Leadership", pg. 4

However, it does result in an innate tendency by the state to separate politics from personal or group philosophy in an effort to be neutral. Effecting decisions of national significance emphasizes how essential family is, not only in terms of raising children, but also in making decisions that would affect the function of the nation. This is why an individual must first be responsible to the role of him/herself in order to fully contribute to the family dynamic. If an individual were not healthy and balanced as a person, then it can be followed that his/her contributions to a wider community (i.e. family) would not be to the fullest potential. Interrelationships then are ever-important to the function of Anishnaabe societies.

George Murdock, a well-known American anthropologist, developed one of the most common definitions of the nuclear family. He stated, "The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It contains adults of both sexes, at least two of who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults."[44] This notion of the nuclear family has been redefined to suit contemporary society describing the family as a safe place filled with, "intimacy, love and trust where individuals may escape the competition of dehumanising forces in modern society."[45] Rather than interact politically with society, the family in this setting acts to disengage from the counterproductive influences of society. Thus, the family does not act politically in the national or even community realm, as 'politics' would be viewed as separate from the confines of family.

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[44] G.P. Murdock. "Kin Term Patterns and their Distribution." *Ethnology,* Vol. 9. 166, 1970.
[45] Zinn, M. and Stanley Eitzen, D. Diversity in American Families. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987, pg. 17.

The above definitions also fail to acknowledge the extended family as an essential component to the operation of families. While the extended family undoubtedly exists, they are not viewed as vital to the core roles and responsibilities of the nuclear family. Rather, the extended family adds to the general love and support of core families. Carole Pateman in her book, The Disorder of Women, examines the role of families in the political life of society. She writes:

> "...The status of the family as the foundation of civil society means that the contrast between the different forms of social life in 'the state of nature' and 'civil society' is carried over into civil life itself. The distinction between and separation of the private and public, or particularistic and universal, spheres of association is a fundamental structural principle of the modern, liberal conception of social life. The natural, particularistic family nestles at the centre of the private sphere, and it throws into prominence and stands opposed to the impersonal, universal, 'conventional' bonds of public life."[46]

We see the value of individuality arise once again in this discussion as separateness of family from nation is not only a reality in Settler society, but viewed as necessary in order for families to both flourish and protect their children from the impersonal aspects of public politics. This perception of public life accepts that family or children exist in the private sphere and are therefore separate from any involvement in politics, as political processes run contrary to the what 'family' represents. If the public system is designed to deny familial participation in the political realm of government, then how does accountability even begin to take shape?

Rather than repair the problem of corruption in politics, the liberal system governing Canada forcibly detaches the private sphere of the people from this subject. Is it any wonder that Settler politics continue to stir up feelings of resentment and aversion amongst the people? It is reminiscent of the common practice of not discussing politics

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[46] Carole Pateman. The Disorder of Women. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989, pg. 20

at the dinner table. Pateman continues to discuss this separation of the public and private sphere in her examination of John Locke's Second Treatise on Government as it applies to family:

> "The family is based on natural ties of sentiment and blood and on the sexually ascribed status of wife and husband (mother and father). Participation in the public sphere is governed by universal, impersonal and conventional criteria of achievement, interests, rights, equality and property – liberal criteria…An important consequence of this conception of private and public is that the public world, or civil society, is conceptualized and discussed in liberal theory (indeed, in almost all political theory) in abstraction from, or as separate from, the private domestic sphere."[47]

The distinction made above between sentiment and rights is emblematic of how family is regarded as separate from the governance of society. The opposite holds true in Anishnaabe philosophies. In order for a nation to function at its fullest potential, the families that comprise it must have full political participation in the decision-making of the community. In order for families to affect politics on national level in Anishnaabe societies, then having many extended family members is essential to the extent in which family can affect change. Gitigaa-Migize explains that at times the environment was so severe, extended family was crucial to the survival of Anishnaabeg.[48] He discusses survival not only in the basic or physiological sense, but also in the spiritual sense. Gitigaa-Migize points out that having many relationships that exist within a family increases the knowledge that is coming together. The idea of living within nuclear families was counteractive not only to basic survival, but to the breadth of knowledge that was being utilized.

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[47] ibid., pg. 121.
[48] Op. cit., Williams, D., pg. 5

Fred Kelly places familial relations into the context of wartime between indigenous nations. He uses the Lakota people and Anishnaabe people as an example to illustrate this:

> "Now, if warfare broke out between other indigenous nations…it was understood very clearly - demarked by rules of engagement, that your husband would have to return to the Anishnaabe camp. And you would stay with the Lakota…Now the reason for that is, according to Sacred Law, try to imagine that if there's much misunderstanding between these two peoples, these nations, how long is a war going to last when I as a warrior of my nation know that my family is in the other camp? Chances are I will try to seek every possible means of placating and seeking that peace – that everlasting peace."[49]

Fred Kelly demonstrates in the above example how familial obligations extend beyond the boundaries of immediate family into the larger community and even further, into the nation. The interrelationships between nations created by marriage put the necessity of war into a different perspective. War becomes not merely a fight for territory or based on political unrest, but obligates warriors to the safety and survival of their own families in politically opposing communities.

Currently in wartime, conflict is often fuelled by economics and politics. War can be both a financial benefit and political usurpation to some nations and thus the incentive to end particular wars becomes lost in the quest for ever-increasing power and status. Familial and communal obligations on a broad level are absent from the reason and practice of war. This is not to say that families and communities are unaffected by war – quite the opposite. It is the lack of consideration of these aspects that makes war so shallow and unrelenting.

It is for this reason that collective responsibility is so vital to the function of Sacred Law in Anishnaabe governance. This responsibility in terms of familial

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[49] Op. cit., Kelly, *Personal Interview,* pg. 2

obligations as was previously shown extends outwards into the larger communities and affects even the role of the nation. It must also be turned inwards to maintain balance in its position. Fred Kelly discussed his role in traditional Anishnaabe marriage ceremonies and the obligations required by both individuals entering into this union. He tells of his obligation to Sacred Law to explain to each partner their respective duties with regard to the function of the family.[50] Once more, we begin to understand how fulfilling our duties as individuals are necessary before we can fully contribute to the family and eventually, community and nation. A functioning and balanced family does not come about by virtue of a marriage or commitment by two people, but further, by those two people understanding their different roles as individuals within that family. Fred explains further, "…And I am obligated to tell for instance the man, if for whatever reason you become unable or incapacitated to look after this woman and the family, then you must return this woman to her family and to that community. You cannot just leave them and abandon them. You must return them."[51] The nuclear family is insufficient in this circumstance, as the community is considered necessary in both the survival and evolution of the family. A man who is unable to fulfil his responsibility to his family must ensure that his roles and responsibilities are being carried out either by extended family or other community members. Keeping our families strong meant that our nation could function at its optimal level.

Extended family is traditionally inclusive of clan members as well. Participation in clan duties and obligations also affected the functions of community and nation as well. In this next section, I will briefly outline the original seven Anishnaabe clans.

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[50] Loc. cit.
[51] Loc. cit.

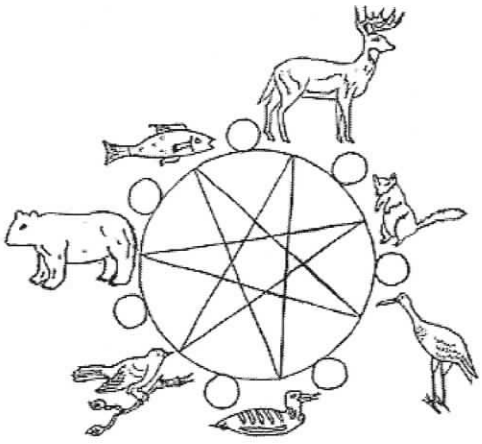
III. CLAN SYSTEMS AND ROLES

In terms of roles and responsibilities, the clan system was very involved in governance of the community. Fred Kelly discusses these roles:

> "The clan system amongst Anishnaabeg serves three purposes. The first was to provide a way of 'identifying the various family groups and their responsibilities.' The second was to 'provide a structure for laws about family bloodlines, marriage, and inheritance.' Finally, the third was to contribute 'to the system of government, whereby the eldest male member of each clan family was responsible for its representation in all its affairs within the tribal group, and for the enforcement of tribal laws within the family."[52]

The clan system is largely informed by the family and vice-a-versa. The two are interdependent on one another in terms of definitions of roles and responsibilities and thus, both are integral to community governance.

There were originally seven clans amongst the Anishnaabe. They were: the Crane clan, the Loon clan, the Fish clan, the Hoof clan, the Bear clan, the Martin clan and the Bird clan (Figure 1.3):



Anishnaabe Clan System - Figure 1.3

The Crane and Loon clans are given the responsibility of chieftainship amongst Anishnaabeg. Members of these clans possess specific leadership qualities that ensure a

[52] Op. cit. Kelly, "Anishnaabe Leadership", pg. 6.

balanced government. Having two clans responsible for chieftainship is a mechanism to make certain that governance continued to be balanced as each of the two clans kept the other accountable.

People of the Fish clan were positioned between the Loon and Crane clans. They are regarded as the intellectuals; they are teachers and scholars amongst the people. Members of this clan aid in the teaching and development of the youth both mentally and spiritually. Their vast amount of knowledge also serves the purpose of solving disputes that arise between members of the Loon and Crane clan.

Members of the Hoof clan are the caretakers of the community. They are gentle and giving and thus responsible for issues such as shelter, recreation, etc. within the community. People of the Hoof clan are considered to be "poets and pacifists avoiding all harsh words". Like their relatives the deer, caribou and moose, Hoof clan people embodied qualities of these animals.

The Bear clan are protectors of the people. They act as the legal guardians and police within the community. People of the Bear clan, like Bear himself, are strong and steady in their actions. Because they patrolled the grounds of the community, they possess a vast knowledge of medicinal purposes of different bark, roots and plants in the area.

Martin people are known as master strategists amongst the people. They were traditionally the warriors within the community in part because they are also hunters and gatherers for the people. Having to know the outlay of the land, Martin people were chosen as the defenders of the land and protected this hunting territory and the people within them.

Finally, members of the Bird clan were regarded as the spiritual leaders of the community. The Eagle is the head of the Bird clan, and like the Eagle, members of the Bird clan are said to have sought out the "highest elevations of the mind just as the eagle pursues the highest elevations of the sky". Bird people are responsible for delivering a vision of well-being for the nation and helping to develop the peoples' spirits.[53]

These clans vary amongst Anishnaabeg depending on geographical location and marriage into other nations. For example, the Turtle Clan is also a part of this clan system in some Anishnaabe societies. Another example would be the Deer clan of the Hoofed people. Some communities would say that the Deer clan no longer exists or can be passed down to other generations because of increased incidents of intermarrying within the clan. Others continue to have the Deer clan represented in the community.

Just as the seven sacred laws of the *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* must work in harmony with one another, so must the clans in order to maintain balanced and healthy governance within the community. Individual clans having specific roles and responsibilities in terms of governance within the community makes the interrelationships between the clans absolutely necessary in order for the community to function. For example, if members of the Bear clan chose to function separate from the other clans, then who would comprise the community in which they are to protect? One of their main roles as Bear people would become obsolete over time. As well, if these same Bear people had political or personal disagreements within the clan, where would the Hoofed people be to pacify hostilities?

On one hand, balanced governance is dependent on individuality in terms of specific clan responsibilities. If every person in a community were responsible for

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[53] Ibid., pg. 6

identical roles, the community would not be interdependent. This is one of the reasons why intermarriage within a clan was not allowed. If it were permitted, there would be generations of clans both underrepresented and over-represented which would result in an imbalanced governance system as well as imbalanced people. As mentioned previously, it is believed in some Anishnaabe societies that the Deer clan no longer exists because there was too much intermarriage occurring and therefore this clan was removed.[54] Preventing intermarriage within clans was a means to protect the unique roles and responsibilities of all clans. Ironically, celebrating and acknowledging the distinctiveness of clans actually acts to create a more cohesive and interconnected community. This structure of governance binds Anishnaabeg collectively because of Sacred Law whereby individuality is absolutely necessary, but is not divorced from the collective will.

IV. CHIEFTAINSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

There is a story that Elder Basil Johnston tells of the Crane Clan. This story outlines some of the characteristics of a leader within a community. As described previously, the Crane clan is traditionally viewed as one of the clans that possess many leadership qualities. This story is taken from a book that Basil Johnston wrote entitled, Ojibway Heritage.[55]

People of the Crane clan are described as possessing "eloquence for leadership." Basil Johnston states that, "...of all echo-makers the crane was most eminent and for this reason was selected to symbolize leadership and direction. The call that he uttered was as infrequent as it was unique." Because the crane's sound is so unique, it commanded attention from the rest of the animal-world in its infrequent call. This ties into the notion

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[54] Edward Benton-Benai. The Mishomis Book. WI: Indian Country Communications, Inc., 1988, pg. 77.
[55] Op. cit., Johnston, pg. 61.

of *Nbwaakaawin* (Wisdom), as a leader embodies the crane in terms of exercising his/her prerogative in rare but appropriate instances. Basil Johnston writes that one of the responsibilities of a leader was to be first in action, so as to not merely possess the voice of a commander. The relationship between the leader and his/her people is not then of authority and rule. The power and ability of a leader rested in the hands of Anishnaabeg and could be removed from a particular leader if he/she failed the people.

Just as the *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* are fluid and adaptable to change, so is the process of instituting a leader. Birds have the opportunity twice annually to change the leader under which they flock to and from the south. Similarly to the way of birds, Anishnaabeg are given frequent occasion to shift or change leadership. A leader's position is never regarded as permanent. Once more, the process of renewal remains constant in terms of not only the qualities and guiding principles of a leader, but the leader himself.

Given this comparison with the Crane clan, the connectedness of human and animal interaction becomes more obvious. In reading Basil Johnston's writing on various clan responsibilities, it is apparent that striving for a way of governing as reflected in the animal world is fundamental. He uses the story of the loons and the cranes to describe how leadership, if it is sought out for reasons of status, can be extremely detrimental. It must be emphasized that in prefacing this teaching, leadership was spoken of as a burden rather than a role to be acquired.

> "…a loon challenged the crane for primacy among all the birds. The crane, unwilling to struggle to the death for such a burden that was both fickle and vain-glorious agreed as did other birds to surrender his primacy to the loon. The loon assumed the position with pomp and considerable authority. The other birds, relieved to have someone willing to accept leadership, looked to the loon for guidance and for better life. But it was not long before there was

> considerable discontent among the birds. By late August some birds were ready to leave for the south. Anxious, they called upon the loon to lead them. But loon was not ready, saying that it was too early and that other birds were not yet prepared to depart. The loon asked them to wait in patience. All would go. By the time the loon and all the other birds were ready to go, the sparrows and finches and robins had suffered considerable hardship, many having died by remaining too long…"[56]

The story continues with the remaining birds beginning their migration to the south, and Loon refusing to go any further than he desired despite other flocks who wanted to continue on. The "malcontents" (as Loon referred to them) argued that Loon had little concern for their differences and needs. Loon retorted by stating "the well being of all comes first. I have to consider the general good." To which Blue-Bird responded, "The general good has killed almost all of us." The malcontents accused Loon of thinking too big and neglecting the small. Eventually, the flocks left Loon. Crane was once more accorded the role of *ogimaa* (leader).

Interestingly, one of this story's implications discusses the dynamic between individual needs versus the larger collective will. The individual needs served a smaller community (i.e. the Bluebirds, Sparrows, Robins, etc.) and these needs were unfulfilled to a point where some members of the community perished. It then became the role of these individual groups to hold Loon accountable to his selfishness and quest for status. This is reminiscent of Maslow's Hierarchy in that Loon was searching for status (Esteem) in order to cultivate a high individual position amongst the larger community. It was Crane who understood that undertaking leadership was burdensome rather than status to be sought after, and thus did not exercise the power of his call unless it was warranted.

This is one example of the need to have two clans responsible for the leadership of the community. Another clan being responsible for the same aspect of Chieftainship,

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[56] Ibid., pg. 62 – 63.

was viewed as a type of 'check and balance' to maintain accountability amongst the people. It was understood that an individual holding power over a collective while at times was necessary, it also brought the temptation of greed and individual voracity.

Modern day systems of governance amongst indigenous nations are largely informed by the Indian Act and have resulted in the continued legitimization of band council style governments. Leadership is encompassed within one person in this system of government – the band council or tribal council chief. This imposed system out-sources responsibility to a bureaucracy rather than cultivating it within the community, resulting in a lack of accountability from chosen leadership. The "check and balance" of this leader is determined by Indian Affairs rather than another equally positioned person within the community. A lack of equal accountability brought upon by someone from the community results in skewed roles and responsibilities as the elected leader's mandate is not cultivated from within the community, but by a foreign government.

Gitigaa-Migize reflected on the accountability that was established through the relationships of the clan system:

> "In the old days with the clan system (which emphasized that we organize around the system of clans), each clan had some responsibility in order then for the community to survive. There are certain things that a community needs done in order for it to survive. One of them is to feed them; one of them is to be spiritual. I think within the system, when a person said, 'I belong to a certain clan'; they're really stating that they are an individual but within the clan. And the clan is the one responsible for the survival of the community."[57]

Governance of the community is being expressed in the above statement as being dependent on a spiritual core that is represented in the clan system. Gitigaa-Migize

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[57] Op. cit., Williams, D., pg. 5.

discusses how we as individuals organized around a 'system of clans' – thus our governance as people was placed before us as a responsibility that we are to uphold as individuals. This is in part why when we as Anishnaabeg introduce ourselves as belonging to a clan, we are acknowledging the many collective duties and obligations we carry as individuals to our extended families. Our traditional governance system was comprised of individuals who ultimately belonged to a larger collective.

V. CONCLUSION

It is imperative that we return to these familial and clan obligations in order to uphold our duty to Sacred Law. As individuals, we are able to create and maintain relationships through these systems of law; accountability to one another becomes inevitable through these interrelationships.

It is evident that as we grow individually, our responsibilities begin to expand outwards to interdependent collectives. Through these established relationships, individuals are able to contribute on a community and national level. It is for these reasons that living solely as nuclear families would diminish the contributions to governance because the interrelationships of the community would be isolated or fractioned into smaller groups. Law at its core in Anishnaabeg societies is dependent on the establishment of large families and clans in order to facilitate a system of governance that is balanced and far-reaching (i.e. the ability to reach and affect individuals).

Having a deeper understanding of the dynamic between the individual and his/her family and clan, it now becomes important to better understand the larger community and how it functions with respect to individuals and ultimately, to the nation.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMUNITY AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SACRED LAW

Understanding the roles and responsibilities that come from clan and family systems inform how these play out in the community. In this chapter I will be examining the various forms of leadership and how they contribute to Anishnaabe governance. The first section will explore the definition of *"ogimaa"*, which translates into leader or chief in Anishnaabemowin. *Ogimaa* have specific duties and obligations that are interconnected to Anishnaabe values and principles.

Settler society has vastly different conceptions of politics and leadership in government. I will discuss this briefly and explore how accountability to the community begins to diminish as indigenous leaders begin to operate officially in this foreign system. While at times it is necessary to send people out and engage in Settler society, in doing so we also risk these leaders intentionally or unintentionally being responsible to Canada and Canada's mandate.

This skewed accountability strengthens the need to have leadership at a community level as well. This can be either an official or unofficial standing amongst the people. What is important is the ability for these *ogimaakan* to affect individuals, families and clans and contribute to the overall continuance of Anishnaabe values and principles in the community. The establishment of these types of relationships will be discussed in the final section of the chapter.

First, a brief examination of how the individual relates to the larger community in terms of role and dynamic must be considered.

II. *OGIMAA* AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN COMMUNITY

> "Experiences are hardly an individual affair, however, for within each community is the collective memory of past events and the behaviour of people within that immediate history is common knowledge. Over decades of community life the leadership emerges as the community recognizes in the continual activities of individuals a sense of consistency, of commitment to the community, and of the course of wise decisions."[58]

These words from the late Vine Deloria Jr. speak to the persistence of our ancestral presence in the governance of community. The contributions of our ancestors continue to have an active place in Anishnaabeg societies through our ceremonies, languages, songs, clans, families, etc. Experiences or decisions we have or make as individuals are continually connected to the larger community in terms of obligations and commitments to family and clan. Deloria associates leadership as being established within this identified commitment of individuals to their community. Leadership in this design is developed within the community, and thus enacts the people to hold their leader to account.

The word "*ogimaa*", "*gimaa*" or "*ogimaakan*"[59] is used to describe a leader or a person with leadership qualities in the community. Fred Kelly describes "*ogimaakan*" as "being drawn from *Ogimaa* the principal spirit with a responsibility for a special function given by the Creator. No human can be an actual *ogimaa* but in sacred emulation to invoke the blessing of the true *Ogimaa* spirit, the Anishinaabe leader is likened to the special spiritual being, albeit for earthly and human functions."[60] This speaks to the degree in which spirituality is at the core of our governance systems as Anishnaabeg. Our leaders being likened to spiritual beings attests to the significance of ceremony at the

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[58] Vine Deloria Jr., For This Land. New York, NY: Routledge, 1999, pg. 133.

[59] This variation in words is based upon different dialects within the Anishnaabe nation.

[60] Op. cit. Kelly, "Anishnaabe Leadership", pg. 6.

foundation of how leaders conduct themselves politically, as they are the chosen spokespeople for Anishnaabeg.

This continues today in politics. Many indigenous people enter Canadian politics with the intent to better the lives of those people in their communities. Some wish to challenge the current standards of justice by participating in Settler institutions which claim to represent indigenous peoples in Settler society (i.e. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada). While the intention may be admirable to some, many times this effort results in the division of accountability - usually between the federal and provincial government. For example, entering into land claim negotiations for the purposes of having collective legal ownership of a territory does not come without continued overriding federal and provincial jurisdictions (i.e. "co-management of resources"). Operating within a system that is ultimately governed by federal and/or provincial mandates changes the scope of accountability for indigenous leaders.

As was previously shown, the values that govern Settler political systems can shift dramatically to suit financial and political interests. Thus the principles that govern us as Anishnaabeg do not necessarily translate to Settler values. *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* cannot truly be represented in this system as our ability to create and maintain interrelationships amongst all levels of people and collectives (i.e. clan systems, familial duties and obligations, community responsibilities, etc.) is encumbered, given that these relationships would be considered by liberal society as contained solely within the private sphere. Accommodating our *ogimaakan* in their renewal of these relationships is not a priority in Canada. In fact, efforts to squash our ways and

assimilate us into the greater society so as to lessen contentious debates of sovereignty are evident in many of Canada's past and current actions.

Elder Fred Kelly writes, "For the Anishinaabe life and everything in creation comes from *Kizhemanito*, the Great Kind Spirit. *Bimaadiziwin* is pursued within a set of concepts, beliefs, principles, and tenets based on Sacred Law where such a notion akin to a separation of church and state does not exist."[61] *'Pimaatiziwin'* or '*Bimaadiziwin'* in its meaning is multi-levelled. Many think of it as living a good life, or living a life of the Anishnaabe, which is being true to our original instructions and Sacred Law. Our way of life by this definition is rooted in the spiritual existence of Anishnaabeg. This is how our relationships are formed and how they become interconnected with one another. The political realm of Anishnaabe governance cannot be divorced from this spirituality as our very existence is defined within it.

Canada has attempted to convince society of the absence of church from state. However, the structure of Canada's government is based on British structures of government, which in turn are derived from religious philosophies. This is interesting because in one sense the absence of Christian doctrine is beneficial to an indigenous way of life (i.e. as proven through attempts to justify conquest and colonization, the creation of residential schools, the labelling of indigenous peoples as heathens or non-human, etc.), yet it speaks to Canada's effort to devoid itself from any spirituality.

However, our governance systems are built upon a spiritual core, not only in regard to ceremonies, but also in the direction that our ancestors continue to lead us. This speaks to the large gap in perception of 'government' versus 'governance' in Canadian-Indigenous relations. Fred Kelly writes on the process of continual renewal:

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[61] ibid., pg. 4

> "Leadership was manifest in the social, economic, political and spiritual governance of community life. And steeped in the sacred gifts of the hunters, fishers, gatherers, herbalists, healers, midwives, medical practitioners, and other specialists is the knowledge and wisdom of traditional leadership accumulated since the time when the Anishinaabe was in harmony with the laws of nature. Traditional leadership was diffused in many specialized roles and capacities allowing for the widest possible participation."[62]

Anishnaabe governance systems are centred on this notion of renewal as they are intended to exist in 'harmony with the laws of nature'. Leadership and other positions held by people within the community were constantly shifting and changing as new generations of Anishnaabeg were endowed with special gifts that contributed to the overall governance of community. Thus, these roles exist in a fluid context which are dependent on the needs, abilities and desires of the community. This prevented the governance of community from becoming stagnant despite ever-changing conditions. Injecting ourselves into a Settler government definition of what is considered 'indigenous' would result in boxing ourselves into a sterile and unchanging identity within Canadian law. Renewal cannot be fully represented in this type of definition, as the spiritual context would have no place. Yet renewal is dependent on the spiritual as shown in the above quote; the gifts/positions that people hold in the community are considered to be sacred, and thus from a spiritual place.

While it is evident to many that Canada does not operate in absence of religious influence (considering this is how colonization was and is justified), its constant rebuff of anything spiritual at the basis of government action is emblematic of its divisive underpinnings. Basil Johnston writes on the idea of spiritual growth within the community:

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[62] ibid., pg. 5.

> "Men and women have to know as they have to grow in spirit. This basic premise presupposes the existence of teachers and imposes upon them the duty of teaching. The well being and the continuity of a community require that the spirit be enlarged and passed on from generation to generation. What had to be fostered was not merely skill but understanding; not merely knowledge but wisdom. There was duty on the part of the wise to impart their wisdom and a concomitant obligation on the part of the unlearned to learn. In general learning was two-fold: one end of training was to prepare man or woman to serve his physical needs; the other, to enlarge his soul-spirit or inner being. For the first, adults imparted their skills and knowledge to the young, for the second, the elders passed on their wisdom. Both forms of training were given at the same time. By combining both forms of training and teaching the product would be a well-rounded man, skilled and wise...The more resourceful a man, the more whole he was, and the better for his community. The community had a duty to train its members as individuals not so much for its own benefit thought there was that end, to be sure, but for the good of the person. The man or woman so trained had received a gift from the community which he was to acknowledge in some form; and that form consisted simply of enlarging one's own scope to the fullest of his capacity. The stronger the man, the stronger the community; and it was equally true that the stronger the community, the firmer its members..."[63]

Leadership, or the quality of leadership, was dependent on the participation and inclusion of the community. One cannot exist without the other, and therefore, the position of 'leader' does not supersede the significance of community influence. James McGregor Burns in his book Transforming Leadership, describes the basis of leadership as being dependent on the ever changing wants and needs of society. In one way, this appears to be very 'people-centred' (i.e. power lying with the people). Yet in another way, it speaks very little to the actual leader himself. Burns writes, "Where does leadership begin? Where change begins. Where does change begin? In my view, with the burgeoning in humans of powerful physical and psychological wants."[64] A leader in this sense is regarded as a tool or method by which the people can achieve their collective wants and

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[63] Op. cit. Johnston, pg. 69.

[64] MacGregor Burns, James. Transforming Leadership. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press. 2003, pg. 149.

desires. I find this to be problematic not only in terms of the quality of a leader, but also in the superficiality that is implied by emphasizing wants and desires. If a leader is merely measured by the extent to which he accomplishes the changing desires of the larger society, then I cannot help but understand leadership in this way to be a vacillating undertaking.

Burns also discusses the "potential link between Maslow's drive for self-actualization and the motivation for leadership. The qualities that motivate and characterize self-actualization…are near to those of leadership." Therefore, that which drives us to attain our full potential through unique qualities is comparable to motivations for leadership. As previously discussed in Chapter Three, esteem and a sense of belonging are just two of the four motivating factors. This view is vastly different than the motivations for leadership in an Anishnaabe sense. Although Burns mentions the unique qualities of individuals and our teachings tell us similarly that unique qualities are recognized in the choosing of a leader, the reasons that motivate the need for leadership are dissimilar. If a driving force in attaining leadership status is esteem and recognition, the people who are being led are at a disadvantage as the leader's accountability is promoted at an individualistic level.

III. *OGIMAA* IN SETTLER POLITICS

Leroy Little Bear once spoke of the need to have our people engage Settler politics to certain extents.[65] This engagement is necessary insofar as it is also temporary. Entering into a political relationship with the Setter government undoubtedly can compromise a leader's accountability to his/her own community. This is why it was crucial that political relations be brief and provisional in order that our *ogimaakan* remained grounded in the value system that directs community governance. Not being grounded in this way increases the possibility of being co-opted by the colonizer's regime based on how its accountability and responsibility are structured. Taiaiake Alfred writes:

> "There is a great danger in attempting to negotiate structural changes to our relationships before our minds and hearts are cleansed of the stains of colonialism. In the absence of mental and spiritual decolonisation, any effort to theorize or to implement a model of a 'new' Onkwehonwe-Settler relationship is counterproductive to the objectives of justice and the achievement of a long-term relationship of peaceful coexistence between our peoples."[66]

By centering oneself in Canada's system and its politics, the manoeuvrability of *ogimaakan* is limited. Canada's financial and political power is vast and constant. It is this that defines and controls political mandates and leaders to suit its economic, political, financial and social interests. Therefore those people working for Canada (whether this is intended or a result of concrete systematic structures) are in one respect working for these same interests. Just as in the story of Crane and Loon, the birds had the opportunity to change leadership frequently. This ensured balance and safeguarded against *ogimaakan*'s political wandering eye.

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[65] Leroy Little Bear. "Native American Political Philosophy" – IGOV 540. University of Victoria. January 2005.
[66] Op. cit., Alfred, pg. 180.

Given the diverse needs of indigenous communities, many *ogimaakan* are needed to represent these needs. This is also akin to the story of Crane, as Crane would delegate many *ogimaakan* to various flocks of birds in their travel to and from the south. However, in today's political realm, many of our people have been convinced to work solely for Canada in order to benefit their community. We also have people who attempt to resist this blatant co-optation. These two approaches of working within Canada's power structure result in our people representing different values and principles in the political spectrum. Are the responsibilities to our own central government (the spiritual and Sacred Law) being upheld with *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan?* Increasingly our *ogimaakan's* responsibilities are being divided amongst foreign interest groups in the hopes of attaining justice for indigenous communities.

A very well respected Anishnaabe man named Wilson Ashkewe (*Niigaan Noodin*) from Nawash First Nation who has passed, spoke of *ogimaa* and their necessary commitment to the people:

> "*Okima* (Chiefs) shall be the mentors of the people for all time. They shall be proof against anger, offensive actions and criticism. Their hearts shall be full of peace and good will and their minds filled with a yearning for the better welfare of the people of their clan and nation. Their firmness shall be tempered with kindness and love for their people. Their actions shall be marked by calm deliberation. All *Okima* shall be honest in all things. They must not idle nor gossip, but be men possessing those honourable qualities that make true leaders. It shall be that the people shall ever hold their *Okima* in highest estimation out of respect for their honourable position, or remove him from office, if they cannot because of his personal failures."[67]

Niigaan Noodin expresses the responsibility that *Ogimaa* have to the clans of the community and further, to the Sacred Law that governs us as an entire people. To be

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[67] Wilson Ashkewe. Passed down to members of our family by Wilson Ashkewe (*Niigaan Noodin*) through oral tradition.

ogimaa of the community was regarded as an honourable position, but was not claimed without scrutiny by the people. The true political power rested with the clans and families of the community. Thus, they possessed the power to remove *ogimaa* from his/her position if he/she has failed to represent the people. Accountability was determined through these many established interrelationships of clans and families, which in turn are comprised of individuals who carry responsibilities to the larger collectives. The many levels of induced accountability acted to ensure that *ogimaa's* leadership affected all people in the community rather than individual people or select groups.

The political power of today's elected leaders in band or tribal councils systems is born from Indian Act legislation. Of course, the people still have a say as to who is elected into this leadership position, as they are the voters. However the mandate of the elected chief's position is outlined in the Indian Act and is enforced by the Minister of Indian Affairs. Therefore, the participation of various clans and families in the governance of the community is systematically denied. In present day, clan and family involvement is usually conducted at a ceremonial level rather than actively in the political governance of the community. This is akin to the notion of "group rights" that was discussed in Chapter One – autonomy in the realm of the cultural/spiritual only.

This is not to say that elected chiefs do not operate under the pretence and intention of "yearning for the better welfare of the people of their clan and nation". However, elected chiefs do operate within a system whereby their decisions and actions are largely determined by a foreign mandate and thus can truly only affect the people in the domains that those governments allow. This compartmentalization of governance

isolates the community and its leaders from Sacred Law in terms of governance. For example, the Settler government's relationship with indigenous communities is divided legally and ideologically in two ways. The first is in reference to the spiritual, and this is considered merely in terms of cultural difference; secondly, the political governance of indigenous communities is regarded simply as an extended fraction of the Settler regime serving a 'special' function. Professor James Tully writes:

> "...the right of self-determination is satisfied when indigenous peoples are counted as part of the fictitious, homogeneous sovereign people of a nation state and are able to exercise the same individual rights of participation as other citizens. Here, the reduction of the rights of people to undifferentiated individual rights of participation is used to gloss over the existence of more than one people in an existing nation state and so to legitimise their assimilation."[68]

This method of assimilation can be appropriately utilized through the awarding of 'community-specific rights' to indigenous communities. Kymlicka would argue that this is in fact not assimilation, but the recognition and acceptance of alternative ways of life. However, this only holds true insofar as indigenous communities do not rise up and represent themselves on *all* levels as nations. No matter how much liberalism is twisted and contorted, it is essentially founded upon one principle – individualism.

Dividing Anishnaabe governance into these individual facets encourages the infringement and adoption of an alternate value system. Individuals are rewarded with power and status as they increase their participation in the Settler system. Fred Kelly writes on this subject:

> "In terms of political leadership, Anishinaabe leadership included both civil and war chiefs. Because there were many leaders, early outside observers believed that there were ranked leaders. To be sure there was a

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[68] James Tully, *"The Struggles for and of Freedom."* Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Eds. Duncan Ivison, Paul Patton and Will Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 37 – 59, pg. 56.

> Grand Chief but in appearance only. In truth he was the first among equals. Civil leadership was composed of both hereditary Grand Chiefs and others who rose to prominence through ability and consensual selection. Principal officials of Midewe'in[69] were influential in political affairs and were prominent leaders. With the encroachment of European settlers, leadership in some areas underwent transformation and began to assume a hierarchy brought on by individual recognition and awards of military rankings."[70]

It is for reasons as this, that having leaders at all levels within community is so vital to the continuation of Sacred Law. *Ogimaa* did not and do not solely exist at an individual position over the community. There were and are many people who represent different clans, families and responsibilities in the governance of the community.

IV. *OGIMAA* AT ALL LEVELS

The above discussion was based on examples of leadership that existed on political levels or various levels of Chieftainship. While those levels are significant to overarching themes in governance of Anishnaabeg, they do not necessarily highlight those leaders at a community level. Focusing only on those people in formal leadership roles does not account for the familial and relational affects that leaders in an informal capacity have on Anishnaabeg.

Given that leadership qualities are birthed and upheld within the clan system, exercising leadership at the familial, community and individual level is inevitable as clan responsibilities occur both outwardly and inwardly affecting all aspects of governance. Leadership at a Chieftainship level is but one situation in which leadership and its responsibilities are demanded. Other instances of leadership are situational within a community or family. The concept of leadership (which is usually situated in relation to politics) is considered in a realm where subtleties can be the most powerful.

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[69] Anishnaabe Medicine Society
[70] Op. cit. Kelly, "Anishnaabe Leadership", pg. 3

I am sure that many people can think of someone in their life, perhaps a family member that exemplifies true leadership in how he/she conducts him/herself. Oftentimes, we come to regard a leader as a person who oversees people or institutions and has therefore attained certain status. However, true leadership is also demonstrated in the legacy and lasting effects they have on the people. At a personal level, I immediately think of two people whom I did not come to know very well while they were alive, yet continue to influence how I carry myself as an Anishnaabe-Kwe[71].

The first is Wilson Ashkewe, whom I mentioned earlier. He is also Uncle to me through our familial and clan affiliation with one another. Uncle Wilson or *Niigaan Noodin* embodied o*gimaakan* honourably as well. *Niigaan Noodin* passed on from cancer fifteen years ago. He was considered a highly respected teacher in Anishnaabe country – a true spiritual *ogimaakan*. My father was adopted by Wilson as brother and fellow Bear clan member. Although he has passed on, we still continue the ceremonies that he shared with us. When my father teaches me, it is Wilson who is also teaching me. When I think back in my own memory, I can only see his face and know how I felt around him. I don't remember the words he spoke, perhaps because I have forgotten or maybe was not paying close enough attention at the time. Yet his words and his thoughts continue to affect and transform me, through ceremony and the people that knew him well. The lasting effects of *Niigaan Noodin's* spiritual leadership is undeniable. His teachings continue to breathe knowledge and reflection into many of our lives. *Niigaan Noodin* never self-proclaimed his leadership in the Anishnaabe community. He was regarded as a spiritual teacher because of how he carried himself, and most importantly, how he carried the teachings and ceremonies.

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[71] *"Anishnaabe woman"*

My great-grandmother, Melba Whetung-Loft or *Kinajiqwa* (Kind, Gracious Woman) passed on when I was five years old. I have one memory of her, sitting at the picnic table with all of our family wearing her brown and white knitted sweater. Sometimes I am saddened to not have had more time with her, but the stories of her are still so alive in my family that I feel I have come to know her and myself very well. The relationships she established with her family and the community continue to affect us and thereby the larger community as well. My father wrote of her influence in his own life and shared:

> "She was a professor of life with a belief in possibilities and potentialities. Many people came to Granny Mel for comfort and help. Her beautiful brown calloused hands would hold yours. She would look into your eyes and the worries of the world would melt away like snow in the spring. She seemed to have a kind word for everyone, and would say *"what goes around comes around...look at what is good in people because that is from the Creator"*.[72]

Her beliefs and wisdom continue to help all of our family during hard times, and remind us to celebrate life. She was and continues to be *ogimaakan.*

The interrelatedness of leadership when it is conceptualized in this manner demonstrates how integral the collective is continually affected by individuals and vice-a-versa. It also reinforces how individuality is celebrated amongst the collective as individuals possessed unique qualities and thus were obligated to various responsibilities. It also reveals the lengths by which family contributes to community as well as the nation. Thus, leadership is dependent on many individuals within the community rather than one dominant person.

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[72] Watts, Bob. A Tribute to Melba Sarah Whetung, *Kinajiqwa.* Written by my father for his grandmother.

Shirley also spoke of various roles within community. Midwives and medicine people were regarded as those having the highest knowledge in their trained gifts. She explained that people of the community could not be dependent on one sole person for leadership. This was evidenced through clan and family systems, certain people acquired or were given the responsibility of particular aspects in the community.[73] Even in significant political decision-making, a pipe carrier's presence was necessary to ensure that the process would be both honest and spiritual. Thus, political leaders depended on spiritual leaders to contribute to the degree in which substantial decisions were made. And even further, pipe carriers were aided by other pipe carriers or *shkaabewis* (helper): "Even though, he might be a pipe carrier he still needs those other pipe carriers to help him - to make a stronger spiritual experience."[74]

Midwives, spiritual leaders, healers, counsellors, etc. are regarded with this same consideration of *ogimaakan*. Their leadership qualities and abilities contributed to the overall governance of Anishnaabe communities. Their aptitude of specific knowledge was not divorced from or contained in diversified spheres of the political, economic, or social. More simply, they were necessary in all of these fields in order to produce and maintain the best governance structure possible for the people.

V. CONCLUSION

As we have seen throughout this chapter, leadership is a complex subject that it is not regarded as an individual position one holds in the community. The extent to which the federal government influences band council/tribal council government in indigenous communities is widespread in terms of official or legal designation. However, the value

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[73] Op. cit., Williams, S., pg. 10.
[74] Ibid., pg. 10

system that underscores the relationship between numerous individuals and the larger community is vastly different than the imposed federal designation that currently defines what a leader amongst the community is.

Accountability within the Anishnaabe value system is ever-present and formed reciprocally between leaders, clans, families and individuals. The power rests with and is enforced by the people, and the leader or chief is a representative of what the collective will is. Thus, a leader's position and scope of ability is informed by the larger collective and operates on this basis. It is for this reason that many indigenous leaders functioning in Settler society are often torn between representing the people and Sacred Law while being answerable to the federal government. There are of course official designations as we have seen through the examination of Chieftainship, however there are also those Anishnaabeg who may not be officially acknowledged in the overall governance of the community, but are recognized nonetheless in terms of their contribution through the transmission of knowledge and wisdom. *Ogimaakan* at a community level is so vital given these current methods of designation, as our value systems are provided room to regenerate without the provocation of Settler intrusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE *BIMAADIZIWIN* OF A NATION

How we function as nations is informed by the established relationships of individuals, families, clans and communities. As the duties and obligations of each of these levels are fulfilled and continuously renewed, the governance of a nation is realized in its truest form. That is, each level can actively participate in the governance of a nation. With this participation also comes responsibility. Our sacred *Bimaadiziwin* as Anishnaabeg defines these many interrelationships and guides the governance of society. 'Nation' in this context differs from the notion of 'community' in that our overarching guiding teachings such as *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* and *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* are encompassed within our existence and identity as Anishnaabeg. This of course varies depending on location, dialect, ceremonial practices, etc., but for the purposes of this discussion, the term 'nation' will be used in this regard.

In the next section of this Chapter, I will examine how our *Bimaadiziwin* developed and the place it has in the lives of Anishnaabeg. Centralized government in Anishnaabeg communities is a part of this governance system, but because it is informed by the spiritual and carried out by all members of creation, its purpose is vastly different than that of Settler society's.

The history of Canada's development in terms of property rights is emblematic of its relationship to the land. I will briefly discuss some of the popular views at the time of economic growth during colonization and how this has influenced Canada's relationship to the land. In an effort to not only assimilate indigenous peoples further, but civilize

indigenous communities as well, Canada attempts to encourage the adoption of an alternate value system based upon property rights.

Finally, I will examine our Sacred Laws and constitution in terms of present-day application and the need to regenerate these ways to prevent assimilation into the larger Settler society. Our relationships that we have a duty to uphold are central to this idea, for if we are to reject them in the name of economic advancement, our claim to be nations will be lost in the multicultural mosaic that is Canada. It is for reasons such as this that our *Bimaadiziwin* must continue to be upheld in our communities and inform our governance as Anishnaabeg.

II. THE BIRTH OF PIMAATIZIWIN

> "The four concentric circles in the sky – *Pagonekiishig* – show the four directions, the four stages of life, the four seasons, the four sacred lodges (sweat, shaking tent, roundhouse, and the Midewe'in lodge), the four sacred drums (the rattle, hand, water, and big ceremonial drum), and the four orders of Sacred Law. Indeed, the four concentric circles of stars is the origin of the sacred four in *Pimaatiziwin* that is the heart of the supreme law of the Anishinaabe. And simply put that is the meaning of a constitution."[75]

Thus our forms of governance as a nation are rooted in these elements of creation that are spoken of above and are a fundamental expression of *Bimaadiziwin.* The ideas of relationships and interrelationships between Anishnaabeg have been central to the discussion of how we govern ourselves at many levels in Anishnaabe societies. It is also evident how the interrelationships within creation also inform the nature of our established relationships as Anishnaabeg.

Our ceremonies are therefore essential in our systems of governance, as they comprise how our constitution was created and is maintained in Anishnaabe communities. Politics today however is not rooted in this spiritual tradition. Settler

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[75] Op. cit. Kelly, "Anishnaabe Leadership", pg. 3

society has taken it upon itself to inform how indigenous communities function and articulate the practices of liberal ideologies. Despite this supposed subsuming of Anishnaabe philosophies, our constitution continues to exist. It is not simply a question or result of one nation eradicating another's political governance system. It is because our constitution is rooted in the elements of creation that it has never been erased. Just as the four seasons continue to turn, the four sacred lodges are continuously regenerated and our songs continue to be sung, our *Bimaadiziwin* will persist into the future. Once again we arrive at the notion of responsibility and the duties and obligations we have to Sacred Law. Currently, the roles that are outlined in Sacred Law cannot be fully expressed in all realms of imposed governments, i.e. politics and law-making.

The majority of indigenous ceremonies are not seen as intrusion upon Settler ideals simply because they are not given recognition by Settler government in the political realm. Rather they exist as cultural practice or activity ultimately contributing to the multidimensional mosaic that is Canada's pride. Placing ceremonies and spirituality at the peripheral of government in Settler society evidences the extreme differences that exist in value systems. It is difficult to understand how infusing ceremonies into a system that fundamentally opposes our own will improve it. This is not to say that ceremonial practice has no effect when done in the Settler scope of politics. Yet, if ceremonies are rooted in *Bimaadiziwin* which stems from Sacred Law, how can they truly deliver their full potential into a system that attempts to eradicate this very way of life? The existence of these complex levels of interrelationships necessitates a living and breathing *Bimaadiziwin* that is bound by how we treat these relationships with one another and

creation. Therefore, operating in a foreign system of government means that we must sever many of these relationships in order to be accountable to a foreign value system. Fred Kelly writes:

> "All presuppositions and suppositions – conscious and subconscious, articulated and unarticulated, are in the common culture that forms a voluntary obedience and cohesiveness of the individual and the collective. In this way, no central government was apparent and seemed redundant if not unnecessary. Yet, there was a central government – it was spiritual and it was embedded in Sacred Law. By this is meant that the order of temporal government was modelled on the understanding of the roles of the myriad of spirits who sit in the four directions, the four layers of the earth, the four levels of the sky, and everywhere with responsibilities over everything."[76]

The "voluntary obedience" Fred Kelly speaks of in the above statement is very telling of how our governance systems were not imposed upon the people (i.e. people were free to dissent/leave the community), but were enforced in terms of Sacred Law. Voluntary obedience then offered individuals the ability to inform their own way of life by having a choice as to whether they lived amongst the community or not. However if individuals did choose to live within a community setting, then collective accountability and responsibility was made compulsory. The people and the relationships that were established through families and clans that ultimately contributed to the nation maintained central government in this way. "Governance" is not conceived on a solely tangible level through legislation and figureheads. Its inception was birthed through philosophies and gifts, which derived from the spiritual. Of course these ideas were practiced in physical manifestations through systems of clans, ceremonial practice, hunting, political meetings, etc. but are not meant to be devoid of this spiritual beginning. Envisioning a centralized Anishnaabe governance system is perceived in this way, a cumulative beginning of sacred teachings and instructions.

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[76] ibid., pg. 4

Some would say that a discussion of 'traditional governance systems' are exactly that - traditional and thus existing in the past. Further, that the debate rests in the realm of 'traditional' versus 'modern' governance systems. Time cannot be turned backwards as we know, and thus 'tradition' cannot be transplanted into the present given the current state of politics and the encroachment of Settler society. However, I do not view our governance systems as simply traditional. To do this would be an admission of tradition as theory and the practice of it as an exercise in futility. Rather, our values and principles of governance as discussed previously are fluid in that their inception is not rooted in man-made manifestations of ideologies. While the corporeal is certainly present and necessary, it does not dictate to the spiritual and thus has the ability to change over time. It is not as if before the incoming of Settler society, indigenous nations did not have to experience change. Our systems are structured to accommodate change or fight it when necessary.

Probably one of the most dangerous arguments stemming from this view of fluidity tends to confuse assimilation with our ability as Anishnaabeg to survive and adapt with the onset of change. For example, considering many indigenous communities in Canada exist at very low economic standards compared to the rest of Settler society, there is a need to increase the amount of economic development to encourage a higher standard of living. This could include development such as mining, oil refining, logging, fish farming, etc. Participating in these types of industry through basic employment, joint ventures, etc. while increasing profit and annual income in indigenous communities undeniably results in degrees of devastation to the land. Our sacred relationship to creation is thus transformed and in some cases severed as industry begins to take control

over the land. This is not to say that Anishnaabeg were not industrious before contact with the settler or should not be now. To do so would of course reinforce the stereotype of "savage" or "uncivilized", or perhaps imply that we should accept a lower standard of living. However, our modes of industry were not absent of foresight in terms of preservation of the land, and thus respect for it.

Settler industry on the other hand is based upon labour and ownership to encourage profit, absent of sacred or spiritual connection to the land or "resource" that is expropriated. The relationship that is established in this mindset of industry is one based on land to money and further, government to power. We as indigenous peoples are encouraged by Settler society to join in this type of relationship, thereby assimilating our own core principles and beliefs into the dominant value system.

But before we become to quick to adapt to further "change", we must consider our own constitution and relationship to the land. Fred Kelly speaks to this idea further:

> "If you listen to the Creation story of the Haudenosaunee, if you listen to our Creation story, invariably we land on the back of a turtle. In our case, why do we call it Turtle Island? Well, this is the island that we were placed on, but in addition to that, to demarcate it, the Grandmother that lights the night sky, commonly called or colloquially called the Moon, in her full glory, comes out thirteen times a year – four seasons. Not twelve – thirteen times. And this is when she kisses the Turtle…Now look at the Turtle. Count the platelets on the back of a turtle. Thirteen. That is why we call it Turtle Island. Now, the difference in concepts with Euro-Canadian law is the concept of ownership and property rights. Wherein Euro-Canadians talk about property rights we talk about territory. It is the closest relationship. And it's the relationship to Mother Earth. So therefore if you understand Sacred Law and the Great Law, that you are an integral part of Grandmother Earth, then is it conceivable that you could sell her? Firstly, to sell her is tantamount to selling yourself. Can you do that? Not under Great Law, not under Sacred Law. So therefore, you can't sell your Grandmother. It's just not allowed. Let me put it another way - it's unconstitutional. It's against the law - it's illegal. So under

> indigenous law it is not possible to sell any part of Grandmother Earth, because we have a sacred relationship to her. You are a part of that."[77]

If we understand our own role as Anishnaabeg in the relationship we have with the land, then it becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile the notion of property rights and our own sacred *Bimaadiziwin*. Everything that Fred Kelly spoke above was based on relationships and maintaining those relationships. We see how our political views and decision-making processes are informed by these relationships to the land rather than political power dominating the land. Yet in Settler society, this is the expectation. It is not a question of simply different worldviews and Settler society's attempts at reconciling these worldviews to produce a more symmetrical nation. Rather, indigenous nations in Canada are still viewed as "uncivilized", especially in the realm of property rights and our relationship to the land. Property rights are a supposed remedy to indigenous peoples continued lack of civility in this regard. Canada's history of its own beginning is evidence of this.

III. LABOUR AND INDUSTRY

Basil Johnston tells a story of how Anishnaabeg conceptualized labour and industry within the community in terms of how we related to the land. He writes:

> "...Hunting demanded skill in tracking down game and patience in stalking moose and deer to get near enough the quarry to use a bow and arrow which had an effective range of about twenty-five yards. The occupation demanded endurance on the part of the hunter who often had to walk miles and even days if game was scarce and demanded strength to carry great weights. Moreover, hunted required resourcefulness in both summer and winter. To overcome and surmount the hazards and hardships represented by hunting was considered proof of individual worth. That hunting and fishing were especially esteemed was publicly acknowledged in celebrating the first kill of a young boy. More often than not, it was the foremost hunter who was invited to be leader. In two ways, therefore, was the occupation of providing food given recognition. The men and women

[77] Op. cit. Kelly, *Personal Interview,* pgs. 11 – 12

> so engaged satisfied man's basic constant need. From the stories about Nanabush and other tales, one of the recurring themes was that of hunger and starvation reflecting fact and fear. Nanabush was constantly hungry. And it was not so much the scarcity of game as his ineptitude and anxiety that kept his larder empty and the bellies of his children emaciated. Had he skill and patience and resourcefulness, Nanabush might not have seemed quite so pathetic or bungling. But there were times when Nanabush was lucky in killing much game. On those rare occasions he and his family feasted to gluttony. Out of the same theme of hunger and scarcity was born Weendigo, the glutton, the image of excess. The same theme produced legends of the disappearance of deer, roses, and the resultant hardships. Only hunters could alleviate hunger...The animal beings who symbolized the qualities needed for success in the provision of food were selected to represent those engaged in hunting and fishing and trapping..."[78]

Resourcefulness is a key component of Anishnaabe governance and is not based solely upon fulfilling the basic needs of Anishnaabeg. Basic needs were obviously important, but ambition and motivation is integral to not only the development of the individual, but also the strength of a community. We also see how the importance of the larger collective is represented in relation to the "first kill of a young boy". This was interpreted beyond the physical act of killing and extended to one's ability to provide sustenance for the people and therefore the community is not only dependent on an individual hunters for food, but the hunters depend on the community for leadership positions and thus respect from the community.

The relationship to the land being so sacred meant that excessive industry was contrary to our roles and responsibilities with regards to the land. Settler society saw this as an opportunity to justify the illegal seizure of land for the purposes of excess and greed. George Scrope, a well-known 19th Century political economist related colonization to the need to spread civility throughout the world. He wrote:

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[78] Op. cit., Johnston, pg. 66

> "To create, in parts of the globe now inhabited but by brutes, or by a hundred or two of half-starved savages approaching to brutes, several populous, wealthy, and civilized communities, Englishmen in race, language, laws, habits, morals, and religion; and united to England, for years to come, in colonial dependency, and for ever by the ties of common origin, tongue, and literature, of commercial intercourse and mutual benefit."[79]

Now this is basic and rather obvious, as we are aware of the reasons behind Manifest Destiny and the justifications of conquest. However, it is necessary to reiterate this viewpoint given what Scrope writes of in relation to the above excerpt:

> "Until not only the whole of our own empire, but the *whole earth* is fully peopled, up to the extent of its powers of nourishment – until we have exhausted the means we unquestionably possess at present, of raising subsistence from any of the myriad acres of fertile land yet uncultivated – until every corner of the globe is tilled, like a garden, with all the appliances which science has yet brought, or may be expected hereafter to bring, to the assistance of industry, all intentional prevention of the natural increase of population is a crime against society…"[80]

On this topic of overpopulation of the earth, Scrope presents the argument that in order for one to justify the prevention of population growth, society must have exhausted all means necessary to inhabit every part of the earth, and once inhabited, to extract every benefit possible from it to accommodate mankind. Thus, the manipulations mankind is able to make to the earth through science and industry are primary in terms of exerting dominion. These are the types of values that have shaped Settler society and continue to inform the notion of 'property rights' in Canada. Preservation is usually an afterthought, considering it is oftentimes put into practice after the occurrence of depletion of resources has been realized.

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[79] Scrope, George Poulett "Malthus and Sadler – Population and Emigration", *Quarterly Review,* Vol. 45, 1831, pgs. 144-145.
[80] Scrope, George Poulett. "The Political Economists", *Quarterly Review,* Vol. 44, 1831, pg. 51.

The development of environmentalism in response to this depletion of resources while oftentimes well-intended is nonetheless modeled and informed by the very oppressive regime that induced the reaction for environmentalism in the first place. Paul Nadasdy addresses this in his essay, *"Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism"*. He writes:

> "The spectrum of environmentalism—in all its various incarnations—is clearly modeled on the ''political spectrum,'' that widely accepted notion that the range of possible political positions exists on a continuum from right to left, from reaction to radicalism."[81]

This same political spectrum and power that Nadasdy speaks of in relation to environmentalism also informs the over-arching relationship that has developed between governments and the land in Settler society; in the ladder relationship this power has been shaped to accommodate the capitalist ideal. Thus, the land is something to be laboured and worked in order to provide sustenance and profit for the people. This relationship was originally fostered through agricultural, but has developed over the years to represent large and exploitive industry. Sacred obligation has no place in this relationship; this would contradict the capitalist ends that the Canadian government depends on to manoeuvre its political power globally. It would be unrealistic to expect the Canadian government and private corporations to suddenly become conscious of the spiritual obligations it has to the land for this would mean forfeiting their entire value system.

Yet Canada expects indigenous peoples to forfeit our own value systems in the name of advancement and economic opportunism. This is seen as a significant measure to solving the seemingly unending 'Indian Problem' in Canada – another attempt at

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[81] Paul Nadasdy. "Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism" *Ethnohistory*: Vol. 52:2. Spring 2005. pg. 6

assimilation. Inviting industry into communities would have at least two desired effects. Firstly, it would encourage increased cash flow into the community and therefore raise the standard of living. Secondly, it would require an adoption rather than a partial adaptation to Canada's current and long-lasting value system – one that is exclusionary of sacred interrelationships to the land. This view of the land by Canada necessitates the presupposition that indigenous nations have not yet become civilized enough to participate fully in Canada's economy.

Pat Maloney describes this superior heir that colonizing nations possess through an examination of James Ramsey McCulloch, another 19th Century political economist. Maloney writes, "For political economists like McCulloch, the poverty and precariousness of savage life derived from the fact that savage nations did not transform, through their labour, the resources available to them into goods of (exchangeable) value."[82] Thus poverty was equated with the apparent un-industrialization of the land. Property rights and industry was and continues to be a solution to the 'uncivilized' philosophies possessed by indigenous peoples and their relationship to the land. This is not simply a matter of ignorance on Settler society's part – i.e. a failure to recognize the deeper interrelationships to creation. It is a refusal to accept an alternate worldview, as it would disrupt the 'progress' of the colonizer.

It is not as if the Canadian government is merely incapable of conceptualizing how Anishnaabeg or other indigenous nations view the world. For if this were true, why then the continued and unrelenting attempts to assimilate us into Settler society if not to rid us of our impeding sacred obligations? To 'civilize' and to 'assimilate' could almost

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[82] Moloney, Pat. "Colonisation, Civilisation and Cultivation: Early Victorian Theories of Property Rights and Sovereignty." Land and Freedom. Eds. A.R. Buck, John McLaren and Nancy E. Wright. VT: Ashgate Publishing Company. 2001, pg. 25

be used interchangeably in Canada's relationship with indigenous nations. In other words, continued attempts to pacify an ugly past are reinforced through a 'father knows best' approach.

Maloney continues to examine the relationship between colonization, religion and thus property rights:

> "...It was a grand theory of progress that was readily compatible with Christian religious beliefs. The colonisation schemes of this period were understood to be the most recent expression of a divinely ordained pattern of human dispersion over the globe and the perfection of nature's endowment through human labour...Savage nations who had hitherto failed to cultivate their portion of the earth's garden and raise themselves up the ladder of civility, were to be the (most often unhappy) beneficiaries of this expansion."[83]

So what we have inherited from the Settler's history and development on Turtle Island is an expectation to rise to the capitalist occasion, and civilize ourselves by rejecting our own value systems. Perhaps to the dismay of the Settler government, we are unable to reject our *Bimaadiziwin* as Anishnaabeg, because it is eternal. For even if we reject our responsibility to Sacred Law, this does not extinguish it. Fred Kelly speaks to this further: "If we go back, if we understand Sacred Law, Sacred Law in our language, in Nishnaabe language comes from the word "*Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige*". "*Kaagoogiiwe*" - anything "*kaagoogiiwe*" is eternal. To us, anything that is eternal is sacred. So therefore it is Sacred Law."[84]

IV. BREATHING LIFE BACK INTO OUR *BIMAADIZIWIN*

It is enough to know that our *Bimaadiziwin* is everlasting? Practical application of it is a continual process given the political constraints our communities are under. It is necessary to decease and eventually eliminate our financial and thus economic

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[83] ibid., pg. 37
[84] Op. cit. Kelly, *Personal Interview,* pg. 7.

dependence on the Canadian government. It is not as though having an economy is bad or "un-indigenous" – being able to support oneself and family is absolutely necessary. However, if we concede to Settler standards of what constitutes a healthy economy then ultimately we are rejecting the role of Sacred Law. As discussed in the previous section, the land becomes victim to capitalism and industry in the name of progress. If this is regarded as what a profitable economy is defined by, then the value system of Anishnaabe laws and principles will forcibly be subsumed. This is a critical time for Anishnaabeg and all indigenous nations in Canada as economic development and decreasing the amount of poverty in our communities have become high on the Indian agenda. And why should this not be a goal? Of course decreasing poverty and encouraging entrepreneurship amongst the people are integral to governance – this is a part of sustainability. However, if we know that our way of life as Anishnaabeg is defined by the many levels of interrelationships with one another and all of creation, then we must be cautious of Settler solutions to poverty. Our relationships will undeniably become stunted through a foreign set of values. As shown in the previous section, the relationship an individual has to the land in Settler society is based upon the ability to labour or work the land. Thus the relationship that individuals develop further to profit is through the need for industry.

This would mean that our roles as individuals with nationhood would become defined by the ability to make profit and contribute to the larger society through money. Immediately, our obligations to family, clan and community are pushed aside in order to make room for this dominant relationship.

Fred Kelly writes:

> "In effect, a traditional constitution cannot be abandoned. For the Anishinaabe, it is the supreme law. It is Sacred Law that comes from the Creator and in which is domiciled the very nature of culture, the spiritual identity as a nation with a traditional government and inherent authority – or jurisdiction, if you will. It is for the Anishinaabe the only source of legitimacy for a governance regime that is capable of addressing modern issues, in my view."[85]

I believe our "spiritual identity as a nation" to be very telling in terms of our approach to governance. It is this foundation that affirms the relationships we are to maintain and renew. Because the spiritual realm is not stagnant and dependent solely on physical circumstances, we possess the ability as Anishnaabeg to regenerate or core value system.

However, if we place our core value system at the peripheral in terms of governance, then our constitution becomes exactly what Canada intended – a cultural activity. We become assimilated peoples or communities in Settler society with a special collective or group right to be different when it comes to cultural practice. Participating in the broader cultural mosaic of Canada through the guise of multiculturalism is the next big step we can make for the purposes of assimilation.

So once again we arrive at the notion of notion of *ogimaakan.* That is, having the type of leadership that embodies roles and responsibilities rather than merely referring to them as a point of difference from Settler society or a bargaining chip for the acquisition of special rights. Gitigaa-Migize speaks of an Anishnaabe concept that describes this type of leader: "…There is also another word for '*gimaa*', which is '*eniigaanzid*'. '*Eniigaanzid*' to me means 'the one to go first'. And it also implies, 'the first to face the future', 'the first to face danger', and also 'the one that should be acting as protector'."[86]

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[85] Op. cit. Kelly, "Anishnaabe Leadership", pg. 8.
[86] Op. cit. Williams, D., pg. 18

The need for *eniigaanzid* is primary considering our governance systems are becoming legislated more and more into categories of cultural distinction. Our leadership needs to not only react to Settler government's attempts at assimilation or other unjust actions through playing the same political game. *Ogimaa* or *eniigaanzid* fight foreign political encroachment by engaging the values of our own constitution and fulfilling the roles and responsibilities to the relationships set out in this constitution. Putting our governance systems on hold until we are able to reach a state of economic advantage will not work; for this is conceding that our constitution is not strong enough to outlast poverty. This is where *ogimaa* and *eniigaanzid* face a great challenge – ensuring that Sacred Law is not forgotten in the pursuit of economic wealth.

V. CONCLUSION

Encompassed within the concept of *eniigaanzid* is foresight. Gitigaa-Migize explains this concept of foresight in terms of decision-making powers of the community or nation. He says, "*Gchi-Naakoonigewin* means 'the big decision'. *Naakoonige* means 'to make a decision for the future'. That's what that means. And they used that for a long time, to describe an important meeting with important people. And a decision is made - for the people."[87] Industry and profit are regarded for their immediate solution to disparity in communities. While they may provide financial security into the short-term future, land and resources are usually of little significance in the role of 'big decision-making' – other than its ability to produce wealth.

Investing into the economic future of our communities may also mean validating the Settler government's perception of indigenous people as "uncivilized"; we will continue to be regarded in this way until we become fully participating members in the

[87] Loc. cit.

Settler economy. A rejection of our ways is in practical terms a step towards assimilation; in a philosophical regard, it is an exercise in civility. To accept this patronizing view of ourselves legitimizes the "uncivilized" perception of indigenous philosophies. Fully participating in the Settler's value system confirms that indigenous forms of governance are obsolete and not equipped to handle the challenges of modern-day political life. This is not only wholly untrue, but a violation of our own constitution as Anishnaabe and the Sacred Law that informs it. While it may be easier to accept the Settler's solution in lieu of less responsibility amongst governing relationships, it also results in us granting that not only are we uncivilized, but we are incapable of confronting the colonial mindset.

CHAPTER SIX –

CONCLUSION

"*Aabawaadiziiwin* means 'the togetherness'. But it is not a sterile definition; it is a definition that is connected by relationships..."[88]

The responsibility to one's self is principal in the development and the continuation of Anishnaabe governance systems. This is not to say that at its core, Anishnaabe governance is founded upon individualism. Rather, the objective in one's own growth (spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally) is to contribute to larger collectives and thus be accountable to them. The scope of one's individual entitlements then, is also dependent on groups (i.e. family/clan, community and/or nation). This ensured that relational accountability was upheld in one's individual actions. The notion of 'deserving' universal individual rights by virtue of existing cannot be manifested without the consideration of how the collective will be affected.

Once an individual has begun to fulfill his/her roles and responsibilities to him/herself, and then the family and clan system become the next level that an individual affects specific contributions. A nuclear family system will not sufficiently uphold the parameters of Anishnaabe governance, as the extent of roles would be stunted and thereby lessen the effectiveness of familial participation in the governance of a community. This too is echoed in the clan system as each clan possesses specific roles and gifts that maintain the cohesion of a community. The intention of the family and clan systems is to account for all possible aspects of community governance, yet be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions within the community.

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[88] Op. cit., Kelly, *Personal Interview*, pg. 1.

The community, being built upon families and clans comprised of individuals with specific gifts/positions, is the level at which value systems and philosophies are expressed through designations and general care of the people. Relational accountability is crucial in this context, as individuals are given special (official or unofficial) positions within the community and thus affect the overall governance of the people. Just as in the family and clan system, these designations are never permanent, but intended to be temporary to ensure the adaptability of shifting desires, changing politics, etc. People holding specific positions are regarded by the community in terms of *Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan* and how these are upheld in the interactions we carry with each other and parts of Creation.

The teachings, stories, philosophies, ceremonies, language were gifted to the Anishnaabe nation from *Gzhe-Mnidoo* (the Creator, the Great Spirit) and thus our *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* is represented in the level of Nation. This informs how we relate to the land, how the governance of a community is expressed, how the roles of the family and clan systems are decided and how the individual grows and thus contributes to collectives through *Bimaadiziwin*.

Revitalizing our *Bimaadiziwin* not only results in the rejection of colonial oppression, but more importantly, it allows us to represent our governance systems and ourselves in accordance with Sacred Law. It is necessary to identify *how* Settler government attempts to assimilate us through legislation and various rights discourse, as this is how we have always been represented in the colonial sphere. Recognizing this however, does not thereby necessitate that we construct political avenues in which we can be better represented within this mentality. Although as Avigail Eisenberg points out in

her book Reconstructing Political Pluralism, aggregative political power is better gained in a group dynamic so as to appeal on a larger and more forceful scale to the particular biases of institutions.[89] This type of political power is not dependent on the many interrelationships that have been discussed throughout this thesis. It is however, dependent on the recognition of Settler government's value system which is based on individualistic ideals. In order to truly engage with this type of government, we must accept that our *Bimaadiziwin* is secondary, as it would contradict the very instruments of liberalism.

If our commitment is to renew and further, maintain the many interrelationships which are the basis for our governance systems, then investing in the Settler solution to the classic 'Indian Problem' must be rejected. Without this commitment we become fragmented, as do our teachings and philosophies. Our *Bimaadiziwin* as Anishnaabeg is imbedded within the concept of *Aabawaadiziiwin,* meaning that as long the people are here to renew the relationships, our way of life continues to exist. Shirley Williams remarked in my interview with her that she strongly believes our ways are coming back again because our families are becoming strong once again.[90] Focussing on the strengthening of our family and clan systems is critical in regenerating our governance systems. Currently, our clan systems exist outside of the realm of politics as it pertains to the community and is perceived as being practiced in the peripheral. There is no doubt that individuals continue to affect the community, but clan system is continually being pushed out in favour of Indian Act band systems which proclaim to be equipped with the

[89] Op. cit., Eisenberg, pg. 59.
[90] Op. cit., Shirley Williams, pg. 17.

tools to manage the people yet only take us further away from the intended roles and contributions of the clan system.

While it may appear that the Settler government is trying to appease the differences indigenous peoples have from the rest of Settler society through the allocation of 'special group rights', individualism will continue to be the most coveted feature of society so long as industry and ownership are regarded with the utmost importance. Assimilation is not without the principle to 'civilize', and it is our responsibility as Anishnaabeg to reject this classification of our *Bimaadiziwin* and redirect our energy to Sacred Law.

The relationships that stem from *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* are formed to create reciprocated accountability on all levels. They are fluid in their existence as they pertain to governance and thus are never obsolete or irrelevant given the shifting political landscape around us. These relationships can only truly be realized within the intent of Sacred Law. Based upon the need for interrelationships, the contributions that an individual makes to the larger group is not measured solely on the estimation of one's self. Rather, the extent by which he/she affects collectives determines how he/she is regarded as an individual. 'Collectives' is not only defined in terms of groups of people, but in relation to the animal world, the spirit world, the sky world, etc. Thus, the individual is intimately connected to many levels of relationships in his/her growth.

In this same regard, collectives can only flourish insofar as the individuals which comprise them are willing to contribute and fulfill their duties and obligations. This interdependency reinforces the notion of accountability and ensures that the intent of *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* is realized.

As discussed previously, '*Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige'* translates to 'the eternal decision'. As Fred Kelly was previously quoted as saying, anything eternal is considered to be sacred. Our purpose in governance comes originally from a spiritual place and is everlasting in this way. Reconnecting to this spiritual place is integral in reawakening our *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige.* It is not only a question of ceremonial practice, but recognizing the innate spiritual fluidity that connects us to our responsibilities in terms of Anishnaabe governance systems. Thus it is not a matter of our ways becoming obsolete or irrelevant nor does it concern the ability of Settler government to eradicate it, as its very design is eternal and spiritual. It is the responsibility of us as Anishnaabeg however, to embrace *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* and fulfil our duties and obligations to these principles. It is by no mistake that our way of life is rooted in values and within the composition of nature. Values by definition can carry through time, albeit expressed differently given certain circumstances. Yet the very nature of our value systems are designed with the intent to remain relevant over time. Thus it becomes the responsibility of Anishnaabeg to revitalize these relationships based on the values that our *Bimaadiziwin* represents.

Anishnaabe Gchi-Twaawendamowinan is expressed in these seven principles or laws: are *Nbwaakaawin* (Wisdom), *Zaagidewin* (Love), *Mnaadendiwin* (Respect), *Aakde'win* (Bravery), *Gwekwaadsiwin* (Honesty), *Dbadendizwin* (Humility) and *Debwewin* (Truth). This is how we are told to approach the many interrelationships that we develop with one another and all of creation. These laws are perhaps even more relevant now then they ever have been considering the continued attempts to assimilate indigenous peoples into Settler society. As we continue to uphold these principles in all

that we do, *Kaagoogiiwe-Enaakoonige* will inevitably anchor itself in our systems of governance once again as it has always been.

Given the current state of the political relationship Settler government enforces and will undoubtedly continue to maintain into the future, it is imperative that our dependence not be on the colonial regime for recognition of our governance systems, but rather on the values that govern our relationships which are represented in our many ceremonies, stories, philosophies and language. It is not a question of living in the past or divorcing ourselves from the social and political realities of our communities. In order to move our communities into the future, we must honour and put into practice the sacred teachings that have guided our very existence as Anishnaabeg. As Fred Kelly wrote:

> It is Sacred Law that comes from the Creator and in which is domiciled the very nature of culture, the spiritual identity as a nation with a traditional government and inherent authority – or jurisdiction, if you will. It is for the Anishinaabe the only source of legitimacy for a governance regime that is capable of addressing modern issues, in my view."[91]

Thus, the relationships that sustain our governance systems must be once again renewed. The roles and responsibilities found within the family and clan system are currently not involved in the political governance of communities to their full potential. If we are to create and maintain stronger communities and ultimately a strong nation, the relationships that comprise these collectives must be once again given the official recognition that they were intended.

Disconnecting these interrelationships results in the fragmentation of our Sacred Law. They cannot exist independent of one another for separate purposes, but must be re-instituted into our governance systems in order to reaffirm our notions of

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[91] Op. cit. Kelly, "Anishnaabe Leadership", pg. 8.

accountability. Re-establishing the sacred relationship to the land is also encompassed within this idea, as many of our ceremonies are based upon the land's natural cycles. This is not merely an avenue to governance, it also the responsibility we carry to our ancestors and all of creation. The teachings and ceremonies have not left us; we have chosen to leave them in a peripheral existence. It is our responsibility to reawaken these interrelationships and their continued relevance in order to realize the sacred gift of *Bimaadiziwin.*

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