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**Indigenous Identity at the Poospatuck Reservation: Implications for
Culturally Grounded Social Work Practice and Policy**

A Dissertation Presented

by

Catherine A. Carballeira

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Social Welfare

Stony Brook University

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Abstract of the Dissertation

**Indigenous Identity on the Poospatuck Reservation:
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This dissertation is an exploratory, qualitative study of Indigenous perspectives on cultural identity. There is sparse empirical evidence of working effectively with Indigenous People, especially as an “outsider.” The study uses mostly in-depth structured interviews and purposive sampling techniques with blood right members of the Unkechaug Nation at the Poospatuck Reservation. The purpose of the study is to develop important guidance to provide a culturally grounded, relevant and sensitive practice model for educators, social workers and other health professionals who work with members of the Unkechaug Nation. This study is proactive, seeking to understand the ways culturally identified Indigenous People experience and resist the institutional and interpersonal undermining of their culture. It focuses on those individuals who have been able to maintain a strong, Indigenous identity despite the efforts of the dominant society to assimilate them. The study utilizes post-colonial and social constructionist analyses of the data from 15 interviews. It also has an Action research component in that it bolsters the current cultural, language and ethnic renewal program on the Reservation.

Results of this study indicate that working with Indigenous People on the Poospatuck Reservation is a political act. It is incumbent on social workers, educators and health care professionals to respect and honor their history, customs, beliefs, worldviews and spiritual traditions. “Outsiders” such as social workers, educators and other health professionals, need to recognize that they can be most helpful in working with the members of the Unkechaug Nation as “allied Others,” in their struggle for what the members of the Reservation identify as most significant to them: maintaining their sovereignty, reclamation of lands, and ethical treatment of their children. These efforts need to be addressed “from the wigwam out,” meaning from the standpoint and permission of the Tribe.

For Tehya, Ashton, Jared, CJ, Christiana
and the children of the
Unkechaug Nation –
May all your dreams come true!

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I: Introduction:

Then I grew older and began to read about adventures in which I didn't know that I was supposed to be on the side of those savages who were encountered by the good white man. I instinctively took sides with the white people. They were fine! They were excellent. They were intelligent. The others were not . . . they were stupid and ugly. That was the way I was introduced to the danger of not having your own stories. There is that great proverb—that until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. That did not come to me until much later. Once I realized that, I had to be a writer. I had to be that historian. It's not one man's job. It's not one person's job. But it is something we have to do, so that the story of the hunt will also reflect the agony, the travail - - the bravery, even, of the lions. (Achebe, 1994, p. 2)

1. The context of the struggle of Indigenous Peoples on Long Island

After months of detailing the contest of the Shinnecock Nation, an ancient Algonquian People on Long Island to receive federal recognition, the *New York Times* published this editorial entitled “The Shinnecoaks Recognized:”

More than 200 years late - - 31 if you count from the tribe’s petition - - the federal government has acknowledged that the Shinnecoaks of Southampton, Long Island, are an Indian tribe. Settling that question raises new ones. The Shinnecoaks will almost certainly try to build a casino - - they have been lobbying as hard for one as they have for recognition -but how big, and where?

The “where” is an especially interesting question. Casinos are usually built on reservation land. The Shinnecoaks live on the East End of Long Island, a national repository of wealth, privilege and privacy. When the tribe jumped the gun a few years back and bulldozed part of its property for a bingo hall, the not-in-my-backyard opposition erupting from the dunes and privet hedges was ferocious. And that was just a skirmish....Casinos are also a magnet for tainted money and a handmaiden to addiction, crime and other social ills. That is why we would urge the tribe to spend its energy on finding other ways to leverage its valuable real estate.

The Shinnecoaks have a long, proud history of self- governance, and advantages that poorer, more remote tribes can only dream of: geography, bargaining power and the support of state officials including Gov. David Paterson, who endorsed their quest for recognition. The good news on recognition would be even better if the tribe could foresee a future apart from slots and dice (2010, January 2).

This editorial from an elite voice of the dominant culture reveals the rationale behind the paper’s interest in the Shinnecock Nation’s struggle for recognition. It echoes some of the main dynamics in the relationship between Long Island’s Indigenous People¹

1. The term “Indigenous People” is the preferred way that current Indigenous scholars, social workers and activists declare that they wish to be called (Brave Heart, Weaver, Yellow Bird). In line with the NASW’s (2001) *Standards for cultural competence in social work practice*, this study respectfully adopts this terminology.

and Europeans since first contact. The editors display the underlying structures of class conflict as they attempt to reassert dominance over the Shinnecock Nation's land and sovereign rights. This editorial is a not-so-veiled attempt to reinforce and strengthen the reins of colonialism. The "skirmish among the dunes and the privets" is an implicit threat as to what might transpire if the Nation dares to move forward with a casino.

Instead of this being a time of rejoicing, healing and coming together, these remarks underscore how Indigenous Peoples on Long Island are perceived as "Other," threat, even potential pariah. These thoughts and attributions are certainly not consonant with what the Shinnecock chairman, Randy King, had hoped for: "This recognition comes after years of anguish and frustration for many members of our Nation, living and deceased...Perhaps this recognition will help some of our neighbors better understand us and foster a new, mutual respect" (*New York Times*, 2009, December 15).

Sadly, the tribal chairman's expectations for understanding, acceptance and mutual respect continue to be unmet by the dominant culture. In fact, both Indigenous Peoples and "their neighbors" appear to be operating in parallel universes. The Shinnecock chairman, hoping for some appreciation and recognition of their tragic, "anguish" ridden history that they and their ancestors have endured, is met with an unchanged perspective and fixed standpoint. The dominant culture continues to regard them as dangerous and not to be trusted. Thus, this perception continues the tradition of colonial oppression since contact.

These perceptions and dynamics of the colonized as "evil" and "without values" reflect the Manichean dualism of colonialism Fanon (1963) uncovered in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

Challenging the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of viewpoints. It is not a discourse on the universal, but the impassioned claim by the colonized that their world is fundamentally different. The colonial world is a Manichaeian world. The colonist is not content with physically limiting the space, i.e., with the help of the agents of law and order. As if to illustrate the totalitarian nature of colonial exploitation, the colonist turns the colonized into a kind of quintessence of evil...The native is declared impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of values but also the negation of values. In other words, absolute evil. A corrosive element, destroying everything within his reach, a corrupting element, distorting everything which involves aesthetics or morals, an agent of malevolent powers, an unconscious and incurable instrument of blind forces (p. 6).

Fanon's analysis of the colonist's manifestation of power by projecting evil powers onto the colonized aptly describes the dynamics in this editorial.

These assertions of power and territoriality are wielded against another Indigenous People, the Unkechaug Nation, located on the Poospatuck Reservation in Mastic, New York. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and under the threat of terrorist attacks, the Town of Brookhaven, New York, created a disaster plan for evacuation last winter to assure safety for its residents in the event of environmental catastrophe or terrorism. Like the Katrina disaster, this plan did not include protection for its most vulnerable population, in this case the residents of the Poospatuck Reservation. Surrounded by water on three sides, with two feeder rivers emptying into Moriches Bay, the Reservation's terrain eerily mimicked the geography of the New Orleans delta region. A category 1 hurricane, the least destructive of the violent storms, they were told, would wipe them out.

For the Unkechaug Nation residents of the Poospatuck Reservation, "the place where the waters meet," the news that they had not been included in the Town's *Disaster Preparedness Plan* came as no surprise. It served to highlight and reinforce the basic

distrust of outsiders that has been a constant in the history of the relationship with colonizers since contact. When faced with the everyday struggle of trying to determine what their families can eat for dinner, the remote possibility of a “category 1” storm or a terrorist attack is not all that pertinent to the Reservation’s residents’ diurnal struggle for survival.

A Reservation member, who lives on the Reservation recognized that in the Maslow hierarchy of needs, getting enough food, gaining access to enough heat to warm the house (often a structurally unsound mobile home), and clothes to keep her children warm, trumped the terrorism and disaster threats. So, she was not at all surprised when none of the residents showed for the emergency meeting called by the Chief and the Tribal Council. She attributed their lack of interest to poverty and oppression and the belief that nothing has changed since contact in this colonizer-colonist relationship.

This incident involving the town’s amnesia about the Reservation residents, as well as the reaction to the Tribal Council’s intervention plan, crystallize some of the more salient issues that arise in working with Indigenous Peoples. The first issue is to understand and to respect the historical realities that characterize the relationship of Indigenous People with the dominant, colonizing culture. The second is to develop an appreciation for the current daily economic, social and political struggles of survival that residents on the Reservation have endured. These concerns provide the backdrop for this study and beg the following questions: how can non-Indigenous social workers best fulfill the National Association of Social Workers (1996) *Code of Ethics* and (2001) *NASW Standards for cultural competence in social work practice* and mission of social justice to maximize successful interventions when working with Indigenous Peoples? Or,

to put it more succinctly, what does cultural competence with Indigenous communities look like and how is it enacted?

Hilary Weaver (1999), Professor of Social Welfare at SUNY Buffalo and a member of the Lakota Nation, insists that cultural competence is an ethical imperative, as well as a mandate, in working with Indigenous People. As Weaver points out, there is very little empirical documentation by outside helping professionals working with Indigenous communities, and her own work is as an “insider.” In order to serve Indigenous People judiciously and expediently, Weaver acknowledges that cultural competence should be used as a tool to “identify the most meaningful aspects of a client’s identity in a particular case and factoring that information into all aspects of the work” (p. 64). In other words, social workers must have a deep grasp of the self-concept and identity shared by the population with which they are working. Weaver describes how cultural attitudes and behaviors are strongly linked to identification with a particular culture. She stresses that “cultural identity is likely to be a significant part of self-concept for people from subjugated groups” (pp. 30-31). She narrates how the development of racial identity as something different from cultural identity “by that people of color overcome society’s negative images of themselves and develop an identity rooted in the sociopolitical experiences of their groups” (p. 32). To engage appropriately, social workers must have an in-depth understanding of their clients’ self-concept and identity.

Weaver (2001) delineates the complexity of identity issues for Indigenous People currently: “We fight among ourselves and often accuse each other of not being ‘Indian enough’ based on differences in politics, religion and phenotype...Traditionalists may believe that progressives are ‘less Indian’ because of cultural naiveté and that multi-

heritage people only claim tribal membership for land and annuity purposes.” (p. 250). If Indigenous People are struggling with these concepts, how can individuals who are not Indigenous expect to understand them?

2. Statement of the problem

Issuing from this debate over “Indianness” is a challenge to the academy by Garrouette (2003) that questions Western and academic “ways of knowing.” She turns to Indigenous philosophies and traditions to answer the questions “Who am I?” and “Who are my people”? “Radical Indigenism,” as coined by Garrouette “...illuminates differences in assumptions about knowledge that are at the root of the dominant culture’s misunderstanding and subordination of indigenous knowledge. It argues for the reassertion and rebuilding of traditional knowledge from its roots, its fundamental principles” (p. 101).

As such, Radical Indigenism opens up the debate around issues of Indigenous identity to include the voices of the people themselves as they explore identity-making processes from the wells of their knowledge. The debate, far from being a merely scholastic enterprise, has serious implications for Indigenous People, and by extension, for American culture in general: “...Indian people themselves have defined this (identity) as an important issue that affects the well-being (perhaps even the survival) of their communities. No one can truly understand the life of these communities without understanding issues related to identity” (p. 7).

Not only, then, are these issues of interest to academics, but they are linked to survival for Indigenous communities and wedded to the ability of Americans to

understand each other. It is imperative to listen to Indigenous voices to decode these cultural constructs.

3. The purpose of this study

Social workers need to explore perceptions of Indigenous identity to develop the cultural competence to allow for successful work relationships and interventions with Indigenous People. This study focuses on the perceptions of certain individuals of the Unkechaug Nation who are currently living on the Poospatuck Reservation concerning their strong Indigenous identity. It explores the ways the Unkechaug people identify themselves as Indigenous in the context of stigmatization and dismissal of their tribal and community identity by the dominant culture. It aims to gain insight into the ways issues of Indigenous identity can inform social workers as they seek to work with community members or the Nation as a whole. The study considers the implications of these effects for social welfare policy and practice.

The specific research questions to be addressed in this study are as follows:

- 1) What does it mean to members of the Unkechaug Nation living on the Poospatuck Reservation to be “blood right¹”?
- 2) How do they perceive the fact that they are who they are (however they define themselves) as perceived by “outsiders?” How can “outsiders” be helpful, given this identification?

1. “Blood right” membership in the Unkechaug Nation is determined by means of evidence of lineage from the mother or father, which might include family documents and affidavits from two tribal elders or more. This information would then be reviewed by the Tribal Council which would then make a decision (Strong, in press).

3) What do they see as the role of outside helping professionals, such as doctors, teachers and social workers?

This qualitative study, then, pursues an understanding of how certain blood right residents of the Unkechaug Nation perceive their relationship with the dominant culture and how they interact with “outsiders.” This qualitative methodology is used to explore the development of critical consciousness to enable people to talk about their objective reality and situate it within their shared experience. The study focuses on the development of culturally relevant and grounded ways for helping professionals to practice and formulate policies to support the Indigenous People living on the Poospatuck Reservation.

4. Justification for this study

The justification for this study is threefold. First, this study aims to broaden the knowledge base necessary for cultural competence in working with Indigenous communities. This project will highlight the development of culturally relevant, grounded social work practice. It should help to address the lack of information available in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous social work community for effective practice.

Second, this study seeks to understand ways that indigenous identity affect how social workers may practice in this particular Indigenous community if they are dedicated to cultural competence. How can effective practice methods be formulated that respect and honor Indigenous traditions? This study will honor the impact of the toll of what Weaver (1999) refers to as “the atrocities of the

Indigenous holocaust,” - - namely the ways that the dominant society has oppressed and marginalized Indigenous People through colonization” (p. 31).

Third, the study delineates the implications these complex identities have on culturally relevant and grounded helping practices and formulates policy and practice initiatives with the Nation that reflect this new knowledge.

And finally, this study explores the challenges of working with Indigenous communities as an outsider.

To fulfill the social work mission of social justice, there is a need to look aggressively at new ways and methods to accomplish these ends. Little is known about working with Indigenous communities as an outsider because it is hard to gain access on multiple levels. In addition, the differences and intensity of health and mental health disparities are pressing and egregious. For example, Parillo (2000) states that suicide is twice as frequent among Indigenous youth (26.3 per 100,000 as opposed to 12.4 per 100,000 among the general population); death from alcohol abuse is five times the national average (p. 245), and on this particular Reservation, the incidence of Type II diabetes and heart conditions is staggering. These realities illustrate that there is a potential for social work intervention that can be productive, empowering and life affirming.

II. Review of the relevant literature

1. Working collaboratively with Indigenous People

When writing about Indigenous People, scholars characteristically describe the dynamics of their relationship with the dominant culture, meaning the purveyors and gatekeepers of access to social, economic and political power, as one of colonialism, oppression, subjugation and domination. Iris Marion Young (1990) provides definitions that make it possible to enter into political discourse from a mutually agreed upon viewpoint. Young asserts, that oppression “refers to structural phenomena that immobilize or diminish a group” (p. 4). She offers by way of explanation five particular “faces” that oppression takes on, including exploitation, that she argues Marxists define too rigidly and exclusively as class conflict. She sees it as a transfer of power in that some become expanded while others are diminished. Marginalization is another form that oppression takes, according to Young, in which racially marked groups are “expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination” (p. 53). She sees this as the most dangerous form oppression takes because of the extreme injustice it causes. She describes the third face as that of powerlessness experienced by “those who lack authority or power even in the mediated sense, those over whom power is exercised without exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them” (p. 56).

As opposed to these forms of oppression that reflect the social division of labor, Young (1990) argues that cultural imperialism is a form of oppression where the dominant culture decides that their norms are the only allowable ones, and determines all else to be “other.” The last type of oppression is violence that is systematically directed at

particular groups by virtue of the fact that they are members of that group. It has the potential to transmit to others of that group their particular vulnerability merely by virtue of membership in the target group. Indigenous People, by virtue of their history, experience all of the facets of oppression that Young describes.

Friere (1994) offers a more compact definition of oppression in his prodigious book, *The Pedagogy of the oppressed*: “Any situation in which ‘A’ objectively exploits ‘B’ or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression” (p. 37).

In *The wretched of the earth*, Fanon (1963) graphically delineates these dynamics of oppression as one of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized:

The relationship between colonist and colonized is one of physical mass. Against the greater number, the colonist pits his force. His safety concerns lead him to remind the colonized out loud: “Here I am the master.” The colonist keeps the colonized in a state of rage, which he prevents from boiling over. The colonized are caught in the tightly knit web of colonialism. (p. 17).

These definitions will be useful to keep in mind while discussing Indigenous issues. Fanon’s understanding of the colonizer-colonized dynamics provides an ideological underpinning for this study as well.

2. Identity theory and social identity theory

George Herbert Mead is recognized as the theoretician/architect of identity theory in his formula of “society shapes self shapes social behavior” (as quoted in Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 284). Mead’s insistence on the social arena as the *locus operandi* where meaning is created, made for an epistemological paradigm shift in that the attention of

theoreticians was turned away from the individual and focused on society. As Mead demonstrates:

Social psychology has as a rule dealt with various phases of social experience from the psychological standpoint of individual experience. The point of approach which I wish to suggest is that of dealing with experience from the standpoint of society, at least from the standpoint of communication as essential to the social order. Social psychology, in this view, presupposes an approach to experience from the standpoint of the individual, but undertakes to determine in particular that which belongs to this experience because the individual himself belongs to a social structure, a social order (in Stryker and Burke 2000, p. 285).

Perceptions about the self are then seen to emerge out of socially-based interpersonal interaction, and are dependent on this social interaction for their meaning. One such meaning is identity that refers to those parts of the self that Mead described as carrying meanings that persons applied to the multiple roles that they play in society (Mead in Stryker and Burke, 2000).

Later researchers built on Mead's formulation and analyzed how these concepts of "society" and "self" could be researchable and categorized through application to empirical research. First formulated as a distinct theory in 1966 at the American Sociological Association by Stryker, identity theory has branched out in two directions, that continue to follow the road heralded by Mead and structural symbolic interactionism. The first seeks to understand how social structures affect the structure of the self, and how structure of the self affects social behavior.

Another trend looks to the internalizing mechanisms of cognitive self-processes and analyzes how they affect social behavior. Each group emphasizes a different aspect of Mead's initial formulation, although the first privileges external social structures, while the latter focuses on internal dynamics (Stryker and Burke, 2000).

Current researchers also borrow from James's perception that individuals have as many "selves" as they have groups to which these selves are attached through group interaction (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Contemporary social psychologists (Stryker, Burke, 2000, e.g.) then theorize that identities are created through interaction with networks of relationships, so that a self has as many "identities" as they have networks in which they play out different positions and roles. Identities are thus seen as "self meanings" that are formed in the context of the meanings of roles, and behaviors are also seen as carrying meaning. Each social role that a person plays out carries with it different role expectations within this network of relations, and the identities are the internalization of these expectations. There exists an identity salience hierarchy that a person establishes through role choices. These choices reflect the salience of one identity over another and thus affect the behaviors persons perform that are then based on the expectations inherent in the identity they privilege.

The concept of role commitment further delineates the process of how individuals live out their identity in communities (Stryker and Burke, 2000). How much individuals are committed to a particular role relationship determines the salience of this identity for them. Stryker and Burke tease out this relationship by refining Mead's initial relationship to state that "commitment shapes identity salience shapes role choice behavior" (p. 286).

While identity theory is concerned with role-based identities, social identity theory describes the dynamics inherent in identification with social categories or groups. To be sure, the difference between these theories has been questioned as one of emphasis rather than kind, and can be combined to form a general theory of the self (Stets and Burke, 2000). Despite the desire to create a dialectical synthesis of the two theories, it

appears that psychological social psychologists and sociological social psychologists have entered into what Hogg and Ridgeway (2003) call “intergroup competition” (p. 97). The further psychologists stray from the path led by American pragmatists Mead, James and Cooley in exploring and explaining at the social, rather than at the individual level, the more lip service they give to the idea of bridging the gap between identity theory and social identity theory.

Tajfel (1979) (and further delineated in his work with Turner, 1985) initially conceived of social identity theory while researching how discrimination is constructed. Social identity theory studies how a person’s identity is formed through belonging to a social category or group. A person compares him or herself to other members of the in- and out- group respectively. Through a process of self-categorization, a person forms an awareness of social identity through social comparisons; and through the search for distinctiveness derive their identity from this group membership (Stets and Burke, 2000; Stryker and Burke, 2000). The dynamics of attaining identity through social categorization and social comparison have different ends. Categorization allows for an “accentuation” of the ways that the self is similar to the in-group, while comparison “accentuates” the way the self is different from the out-group. Comparison leads to self-enhancing results for the self, such as higher self-esteem when the in-group is seen positively and the out-group negatively (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 284). For social identity theory, the social structures that are utilized to create identity are external to the self; they are seen to “precede individuals” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 285).

Stereotyping is a significant issue that emanates from this framework. Termed depersonalization, this process sees “...the self as an embodiment of the in-group

prototype (a cognitive representation of the social category containing the meanings and norms that the person associated with the social category rather than as a unique individual) and also seeing the other as an embodiment of the out-group prototype” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 231).

This process is key to understand social processes beyond stereotyping as well. Ethnocentrism, group cohesiveness and altruism develop out of seeing the self in light of the roles the identity takes on, as well as the meanings that are associated with those particular roles (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 231).

Further permutations on social identity theory lead theoreticians to focus on ethnic identity as a field of study. In White and Burke’s (1987) study of ethnic role identity in black and white college students, it is seen as reflecting “shared understandings” by members of a group. “We suggest that stereotypes and other perceived trait differences and social inventions of ethnic groups are the symbols and shared perceptions used as the basis of ethnic self-identity” (p. 311). The theorists see ethnic identity as the intersection of three related concepts - - identity salience, commitment to the role identity, and self-esteem or self-evaluation in the framework of one’s social network.

Identity, then, is a complex process created by the meanings people apply to their roles through interactions with networks of relationships. Social identity theory is the discovery of how identities are formed through belonging to a group, namely through self-categorization and comparison. Ethnic self- identity represents understandings that members of the group share.

3. Ethnic and cultural identity among Indigenous People

For Indigenous People, ethnic or cultural identity is defined ultimately as a lived experience as Lone Knapp (2000) demonstrates: “One can remain a Native person regardless of place of residence or significant genetic bloodline (I am speaking here of enrollment, where a person may be enrolled due to direct lineage, although different Nations may have blood quantum requirements). Ethnic/cultural identity, then, is defined as a norm of familial and community ties within a network of similar cultural values and societal behaviors” (p. 635).

Lone-Knapp (2000) thus identifies kinship ties as well as beliefs, ways of acting toward one another and particular shared values as the stitching that holds Indigenous society together, and by extension, the organic fabric from which identities are woven. When Lone Knapp interviewed members of the Haudennosanne Nation (Iroquois people), they referred to the out-group in making this determination: “Knowing that we are rare, that there is not a lot of us, but that we are a big part of America...I am not like everybody else” (p. 637). To maintain their traditional lifestyles and values, they made reference to how white society had encroached on their identity: “we are covered with that white man” (p. 637). In one anecdote, Lone Knapp (2000) demonstrates how the self-esteem and the pride they take in their ethnic identity is shown when she asks an interviewee why he has not identified himself as an Indigenous person. His surprised reply is that he thought she knew his identity, and that to announce it “would be like bragging” (p. 639).

In Hanson’s article (1997) “Ethnicity and the looking glass: The dialectics of national Indian identity,” he describes the process behind the construction of this

“bragging” identity as one of dialectics: “Ethnic identity is a dialectic process, that like a collective “looking glass self,” consists of an interplay between “self” and “other” or “we” and “they” where the components of identity are historical outcomes of reflexive stereotypes between two or more groups” (p. 195).

Hanson (1997) studied how the Society of American Indians, the first formally chartered Indigenous organization, sought to identify itself in spite of assimilationist policies. He found that they referred to their Indigenous identity as “an inner, individual thing- - somewhere between going ‘back to the blanket,’ and being completely engulfed in acculturative politics through education, loss of tribal ways and living through individualistic rather than communal lives and values” (p. 203). Hanson’s research demonstrates that “ethnic identity cannot act in a vacuum; distinctions or boundaries between ‘We’ and ‘They’ need to be drawn” (p. 201). Hanson noted that Sam Deloria and Oren Lyons (members of the Society of American Indians) had grasped this idea that when “Indians” cease to be discernible by cultural differences, they will not be allowed to exist as separate Nations (p. 204). To create “Indianness” and promote traditional cultural distinctions on a pan-ethnic level, the members of the National Society of Indians attempted to build a “national identity with distinctive cultural traits: Mother Earth, spirituality, love and respect for nature and the environment, and Plains Indian symbolism that had spread to Indians far beyond the geographic homeland to provide a viable and recognizable symbol of ‘Indianness’” (p. 204).

In a sense, what they created was a stereotypical ethnic reality, what Baudrillard (1994) would call “hyperreal, a simulacrum: It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does

it survive it” (p. 1). This “hyperreal” replaced the reality of Indigenous ethnic identity by distorting it to fit into a homogeneous, pan-ethnic universe, free from diversity, individuality and uniqueness. The stereotype of ethnic identity transcended the signs of that identity, “emancipating” the signs, and losing their value to be exchanged as meaning.

In “Indigenous identity: What it is and who *really* has it?” Hilary Weaver (2001) seeks to concretize what “Indianness,” cultural and ethnic identity is, as expressed in the “values, beliefs and worldviews of indigenous people” (p. 240). As a social work educator and university professor who works with Indigenous people, she is interested in the aspects of practice applications for this definition “for helping service providers understand their indigenous clients” (p. 205). Weaver (2004) points out that, since identity is a “combination of self-identification and the perception of others,” there was no “Indian” identity until contact. Indian identity became a socially constructed category that derived from the relationship imposed by, and serving the interests of, the dominant group.

The label “Indian” has served to reinforce the image of indigenous people as linked to a romantic past. “Indians” are the images in old photographs, movies and museum cases. It is a label for people who are fundamentally unknown and misrecognized by non-indigenous people. Indeed, an “Indian” is constituted in the act of naming. Those who are relatively powerless to represent themselves as complex human beings against the backdrop of degrading stereotypes become invisible and nameless (p. 243).

Weaver (2004) elaborates on the use of Indigenous stereotypes as mascots to further exemplify this process. The political aspect of power and control is key: “Identity is always based on power and exclusion. Someone must be excluded from a particular identity in order for it to be meaningful” (p. 244). Weaver and others (Nagel, 1997;

Garrouette, 2003; Hanson, 1997) see Indigenous ethnic identity as linked to ethnic renewal efforts such as the Red Power movement of the 1960's and 1970's. This came on the heels of the civil rights movement. It had its acme in the take over of Alcatraz and can be argued to have resulted in a tripling in endorsing of "Indian" in the Census statistics in 2000 (Nagel, 1997). As Weaver points out, individual cultural renewal and collective cultural renewal are intertwined:

Indigenous identity is connected to a sense of peoplehood inseparably linked to sacred traditions, traditional homelands and a shared history as indigenous people. A person must be integrated into a society, not simply stand alone as an individual in order to be fully human. Additionally, identity can only be confirmed by others who share that identity. The sense of membership in community is so integrally linked to a sense of identity that Native people often identify themselves by their reservations or tribal communities...Tribal members have an enduring sense of their own unique indigenous identity (pp. 245-246).

Weaver (2004) points out that non-natives have defined Indigenous identity, and asserts that this calls into question the idea of authenticity: "Can someone else decide who we are?...The way we define ourselves is often not the way that others define us" (p. 247). She sees that often Indigenous People are defined according to their level of acculturation: "Rather than determining where someone fits in a continuum between two cultural identities or worlds, it may be more accurate to say that indigenous people live in one complex, conflictual world" (p. 249). As Perloff (1997) points out:

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

Weaver (2004) points to the difficulties inherent in colonialist racism, where the most difficult element in working with Indigenous populations is struggling to deal with

others' stereotypes about them in the dominant society. She points to the internalization of colonialist oppression as the result of these stereotypes:

Indigenous identity is a complex and multifaceted topic...the perspective that comes across is a reflection of my own beliefs, sense of self and identity as a Lakota woman, living in a particular time and place....Sometimes we are our worst enemies....Actions and reactions born of internalized oppression and colonization are themselves acts of colonization that mirror the oppressors' acts (p. 252).

In the above quotation, Weaver makes concrete the nature of this oppression. As a Lakota woman, as well as a social work theorist, she highlights how the nature of Indigenous oppressed identity is a special situation, given that social identity in the case of Indians means owning a stigmatized identity and reappropriating it.

Given the difficulties in maintaining an Indigenous identity despite, or in spite of, centuries of colonialism, oppression, discrimination and racism, the question is not whether Indigenous identity is affirmed, but how the choice to "remain Indigenous" is made. This question is front and center in Lomawaima and McCarty's (2006) study, *To remain an Indian*. The authors quote the Meriam Report of 1928 as a watershed in this respect: "He who wishes to merge into the social and economic life of the prevailing civilization of this country should be given all practicable aid and advice in making the necessary adjustments. He who wants to remain an Indian and live according to his culture should be aided in doing so" (p. xxvii). Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) state that the choice to "remain an Indian" was seen as much of a factor of tribal sovereignty as the right to self-government, self-determination and self-education, including cultural expression in language and norms (p. 9).

As contemporary Karuk writer Julian Lang's treatise, *It's hard to be an Indian*, illustrates, Indigenous People daily confront "a wall twenty feet thick of misconception,"

that he asserts in itself has become a mantra on Reservations nationwide. It pays homage to "...the challenge of living right, of joyfully assuming the responsibilities and obligations of adult life as a Karuk, or Dakota or Arikara" (Lang in Lomawaima and McCarty, 2006, p. 27). Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) wax philosophically about this choice and its immense significance for Indigenous people: "We can see an Indigenous theory of intellect-It's up to you! It's hard, but it's worth it!-working to put sovereignty and ancient knowledge into practice" (p. 27).

This mantra, then, serves as a central metaphor for this study. This investigation into "Indianness" and Indigenous identity rests ultimately with the Indigenous People themselves. It questions how certain individuals with strong Indigenous identities on the Poospatuck Reservation experience their Indigenous personhood in a society that is hostile to them. How does this experience impact their life choices and decisions that they can and cannot make? What accounts for their resilience in the face of having to resist the continual attacks of colonialist domination, oppression and racism?

4. Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism serves as a heuristic tool for investigating and seeking to understand how individuals make sense of their reality. Meaning is created through interaction with others in a mutual process, in which people learn to make sense of the other, by fitting their actions to others. Herbert Blumer (1969), one of the codifiers of this methodology, describes its processes vividly:

This approach sees a human society as people engaged in living. Such living is a process of ongoing activity in which participants are developing lines of action in the multitudinous situations they encounter. They are caught up in a vast process of interaction in which they have to fit their developing actions to one another. This process of interaction consists in making indications to others of what to do and in interpreting the

indications as made by others. They live in worlds of objects and are guided in their orientation and action by the meaning of these objects. These objects, including objects of themselves, are formed, sustained, weakened and transformed in their interaction with one another (p. 21).

These “objects of themselves” to which Blumer refers are symbolic products, and as such they are social constructs and symbolic distortions, of which racism is one.

In *White Racism*, Joel Kovel (1984) focuses on the human apparatus by which we create meaning. Kovel describes “a set of beliefs whose structure arises from the deepest levels of our lives—from the fabric of assumptions that we make about the world, ourselves and others from the patterns of our fundamental social activities” (p. 3). It is in the interactions with others that these fantasies arising from our imagination are born. They are tested with repeated social interactions on a daily basis. In the case of Indigenous People, a half millennium of exchanges, opportunities and contacts have sharpened their sting. Kovel (1984) is explicit about the pernicious quality of racism: “Racism is perhaps the most glaring of this class of creatures of symbolic distortion: it is indeed a symbolic product, a set of fantasies but only insofar as the symbols and the fantasies of racism have been themselves generated by the history of race relations and sustained by the rest of an organically related culture” (p. 5).

Kovel is clear about the genesis of these symbolic distortions of racism and prejudice, and equally precise about how they are reinforced, transmitted and codified in culture. This discourse on racism, that is itself a product of post-modern critique, of semiotics and symbolic interactionism, lends a social constructivist lens to this discussion of race, ethnicity and tribal identity in this research study that is grounded in phenomenological inquiry and is exploratory in nature. As such, this study purports to understand the tacit as well as hidden belief system, values and assumptions at work in

the creation of meaning as objective or behavioral. It asks questions about what meaning is, how the personal life takes on meaning, how the meaning persists, is transformed and lost or regained (Stone and Farberman, 1970).

5. Freirian structured dialogics and collaborative, participatory research

Paulo Friere's (1994) system of liberation from colonialism (*The pedagogy of the oppressed*) has transformed not only educational praxis, but has been tailored to meet other programmatic needs as well, including health and social work fields. Friere's concept of "conscientizao" -- the process of recognizing social, political, and economic contradictions in order to take action against the oppressive elements of their reality-- provides a framework for understanding the effects of oppression and domination, wherein "the completely marginalized can be radically transformed" (p. 37). Friere warns that it is not only in having the correct orientation that allows this reality to change, but in utilizing appropriate methodology: "The climate of right thinking has nothing to do with pre-established formulae, yet it would be a negation of right thinking to imagine that it could flourish in an atmosphere of mere spontaneity. Without methodological rigor, there can be no right thinking" (p. 51). Friere meant that oppressed communities can be encouraged to change through proper motivation, compassion and empathy, as well as through a structured approach or structured dialogue.

As Minkler (2005) adopted this approach, she sees it as a process of dialogue whose goal is:

...praxis or the ongoing interaction between reflection and the actions that people take to promote individual and community change. In health education, social work and community organizing, there has been growing interest in the role of Freirian theory in health enhancement, with the goal of helping people collectively move beyond feelings of powerlessness and assume control over their lives (p. 221).

Minkler (2005) also stresses that empathy and compassion are essential ingredients in this methodological mix that Freire named the structured dialogue. The dialogue creates a consciousness of the bridge between behavior and action. A supportive group is then formed that listens actively at first, and then engages in dialogue. This facilitates critical thought and decision-making skills and action, the plane where change and transformation is possible (pp. 221-223). Friere (1994) expresses it movingly and poetically:

The pedagogy of the oppressed as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy has two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil their world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation. In both stages, it is always through action in depth that the culture of domination is culturally confronted (p. 73).

6. Unresolved historical trauma and grief

Any investigation or study involving Indigenous People must, by necessity, consider the history of the Indigenous Holocaust, and frame the narrative within an informed and judicious heuristic. As a result of this trauma of colonialism, according to Brave Heart and De Bruyn (1998), Indigenous People frequently carry a “trauma response” that entails the intergenerational transmission of disenfranchised grief across centuries. This renders a people incapable of expressing their unresolved grief over the atrocities their people have suffered. These traumas include loss of land, culture, identity, as well as the annihilation of entire populations and nations through genocide, accompanied by the underlying racism, oppression and relegation to second-class status. The authors cite Doka’s definition to describe this concept: “Disenfranchised grief is

grief that persons experience when a loss cannot be openly acknowledged or ‘publicly mourned’...In the United States, grief is legitimate only when it is for immediate kinship” (p. 66). Grief can only be expressed for a member of a nuclear family, not for extended kin, animal relatives or entire Nations or peoples.

As Brave Heart and De Bruyn (1998) point out, Indigenous People are victims of genocide “much like victims of the Jewish Holocaust,” and present with the same constellation of responses that Jewish survivors have experienced, including “survivor syndrome,” and “survivor’s child complex,” as well as the process of “transposition” - - living in the past and the present simultaneously (p. 66). Citing the Holocaust literature, particularly the work of Berger, Kestenberg, Niederland and Fogelman, the authors point out the many similarities in the responses of Jews and Indigenous People, including “the difficulty in mourning a mass grave, the dynamics of collective grief and the importance of community memorialization” (p. 63).

Particularly for Indigenous People, these issues are unique in that their Holocaust occurred on American soil and continues to be perpetrated by Americans. The history of the federal government’s relocation, Reservation, allotment, and boarding school initiatives attest to an internal genocide, or attempt at mass extinction of a targeted group. Brave Horse and De Bruyn (1998) also refer to Alice Kehoe’s statement that brings home the nefarious quality of the Indigenous Holocaust, namely that no “outsiders,” or non-Indigenous people came forward to offer them refuge or to claim the victims. There was no international consensus that these atrocities constituted genocide and should have been dealt with as the crimes against humanity. Kehoe’s vehemence brings it home: “Where was America for American Indians? No other country welcomed them as immigrants. No

other country promised them what their native land had denied them” (p. 65). Unlike the Armenian genocide, the Indigenous People have never gotten their land back. There were no Wounded Knee trials, no vindication for the lost Cherokee on the Trail of Tears.

Even more so, Indigenous People were blamed as victims, held responsible for the acts of violence perpetrated against them and pathologized as being “stoic” and having no affect, or outward feeling or emotion. As Brave Heart and De Bruyn (1998) describe the process: “We assert the historical view of Native Americans as being stoic and savage contributed to a dominant societal belief that American Indian people were incapable of having feelings. This conviction intimates that Native Americans had no capacity to mourn and subsequently no need or right to grieve” (p. 67).

In a similar response witnessed in Jewish Holocaust victims, sadness and anger that cannot be resolved lead to a natural progression or unraveling of shame:

When a society disfranchises the legitimacy of grief among any group, the resulting intrapsychic function that inhibits the experience and expression of the grief affects, that is sadness and anger, is shame. Subsequently there can be a lack of recognition of grief and inhibition of the mourning process. Grief covered by shame negatively impacts relationships with self and others and one’s realization of the sacredness within oneself and one’s community. Associated feelings are helplessness, powerlessness, feelings of inferiority and disorders in the identification of the self (Kaufman, as cited in Brave Heart and De Bruyn, 1998, 89)

7. Post traumatic slave syndrome

An alternate or additional paradigm that also proves useful in interpreting the rich, phenomenological data from the respondents on the Reservation is that of post traumatic slave syndrome. As a heuristic for encapsulating the heinous legacy of chattel slavery in the United States, Leary (2005) develops a matrix of characteristics that define the effects of the horrors and terrors of chattel slavery on generations of Africans and African

Americans (*Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*). Similar to the intergenerational transmission of grief outlined by Holocaust scholars and transformed by Brave Heart and De Bruyn (1998) to apply to Indigenous Peoples, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* offers a way to understand the behaviors, attitudes, values and belief systems that contemporary African Americans and Indigenous People have embraced in their struggle for survival for themselves and their families.

Despite the title of her book, Leary (2005) ultimately posits a hopeful and celebratory future for African Americans, and her work is fueled with a strengths-based approach that does not sugarcoat the horrors she illustrates in her historical treatment of chattel slavery. Like Brave Heart, De Bruyn and the Holocaust survival literature, Leary's focus is teleological, on healing wounds that were set in place centuries and generations ago by colonialist racism and the dehumanization of human bondage. Leary seeks to alleviate palliatively the evident scars with wisdom and compassion. She emphasizes the willpower, resilience and spiritual strength of African Americans and Indigenous People. Leary also refuses to pathologize or condemn her ancestors. Instead, she liberates them by elucidating this post traumatic slave syndrome historically from a place of empathy and care. She links the past to the present and the future of the children of the African Diaspora.

Like Brave Heart and De Bruyn, Leary (2005) is unequivocal that the perpetrators and beneficiaries of the crimes must confront the actions and their legacy and take responsibility for these crimes against humanity. They must also acknowledge that they have benefitted from them. She states:

Those who have been the victims of years, decades and centuries of oppression first must heal from injuries received first hand, as well as

those passed down through the ages. Those who have been the perpetrators of these unspeakable crimes, and those that continue to benefit from those crimes, have to honestly confront their deeds and heal from the psychic wounds that comes with being the cause and beneficiaries of such great pain and suffering (p. 97).

Leary (2005) focuses in on the ways that African Americans “have adapted their behaviors over centuries to survive the stifling effects of chattel slavery, effects that are evident today...*Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* examines those adaptations with an eye towards identifying today, those that limit us and those that make us stronger” (pp. 13-14). Leary’s (2005) intent is to create an awareness in the Freierian sense of *conscientizao*, in order to examine and understand how the history of slavery and oppression have colluded to create these adaptations in “thoughts, feelings and beliefs” which are maladaptive and destructive (p. 16).

Leary’s (2005) trust in the process of liberation, and her historical wisdom in connecting past with present with future is evident in her exhortations, in which she invites the reader to join with her in dialogue: “It is essential that we build upon these strengths in ways that will sustain and advance future generations. In this way we can begin the healing” (p. 16).

Leary (2005) focuses on three philosophical concepts that she sees as forming the “bedrock of African American culture... namely the preeminence of relationships, our African American conception of time, and the role traditions and intuition play in knowing the world“ (p. 27). She examines these concepts in the light of the contemporary world to validate and affirm their very nature, and to harness them as the central motif in her “mission to integrate them and learn how to use them to our advantage in the world in which we find ourselves” (pp. 143-144).

Likewise, for Indigenous People, these “philosophical concepts” of the importance of relationships, a different conception of time, and the reverence for intuition and tradition are held in high esteem and have also withstood the ravages of time and the assaults of oppressors.

According to Leary (2005), African Americans and Indigenous People share some essential characteristics. Both are tribal cultures which endorse many of the same values, especially around kinship relationships, family and children. Both were intergenerationally situated for the most part in caste systems, being forbidden to marry outside their race, and were despised, displaced and ostracized by the dominant society amid enforced isolation and segregation on plantations and Reservations. Leary (2005) makes frequent comparisons between African American and Indigenous societies, and details the similarities between them as well as the parallel oppressions that they were forced to endure by the colonizers. For example, she states: “Chattel slavery and the genocide of Native American population were so un-Christian. The only way they could make their actions acceptable and so resolved the dissonance was to relegate their victims to the level of subhuman” (p. 62). She thus underscores the reality that Africans and Indigenous people had in common: they were not European and they were not Christian. As such, they were considered “immoral, irreligious and uncivilized savages” (p. 62). In her discussion of this process of cognitive dissonance, Leary (2005) also includes Indigenous People: “While the powers that be in America are happy to talk about others’ crimes, they seem to be reluctant to truly confront their own. With respect to the genocide of Native Americans and the enslavement and later oppression of those of African descent, the history we in this land learn has been greatly sanitized” (p. 73).

As a revisionist historian, Leary (2005) struggles with the task of rewriting and reworking this sanitized version of reality, and powerfully confronts the reader with a dialogue to engage affectively in this new reality:

How do I make real the pain and suffering of our ancestors? How do I give their experiences appropriate recognition?..Imagine giving up your dignity, your identity, your will, your soul to relieve your seemingly endless suffering? What effects must such compromises have on a human being? ...In the pages that follow I hope to make real some of the experiences of our ancestors. It is important in this chapter that you try to feel what they might have been going through. We need to do this in order to learn and appreciate our history. We need to do this to get a stronger sense of the forces that have shaped our community. Finally we need to do this so we can understand the strength our people had in order to survive and at times even thrive in some of the harshest conditions...this strength that has been passed down to us (pp. 74-75)

7. Culturally relevant and grounded social work with Indigenous People

Much of the work that has been done to delineate culturally relevant and grounded issues has been done by Indigenous Social Work researchers, particularly Hilary Weaver (1999, 2001, 2004, 2010) of the School of Social Work at SUNY Buffalo and Michael Yellow Bird of Humboldt State University (2005, 2010). Theoretical issues abound in this challenge. Empirical studies that Weaver and her colleagues (1999) have devised from their work with the Indigenous people of New Zealand, the Maori, and with Indigenous professional social workers and social work students (1997, 1998, 1999, 2010), serve as a heuristic guide.

Weaver (1999) excoriates the social work profession for its intrinsically ethnocentric, Anglo models, roles and cultural values that are antithetical to Indigenous worldviews. She demands that this awareness of the profession's own biases and prejudices be paramount in the social worker's consciousness.

It is also imperative, following from Weaver's (1999) work, to maintain the understanding that there is diversity among Indigenous Nations, as well as within Indigenous communities. Knowledge of the history of treatment of Indigenous Peoples, the sovereign status of Indigenous nations, federal Indigenous policy and laws, tribal politics and the treaties that have fostered dependence on the federal government, particularly the social service agencies and the Indian Health Service is necessary. Rights accorded Indigenous People are not entitlements. They are payments for land that has been taken.

According to Weaver (1999), knowledge of communication patterns, worldviews, belief systems and values are essential for culturally relevant and grounded practice. It is also crucial to have an understanding of the realities of belonging to a community rich in extended family where respect for elders, matriarchal structures, and spiritual traditions are often shared. A commitment and a dedication to social justice, as well as "a willingness to decolonize their own thought processes" must be an intrinsic part of this endeavor. Reflexivity is key in attending to these processes. These theoretical and empirically based principles provide social workers who work in Indigenous communities with a roadmap for traversing this terrain in ways that honor the traditions, history and character of the relations between Indigenous People and the dominant culture.

III. Indigenous Social Work Practice Models

1. Is There an Indigenous Social Work Practice Model that is Culturally Appropriate, Relevant and Authentic?

A truly Indigenous model (of social work) would arise directly from an Indigenous context rather than be an adaptation of a model from another cultural context. It would be developed by Indigenous social workers for Indigenous social work practice in a specific local context and, as such, would be more than a model of culturally competent social work practice (Weaver, 2010, 78).

I also know that social work is not the only way that Indigenous People get help or find balance in their lives. There have always been Indigenous ways of helping and these will remain as long as there are Indigenous People. There is no need to incorporate this or subsume it under social work practice: Indigenous ways of helping have their own legitimacy without the need for professional sanction. The part of me that strives to live my life in the Indigenous canoe would say that perhaps these Indigenous ways of helping might, in fact, be more legitimate than professional ways that we have learned from those outside our culture (Weaver, 2010, 81).

In the citations above, Hilary Weaver raises the question that is at the heart of Indigenous social work practice: Is there an Indigenous social work practice model bred in a local context that is more “legitimate” than the current professional standard? The term “legitimate” is a powerful one, and carries meanings of authenticity and genuineness; it also raises the specter of lawlessness and criminality. Many Indigenous writers remind us of the role that Anglo social workers played on the Reservations, in removing children from the home, placing them in non-Indigenous homes, toxic foster care systems and institutions, and colluding with the dominant society’s exterminating programs in forced sterilization programs with the Indian Health Service (Weaver, 2010; Deloria, 2005; Yellow Bird, 2005). Weaver (2010) reminds us that, as a result, some 25

to 35% of children were raised mostly by non-Indigenous families, and some 25 to 50% of Indigenous women of childbearing age were sterilized without their consent or even knowledge in the 1970's. This is a dark chapter in the history of social work. It also begs the question: How can Indigenous social work be re-conceptualized, localized and contextualized to allow for and reflect the ways of knowing that Indigenous peoples have successfully utilized in helping, healing, accessing resources, supporting relationships and using problem solving techniques?

Mindful of the realities of the history of social work with Indigenous peoples, can a new paradigm be constructed from the ground up, based on the interdependent ways that social workers, along with other Indigenous members in informal "helping ways," can serve their communities in Indigenous settings? Instead of attempting to tweak current social work practices to fit into an Indigenous context, as Weaver (2010) cautions against, is it possible instead to create an alternative paradigm based on the values, beliefs, actions, interactions, informal and formal helping systems, and methods of advocacy and empowerment that are at work in Indigenous contexts? Instead of "Indigenizing" social work by bringing Western practice models to bear on it in colonialist fashion, the question becomes: what can Indigenous ways of helping bring back to Western practice models that can ultimately transform them?

Or is it a matter of foregoing the work altogether of building such a model that cannot approach the level of healing and helping that Indigenous communities have created naturally? Weaver (2010) concludes her chapter, "Indigenous Social Work in the United States," by leaving this intriguing question hanging in the air: "My comfort lies in the fact that our Indigenous ways of helping persist in many communities in spite of often

having gone underground. Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing persist and can continue to shape how people are helped, with or without social work” (p. 81).

Contemporary Indigenous social work scholarship, as highlighted in *Indigenous Social Work Around the World: Towards Culturally Relevant Education and Practice* (2010), emphasizes the necessity of using “local knowledge, local customs and local interventions for local benefit” (Gray et al., p. 18). It also demands social workers recognize the primacy of culture in this new model, and by extension, then, the rejection of other cultural models based on colonialist mentalities. As the editors point out: “This model highlights responsiveness and sensitivity to local contexts and cultures. Making culture central to social work forces the profession to question the primacy of Western (modernist) values and to rethink just what is universal” (p. 21).

The Indigenous social work scholars, Mel Gray, John Coates, Michael Yellow Bird, Hillary Weaver, Erika Faith and Michael Hart, among others represented in this collaboration, are aware that this paradigm presents a paradox: what can be at the same time universal and local, honoring the diversity of cultures and at the same time being culturally relevant and appropriate? As Gray, Yellow Bird and Coates indicate: “Indigenous social work cries out for social work models and knowledge that value the particular and the local, as well as the diversity of the world’s cultures” (p. 55).

This process of creating a new social work model that responds to the needs of Indigenous peoples conjures up a new paradigm. It calls for a revolution in the way social work is socially constructed. Instead of authorities who dictate a culturally irrelevant and inappropriate value system of a conquering people (the “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” mentality), Indigenous scholars call for direction from Indigenous

communities themselves around the ways Indigenous people act toward each other individually and toward their community collectively. They seek to understand how these communities create helping systems to support their inherent strengths and innate values of interconnection and inter-relatedness (Gray et al., 2010). Western concepts of professionalization, including distancing, individual self-reliance and determination, internal causality, materialism and consumerism are alienating to Indigenous peoples. The methods that are used to convey them can even be offensive and harmful in their attempts to intervene in intrusive ways (Weaver, 1999; Gray et al., 2010).

These technologies represent the effects of the globalization and the “territorialization” of Western social work that Indigenous scholars warn not only run counter to Indigenous ways of knowing and healing, but also smack of choosing to partner with the continuing colonization and empire building of imperialism (Gray et al., 2010). An example they provide is the widespread development of schools of social work internationally, where there are no prospects for students to find gainful employment once they graduate.

Indigenous scholars also question the use of English as the language of choice that further secures the domination and continued privileging of Western social and cultural constructs. Gray and Coates (2010) describe this imperial impulse as following “hard on the heels of social work’s colonializing past, and continues its penchant for spreading itself with missionary zeal” (p. 13). Gray, Coates and Yellow Bird (2010) press social workers to look beyond the damaging and devastating effects of colonialism, and adopt an “authenticizing” approach to develop a culturally appropriate model, based on the experience of Egyptian social workers in the community, that would generate:

knowledge and practice models from the ground up, drawing on the values, beliefs, customs and cultural norms of local and Indigenous helping practices. It is argued that through this process whereby local culture is used as a primary source for knowledge and practice development, social work practice can become culturally appropriate, relevant and authentic. Authentization may lead to a rethinking of what is really universal in social work by challenging the dominance of Western beliefs and values (p. 5).

Indigenous social work scholars (2010) also call for a revisionist strategy in rejecting anti-oppressive and anti-racist models. Although these approaches are helpful in facilitating political activism among social workers, they report they emphasize marginalization, internalized oppression and foster identification of vulnerable populations as victims. They ask instead that Indigenous social work models be rooted in the positive strengths of the communities and instruct us that much is to be learned by giving these communities the lead, in going hat in hand, so to speak to them, for guidance. For example, Gray and Coates (2010) point to what can be learned from the Indigenous ways of living in balance with the natural world, their “ecosocial” character, and their “ecospirituality.” “Indigenous knowledges are re-emerging in spirituality with its inclusive approach and in the growing environmental awareness where Indigenous People’s closeness to the land and the importance of place is a sought after source of wisdom” (p. 22).

2. What would a Culturally Appropriate, Relevant and Authentic Practice Model Look Like?

What would social work look like then? Rather than Anglo values of individualism and responsibility for the self, it would be focused instead on Indigenous values and beliefs and what Cherokee scholar Jace Weaver (1997) calls “communitism,” a word he constructed from “community” and “activism” (p. ix). It is a term meant, he

warns, not to be forgotten as an obscure piece of academic jargon. He uses it as a political call to action, emanating from an intrinsically Indigenous political ethos and value system.

Instead of an outside “professional,” objective and standardized system for mutual aid, a network comprised of family members could work politically and interdependently toward building a healthy, resilient, strong community base. This base would be anchored in maintaining and reviving their cultural identity, spirituality and “Indianness,” so that in the words of the Sun Dance “that the People might live” (J. Weaver, 1997, p. 1).

By definition, Jace Weaver (1997) see all Indigenous “output,” meaning speeches, poetry, fiction, newsletters, speeches, websites etc. as inherently resistance narrative and discourse. Many contemporary Indigenous social work scholars reinforce the necessarily political nature that any work with Indigenous people requires. In declaring that Indigenous social work in itself is a “just cause,” the terminology echoes the concept of a “just war,” and serves as a rallying cry for it. Gray, Coates and Yellow Bird (2010) state that “Indigenous social work is deliberately political framed within the discourse of human rights and social justice with contemporary manifestations marked by the ever pressing memory of Indigenous People’s unjust treatment under colonialism” (p. 50).

Other scholars, including Michael Hart (2010), highlight how this political action is inherently spiritual for Indigenous peoples. In *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook* (2005), editor Michael Yellow Bird refers to Indigenous social workers as “practitioner activists.” Gray, Coates and Yellow Bird (2010) define decolonization as “the intelligent, calculated and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies and

lands, and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation” (p. 2).

Yellow Bird (2005) instructs that the social worker’s role is to fight alongside Indigenous Peoples, to engage actively in political contests to regain the land and territories that have been stolen and to recover the languages, natural diets, physical remains of lost ancestors, as well as the educational systems that were intrinsic to their communities before colonialism. The social worker should be on the front lines of this battle to reclaim Indigenous land, heritage, culture and sacred objects. How can social workers be trusted if they are not willing to do this? Yellow Bird (2005) relies on Freire and Fanon for instruction on how to proceed in overturning colonial structures by developing a critical consciousness, and arriving at it through a *praxis* that represents not passive but active engagement with the colonial powers to overturn and transform them.

In this collection of articles edited by Yellow Bird (2005) entitled *For Indigenous Eyes Only*), consisting of a consortium of Indigenous activists, James Riding In discusses the attitudes of the colonizer to the Indigenous population as he asserts their rights to regain what has been stolen from their Nations: “The perpetrators disregarded our views, beliefs and rights because colonialism instills the colonizer with a notion of absolute entitlement - - a notion that denies the colonized the respect and rights afforded to other humans” (p. 5). This all-out refusal to recognize the humanity of the Indigenous Peoples not only gives the colonizers permission to steal their lands and plunder their riches, but perniciously allows for them to despoil their spiritual riches as well - - their beliefs, values and rights. The discussions on the stereotyping of Indigenous Peoples with sports mascots, reclaiming educational rights and storytelling echo this refrain.

The emphasis of the *Decolonizing Handbook*, however, is not on passivity or victimization, but rather on harnessing political action to these ends, and to see the social worker as a potential ally in this struggle for liberation. Waziyatawin (2005) describes how narratives of truth telling can be used to “initiate our own healing processes from historical injustices” (p. 7). The social worker must know the history of Indigenous Peoples and make themselves relevant and useful politically in the Indigenous struggles for political, social and economic justice. As Yellow Bird (2010) states elsewhere:

Hence the first lesson is that the social worker has to find a niche in Indigenous social development where cultural relevance and political justice is more important than professional interests. Indigenous Peoples are wary of professional social workers and are more concerned with relevant responses than with social workers’ territorializing agenda. Indigenous Peoples must be convinced that they support their just cause for land, security, appropriate education and health and welfare services, *self*-representation, *self*-development, *self*-government and *self*-determination and that they place the interests of Indigenous community organizations at the center of their activities. They must recognize and work with Indigenous community organizations and engage in community advocacy (p. 55).

Yellow Bird (2005) asserts that the social worker, in true decolonizing fashion, must acknowledge that the profession has nothing in common with Indigenous Peoples’ welfare, and that the NASW (2001) *Code of Ethics* is guilty of “false advertising” in allowing social work students to think that after graduating, they will be out in the trenches empowering and achieving social justice for Indigenous Peoples.

Social workers, according to Yellow Bird (2010), must use bell hooks’ methods of “fierce interrogation” of the profession, its mission and its history if they want to become decolonized and helpful to Indigenous communities.

Yellow Bird and Gray (2010) point out that before Jane Addams and Anglo social workers existed, Indigenous communities were taking care of their own needs. He

laments that there is “no mention of the existence and genius of Indigenous forms of social work prior to or after the invasion phase of colonization by their forebears” (p. 63). He maintains that for social workers to be worth their muster, they must actively fight in political campaigns “to diminish federal oversight and paternalism,” for example, noting that they are well trained to perform this kind of advocacy work. He states this reluctantly, adding, “But will they do this?” (p. 74).

3. The Indigenous social worker: An Indian taco?

To describe who and what an Indigenous social worker is, Hilary Weaver (2010) refers to the joke, “What makes an Indian taco Indian? The answer is the Chef!” She proceeds to describe how this is not as simplistic as it appears. Is an Indigenous social worker necessarily going to be able to utilize Indigenous beliefs, values and spirituality to work effectively with the community, just by nature of the fact that he or she comes from an Indigenous background or community?

Weaver (1999) had conducted a survey of Indigenous social workers to determine what cultural competence entailed and discovered that the social workers who answered her survey believed that knowledge about the history, culture and “contemporary realities” of their communities was essential. The Indigenous social workers who responded to her survey on effective practice in Indigenous social work also stated that they must have “containment skills” - - to be able to listen and not interrupt; they should be willing to engage in humor even if it is at their expense; demonstrate humility as well as self-awareness, appear open to learning and be respectful. They should value social justice.

Weaver concludes that of all of the skills and qualities noted in her 1999 study, she now (2010) finds that it is the emphasis on political and social action for social justice that is the most desirable: “Social justice must be the fulcrum on which social work turns if we are to truly escape the oppressive legacy of past social work practice with Indigenous Peoples in the context of colonialism within the United States and elsewhere” (p. 79).

Weaver (2010) points out that it is one matter to identify qualities a social worker should possess to be “culturally competent,” but this is not the same as creating a social work practice model, one that needs to be fueled by social justice. It is merely a starting point, one that is picked up on by other Indigenous social workers who have wrestled with creating models that are culturally relevant, appropriate and localized. As Clifford Geertz reminds us, “Social work, like sailing, gardening, politics and poetry, law and ethnography are crafts of place; they work by the light of local knowledge (Geertz as quoted in Faith, 2010, p. 256).

In “Indigenous Social Work Education: A Project for All of Us,” Erika Faith (2010) addresses how “questions of identity and place, privilege and power, language and voice, harm and healing have been woven throughout my personal life and professional and academic work” (p. 245). She refers reflexively to her life as existing “between the interface of colonizing and Indigenous ways of being in the world” (p. 245). She points to the necessity of cleansing and decolonizing herself from the “dominator ideologies and practices” to which she has been exposed. Citing Yellow Bird’s definition of decolonization referenced above, she adds her own:

Decolonization to me means to remember to heal, returning to balance and wholeness the severed connections between body and

spirit, between men and women, adults and children, between nations and between human communities and all our non-human relations. My purpose involves doing my part to reverse the power imbalances in which my life is embedded, and to draw inspiration and direction from Indigenous ways of living in balance and harmony on the earth (p. 245).

Although Faith (2010) was well aware of the impact of these ideologies on her, and her work on recreating balance and harmony in her life as a result of these traumas, she had not realized how important it is to become grounded in local contexts. She discovered this when she returned to her roots and participated in an “Indigenizing” project for social work curricula at the School of Indian Social Work at the First Nations University of Canada in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She questioned whether what we know about social work is merely colonialist discourse, who is served by it and who is disadvantaged as a result. She asked how social work practice has suppressed Indigenous social, political and cultural systems and what reparations might need to be made. She asked how it is different coming from Indigenous contexts. She wondered if there is a danger in conflating Western paradigms and Indigenous helping ways. She considered that Indigenous models are about inner rather than outer knowledge. She addressed some of the issues raised above by her Indigenous colleagues, especially in reference to power and privilege, including whether English is an appropriate language for the discussion and transmission of questions about Indigenous social work models. Ultimately, she asked what the responsibilities of social work academics such as herself have for “creating space” for Indigenous models (p. 247).

Faith (2010) defines social work within the context of Indigenous ways of treating their most vulnerable, according to the beliefs, values and norms in “resolving conflicts, redistributing wealth and building communities. What we know today as ‘social work’ is

a recent and culturally specific manifestation of a societal function that is as old as the human race” (p. 247).

Faith (2010) echoes the thoughts of Weaver and Yellow Bird in stressing the ethnocentrism and professional imperialism of social work as a locus and messenger of colonialism, and sees its gendered, white-dominant structures as more of the same:

Thus all over the world, social work was part of the imperialist project for assimilation accomplished by replacing traditional Indigenous social structures, ceremonies and forms of governance with colonial systems and structures. As Yellow Bird asserts, social work is colonization: It was founded on colonization and the exclusion of the well-being of Indigenous Peoples (p. 248).

Following on this project was the colonizing message that Indigenous Peoples were incapable of taking care of their own. Their intrinsic and innate systems for social care were “devalued and silenced” (p. 249). She denotes the irony that these systems were built on belief systems that successfully united the natural and spiritual worlds, only to be split asunder by Western binary worldviews that separated spirituality from humanity, and humanity from the natural world. Faith recognized that micro interventions based on Western notions of individuality and capitalist thinking disrespected Indigenous values of community and the interconnectedness of all life.

In Canada, where Faith’s (2010) Indigenous roots lie, she states that “baby snatcher” and social worker are synonymous. The implications of these dualities and the marginalization of Indigenous belief and value systems have created anger, distrust and a lack of confidence, associated with “oppressive, unwelcome outside government interference” in the lives of First Nations Peoples (p. 251). Yet, Faith underscores the resilient quality and character of Indigenous life in Canada, referring to Freire’s statement that “there is no colonial intervention that does not provoke a reaction from the people

about to be colonized” (p. 249). She lauds the ability of these communities to maintain their ceremonies and traditions intact despite attempts to annihilate them by the dominant society. She praises how they continue to assert their sovereignty and self-determination, and points to changes in educational practice as reinforcing this reality. Education is seen as a crucial place of struggle: “Education is an important site of reclaiming sovereignty of First Nations traditional knowledge, structures and methods of social care” (p. 251).

Faith (2010) describes how the School of Indian Social Work focused on the creation of “culturally grounded social work based in community healing, as opposed to the dominant social work model that has relied heavily on child apprehension” (p. 251). She describes how she was able to learn one model of Indigenous social work practice based on the teachings of First Nation Elders and academics of the Nehiyawak, Anishinabe, Nakota, Dakota and Dine Nations. Using the sacred ceremonies and teachings of the Elders through storytelling and integrating them into her work, Faith (2010) states that two of the most important facets for this practice model are reciprocity and speaking from the heart. The necessity of utilizing spiritual tools, such as the medicine wheel, and speaking to healing on a personal as well as a communal level are significant. An emphasis on balance and harmony on a personal as well as a community level is key. It reflects an Indigenous belief in following the teachings of the medicine wheel with its connection to the natural and spiritual realms. Also, the Indigenous belief in the wellness of the practitioner is highlighted:

Before you can help others to heal, you have to heal yourself. Instructors are expected to teach from their own lived experiences and to model integration of theory with our personal journeys....We all have a healing journey to make. The framework creates a sense of shared humanity, egalitarianism and deep empathy No shame. No silence. No pretense at perfection (p. 255).

This is the obverse of the Western model that prioritizes and values professional distancing, lack of self-disclosure, rationalism and objectivity. This model seeks to place the social worker in a dominant position, intimating authority and superiority of knowledge at the expense of healing, humor and personal sharing.

Maintenance of the ideology and system are what is sacrosanct in a self-aggrandizing Western social work construct, as repudiated by Indigenous social workers. The sentiments of egalitarianism, empathy and shared humanity deeply reflect the Indigenous value system of the overall importance of community, of respect for individuals and reverence for the land. Healing is a process that occurs for the entire community and the healing of intergenerational trauma, grief and loss especially is both a communal, public process as well as a personal one.

Addiction, family violence, sexual abuse and intergenerational pain are publicly addressed in the “survivor movement,” where participants experience expressions of personal grief. Processes of self-evaluation and self-disclosure are pivotal, and Faith (2010) takes issue with the emphasis in social work education on writing academic papers, for example, where self-evaluation would yield more profound and lasting results.

As necessary features of this healing process (Faith, 2010), this practice model entails participation in community, traditional, sacred ceremonies, such as sweat lodges, pow wows, round dancing, smudging to cleanse and bless, as well as learning and creating traditional crafts, practicing give away ceremonies, even cooking meals together. Another essential ingredient in the mix is an in-depth knowledge of history and the languages of the particular Nation.

Although only 40% of Canada's population is Indigenous, Faith (2010) uses this model for all her academic teaching and social work, privileging Indigenous over Western models of social work because:

I have come to believe that Indigenous models of social work practice and education are good for all of us, whether we identify ourselves as Indigenous or not....By sharing my own journey of decolonization which to me means in part transforming all forms of domesticated ways of thinking and being, I create space in the classroom for deeper levels of sharing and community building. I have come to believe that the project of decolonization is global and requires all of us, regardless of where we sit on the colonizer-colonized continuum. It is my hope that through mutual liberation we will be able to find more integrative forms of social work practice that will serve all members of our communities" (p. 253).

Faith (2010) feels that it is "imperative" that this model supplant the current Western model "in order to bring our profession into a greater place of balance, harmony and respect for all of our relations" (p. 255).

This analysis of practice models that are culturally grounded, appropriate and relevant begs the questions again - - what is the purpose of social work? What is the best way to practice social work in any community to address the social, economic and political needs of the people in helping and healing ways?

As the Indigenous social workers discussed here tell us, there is much to be learned from the way that Indigenous communities have been practicing their own form of caring for themselves and their communities and their lands since "time immemorial."

4. Indigenous Worldviews

Can an outside social worker ever enter into this reality and be competent, or, rather, how can an outside social worker hope to be able to work effectively with Indigenous people, given this in-house model?

Can such a practice model be extrapolated from the interviews conducted with the 15 members of the Poospatuck Reservation? Perhaps not a full-fledged model, but some indications can be gleaned from the comments and responses of the Reservation residents. How blood right residents of the Poospatuck Reservation define and think about their cultural identity provides a heuristic starting point to investigate the intricate structure of these helping systems. Certainly, a first step is to try to understand how these informal and formal helping ways operate. As Michael Hart (2010) reminds us: “Understanding the worldviews of both the targeted community and ourselves is imperative if we are going to do more good than harm” (p. 132).

As Jace Weaver (1997) points out: “Culture embodies those moral, ethical and aesthetic values-what Nguwa Thiong’o calls ‘the set of spiritual eyeglasses’-through which a people come to view themselves and their place in the universe. As Thiong’o notes, values are the basis of a people’s identity and their sense of particularity as members of the human race” (p. x).

What do the spiritual eyeglasses of the residents interviewed reveal? Understanding the moral, ethical and aesthetic values follows on gaining an appreciation for the underlying beliefs that buttress them. For example, an ethical mandate to “live with integrity,” needs to be comprehended against the backdrop that belief in reincarnation, that some respondents espouse, presupposes that what one does in the universe has consequences, and that this ethical responsibility expands to include the natural world, including “non-human kin” as well as other individuals. It thus provides a moral compass from which to proceed.

Especially for people who are not Indigenous and are invested in working with Indigenous communities in culturally relevant and appropriate ways, exposure to Indigenous worldviews provides a way to enter into the following discussion from an informed standpoint. It is important to discern Unkechaug values, beliefs, actions and interactions against the backdrop of shared indigenous cultural consciousness. This process illuminates the Poospatuck Reservation members' perceptions in context and not in a vacuum, without framework or cohesion. Therefore, some introductory remarks can be helpful in placing the Unkechaug responses in a wider, Indigenous frame of reference. It calls for an adjustment in the frequency, so to speak, to comprehend the Indigenous complex, holistic, communal, cyclical and circular worldview.

To get to the point of understanding that for indigenous peoples, the spiritual is political, as Michael Hart points out, we will need to lean heavily on how Indigenous scholars have described their way of looking at the world (Gray, Coates and Yellow Bird, 2010). To build this paradigm of social work practice with Indigenous peoples, to learn to decipher the particular in the foreground, necessitates that the universal be fully sketched out in the background.

It is a constant in the literature and the scholarship of Indigenous people that certain beliefs, values and "lifeways," are shared among them, including the value and reverence for the land, for example, and the interdependence of all living entities. This is not meant to "essentialize" Indigenous belief systems, but rather to highlight the diversity among Indigenous people on the one hand, and their particular belief and value system on the other. Indigenous writer and scholar Louis Owens refers to this as "...a shared

consciousness and an identifiable world view...defined primarily by a quest for identity (as quoted in J. Weaver, 1997, p. 27).

This description does not imply that there is a monolithic homogeneity among Indigenous peoples' belief and ethical systems, but rather that there are common threads that are interwoven throughout these belief systems, that are more in harmony and have more in common with each other's Nations than they do with Anglo beliefs and values.

Perhaps even more pronounced is the widely held belief in the interconnectedness of life, and in the seamless interface between what Anglos refer to as a distinction between what is religious and secular: "Because of the failure (sic) of Native cultures to recognize any split between secular and sacred spheres, this worldview remains essentially religious, involving the Native's deepest sense of self and undergirding tribal life, existence and identity just as the Creator ungirds all the created order" (J. Weaver, 1997, p. 28).

Simon Ortiz (1984), an Acoma Tribal member, refers to "the communal nature of the Indigenous universe," and details how "mutually shared and supported legends about the beginning and the end of the world (and what happens in between) seem hopelessly beyond their (western industrialized people's) vision" (p. xi). To explicate this, he offers the following description: "Mysterious but real power dwells in nature-in mountains, rivers, rocks, even pebbles. White people may consider them inanimate objects, but to the Indian, they are enmeshed in a web of the universe, pulsating with life and potent with medicine" (p. xi).

In the preface to his book, the *American Indian Mind in a Linear World*, Donald Fixico (2003) describes a cyclical way of thinking. He states Indigenous people grow up

learning in tribal communities and share among themselves and with their children. He dedicates his work to “full bloods and those who live the Indian way of traditionalism, for Indian people who think in the Indian way, meaning in a circular philosophy based on close relations with the natural environment” (p. xvi). He declares:

“Indian Thinking” is seeing things from a perspective emphasizing that circles and cycles are central to the world and that all things are related in the universe. For Indian people who are close to their tribal traditions and native values, they think within a native reality consisting of a physical and metaphysical world (pp. 1-2).

The “native reality,” described in the above citations is one of connection and shared relationships among all living things. The world, like the person, is not split in binary dualities as it is in the Anglo world(s). The indigenous world is perceived as a cyclical, living web of interconnected organisms, dependent and interdependent on each other.

As Vine Deloria (2003) points out in *God is Red*, there is another crucial difference in perception of the world between Anglos and Indigenous people based on a sense of place, rather than a sense of time. He posits that for Indigenous peoples, time is perceived as cyclical rather than linear. This “geomythology” means that an individual’s identity is discerned from a sense of place. This view is a frequent refrain in the interviews about the Poospatuck Reservation, “the place where the waters meet.” This concept of geomythology also helps outsiders to appreciate the enormous conflict and the pain caused to the Unkechaug. Because they do not have enough land on the Poospatuck Reservation, many full blooded Unkechaug cannot live on the Reservation. As a result, they cannot participate, not only in the communal but in the political life as well, since the bylaws state that one has live on the Reservation to vote.

Deloria (2003) considers that the “tentative comparisons” relating to space and time between the ways Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people see the world stand in direct conflict to each other: “The opposition is more than conceptual; it colors the manner in which non-Indians view the world and the people they deal with in that world, particularly Indians” (p. 287). So it is not merely a philosophical or intellectual difference.

In Deloria’s (2003) view, this fundamental experience of reality accounts for the colonizer’s oppressive and annihilating treatment of Indigenous people, and for the non-Indigenous, destructive attitude toward the natural world. He sees the two as related because there is a lack of connection between the individual and the natural world, and the perception of the metaphysical world as being separate from the physical one creates a dangerous schism. This connectivity to the land expands to tribal communities and is manifest in Indigenous spirituality. He points to the inability of white and western industrial societies to embrace a holistic vision of the world due to this dualistic split or “disruption” between physical/metaphysical realms. He points to the influence of Christianity in creating this “Manichaeian” duality which Fanon refers to above. This duality keeps them from appreciating and revering the land as indigenous people do:

White America and western industrial societies have not heard the call of the lands or of the aboriginal peoples. In the appalling indices of social disorder of the tribal peoples, Westerners see only continued disruption and being unaccustomed to seeing life as a totality, cannot understand the persistence of tribal peoples in preserving their communities, lands and religions (Deloria, 2003, p. 296).

In connecting the relationship of indigenous people to their land, Deloria (2003) envisions this opposition of these two belief systems as irreconcilable. Like Yeats’ falconer, the western and industrial societies have placed such a gulf between themselves

and the natural world that they are deaf to the falcon's cries. The connection and stewardship that indigenous people share for their lands, and by extension their communities and their spirituality, is not well understood or appreciated by western and industrial societies:

Who will find peace with the lands? The nature of humankind lies waiting for those who will come to understand their lives and take up their responsibilities to all living things. Who will listen to the trees, the animals and birds, the voices of the places of the land? As the long forgotten peoples of the respective continents rise and begin to reclaim their ancient heritage, they will discover the meaning of the lands of their ancestors. That is when the invaders of the North American continent will finally discover that for this land, God is red (p. 296).

Deloria highlights the Indigenous values of reverence for the land, the interconnectivity, inter-dependence and inter-relatedness of all living things, as well as the responsibility of Indigenous people to respond to the needs of the lands, the people, the trees and the animals in their stewardship and communal responsibility.

As a tonic to Deloria's and Lone Otter's pessimism about the future, Cherokee Jace Weaver (1997) offers the following prescription: "As communities that have too often been fractured and rendered dysfunctional by the effects of more than 500 years of colonialism, to promote communitist values means to participate in the healing of the grief and sense of exile felt by Native communities and the pained individuals in them" (p. xi).

The cyclical and circular dimension of reality and the sense of place, space and time that Deloria describes are shared among many Indigenous peoples and can be seen in multiple variations in the responses of the members of the Unkechaug Nation below. These introductory words are meant to frame the discussion of the interviews and provide

some context to the discussion of helping and healing systems, lifeways, beliefs and values on the Poospatuck Reservation.

VI. Culturally relevant, appropriate and authentic social work practice in a local context on the Poospatuck Reservation¹

Hillary Weaver (2010) raises the prospect that it might be disempowering and alienating for social workers who leave the Reservation to earn an MSW only to return to find that what they have learned is not only culturally irrelevant, but actually harmful to them, their beliefs and values, as well as to the communities they serv. Their predicament is reminiscent of the boarding school children who were forcibly taken from their homes and returned as different people to their communities, unable to communicate with their elders, who spoke the Indigenous languages they had lost, leading to several generations of trauma, alienation and grief. Whether these Indigenous social workers, armed with their newly earned MSW degrees can maintain or recover their culture and values intact and return home unscathed to their communities remains the question. What they do once they arrive home is another question, one that the Indigenous social worker on the Poospatuck Reservation grappled and wrestled with in the dark “with little support and little guidance.”

These theoretical and empirically based principles learned in MSW programs are meant to provide social workers in communities with a roadmap for traversing this terrain. However, there were few signs or guideposts to map the uncharted, presenting

1. Adapted from a paper co-written with Veronica Treadwell, MSW in 2007 and presented at the SUNY Albany School of Social Welfare Diversity Conference: “Working with a Vulnerable Population: The Unkechaug Nation at the Poospatuck Reservation.”

situation that the Unkechaug social worker faced upon her return home to “give back” to her community on the Reservation. She received her MSW at SUNY Buffalo and spent twenty years working in community-based programs with homeless people, foster children and individuals in methadone treatment, many of whom were Indigenous Peoples in Erie and Niagara counties.

Coming from a long line of Unkechaug Nation chiefs whose grandfather (also a chief) had brought paved roads, electricity and phone lines to the Reservation, the social worker was no stranger to the Reservation or to the unwelcome response that any change can bring. Upon her return, she took on several formal positions including Community Service Block Grant Fiscal Consultant, and Educational Liaison with the local schools where the Reservation children were placed. She also served as College Specialist, Indian Child Welfare Act Expert Witness, and FEMA State Emergency Manager, among other informal positions and duties she performed such as grant writing and sitting on the Cultural and Language Revitalization Committee.

Although her status as a “Princess” (daughter of the chief) gave her the badge of an insider, she found herself in a curious situation as neither insider nor outsider, but “walking in neither world” in respect to the Unkechaug community. What she discovered was the insider/outsider paradox:

In order to be inside and be effective, you have to have gone out to the outside to gain more knowledge. I had to go away--to grow and learn and meet people from all over the world, but this is a catch 22, because once you have left the Reservation, you are considered an outsider. Your motives are questioned: ‘Why are you back here? What do you want? Now that you have education, you think you are better than. Are you just doing this to get paid? What is your real interest in us?’

She was no longer “one of” and needed to become decolonized in order to regain the trust of her community. As Yellow Bird (2005) demonstrated, trust needs to be earned. From her perspective, she was bringing home the knowledge and skills that she had amassed in the MSW program at SUNY Buffalo, as well as twenty years of practice working as a professional social worker trained in this Western practice model in the community.

Her experience, then, was neither “ivory tower” meaning solely in the classroom, nor confined to non-Indigenous people. But her training and professional experience in Western models of social work practice, she learned, had changed her ways of relating and inter-relating with her community members. For one, she had not lived among them for twenty years. It is also a matter of living as a member of the community day in and day out that constitutes that membership as “in-group.” The members of the community who approached her stripped her of her identity as “one of” and devalued her education as worthless to them. They “called her down” by rejecting the prestige that her education and degree brings, and would not allow her to act in a dominant role with the power and privilege that such education and status affords “outsiders.” They condemned her for bringing back to the Reservation a consumerist and capitalist mentality: “Are you just doing this to get paid?” As Yellow Bird (2010) declares, “the most effective colonizer is the colonized” (p. 288).

The Reservation members would not suffer this inversion of her role or subversion of her power over them. In a sense, they were also training and teaching her how to decolonize herself and cleanse herself of the Western practice models she had internalized. She had, like the Haudnosanee individual described above, “the white man all over her.” Their reaction to her was visceral, reflecting Freire’s statement above that

“there is no colonial intervention that does not provoke a reaction from the people about to be colonized” (as quoted in Faith, 2010, p. 249).

I felt like I was coming home and I had something to contribute. I thought they were going to be happy and they would also contribute to make things better for the Tribe, and what I got was: ‘I don’t trust you. I don’t like you. You ain’t got nothing for me.’ This was a double betrayal. I was very hurt and very angry. There was an incident where other children were not kind to my child because they were listening to what their parents said.

She had brought with her the Freirian (1994) banking concept of education, where deposits are made into accounts rather than teaching to the individual. In the language of linguistic imperialism, she brought “information to distribute” or “something to contribute” to the community. She realized that the community violently rejected her dominant, hierarchial role and quickly made it clear to her that they would not accept her colonizer mentality. They had rendered her the proverbial “knock on the head.” They responded to her with “righteous anger,” that is defined as the “emotional and psychological response of victims of racism and discrimination to the system of power that dominates, exploits or oppresses them. Righteous anger is not racism; it is a defensible response to racism” (Yellow Bird, 2010, p. 289). She had instituted a one-way relationship in that she attempted to hold all the cards.

The community was creating her anew as one of them. They forced her to “fiercely interrogate herself,” as bell hooks would say, to develop a critical consciousness of whom she had become, and to become decolonized of the “power over attitude” she brought back with her. Stirring up feelings in her of hurt, anger and betrayal, they had forced her to engage and relate to them on an inter-personal, affective level, to communicate through the language of feelings. They rejected what they saw as “false generosity” where the messenger of the colonizer “brings further injustice on the

oppressed by creating words that disproportionally support their priorities” (Friere as quoted by Yellow Bird, p. 277).

The community response was to cut her off completely with “little support and little guidance,” in her disconnection and alienation. In social work speak, she had triggered the community’s horizontal hostility. They embraced her when she shed her Western modeled social work training and chose to rejoin them by relating to them individually and communally by reciprocal sharing, self-disclosure and self-evaluation, demonstrating the deep empathy, shared humanity and egalitarianism which Faith (2010) describes as necessary for effective Indigenous social work practice.

When she acted like an outsider, she was treated like one. When she began to behave like a member of the community, interacting with the members on a personal and heartfelt level, asking them about their families, catching up on what had transpired on the Reservation in the twenty years that had passed, she demonstrated Indigenous values of respect for the individual, their connections and relatives. She was not considered with so much suspicion, but rather regarded in a reciprocal relationship to be someone they might go to for help if they needed it.

I began to understand that, even coming back as an insider, I did not take the time to relearn what I am asking outsiders to do--to take the time to listen and catch up with the histories of the people on the Reservation over the last 20 years, before I came in trying to make changes where I saw changes needed to be made. I made a lot of wrong choices, because when people don’t value what you are bringing, then what you are bringing has no value to them. I have had to step back completely from my high, official horse to meet people where they are in their own individual lives, and to deal with my feelings head on.

She recognized that she had ridden into the community on her “official” high horse, dictating decisions that she thought the community should make, based on her

training and education with its attendant virtues of professional distancing, objectivity and “intervention.” What she received instead was a rude awakening when these Western practice skills, based on values alien to Indigenous worldviews, were vehemently rejected as worthless and useless precisely because the community did not accept their underlying colonizer assumptions.

The concept of one person deciding what the rest of the community should do is foreign, even anathema to Indigenous communities where concepts of communitarianism, interconnectedness, the primacy of relationship and shared decision making are prized. She states that she asked “outsiders” to act one way, that was diametrically opposed to the Western social work model, and that she ignored her own advice, even as an insider, choosing instead to run roughshod over their communal feelings while demonstrating what she had learned in “official” social work education and agencies. She had returned as an enforcer of colonialism, and was made dramatically aware by the community of her need to become decolonized. This is a process that Yellow Bird (2010) describes eloquently:

Decolonization is a process that begins with understanding that one is colonized (at whatever level that may be). It is creating and consciously using various strategies to liberate oneself from, or adapt to, or survive in oppressive conditions. It is the restoration of cultural practices, thinking, beliefs and values that were taken away or abandoned but are still relevant or necessary for survival and well-being. It is the birth and use of new ideas, thinking, technologies and lifestyles that contribute to the advancement and empowerment of Indigenous Peoples (p. 284).

She describes this process of decolonization as “stepping back and taking stock” of what she had done, who she had become and how ineffective, even harmful to the fabric of relations and relationships on the Reservation, the Western social work paradigm had rendered her. She also reflected on how she needed to connect with

individuals “where they are in their own lives.” This sounds like the familiar Western social work dictum of “starting where the client is,” but it is also about picking up where she left off, reflecting an Indigenous cyclical concept in the history of her relationships with them, and re-establishing the deep connections and respect that is valued in Indigenous communities.

In adding that she needed to direct herself to an examination of her feelings “head on,” she was echoing Faith’s (2010) instructions that Indigenous social workers need to be in balance and harmony with their emotional life, as expressed affectively, as well as with their communities. This is essential to the healing process: “...to work through the pain, to give voice to aspects to their journey that they may never have shared in a group before, and in so doing, gain confidence, discover integration and then be in a position to lead similar groups in the communities they will work in” (p. 252). To reiterate Faith’s (2010) mantra for Indigenous social work: “No shame. No silence. No pretense at perfection” (p. 252).

I was told by Chief Harry Wallace that in terms of sending things out and getting the community involved, I didn’t notify everyone about everything. I didn’t remember to be humble. I realized I was using the language of the social worker-I needed a translation-a way to bridge the gap between our worlds. So I understood the process-- I had to take a step back and assess my skills. Information is knowledge and power--it increases self-esteem and gives you the ability to make changes. There were too many agendas at one time.

This knowledge that she had lost her most precious Indigenous skill - - the ability to relate and communicate in a world where everything physical, natural and spiritual is inter- related and inter-connected -- by virtue of taking on the mantle of the professional Western social work model, must have been a devastating loss. It revealed to her how

disconnected and out of balance these Western models of thinking, doing and talking had rendered her.

Like the children sent to boarding schools, she had returned to her community mute, unable to communicate, with knowledge that was irrelevant and rejected. Recognizing that this was the case, a key point in her decolonization, also allowed her the power to realize what she needed to do: to relearn her own language, meaning her lost ability to communicate with her people, and to find a way to “bridge that gap between **our** worlds.” Like the falconer, she was aware of how far she had strayed. She then used her wisdom to reconnect with her Indigenous universe that had become lost to her as a consequence of taking on the objectified values, orientation and cognitions of Western social work models. She pulled on her Indigenous ways of knowing and recognized that the information they were providing her with was the key to uniting these worlds, integrating them within herself first.

Once she had become in touch with her feelings and returned to a state of balance and harmony, she was able to investigate or “interrogate” the “world” of the Reservation. In order to accomplish this task, she turned her back on Western social work textbooks and agency protocols, and instead turned inward to her Indigenous reservoir of skills and “assessed” what she knew from her own experience: “that information is knowledge and power--it increases self-esteem and gives you the ability to make changes. There were too many agendas at one time.”

In making this assessment, she took stock holistically of the effects of oppression, racism and colonization on herself as well as the Reservation. She examined dialectically how the community had been shaped and deformed by their relationship with the

dominant society leading to their isolation and alienation. She needed to be on the same page with them, to have the same agenda, meaning that what was valuable to them needed to be valuable to her: “Many people on the Reservation have not ever left and had a closed reality of life. I had to back up and sit and watch, listen and talk to people about their experiences, rather than to go in with the expectation that since I had an MSW, I was ‘better than.’ What do they need? Where do they see themselves? What are the spoken and the unspoken rules?”

She has come full circle here, coming into her own as a decolonized Indigenous social worker. She had integrated her knowledge of their marginalization and isolation and responded appropriately to their needs from a place of caring to allow for sharing and the space to do that. She recognized how her training in Western models of social work had given her certain expectations and “ways of thinking and being” about power and privilege that were offensive, unacceptable and not consonant with the unvoiced rules of the Reservation. She became aware of how incongruous this was from Indigenous methods of assessing and understanding their needs in light of their own self-determination.

She allowed them to be the experts in what they needed and wanted for themselves, the community and the children. She turned to an assessment of the children’s needs. In order to do this empathically, she conjured up her own memories of attending school.

As a school social worker in the district in which she grew up (not the local, community school because the children were “shipped out of town” when the local school district refused the Reservation contract), she reflected on her experience as

“other,” in her struggle with her cultural identity. She connected her painful experiences and the feelings of shame associated with them to the oppressive machinery of racism, acculturation and assimilation from her perspective as liaison for the Nation:

When I went to kindergarten, I made a conscious effort-even at 5-to use the Anglo part of my name instead of my Indian name- I remember that from my first day in kindergarten, filling out the dotted sheet where you put your name. I was ashamed for anyone to know I was native, which seriously conflicted with what I was taught at home. Societal values meant more to me than standing up and out and being different.

She was able to get in touch with surviving a brutal school experience and the shame associated with rejecting the stigma of being Indigenous in the second wealthiest and most segregated county in the United States. She echoed Faith’s comments that her life is the primary text she operated from as an Indigenous social worker. Her phenomenological experience, as well as the feelings attached to it as a “survivor” of an oppressive, colonialist educational system, allowed her a window to peer into the world of the children and their families. In referencing her conflict living as an Indigenous person on the Reservation and taking that identity with her to school, even at five, she entered into a compassionate place to understand how many residents never leave the Reservation. Due to a conflict between who they are on the Reservation and who they are in the outside world, they have a “closed reality” because an open one is too painful.

This time, when she saw the need for changes to be made on the Reservation, it was from the vantage point of her own lived, albeit painful experience. She wanted to give the children what she did not have at their age: an internalized, “quiet pride” in their cultural heritage and identity:

I saw changes needed to be made in the school. The children needed more support educationally in terms of social skills. They were acting out in the classrooms. When you are the only minorities in school, there is a certain

expectation of how you are supposed to act because you can't relish in your Native American heritage--in who you are. So then it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when the kids started assimilating with African American culture. They were more comfortable with gangsta rap, with black culture's language and attire. Many children know that they are native but don't have a full understanding of who they are. Many are missing the quiet pride of knowing who they are. The children on the Reservation were shipped out since the 1940s. You assimilate any way you can where you most don't stand out. Theoretically they knew who they were, but internally it was different. They knew that they lived on a Reservation, they had pow wows, and naming ceremonies, but when they left the Reservation and went to school, there was a push to take away their native American heritage, Native is lower than black. They were considered the lowest of the low, so it was easier to assimilate with African Americans and to take on their view of life. But we don't fit in there either--there is a separation there also. We knew we were different. We knew we danced. We dressed in our regalia. We knew we lived on the Reservation. We knew that our ancestors had all lived there. We knew who our family was even though we didn't know the fundamentals of beading and whaling any more or the educational stuff of our history.

In this passage, she goes back and forth between her own experience and that of the children, to integrate a "theoretical knowledge" of "Indianness" with an internalized Indigenous identity. To stay strong, learn appropriate social skills and succeed in school, first and foremost, she determines that the children need to know who they are and be proud of it. They must connect the dots between living on a Reservation, participating in naming ceremonies and dancing in pow wows, and "relishing" in that cultural identity to develop self-esteem. She recognizes it is easier to assimilate into African American culture because the children are out of touch and removed from their history, from practicing their crafts and engaging in Indigenous forms of education.

She sees it as imperative that cultural identity be fostered and nurtured on all levels on the Reservation so the children can develop pride in their heritage and counteract the negative effects of the "self-fulfilling prophecy" that Indigenous children are meant to act out and fail in school. Like Faith's experiments with community building

and healing, she realizes it is a larger issue for the entire community to become aware and proud of their cultural heritage and identity that they are not currently sharing with the children.

How, then, to go about engendering this pride without resorting to Western models of practice? She discovers an alternate path, a “different worldview,” that can be accessed through the sharing and reciprocity inherent in the Indigenous ways of being and thinking. She finds her way to Weaver’s “Indigenous canoe” through tolerance and understanding, of opening up the parentheses in these conflicts, discussions, confrontations and finally shared, communal encounters with reciprocity and mutual respect. As Faith states, it takes “mutual liberation” for healing to occur (p. 254).

She describes the process whereby this “closed reality” came about--through relentless colonized oppression, marginalization and domination so that their experience is one of continually being used, taken advantage of, with nothing given in return. She offers another way to deal with this history of oppression, and that is through understanding and knowledge.

The residents told me --“we don’t want you to be informed of who we are. Everyone just wants to live and let live and be.” I have a different worldview. The only way to deal with and build tolerance is through understanding and knowledge. When there is no reciprocity and you feel you have been taken advantage of, and don’t want to give because you don’t know what people are going to do with the information--take something and make something out of it. So much history has happened between Nations, and families. History changes with written and unwritten history. This isn’t the history that you find in the records because it is more important than the outside history--the treaties--because the real deal of who we are is unwritten. Like a family that presents well to the outside--what goes on in the house is what the family is--not what is exposed to the outside. The Reservation is a bigger case of this, just like every other community.

In this final passage, she removes the cloak of Western social work and envisions the Reservation and her role in it, not as an outsider, but as a member of the family, a community with work to be done, that she readily accepts and takes on as a touchstone. She recognizes that there is an internal and an external history to the life on the Reservation, one that will only be known to its community that has survived for over 4,000 years. The last 500 since colonization have been but a drop in the bucket, and the same Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and healing are still operative. They need a political and a spiritual recharging through the invigoration of their cultural identity and heritage.

She has created a model for Indigenous social work practice through her efforts on the Cultural and Language Revival Movement on the Reservation led by the Chief and the Tribal Council to reestablish the original Unkchaug language. She has helped to write grants for the development of a Reservation school. She has worked to get an Indigenous based substance abuse program off the ground. She has acted as the FEMA emergency management coordinator. She has diligently worked to improve the way the Reservation is perceived by outsiders through active engagement with the outside community, with speaking opportunities, joining Boards of outside organizations such as the Holocaust and Diversity Museum and the National Association of Puerto Rican and Hispanic Social Workers. She accompanies the Chief and Tribal Council members to the Legislature to apply political pressure to maintain the Nation's sovereign rights. She reached out to Stony Brook University's School of Social Welfare to initiate the Collaborative Needs and Assets Assessment that provided the much needed information for the Chief and the Tribal Council to make changes in the material culture of the Reservation, and to plan

from an informed, participant perspective of the members of the Reservation for the Community Center. She hopes that the new Community Center will build a sense of unity, community and more ownership by its members: “Finally we will have a place where we can do more than one thing at a time.” In all of these activities, she has created a model for Indigenous social work practice that is relevant, grounded in the cultural life of the community and consonant with the values, beliefs and worldviews of the residents. Ironically, and judiciously, NASW voted her as Suffolk County’s “Social Worker of the Year” in 2010.

IV. The Unkechaug Nation

The People of the Unkechaug Nation are considered to be among the original Algonquian speaking inhabitants of Long Island, living on and near their present site in Mastic, New York for at least 4,000 years (Strong 1997, 1998, 2011, in press; Treadwell, 1992). Of the four Nations currently living on Long Island--the Unkechaug, Montaukett, Shinnecock and Matinecock--only two have Reservations, namely the Unkechaug at Poospatuck Reservation and the Shinnecock on their Reservation in Southampton.

There are several overarching themes in the history of the survival and transformation of the Unkechaug Nation. The first is the commonality of experience, worldview and interrelatedness among the Native peoples on Long Island vis-a vis the dominant culture after contact; the second is the “myth of extinction,” echoed many times since contact, asserting that all “the Indians had become extinct,” due to miscegenation with African Americans, and their land was therefore free for the taking due to the “one drop rule” (Strong, 1997, 1998, in press).

This idea that thinning of the “blood” will make it possible for the colonizing forces to come in and disband the Reservation, based on the phenotypical or “genetic” constitution of the inhabitants, is not a conspiracy theory; it is a reality based on over 400 years of experience, living on the border of colonial New York. After all, although contact was much earlier - - in the 15th century when Basque fisherman whaled along the eastern shores, Europeans encroached on the Reservation very early, in 1590, rather than the late 18th century colonizations that Western Indigenous Peoples suffered (Strong, 1996, in press). The Unkechaug struggled to survive, and were victimized by disease as well as kidnappings. Lion Gardiner estimated that 2/3/ of the population of Long Island

was wiped out during one of the plague outbreaks (Strong, 1996). The colonists were very aware of the Unkechaug presence, and Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, visited them in 1791 to compile a Dictionary of the Unkechaug language (Treadwell, 1992).

The “myth of extinction” as Strong (1996) calls it, carried life and death consequences for Indigenous Peoples, their sovereignty, as well as their very right to exist as a People. As Strong (1996) puts it:

The struggle for Indian lands on Long Island is inextricably involved in the question of cultural identity. When the Unkechaugs at Poospatuck began to take African American spouses, the perception of them in the minds of the outside communities began to change. This had an impact on the land question. If they were no longer “Indians,” their land claims could be challenged in court. This perception reflected the impact of racial prejudice about social ranking and the confusion about race and cultureThe equally invalid assumption that a change in skin color was arbitrarily linked to a change in culture is also reflected in the Census (p.25).

How does a Nation endure the multiple levels of racism, discrimination and prejudice and yet hold strong as a people and a culture? As Chief Lone Otter (Donald Treadwell, 1992) relates in his history of the Unkechaug People, it is a question he cannot answer. It depends on whether the Unkechaug people will be able to privilege and prioritize their cultural identity or “Indianism” above all others: “We are the brown smudge on the white sheet. We do not hurt the sheet but we are noticeable. I don’t see much future for my people. As long as there are people like myself, however, who are going to write, to promote and to stimulate Indianness as a way of life, a culture, some will still live” (p. 107).

In 1700, the Unkechaug received a land grant from William Tangier Smith to 175 acres, land which they had originally sold to him. This grant established the Reservation, since it declared specifically that this land be set aside for the Unkechaug People (Strong,

1996). The colonial patent had been given to Smith by the British crown. This byzantine system of land allotment reflected the cultural differences between the Indigenous People and the Europeans, who thought they were buying the land, whereas the Indigenous perception was that they were sharing or leasing the land, and would continue to be able to use it when they needed it for hunting or farming (Strong, in press). Through a series of land grabs or seizures, the Unkechaug lost all but 55 of these acres.

Surrounded by the Floyd estate, many Unkechaug became indentured servants or slaves to them, taking on their names and living in a perpetual financial merry-go-round when they could not settle their unfairly imposed debts for services such as whaling (Strong, 1996). As Strong (in press) points out, the colonial documents of the Town of Southampton, the first town in New York State, reflect a provision for the expense of alcohol to be used in land transactions with the Indigenous People. Clearly, negotiations with the Indigenous People were not fairly transacted, and not at fair market value for their sale of services or land either (Strong, in press).

There have been at least two major crises in the past century when the Unkechaug Nation was at risk for losing their sovereign immunity and their right to exist as an Indigenous Nation. The first occurred as a result of the attempts by the Department of Education of the state of New York to close the Reservation school in 1935, which had been operating since 1876. This was successfully defended, although a few years later, the school was closed and the children were moved first to Bellport and then to Center Moriches, where they currently attend (Strong, Gristedes, in press). The local school district, William Floyd, the most accessible and convenient for parents and children, refused the contract.

The second major threat or challenge to the Unkechaug Nation came in 2006 when the owner of a string of boutique grocery stores, Gristedes, sued the Reservation for a purported loss of revenue from the sale of tax-free cigarettes by the smoke shops on the Reservation. The owner of the Gristedes chain alleged that the members of the Reservation were no longer constitutive of an Indigenous tribe because there had been inter-marriage with African Americans. This suit, which threatened the loss of the Nation's sovereignty, was answered by a successful presentation of 6,000 documents relating to the history of the Tribe. Expert witness Dr. John Strong detailed the history of the Unkechaug People so that the traditional, standard legal, constitutional definition of a "Tribe," the Montoya criteria, could be met (Gristedes).

This common law federal criteria was met by deciding three factors: that they are "a body of Indians of the same or a similar race, unified in a community under one leadership or government, and inhabiting a particular though sometimes ill-defined territory" (Montoya v. US). The trial conjured up the past demons of the "one drop rule," and issues with tribal government succession. The Tribal government consists of a Chief, who is elected annually, a Keeper of the Wampum, Keeper of Records and three Land Trustees, who are elected in alternate years.

This contest for sovereignty also brought out the best in the Tribe in that they came together in unity to fight a common enemy, and became aware of how precious their sovereignty was. This occasioned more cultural and political activity, as well as increased inter-generational discussion, especially between parent and child around issues of cultural identity. This is manifest in the interviews below. As Chief Harry Wallace (2009) describes: "This has been a most difficult and arduous task....Let us pray that we

are successful in this struggle and we never again have to submit to this kind of slanderous and abusive tactics.”

Because determining who they are is just as important as deciding who they are not, the Reservation became embroiled in a difficult situation about who belonged on the Reservation and who did not. “Blood right” membership in the tribe, that allowed individuals to live on the Reservation and to vote in elections, was determined by several factors: “An individual had to have a hereditary “blood right” which could be traced through either the mother or the father’s lineage. Evidence supporting this claim must include family documents and affidavits from at least two tribal elders. The Tribal Council would then review the supporting evidence and make a decision” (Strong, in press). It reached such proportions that the residents went to the local courts in 1977 for assistance in solving this matter, but the federal court, in the Signorelli decision (In re Treadwell), only authenticated several family lines and threw it back on the Nation. Strong (1996) describes this struggle about land and cultural rights as the reason why the Unkechaug were unable to move forward economically and politically as quickly as the Shinnecock did, because they were so embroiled in their internecine political battles (Strong, in press).

From being stewards and keepers of thousands of acres of land, comprising Brookhaven township, then to 175 acres of land, the Unkechaug have been relegated to live currently on 55 acres of their own land on the Poospatuck Reservation. They are not federally recognized as a nation, although winning the Gristedes case gave them common law federal recognition as a Tribe. They maintain, according to Unkechaug Chief Harry Wallace, “a sovereign relationship with the State of New York, other Indians Nations in

the United States and Canada and other foreign powers” (Wallace, retrieved 2011). Despite this meager acreage allotment, Wallace contends that “the affinity of the people to the land is as strong as in the past, if not even stronger today” (Wallace, retrieved 2011).

The 2000 Census¹ listed 271 people living on the Reservation, consisting of 93 households and 67 families, housed in 100 units. Of the 93 households, 47.3% have children under the age of 18 living with them. The median income for a household on the Reservation is \$13, 125 and the median income for a family is \$17, 500. The per capita income is \$8,127. 36.6% of the population and 36.8% of families are below the poverty line; 46.6% of those under the age of 18 and 25% of those 65 and older are living below the poverty line (US Census 2000). It is important to note that by all accounts, the Census figures underreport the number of people on the Reservation since many residents refuse to answer or respond to Census inquiries.

Along with issues of overcrowding on the Reservation, health disparities abound with epidemic proportions of diabetes (18% of the people interviewed for the Needs Assessment (Peabody, 2008) as opposed to 9.6% in the general public), allergies, asthma and vision problems that are also out of proportion to the general population. Dysthymia was self-identified by 14% whereas it is clocked at 8.2% in the general population. Educational problems are rampant, resulting from having the children bussed out to Center Moriches, where they are stigmatized as the only minorities. The Chief, the

1. The results of the 2010 Census will not be available until December 2011

Tribal Council and the community are engaged in a concerted effort to eliminate health, educational and employment disparities, and to uplift the community through grants and utilizing the funds secured by the community through the smoke shops to change the material life of the Reservation. A new Community Center is being erected from the tribal funds collected from the smoke shops. There is a movement of revitalization of culture and language on the Reservation after the exciting discovery of spoken recordings of the Unkechaug language in the Dartmouth College library. The revitalization of the language and culture has infused a hopeful spirit, as the Program (2009) of the Introduction of the Language Revival Program indicates:

...the loss of one language is a loss for all humanity. Each language represents a whole system of knowledge unlike any other.' It is our belief that this initiative, through the resurrection and re-integration of our language into our tribal community, will play a vital role in helping to preserve our culture, our history, our values and our worldviews, in essence, helping to preserve the cultural integrity and cultural heritage of the Unkechaug Nations for future generations.

Chief Harry Wallace described and posited a positive and buoyant picture of the future of the Reservation.

The Unkechaug are committed to supporting and expanding current economic efforts at Poospatuck so that tribal enterprises can be developed and individual entrepreneurial efforts can be encouraged....Economic self-determination has been one of our traditional roads to self-sufficiency....The Unkechaug are committed to finding resources to develop the tribal infrastructure and developing a strategic plan to take the Unkechaug into the 21st century (Wallace, retrieved 2011).

V. Design and methodology

1. Why qualitative methodology is best suited to this study

This is an exploratory, qualitative study of Indigenous perspectives on cultural identity using mostly in-depth, structured interviews and purposive sampling techniques. The unit of analysis is the blood right members of the Unkechaug Nation. The purpose of this study is to develop important guidance that will provide a culturally grounded and relevant social work practice model for outsiders who work with the members of the Unkechaug Nation from the Poospatuck Reservation, including teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers and other health professionals

As social work professionals, we are invested in supporting communities that have been targeted and undermined by the dominant culture both historically and currently. In our mission of social justice, we aim to fight for policies, funding and practices that support strong cultural identification in an effort to empower and affirm the communities with which we work. The NASW Code of Ethics (2001) makes this mandate for social justice clear: “Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability” (6.04). This study addresses these issues as they relate to the Indigenous residents of the Poospatuck Reservation. It seeks to foster the resilience and the invigoration of Indigenous culture. This study focuses on the ways that some of the people in the Unkechaug Nation have developed and maintained a strong Indigenous identity, as defined below, and how they perceive and support this identification despite the assault of the dominant culture. It

seeks to ask the following questions: how have those who have resisted forced assimilation stayed strongly connected, endured and survived? For those who have been able to hold on, how have they done it?

This study is proactive, to understand the ways highly culturally identified Indigenous Peoples experience and resist the institutional and interpersonal undermining of their culture. What can we learn from those who have a positive, strong Indigenous identity about what has given them the strength to resist assimilation and annihilation of their culture? What tangible evidence can be teased out of conversations and dialogue that can support a ripple effect of positive change, a closer connection and identification with Unkechaug culture?

From its inception, then, the present study presses into service a qualitative research methodology reflecting these aims and goals. As such, it is informed by what N. K. Denzin (2010) describes as a social justice “call to arms” to promote human dignity and human rights:

In the midst of such an assault on human rights, it is becoming ever clearer that we must be honest about the role of qualitative research and researchers in such a context. It is not about “method” or “technique.” Rather, qualitative research is about making the world visible in ways that implement the goals of social justice and radical progressive democracy....The global interpretive community seeks forms of qualitative inquiry that make a difference in everyday lives by promoting human dignity and social justice....The current historical moment requires morally informed disciplines and interventions that will help people recover meaning in the shadows of a post 911 world, in a world after George Bush-a world entering the possibility of transformational change inaugurated by President Obama (p. 15).

This radical, revisionist platform for qualitative work defines it as neither method nor technique, but rather as a vehicle for the transmission of social justice. It breaks free of

the “implicit purposes of colonialism, patriarchy and state domination that have often lurked within the research” (Erickson, 2010, p.115). Qualitative research is essentially a program of decolonization. It melds form and function, theory and *praxis* as one.

In seeking to ally with the Indigenous residents of the Poospatuck Reservation, this qualitative methodology echoes the strengths perspective of Pfiel (2010):

But those marginalized by institutionalized oppression are neither voiceless nor powerless. Rather, their voices go unheeded, and their exercises of power meet with crushing, violent resistance reinforced by structures of domination. Taking this reality into account, those who opt for the poor must position themselves to listen to and accompany those human beings relegated to the margins of society by various and variable structures of exploitation (p. 128).

In joining with the Unkechaug residents to listen to their “unheeded” voices, this study utilizes semi-structured, in-depth interviews as its primary source. The interviews provide rich, thick description of their phenomenological experiences and allow for an elaboration of content unavailable through quantitative methodology. The interview format also provides for the Indigenous residents to tell their stories, in a culture where storytelling has infinite meanings and purposes, in teaching, sharing, and promoting a sense of community.

Erickson (2010) states that qualitative research gives us the ability to “serve as truth commissioners in our own societies” (p. 121). As Erickson (2010) states in his article, “Affirming Human Dignity in Qualitative Research,” “qualitative social research advances human rights and affirms human dignity by seeking and telling the truth about what particular people do in their everyday lives and about what their actions mean to them” (p. 113).

Qualitative scholars organized the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry as a way to address these issues cohesively. They created a “forum that would listen to the voices of the oppressed, bear witness to the power structures that control people’s lives, offer resistance narratives and imagine utopian alternatives” (Denzin and Giardina, 2010, p. 16). The Congress makes a distinction between the way ethnographers from the beginning, such as Malinowski, operated. It is not about describing or interpreting the world; it is about transforming it in ways that “resist injustice while celebrating freedom and full, inclusive participatory democracy” (p. 17).

Qualitative researchers assert that this methodology can be used for empowerment, advocacy, social and policy change with “knowledge-based critiques of social settings” and as such has the following agenda:

- It places the voices of the oppressed at the center of inquiry;
- It uses inquiry to reveal sites for change and activism;
- It uses inquiry and activism to help people;
- It affects social policy by getting critiques heard and acted on by policy members;
- It affects changes in the inquirer’s life, thereby serving as a model of change for others (Denzin and Giardina, pp. 17-18).

With its stunning ability to act as a vehicle for social change, justice and human rights, the qualitative approach reflects the purpose of this study, its aims and goals. It is clearly the best tool to use to address the research questions.

2. Research background and setting

This research project is an offshoot of the collaborative Community Needs and Assets Assessment of the Unkechaug Nation on the Poospatuck Reservation, a joint project with the Nation and Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare that has now been completed. This Needs Assessment was initiated when the social worker of the

Unkechaug Nation, Veronica Treadwell, MSW, along with Chief Harry Wallace and the Tribal Council, reached out to the School of Social Welfare's Professor Carolyn Peabody for assistance in developing a detailed picture of the needs and assets of the Unkechaug Nation. Ms. Treadwell sought to enable the Nation to develop economic and social plans, and to apply for grants to address multiple housing, health, safety and education issues.

Once Dr. Peabody and her students gained access to the Reservation community, they committed themselves to this collaborative effort with weekly meetings, grant writing and community support over a four-year period. Fortifying and nurturing this relationship with the Reservation was a bond of trust. As Dr. Peabody (2008) explains in the narrative description of the project: "The possibility of any meaningful working relationship absolutely required a patient and relentless commitment to consistency, honesty, humility and a willingness to listen carefully to the voices of the Unkechaug people."

I was actively involved during my practicum/internship year and for three years later as a Steering Committee member of this jointly named venture, "The Unity Project," that undertook the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. I was fortunate enough to work alongside Poospatuck residents and members of the Unity Project in collaborating to create the survey instrument, interviewing residents, attending meetings and pow wows where we actively sought participants for the Needs and Assets Assessment survey. We presented the information to the Tribal Council and took part in a children's event organized by one of the members. In an attempt at reciprocity, I also helped with some grant writing, attended a training on developing a 501C3 entity, as well as a grant writing workshop, the results of that I shared with the Nation. Lastly, I supported the Nation at

the Suffolk County Legislature, tutored in the after school program and worked on the reports for the Needs Assessment.

In an almost unanimous response from the community interviewed that consisted of 100 of the 153 adults living on the Reservation, the adults expressed concern that the youth of the Reservation did not know enough about their culture, and that this was a concern to them. Ninety-two percent of the interviewed people responded “yes” to this query. Eighty percent indicated that they would like to see a museum on the Reservation to help build community pride. The issues, then, of passing on knowledge about their culture to the next generation, and of creating historical memory in the form of a living legacy of a museum, were endorsed by adults in the Nation as meaningful and serious concerns. Almost all of the residents (97%) interviewed agreed that they would be willing to work together with the Unity Project to translate into reality this concern of their cultural identity to the next generation.

The present study was conceived as a result of the concerns that the residents voiced about their cultural identity. The research setting, then, was chosen because it was a natural extension of the work that the “Unity Project” performed. My decision to undertake this study was based on what I perceived as an extraordinary benefit that the Needs and Assets Assessment had for the residents. The ability to visualize the difference that the Needs and Assets Assessment made on the Reservation was rewarding and transformational. Chief Harry Wallace and the Tribal Council used the data collected to make decisions about the Nation’s needs. These included offering each resident a certain stipend from the communal pot generated by cigarette sales in the smoke shops to enable them to renovate their home or to purchase a new modular unit. The physical changes

alone were extremely dramatic, and the climate on the Reservation appeared more positive and was reflected in the interviews. The Needs and Assets Assessment also opened the door to more collaborative work and to grant writing and support for the Cultural and Language Revitalization programs.

This was, and continues to be, a very difficult and stressful time for the Poospatuck Reservation since the Nation has been targeted and sued by local businesses (Gristedes), as well as Mayor Bloomberg, the Suffolk County Legislature, among others regarding smoke shop taxation issues. The income from the smoke shops allows the residents to operate as entrepreneurs and to keep their heads above water financially. This is significant because many of the residents are unskilled and without high school degrees or even driver's licenses. Without this they would be unable to support their families.

During this time, the Nation's sovereign rights as an Indigenous Nation have been attacked alleging that the Unkechaug members were not Indigenous Peoples. Enlisting the acknowledged expert on the history of Algonquian Nations, Dr. John Strong, allowed for the history of the Unkechaug Nation and the Poospatuck Reservation to be made known and for the Nation to achieve common law federal recognition. A federal judge in Brooklyn decided that the Unkechaug Nation met the Montoya criteria for recognition as a Nation. It was also a time of great joy since the Shinnecock Nation, a "sister" Algonquian speaking Nation on Long Island, after 32 years of attempting to win federal recognition, finally received it (Strong, in press). Many Unkechaug members are related to the Shinnecock, including Chief Harry Wallace, who is married to the daughter of a prominent Shinnecock Elder. Tamara Pinckney, a current member of the Tribal Council (and Unity Project) is married to a Shinnecock individual.

This study, then, supports the Nation in its struggle to maintain its sovereign rights by focusing attention and highlighting their Indigenous tribal identity. Thus, this study has an Action Research component to it, in that I am working with the members of the Unkechcaug Nation as an “allied Other” in their struggle to maintain their sovereign rights under pressure and attack from various local and national political forces.

3. Participant selection

This study naturally extended from the Needs and Assets Assessment questions around cultural identity. I had interviewed most of the participants of the present study for the Needs Assessment and they agreed to a follow-up interview at that time. The usual issues of gatekeeping for this research setting were relatively moot, since the Unkechaug Nation’s social worker had opened the door for collaborative work initially through the Community Needs and Assets Assessment.

There are approximately 153 adult residents currently living on the Poospatauck Reservation, and 100 of them participated in the Needs Assessment survey. Since not all of the 100 participants who responded to the Needs Assessment and agreed to participate in a further study were blood right (n=77), and not all of the blood right individuals endorsed a strong Indigenous identity, the population from which I could draw was smaller than I expected.

The unit of analysis for this study entails tribally enrolled, “blood right” members of the Unkechaug Nation living on the Poospatuck Reservation who endorsed strong, positive cultural identities as Indigenous Peoples. Three criteria determine this positive identity: how they responded on the Needs and Assets Assessment survey in endorsing strong cultural identification; whether they devoted time on the Tribal Council

or Cultural and Language Revitalization Committee, or through involvement in protests during the “Red Power Movement” of the 70’s.

Blood right membership entails being certified by way of formal tribal enrollment. It consists of a process of documentation of lineage that must be confirmed by the Tribal Council. Although many blood right members live off the Reservation, this study includes only those who are residents of the Poospatuck Reservation and who are blood right.

This study, then, used a purposive sampling technique, concentrating on those individuals who presented with a strong Indigenous identity, and were active in some way in furthering the cultural agenda of the Reservation. Many were or had been on the Tribal Council, for example, or were involved in political work as activists in the past, with protests at the Mayflower on Thanksgiving, or at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) during the takeover in the 70’s. Thus, this study’s sample is composed of 15 blood right members of the Unkechaug Nation presenting as having a strong Indigenous identity.

I attempted to get representation from the elder, middle and younger groups to allow for a diversity of voices across the generation span, but this proved difficult and most were in the 40-60 year age range. I was able to obtain representation from each of the 5 core families that comprised the original residents of the Reservation. Participants who have lived on the Reservation their entire lives were tapped, as well as those who have left the Reservation and returned, some from living on other Indigenous Reservations.

The sample consists of fifteen blood right residents, of which six are male and nine are female. Two were in their 20’s, one in her 30’s, four in their 40’s, three in their 50’s,

four in their 60's and one in his 80's. Ten had served or are currently serving on the Tribal Council; four are involved in the Cultural and Language Revitalization Committee; four had never moved off the Reservation; and two were actively involved in protests around issues of Indigenous rights and sovereignty issues and Pan Indianism in the 70's and 80's. All are currently involved in supporting the Nation's sovereign rights.

Despite all the issues described above of collaboration and mutuality, it was very difficult to find participants who were willing to be a part of my study. Some of the original members of the Unity Project refused, and I depended on the Unkechaug social worker, Veronica Treadwell, MSW as my main key informant to help me gain access to other residents. I then followed up by calling them with the telephone number provided by her. I also attended the Nation's pow wows and made some connections there, but these leads did not materialize. There seemed to be a pattern--polite, friendly conversation and then no follow through. This is understandable given the history of the relations with outsiders. I met with Chief Harry Wallace who offered to help me with the process, and I spoke with two members of the Tribal Council. Some of the information elicited by participants was not helpful because they were so afraid of the ramifications of speaking to an outsider. One participant asked me for a copy of the *Interview Guide* (see Appendix 4) that I gave her, and for the tape to be replayed when we finished the interview to see if she would agree to let me keep it. She finally agreed, although nothing she answered was controversial. Therefore, without the direct help of the Unkechaug social worker, none of these interviews would have been possible. Originally, twenty-five interviews were planned but only fifteen materialized. Nevertheless, this represents 10% of the adult, blood-right population on the Poospatuck Reservation.

Interviews took place in a variety of venues. Most were in the homes of the participants; two were outside in the open air; one was at Starbucks; one was in the temporary Community Center; one was by telephone with a resident who was off the Reservation, and several were in the Tribal office and home of Chief Harry Wallace, who cooked while business carried on as usual.

I became aware how rare this opportunity was to obtain interviews with members of the Reservation. To put this in perspective, after hearing Dr. Strong speak at the Douglaston/Little Neck Historical Society, I got into conversation with a member of the Mattinecock Nation, another ancient Algonquian Nation, without a land base (Reservation) currently. When he learned that I was interviewing residents on the Poospatuck Reservation, his response was: “No one will talk to you on that Reservation.” Likewise, while speaking with Professor Evan Haefeli at Columbia’s History Department about my project, he expressed surprise that I was able to “get on the Reservation at all. I have been trying to make contact there for years.” It is only because of the help and support of Ms. Treadwell and Chief Harry Wallace that most of these interviews were possible, even after several years of working on the Unity Project. Also, the Unkechaug members understood that this study was about cultural identity. Many mentioned in their interviews that their involvement in this project reflected their eagerness to fortify and memorialize their cultural identity, and to preserve their “Indianness” and their way of life for themselves, but mostly in honor of their ancestors and for the future of the children.

4. Data sources

Fifteen semi-structured, in-depth interviews with blood-right members of the Unkechaug Nation at the Poospatuck Reservation are the primary sources of this study. An *Interview Guide* (see Appendix 4) was compiled to facilitate discussion of cultural identity issues from the vantage point of the residents' childhood, adult years and their roles as parents, providing their children with information about their cultural identity. The *Interview Guide* was part of the original dissertation proposal that was submitted to Chief Harry Wallace, reviewed and accepted and later approved by the Institutional Review Board (Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects or CORIHS; see Appendix 2). The *Interview Guide* focused on how participants developed and shared their Indigenous cultural identity, as reflected in questions about how this identity was formed, tested and presented both within the community and outside it. The *Guide* is referred to as "semi-structured" because it left room for following up on questions, and allowed for the participants to raise issues of concern for themselves.

Triangulation of information was obtained by means of other sources, namely the researcher's field notes, journal entries, and memos; review of newspaper and journal articles, histories, including Lone Otter's history (*My People, the Unkechaug: The Story of a Long Island Indian Tribe*) and John Strong's *The Unkechaug Nation: A History* (in press), that he has generously allowed me to read, and the Nation's archives such as the Unkechaug Nation's *Newsletter* and *Program for the Introduction of the Language Revitalization Program*.

I used participant observation throughout the joint work on the Unity Project, including the eighteen interviews I conducted on the Community Needs

Assessment. I attended meetings with the community and the Tribal Council, with grant funding sources, and the Cultural and Language Revitalization Committee. These proved helpful in triangulating the data.

5. Data gathering

Much of this study has focused on the marginalization and oppression of Indigenous Peoples people, and reflects the effects of the dominant culture's oppression and racism on the Unkechaug Nation. Protecting privacy and confidentiality are crucial, as are efforts to guard against marginalizing and disempowering the participants. Before this study was proposed to the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects or CORIHS, I secured the permission of the Unkechaug Nation chief, Harry Wallace, which entailed a series of visits with the chief and a meeting with the Tribal Council during which this study was discussed and presented. The Unkechaug social worker, Veronica Treadwell, MSW, also provided insight and advice on the project proposal, and had to sign off on it before Chief Harry Wallace would agree to give his approval (see Appendix 1).

There are two parts, then, to the consenting process when working with an Indigenous Reservation. The first is obtaining consent from the Chief of the Nation and the Tribal Council, and the second is securing individual consent from each participant. I obtained permission from the Unkechaug Nation Chief, Harry Wallace, and the Unkechaug Tribal Council to pursue this study. Chief Harry Wallace went through the proposal with a "fine-toothed comb" and made suggestions that were helpful, such as eliminating terms such as "internalized racism" that he found offensive and that placed the residents in a victim position. I made all the changes he suggested and brought him a

copy of the revised proposal. As a result, this writer was given permission by the Nation to undertake this study that entailed qualitative interviews with blood right individuals of the Unkechaug Nation residing on the Poospatuck Reservation. This study promotes and benefits the individuals of the Nation with the discussion of tribal members endorsing positive aspects of their Indigenous identity. It fits in with the needs and the wants of the individuals of the Nation to encourage and foster cultural programming of an affirmative nature.

After permission was obtained from the Nation, the writer then obtained permission from the Stony Brook IRB entitled the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CORIHS) to undertake this study, which was given on 4/15/09 and again on 5/18/10. The consents were also approved by CORIHS (see Appendix 3).

I obtained individual consent from each subject at the time of the interview. It consisted of the subject reading and signing the consent form, and being asked if he or she had any questions about the form or the project. Since each subject had already signed a CORIHS approved consent form for the Needs and Assets Assessment, he or she was familiar with this process. Participants were advised that if they were uncomfortable with any of the questions, they would have the power to refrain from answering that question or to stop the interview at any time. I also advised each participant that I am a social worker and as such, a mandated reporter of child abuse. That was also addressed in the consent form. Several respondents politely refused to answer questions about their spirituality that they considered “personal.” Capacity to consent was not an issue since all of the subjects are adults and speak English. Participants were offered a \$20 incentive

fee for their participation, twice the incentive given for the Needs Assessment since I calculated it would take twice as long.

When I called participants on the phone or saw them in person to make an appointment for the interview, I told them that the interview would be audio-taped, that they agreed to initially, and this was confirmed when we met and they signed the consent form. Only one interview was done via telephone because the individual was not available in person, and consent was obtained via the postal service.

Privacy and confidentiality were addressed in the following manner. After consent was given in writing at the time of the interview, a number was coded for each participant and assigned to each tape and transcript. The number was transferred to a name for the data analysis section. Names of well-known Indigenous writers and activists (such as Winona La Duke) replaced the code numbers. The consent form spelled it out clearly:

The following procedures will be followed in an effort to keep your personal information confidential in this study: Your identity will be coded by a number, not by your name. The linking information is kept separate in a locked file, and identifiers will be destroyed when the study is complete. All data will be kept in a secured, limited access location. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation of this research. Your identity will be held confidential (Appendix 3).

The participants were told that their confidentiality would be protected by this physical substitution of their name with a code, and then by the name of an Indigenous writer or activist, and by the fact that their names and other identifiers would be kept separately from the tapes and transcripts in a locked file drawer for three years, after that they would be destroyed. The following risks were detailed on the consent form:

The risks to you are minimal. They might include a breach of confidentiality or stigmatization by the dominant society for endorsing pride in a Native American identity. All efforts will be made to make sure that confidentiality is not breached and that Native American identity

issues will be treated with respect and sensitivity for maintaining a strong cultural identity despite how the dominant culture has portrayed and treated Native American people (Appendix 3).

6. Data management methods

Audio-taping was done using an Olympus Digital voice recorder (VN-5200PC) that was then inserted into the computer and stored in my password locked computer's hard drive and on an external hard drive in my home and backed up on a flash drive. I created a Microsoft file that stored the only information connecting the participant to the de-identified code. This file included information on gender, age, which original Unkechaug family system they belonged to, time on the Reservation and what tribal office, if any, the individual held. As stated in the CORIHS application, all of this information will be destroyed in 4/12, three years after the data was collected.

I personally transcribed each of the interviews directly on the computer. This transcribing process allowed me to engage with the data in a more intimate way than sending it out to a transcription service. I was able to write memos while I was transcribing that facilitated code development later on.

7. Data analysis

Grounded theory method, *de rigueur* in qualitative research, was used to analyze the data, with the computer assisted software program, Maxqda+. As Bryant and Charmaz (2010) define it, grounded theory method

comprises a systematic, inductive and comparative approach for conducting inquiry for the purpose of constructing theory. The method is designed to encourage researchers' persistent interaction with their data while remaining constantly involved with the emerging analyses. Data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously and each informs and streamlines the other....The iterative process of moving back and forth between empirical data and emerging analysis makes the collected data

progressively more focused and the analysis successively more theoretical (p. 1).

Although I was skeptical of this iterative and dialectical process initially, it proved very useful in the development of theory. “Interrogating” the data, through line by line coding, and translating segments into action sequences, I was able to get “behind the data,” to go beyond mere description to interpretation and understanding the processes, the “how,” not the “why.” The maxim of Wittgenstein that Bryant and Charmaz (2010) refer to, “Don’t think but look!” highlighted the importance of the suspension of judgment and pre-conceptions during this processes of coding, constant comparison of similar and dissimilar themes and iterative sampling (p. 11).

Scholars remind us that the interpretive world can be used in facile ways against the very people our work is trying to support. In order to get around this issue, Charmaz (2006) outlines four criteria that merge grounded theory with social justice: credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness. Inquiry must be locally based and shaped by local concerns and the end material must be locally owned and have positive repercussions. As Maori Indigenous scholar Smith (2007) states, “Struggle is always local and contingent; it is never final, and inquiry is always political and moral, grounded in principles centered on autonomy, home, family, kinship, on a collective communal vision that requires that research not be a ‘purchased product owned by the state’ (p. 466). Denzin (2010) quotes Collins in her justice-based framework that emphasizes that any action must contribute to “a politics of resistance, hope and freedom” (p. 466). Grounded theory can be a decolonizing tool because of its commitment to critical, open-ended inquiry.

Initially, I was opposed to using a software package for assistance in developing grounded theory because it appeared to structure the data artificially and seemed removed

from my control. I was afraid that it would stifle my creativity and my ability to engage with the data, as Charmaz (2010) reports Glaser suggests. Other theorists of grounded theory method, such as Dey, argue that software can instill “a more diligent and disciplined approach to the auditing of the creative process” (as quoted in Bryant and Charmaz, 2010, p. 24). After attempting to code and categorize the data several times, I had lost control over the masses of data that flooded my desk. I recognized that structure was necessary. With only fifteen interviews, I wanted to ensure that I was squeezing all I could out of the data. The graphic capabilities, its ability to weight codes and the ability to write memos on the spot proved useful in using MAXqda+.

8. Ethics

Crewsell (2003) highlights the importance of maintaining an ethical code and protecting the privacy of the participants throughout the research process:

Researchers also need to anticipate the possibility of harmful information being disclosed during the data collection process. For example, a student may discuss parental abuse or prisoners may talk about an escape. In these situations, the ethical code for the researcher is to protect the privacy of the participants and to convey this protection to all individuals involved in a study (p. 65)

I wanted to make sure that participants knew where I stood as a mandated reporter. This admonition is particularly important because of the on-going political and legal attacks on the Reservation. Participants were aware that I recognized how anxious they were about the material that they were sharing with me, and as an “allied Other” was sensitive to questions about privacy and protection. For example, I re-played the audiotape and shared the *Interview Guide* with one participant at her request.

Working with vulnerable populations such as Indigenous People comes with a mandate--that scholars respect and honor the impact that 500 years of colonialism has

had on indigenous nations, and contractually pledge that no harm will come as a result of the research. Indigenous scholars contend that Anglo historians, ethnographers, and anthropologists have often laid siege to their cultural history in a way that revictimizes the survivors. Histories and studies have been written about Indigenous Nations without benefit of any involvement or consultation with Indigenous People. They point to a profound lack of respect by scholars who have refused to seek out Indigenous viewpoints, use Indigenous People as informants, or invite them to join the boards that award prestigious prizes to white scholars for work on Indigenous People (Mihesuah, 1998).

The late Indian scholar/activist Vine Deloria put it succinctly: “Despite what many writers may believe, Indians do not necessarily like being studied, not even by established scholars whose careers and identities are based on studying Indian histories and cultures” (as quoted in Mihesuah, 1998, p. 9). Cook-Lynn echoes this sentiment more strongly in saying that “many Indians despise (white writers’) curiosity about their lives” (Mihesuah, 1998, p. 10). Mihesuah sees the impact of colonialism that genocide by warfare, removal, disease and intermarriage with tribal outsiders, loss of lands, encroachment by whites on Indian lands, and the cultural appropriation by the “New Age” of Indian spiritual ceremonies and rites, the scholarly pirating and confiscation of cultural and spiritual history, as another means of extermination by whites (Mihesuah, 1998). How then, can any collaborative effort be accomplished with such profound lack of trust between whites and Indigenous People? For this answer, we turn to the writings of Native scholars for direction. Cavender-Wilson (1998) offers this advice:

This kind of work is not something that can be accomplished on a six-month research grant. Rather it means years of involvement, building trusting relations with native people. The scholar must understand the internal mechanisms Native people have for determining within their own

communities whether they have information relevant to a scholar's study, whether they feel a scholar is respectful enough of their culture to share their valuable insights, who within the community is authorized and informed enough to share the information, and what information is appropriate to share. The rewards of this kind of scholarship may not come from a scholar's academic peers. Rather, the personal rewards reflected in the experiential learning process, the depth of understanding in analysis, and a sense of satisfaction in the realization of moral responsibilities, should be enough to inspire many historians in the field of American Indian history to take this route (p. 26).

The wisdom in this advice should serve as the backbone for any work with Indigenous People. Turning Point, an initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that, together with the National Association of County and City Public Health Officials, devised protocols for operationalizing these moral obligations and mandates in their "Thirteen Policy Principles for Advancing Collaborative Activity Among and Between Tribal Communities and Surrounding Jurisdictions." These principles represent the acknowledgement of the objections and admonitions raised above. They exhort instead mutual trust, respect, involvement, seeking out guidance, opinions and information. They invite the Nation to decide what should be shared and by whom.

1. Don't plan for us without us.
2. Tribal consultation will be the overarching principle.
3. No policies will be made for that affect the Tribes without the direct involvement of Tribes.
4. Tribal systems, traditional and governmental, shall be respected and followed by others working with Tribes.
5. Trust responsibilities between states and Tribes will be respected and honored, with emphasis on building a policy bridge, not a policy wall.
6. Policies shall not bypass tribal government review and approval prior to implementation.
7. Tribally specific data shall not be used or published without prior consultation with the Tribe.
8. Policies shall respect Tribal belief in matrilineal and patrilineal ways of life, reverence for elders and respect for children.
9. Policies shall respect humanitarian principles and values.
10. Policies shall be honored by actions.

11. Training policies shall include developing knowledge of American Indian and Alaska native sovereignty.
12. Blanket policies shall be very broad, consider economic, social, regional and cultural differences and advance integration of public health and environmental health action.
13. Sovereignty includes an inherent right to be in search of life, liberty and happiness in human beings (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003, 436-37).

9. Limitations

This study centers on the perceptions of a particular Indigenous community, the Unkechaug Nation of the Poospatuck Reservation, and the results, therefore, cannot in any way be assumed to be generalized or transferred to other Indigenous communities. Each community is unique, although all share some belief systems and certainly a history of oppression. This study does not purport to make broad generalizations to other communities, so it is limited in scope and in transferability. It should, hopefully, though, provide an accurate reflection of the thoughts, feelings, perceptions and realities of the individuals of the Unkechaug community, and as such provide some understanding of the challenges they have faced in their struggles to survive and to endure as a people in this country. The insights and theory derived from respondents' reflections on their indigenous identity will hopefully add to the current discourse on identity, providing fundamental insights to social workers intent on honoring the process and gaining the knowledge necessary for culturally competent policy, research and practice.

10. Subjectivity and the Researcher's Lens/Reflexivity

As Weaver (1999) discusses, self-awareness and a critical sense of the role and the use of self will need to be managed throughout this study -- not only in the data collection and interactions with Tribal residents, but in the writing, analysis and interpretation of the data. The strategies I used to avoid bias included sharing the material

with the Unkechaug Nation social worker, who provided critical and useful analysis and served as a “devil’s advocate.” Keeping a reflexive journal allowed me to be in touch with my feelings and thoughts proactively. Issues that arose for me were my early experience with stigma as a Latina, especially in high school, that mirrored some of the shame issues participants discussed. But these are memories that were triggered of rude, narcissistic injuries and not the heavy hand of poverty. One social worker in the Unity Project made the callous comment that “no one should have to live like this” to an astounded group of residents who were insulted, but did not respond. I wondered how many times I have ignorantly made similar affronts since the residents were too polite to point this out.

In the writing and analysis, it has been a matter of unlearning in order to learn new methods, and untraining myself as a therapist not to do therapy but to listen during the interviews. In college and graduate school, I was trained in an objectivist historical tradition at Columbia University, a place synonymous with positivism, the diametrical opposite of the pragmatism to which I was exposed and I was using for my analysis. Steeled in objectivity, dispassion, neutrality, lack of bias and attachment, all in the service of science, did not prepare me well for the world of social constructivism, and I have to fight against this impulse that qualitative scholars see as tainted by colonialism.

The only experience I have had as oppressed has been as a woman and as a Latina, but because of class and white overprivilege, I have operated under the radar and not felt the full effects of these oppressions or victimizations. It stings and hurts like the smarting of a whip but does not have the same effect as loss of land, property and livelihood. My oppression has not been life threatening or disastrous, as it has for

members of the Reservation. Unpacking my overprivilege backpack is a daily job, and I have become more aware of it.

I have a car and a license, two accoutrements that keep most people on the Reservation from securing gainful employment. Having enough to eat and a warm apartment, free from black mold and damp conditions that cause asthma and other lung problems, overflowing cesspools, problems with heat, and being able to live where I want and to look for housing where I want, were not privileges I earned.

My ancestors and their children, were not targeted for extinction nor annihilation for the religious, spiritual beliefs and practices; my language was never forbidden. They have not been forced to relocate; they never had their lands taken away and forced onto Reservations where they could no longer hunt or fish or tend to crops to be self-sufficient and economic providers for their families. These were the issues the Indigenous Peoples on the Reservation, and my phenomenological experience devolved on a parallel universe to theirs. I became acutely aware that I had done nothing to deserve this differential treatment and experience, and that I had a responsibility to be an “allied Other” in their struggle for self-determination and maintenance of their sovereign rights.

VII. Data Analysis

1. The world we have lost: A community that would be a dream to live in

Oral tradition contends that this land, our land, as I am a direct descendent of this tribe, consisted of more than 11, 000 acres at one time. The acreage extended west to Blue Point, north to Port Jefferson, northeast to Riverhead and east to West Hampton Beach. This was our living, hunting and seasonal migratory zone. During the spring and summer months, we lived along the edges of woodland creeks, streams, bays and, of course, the ocean. In the winter, we could move inland for the protection of the trees and accessibility of fresh water and wild game (Lone Otter aka Donald Treadwell, 1992, p. 83).

Oral tradition, collective consciousness and what Brave Heart and De Bruyn (1998) call “genetic memory” converge in the Unkechaug memory of a utopian, golden past before conquest. Whether it is a reference above to life over 4,000 years ago, or of a childhood 50 or 100 years ago, a yearning is expressed and echoed throughout the interviews for the “world we have lost.” For the Unkechaug People, the depletion of over 10,000 acres of land cannot be underestimated. This diminution is both literal and figurative - - in losing a way of life, the freedoms and the connections to the land, to the animals and metaphysical realms and to each other as a Nation. Connection to the land physically for sustenance, economically and politically as a land base, and spiritually for connection to the metaphysical realms was all-encompassing. This land where the Reservation now stands is a mere pittance of the original acreage. The vision of their land embedded in these memories was pre-colonial, pre-conquest, pre-industrial and pre-capitalist: the communal, shared universe of a People, a Nation, a family. This land was stolen from the People:

Up to and during the time, the Unkechaug and other Indian nations inhabited this prized area, but the English, upon their conquest, occupied land not inhabited by Indians and traded cheaply for the land that was being occupied by the aboriginals at that moment. Fascinated by such novelties as needles, guns, gray coats, swords, iron knives, kettles and more, the Indians exchanged the use of their land not knowing that when a European makes a trade, it is a trade for keeps. The disparity of these transactions was realized when the native people found themselves without a place to live. The English “squatters” took for granted that White had supremacy over the native (Lone Otter aka Donald Treadwell, 1992, p. 83).

Lone Otter (Donald Treadwell) poignantly describes this process as one of chicanery, subterfuge and seduction, fueled by the irreconcilable differences between Anglo attitudes and Indigenous reverence toward the land. He characterizes concepts such as private, individual ownership as alien to Indigenous Peoples.

The Unkechaug participants’ memories of childhood, the teachings to their children and the references to the way their ancestors lived metaphorically and concretely reflect the loss of land and the concomitant “lost world.” These memories create a transpositional reality - - they live in the past, the present and the future simultaneously, as described by Brave Heart and De Bruyn (1998). The personal is historical. The individual histories of the respondents reflect their vision of a utopian past. Inherent in this utopian ideality is, by definition, a critique of the present world. There is also a projection of what it could be in the future. It reflects a circular and cyclical view of history. The land serves as a connection to the ancestors and anchors their history:

I mean, we have always known that we have a real, long history, and part of it, in that history, is that we were always proud to show that we can document, that we can show that we have been here longer than most. That we walk the same grounds and feel and see a lot of the same things that many of our ancestors have....I always feel a connectedness to the past and to know that the same thing I’m doing my family and the elders and they (the ancestors) have been doing it since the beginning of time, so I feel a fluidity-that’s the best thing I can say. It’s knowing that they are

still watching and that they are on the next plane and they see what we are doing here. So it's just connectedness. (Winona*)

Winona relates that the Unkechaug have a “peace” that people who are not Indigenous do not have because they did not come from somewhere else; they have always been here. On the other hand, there is no “old country” to return to, so that the devastation of their land has an even more potent quality to it. This reality compounds the trauma. Thus, this collective consciousness of loss of land by the participants reflects the intergenerational transmission of grief, loss and trauma, as they recount their current alienation from the land and the former “freedoms” they enjoyed.

This theme of “the world we have lost” focuses on the stories they heard from their elders. In this Eden they were self-reliant, self-sufficient and self-determining. They conjure up a time when freedom to hunt, fish, trap and whale followed the cycles of the seasons, and when abundant fish, fowl and deer composed their daily diets, and gardening and collecting the fruit from the orchards and the herbs for medicinal purposes kept them resilient, strong and healthy. After the adoption of the colonizer’s diet that clashed with their lactose intolerance and the loss of their protein-based foodstuffs, their constitutions were compromised, which led to the development of the diabetes epidemic, according to Chief Lone Otter (Donald Treadwell, 1992). As he describes it: “The Unkechaug diet, prior to contact with the Anglo was high protein, high fiber, low starch and fat, and little or no butterfat products...The hunter-gatherer daily diet was high

* Names have been changed

nutrition. It supplied all the nutrients, vitamins and minerals to maintain a healthy body” (p. 34). The colonizers’ assault on their systems was biological as well as psychological.

Winona laments this change from 175 to 55 acres and describes what effect it has had:

I talked with the eldest member of the tribe for a period of time. She talked about what it was like when they were first here as kids and how they hunted and the deer used to run and they used to get around on horses and just the freedom, and how far the land used to go. We used to have all of Brookhaven town and now it’s diminished to about between 52 and 54 acres. (Winona)

When asked about how she felt about the discrepancy between then and now, Winona’s thoughts went to her children and to the legacy that she was leaving them. She recognized that they experience a radically different childhood from hers:

I get angry. I get angry that we had a freedom as children with no fear. We canoed. We took boats. We had a relationship with the ocean. We respected the ocean but, umm, we loved it. I couldn’t see my children at 5, 6 and 8 just saying, “I’ll see you later,” and taking a canoe and just going out into the river where that was something that we did on a daily basis. We never had to worry about cars because there were none coming through. (Winona)

Her description of “freedom with no fear” attests to her feelings of self-confidence, self-determination, and self-awareness. She laments that she cannot offer this to her children, and expresses her anger at this decimation of her land and rights. She expresses her fear of what might happen because of the encroachment of the dominant culture. To counter this assault on her autonomy, she relates that she sits with her daughter and educates her to imagine what life was like in her great-grandmother’s generation. She does this to give her the ability to envision this utopian past for herself and to join empathically with her ancestors in reliving a world before colonization, capitalism, usurpation of the land, and the imposition of Anglo values:

Winona: Yea, definitely, I mean I definitely encourage my daughter who is able to read, you know we do. I think that through some of the books that she's reading and the little girl is going through different experiences, I talk to her about those experiences and say, "think about it. Great Grandma-that's what it was like when she was little. Or her mom, like being responsible for the other kids. Having to help out in the house, having to help hunt, you know, having different responsibilities and not having television, not having cars and having to walk and ride horses and just real responsibility things--the responsibilities to the earth, the responsibilities to family, you know, those kind of things, the same things that comes to you- -you look after your family, you may not like them all the time, but you know, you really have to take care and respect and try to live with integrity."

Interviewer: What does that mean to live with integrity?

Winona: To do the right thing for the right reason, even when it doesn't feel good. (Winona)

She asks her daughter to imagine a pre-industrial and pre-capitalist environment, one that nevertheless carried certain expectations and responsibilities. She details a moral code that includes reverence for the earth, the culture, and respect and caring for her family, the residents of the Reservation. She exhorts her to follow an inner-directed, ethical mode of conduct. She invites her daughter to discover another way of looking at the world, another reality and frame of reference, despite the devastation she sees around her. Winona challenges the current reality of loss of lands and freedoms when she teaches her child to imagine another world. She struggles against the intergenerational transmission of trauma and grief by keeping the hope alive that this world can be re-created.

Winona's emphasis on self-reliance, self-affirmation and self-determination is a metaphor for the Reservation and for her people in their life before colonialism. This is Winona's victory over colonialism: to keep the "lost world" alive, despite the desire of the colonizers to annihilate it. Later, she expounds on these "freedoms" she had as a child:

We were definitely isolated... We just had freedom. Our dogs were never tied. Everybody was just free and it was just family. We never worried about strangers. We had... our doors were never locked and nobody had fences and everything was just wide open and it was just us. Now, I have to watch out for cars. People don't have the same respect for the land. People don't have the same respect for the culture. Many have married out and have not taught their children or their spouses to love and respect, so it's very different and that's part of the reason it saddens me that the children do not have the same freedoms that we did. (Winona).

The lack of locked doors and fences and the expansive quality attest to the communal nature of the Reservation. Winona extends this act of nurturing to her animal kin. "Just us" refers to the unity of shared values and beliefs that residents had. Winona sees that the current lack of respect for the land has led to a concomitant loss of cultural identity. Culture is seen as a natural extension of the connectivity to the land, the ancestors and each other. The intrusion of colonial mentalities has corrupted some people on the Reservation. It has led them to adapt the colonizer's mentality of private property and capitalist attachment to it.

Sherman also remarks on this characteristic of the world he had lost- - the open door policy, the sharing, the lack of separation between what is mine and what is yours, the lost sense of family, community and unity:

One of the things that you can definitely say is at least when I was growing up, the Reservation was a community where there were just like any family problems, but people shared, people looked out for each other's kids. I was able to go to any house and use any of the facilities as needed. If I was hungry, I could get food and water. That was just when I was growing up. I don't think they can do that today. It's become too much too isolated for each individual family. It's like they're protecting what's theirs versus. When I was growing up anybody could borrow anything they needed from anybody and it was much more of a community then. (Sherman)

Like living in a kibbutz, the communal nature of the Reservation was most manifest in the way children were treated, honored, cared for and appreciated. There was no division

of assets, belongings or property; no private ownership. Neither were children considered private property. No “theirs” vs. “ours.” There was no “in group” or “out group,” just family. As Winona describes above, the “fluidity” of connection with the children and adults extended to ancestors and animal kin. This connection was made manifest through the communality and commonality of the land.

For Paula, this sense of being safe, nurtured and cared for as a child is a strong memory of her cultural identity that she still has when she returns to the Reservation:

I didn't want to admit to it but I loved coming back. There was a sense of safety and community and love that I didn't experience anywhere. Anywhere. My mother did not lock the door. It was still everybody's kids were everybody's kids, and it was just a wonderful, wonderful feeling to come back home. I didn't say it out loud. I said it to myself. It was absolutely great to walk on the path behind my house and sit by the water. It was wonderful to see my cousins. It was great. (Paula)

Children belonged to everyone in the “family,” i.e., the Nation. The excitement this memory stirs in her is palpable. The concept of “safety” also reflects not only the lack of cars but how she felt protected from the outside world. She internalizes this feeling of safety as a buffer from the outside world, a demarcating line that separated outside and inside worlds.

Leslie related how this attitude toward children as “everybody's kids” meant that they belonged to the Nation. As a result of this culturally grounded attitude, “children were never adopted out because of this “familiness.” It also reflects Winona's dictum to live with integrity, to follow the mandate directed by cultural values wherever it leads:

It (the Reservation) draws you back no matter what, you want that familiness, you know in native, you know, your family is always there for you no matter what. I don't care what you've done. Your family is there for you. They make sure you eat. If you don't have any food, if I have food, it's here. We make sure we take care of our own. Partly I don't think there is any child on this Reservation, they might be an orphan but they're

not homeless, because if someone's parent dies, someone takes them. We don't let our kids go to orphanages or be put out to adoption or whatever. Somebody takes them in here and this is the way it's ever been ever since I was a kid. Nobody's ever been put out. Somebody took them in. That to me is tribal because if you read any history books, this is what people did. You did not allow...Even the thing about adopting little Indian kids, but I never went for that because they need their culture, you know and I don't know whether...because people are always trying to change people. They want them to be something they're not. (Leslie)

Leslie tied in the history and the cultural identity of the Nation with their treatment of children, as well as the elephant in the room--the dominant culture's desire to make them in their own image and denude them of their Indigenous nature. Annihilation through assimilation by sending Indigenous children to boarding schools, as well as the current tendency for children to be removed by Child Protective Services attests to this continual colonization of Indigenous People. Thus, keeping cultural values and the memory of one's cultural history alive is about survival of the Nation, its ideals, values and morality, as well as its children--the future of the Reservation.

For example, Paula's memories of music and song being heard on the Reservation include the sweet sound of her ancestral language. She reflects on this reality and ties it to the attempts to revive the language on the Reservation:

The tribal music was also very important too. I remember my uncle sitting on his front lawn and playing drums and singing, and I also remember as a child hearing words, actual words being sung and that's why it's, I'm just so, so, so very, very proud of the Language Revitalization Committee members who have worked tirelessly to bring back the language because it was lost, it was absolutely lost, but I remember hearing these words. I remember my mother using words, not necessarily part of dialogue but to express an idea or thought or a thing. (Paula)

This lost world contained the music and the language of the spheres for Paula, whose involvement in her family was intensified by hearing and playing music with them and being privy to their ancient language. In voicing her support for the language

revitalization program, she further highlights her desire to restore this lost world. As a “truth teller,” she attests to its veracity, its historicity and its authenticity by her memory of witnessing it.

Sherman learned early that when he left the Reservation, the Indigenous standards, values and realities did not hold. The dominant culture could not contain his affinity for the woods or the animals and birds with which he communicated. He made a stand in kindergarten that he would not cede these precious freedoms to the colonizing world:

Uhh, well, I almost failed kindergarten (laughter) seriously because again as I described I was a wild child very much into nature and it was essentially I could walk up to a deer. When I was a kid, birds would fly around me and land. It wasn't an issue. It just happened because I was around them all the time. My dad could call birds to him. I couldn't do that. They just happened to be there. Umm when I got into kindergarten here I am in these walls and as long as there was an open window, I wasn't there anymore. My body might have been there but my mind was gone. I was out. I was still in the woods. I was still fishing, and that became a problem. So as I said I almost failed because I just wasn't there and I was told this later but I remember and again like I said about the fantasy world. You got the body and you got the mind, the mind, the soul, the spirit, whatever you want to call it. They're not necessarily attached (laughter). (Sherman)

Sherman's separation of body, mind and spirit was a strategy to maintain the continuity of his connection to the land and the metaphysical realm that were physically attached to the geomythical place, the Reservation. The colonizing teachers could not annihilate his love and reverence for the land, and his privileging of the ancestral woods and connection with the physical and metaphysical realms over the school almost caused him to fail kindergarten.

Sherman was in training as a medicine person by his family. His true education was taking place far outside the classroom. It was the tribal education that Fixler

described above in which an Indigenous individual is introduced to the concepts of the circular nature of reality by a family member:

That would be my great uncle and my dad and it did have aspects of respect for the wildlife around you, but it also had aspects of how everything had its own spirits and traits and observation. You just looked at things and you know that it has its own spirit and its own lifecycle. As an example real quick is, along with hunting as a possibility, rabbits if you scare a rabbit, rabbits live in the world of circle. Their burrows are a circle, the burrow is a circle, and if you disturb them while you're walking, just wait a little while and they'll come right back to you. Things like that and the world of a native person is the world of circles, that's one of the things that I learned later is that, square rooms and things like that were just not native, just not the way that the worldview was, so changing of times is...long story short, again it's the same thing, I just lived it, and things that I did I still do. I'm an undercover pagan, I guess you could call me (Laughter). (Sherman)

“Just living it” translates as making a choice of the preferential identity of Indigenous values and worldviews on the Reservation rather than to give up his mind and spirit to the rooms of the “outside world’s” kindergarten class and to the teachers there, “the squares.” The concepts of almost failing in kindergarten and success in his growing appreciation of Indigenous worldviews and lifeways intimate that these concepts are not compatible. His preferred, salient identity, like Winona’s, even at five years old, was that of an Indigenous person that he hid as an “undercover pagan.” Sherman’s cynicism about the current state of the Reservation, its isolation and the lack of connection and cohesiveness of the residents, as well as their alienation from the land, did not prevent him from harboring the hope that the lost world could be revived. In the words of the philosopher, hope triumphed over experience for Sherman:

It’s my hope that they rebuild the community and don’t be so isolated as individuals, and greedy as individuals, and they work together as a community and become what they are, as one family again. Lots of different names, lots of different experiences but they are related and if, if

they just learn to work together and help each other, that could be a community which would be a dream to live in. (Sherman)

Sherman attests to the circular and cyclical nature of history and Indigenous worldviews. He reinforces the elements that comprise his version of the utopian “world we have lost” such as the sense of commonality and community, its unity, its moral universe, its collaborative nature and interconnection with the metaphysical realm. He pits this against the encroachment of the outside world’s “isolation,” “greediness” and “individuality.” Sherman breaks the cycle of the intergenerational transmission and disenfranchisement of trauma, loss and grief by posing the hopeful model that a return to the “world we have lost” is possible. A “new world” is envisioned through a rediscovery of communal moral and spiritual values, the “familiness” that Paula describes, Winona’s emphasis on responsibility, self-determination, self-affirmation and self-reliance. The intergenerational buck stops with Sherman, and the liberation begins.

2. Defining Moments: “The Indian as simulation”

In social psychologist Claude Steele’s (2010) work, *Whistling Vivaldi and Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us*, he relates an “encounter” from his childhood: “I have a memory of the first time I realized I was black. It was when, at seven or eight, I was walking home from the school with neighborhood kids on the last day of the school year--the whole summer in front of us--and I learned that we ‘black’ kids couldn’t swim at the pool in our area park. Except on Wednesday afternoons” (p. 1). Until that point, Steele informs us, he was not aware that he was one of the “black kids” who was excluded until his peers informed him of such. This “encounter” with an identity contingency tied to his race had a lasting impact on him. It led twenty years later to his research, as well as to social and political activism to achieve identity-integrated civic life

and equal opportunity. Steele discovered that social identities strongly affect a myriad of social performance items, such as the classroom, standardized tests results, memory capacity, and athletic performance. Steele (2010) discovered that these identity contingencies “constrain our quality of life by putting a stereotype threat in the air” (pp. 3-4).

Steele’s description of his “encounter” was what Kathy Charmaz (2006) describes as a “defining moment.” In this moment, there is no turning back from the alternate view that is perceived by the Other. Interview participants relate traumatic episodes as children and young adults, in which they are confronted with a denial of their identity, their very existence as Indigenous Peoples, as a Nation or as individuals. These experiences are the tipping point, a crystallization, at which they become aware of themselves as other or outsider; they discover themselves to be existing within a parallel universe where their beliefs, ideas, spirituality, history and concept of reality are at odds with the dominant culture’s perception of them.

They are confronted with an alternate definition of the situation, when for example they are categorized as “extinct” in textbooks and classroom lectures on the history of Long Island, or in grade school yearbooks, or chastised as mendacious imposters by teachers who do not “believe in them,” as if they were ghosts. These encounters lead to dehumanizing, alienating and shameful feelings for the interviewees, where they feel exposed and are stripped of their humanity, their dignity and their identity. They reflect the post traumatic slave syndrome Leary (2005) describes. For example, one resident tells of an incident in which an Italian man came over to her in a diner and rubbed her head because “Indians are good luck.” This act reflects Fanon’s

(1963) description of the colonizer's imputation of savagery onto the colonized: "Sometimes this Manichaeism reaches its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the colonized subject. In plain talk he (sic) is reduced to the state of an animal. And consequently when the colonist speaks of the colonized he uses zoological terms" (p. 7).

An often-repeated theme in the interviews, "living in two worlds" takes on a different complexion when both of these worlds are seen to encapsulate divergent realities or identities for their inhabitants. On the one hand, the Reservation is a place described above in the "world we have lost" as a safe haven, literally a port in the storm. It is where young Unkechaug flex their muscles riding canoes into the Forge River, or freely enter the homes of any of the residents for food, sustenance or warmth, and experience the communal nature of the inter-relationships with each other, the land and the metaphysical realm. The corollary is the "outside world," the "real world" or the "pretend world" as participants name it, which is not considered safe. One participant knew enough, even at five, to protect herself from the stigma an Indigenous identity generated in the local school by hiding and keeping secret her Indigenous name and identity. These worlds collide in the experience some participants describe in that they see themselves through the eyes of the other, and that defining moment becomes a watershed for them by triggering the intergenerational transmission of grief and the trauma response.

One participant remembers how she returned home from school where she was told "there are no Indians on Long Island," to ask her father, the tribal chief, "Why don't they believe in us?" As he returned to canvassing the beach for arrowheads and broken pottery shards of over 4,000 years of civilization washed up on their beach, he advised

her that they were “ignorant,” to “pay them no mind.” His reaction was a common response. Her father’s life work centered around authentication and support of the resilience of his people. He discovered artifacts that lent credibility to his assertions about Unkechaug history that were his tonic to this “myth of extinction” that his daughter faced in school. He was not ignoring this denial, but rather working ceaselessly to counteract it. With the psychic numbing he expressed, his presentation to his daughter reflected what Brave Heart and De Bruyn (1998) see as “survivor’s guilt.” He saw his obligation to his ancestors was weighted with the onus to share in that ancestral pain and take responsibility for it. Although unintended, his daughter’s anger response to this denial ironically led to the disenfranchisement of her grief and the reinforcement of the shame she experienced in school.

As Brave Heart, Weaver and De Bruyn (1998, 1999, 2005) recognize from their work and from the scholarship of Holocaust survivors, this is a normal reaction to trauma; however, it serves to intensify the intergenerational transmission of grief and trauma. The antidote for these interactions is what her father was formulating: a vehicle to transmit the history of the Nation and educate the members of the Nation. By excavating actual living proof of their existence - - arrowheads pottery shards, beaded pipes, that he then sent to the Smithsonian Museum for authentication, he had helped them to learn their history. Brave Heart points out that this is the first step in the healing process. It is followed by a more intensive participation of the community in ceremonies, rituals, and deeper relationships with extended kin in realigning with their cultural identity (1998, 1999, 2005).

Brave Heart (1999) unpacks this intergenerational transmission by referencing the work of Holocaust scholars, Fogelman and Kestenberg: “The psychological transfer of a trauma response across generations has been explained by theories of a) transposition where descendents not only identify with ancestral history but emotionally live in the past and the present, and (b) loyalty to the deceased and identification with the suffering that necessitates perpetuation in one’s own life” (p. 112).

Brave Heart (1999) also points to the trauma work of Harvard neuropsychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk, who discovered “a neurophysiological analogue of memory among cumulative trauma survivors” (p. 112). The production of cortisol due to the stress that this trauma caused could also be operative in the development of Type II diabetes, a disease that ravages the Indigenous Nations, and particularly the Unkechaug Nation, where children are reported to learn the word “dialysis” before their “ABC’s.”

As Winona recalls:

As a young child, I remember in kindergarten making a conscious decision not to use my full Indian name because I was embarrassed by it, because I was told that there were no Indians and that umm, that we were lying, and you know, and I didn’t feel I was comfortable at that point really showing people who I was. I didn’t know in kindergarten when I made that decision how many of my family members or extended family I was actually in school with at that time, and it wasn’t until I got into, umm, middle school that I started to realize who was who I was in school with and I began to realize who my family was and that we were all related (Winona).

The irony is that she would have been revealing herself to members of her own family, but apparently this reality was hidden to her, since they also must have been “under the radar.” She was forced to develop her identity in hiding. She sensed it was not safe to reveal this social and cultural identity at that time, but strongly asserts that she “knew who she was.” To be accused by teachers and authorities of lying about her

ancestry pushed her shame further inward: it discouraged her from joining or seeking acceptance in a group that rejected her perception of who she was. Forcing this identity underground strengthened her loyalty and affective bonding ties with the Reservation and further alienated her from the dominant culture.

Vickie's experience with the "lies told in school" was foundational in her identification as Indigenous and her rejection of a colonialist mentality. She narrates how her education came to a head one day when she realized that what she had been taught about Thanksgiving in school was nothing more than a "big fat lie:"

Vickie: That was, uh, just trying to get the true story out. It wasn't all peace and harmony and for the great part what we learned in grade school about Thanksgiving is just a big fat lie and that was...

Interviewer: So what was that like for you to find out that was a big fat lie?

Vickie: It was devastating-it really was.

Interviewer: What was the truth that you found out?

Vickie: One, that *we* (italics mine) had welcomed for the most part, the Pilgrims, helped them through the winter, and then were basically told that, you know, when we... that they, there were people who travelled back and forth into the stockade, and then all of a sudden *you* weren't welcomed. And then there was encroachment on the Native American lands and then the out-and-out slaughter, you know, that *to me* was devastating because of ...what had happened... They were in ceremony and the Pilgrims or whatever they wanted to call themselves, set fire to the structure, and as the people tried to escape, they were killed--women and children, babies clubbed to death. That was heartbreaking, and for the longest time I thought, well, they thought *we* were savages....How could you expect justice...while people were in their churches and they set fire to them? So it took a long time to dissipate that anger, to realize people are shit...sorry (laughter) which is really bad, you know, but well, *we* must have done something really, really wrong to have been treated in this manner. (Vickie)

The effects of a colonialist, manifest destiny machinery are vividly apparent in the juxtaposition of the Pilgrim's treatment of the Wampanoag Indians detailed above, and Vickie's response to them. She questions what Indigenous People have done to be

responsible for and elicit the treatment they received from the Europeans. This blood right member of the Nation personalizes the tragedy, stating: “*to me*, it was devastating” and “heartbreaking.” Vickie speaks about how long she has struggled emotionally to deal with her feelings “to dissipate that anger,” to come to terms with the realization that “people are shit, which is really bad,” and finally “that they thought that *we* were savages.”

The most insidious statement, however, is her assertion that “*we* must have done something really, really wrong to be treated in this manner.” Identification with ancestral suffering and dealing with overwhelming feelings and emotions as a result of this, certainly separate out this trauma response and impart a particularly Indigenous inflection to it. Vickie’s response is evocative of Leary (2005)’s imputation of African Americans and Indigenous People as savages because they were neither Christian nor European -- the “out group” to be sure! Leary describes the process of cognitive dissonance whereby the colonizers, in denial of the atrocity and responsibility persuade the colonized to take on the culpability for their crimes. This is reflected above when Vickie asks what the Indigenous People did to merit genocide.

Given the importance of education for social and economic advancement in this country, what damage does this have on a child’s ability to trust in a system that rewards those who believe the lies, and punishes those who do not? The dialectical tension renders the child unable to function well, hampering natural born abilities to ask questions safely, to believe in a righteous system and to trust in that American dream of advancement - - the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Winona relates that a negative identity contingency tied to her race emanated from television. As a young child she was

mystified and amazed at the ignorance with which children from the outside perceived her and her culture as evil, violent and life-threatening:

Television- Indians were always bad in cowboys and Indians. Who wanted to be an Indian ever? We were always the ones, you know, that were bad. I remember that as a small child, there were some kids from the outside community who they were riding their bicycles and they were lost and we told them that they were on the Reservation and they ran away scared. "Oh no, they're going to scalp us! They're going to scalp us!" And we just looked kind of looked at them like, "What are you crazy? Don't you know that you were the ones who were scalping us, who taught us? Come on!" I mean and this was in like 1st-2nd- 3rd grade we were having those experiences. Even though we had pride in our culture within, when we were together when we were separated, it was not something that you held on to. We tried to blend as much as we could with the community we were living in. We were not quick to say, you know, we were from the Reservation. We would try to blend in wherever we could and just not make too much of a scene. (Winona)

Winona was taught not to struggle against the abusive labeling of her as a "bad Indian:" just ignore it; they are ignorant. This was more psychic numbing. She learned early that the dominant culture blamed the victim; rather than taking responsibility for their atrocities, they projected crimes or in this case, "scalpings" back onto the victims (Leary, 2005). History was turned upside down and falsified to the ends of the dominant culture.

As Leary describes in *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* (2005), the dominant culture finds ways to escape its responsibility for the atrocities that they have perpetrated. It is not until they are willing to take responsibility, a necessary factor in healing, for their pernicious treatment of African Americans and Indigenous People can this intergenerational trauma and grief be lifted and healed. The response of Indigenous parents above also echo this syndrome in that they told their children to ignore the ignorance, be proud of who they are and to know who they are. Like the parents of

African slaves and African American slaves, they were forced to hold two opposing and unresolved realities simultaneously--that of the oppressor, and that of the oppressed. They learned to interact with outsiders to diffuse and minimize the impact on them, as symbolic interactionism demonstrates.

For Paula, who danced as a child in a troupe organized by Chief Red Fox, this encounter with outsiders at the fairs, parades, camps and schools was confusing for her, even in the retelling of the experiences, that take on a trance-like quality in her description of her alienation and anomie. In this section, Paula narrates how she was objectified, devalued and stripped of her humanity, when she repeatedly had her picture taken with children from the audience, rendering her a “*simulacrum* of Indianness”:

Yeah, because my uncle said to do it, you know. I was like a kid and my uncle said, “Go stand over there and get your picture taken,” and my whole thing is, you know, and ... I don’t know if this sounds odd but...”why?” You know, my mother would say, “Stand over there and have your picture taken with that kid.” Do you know what I mean? I really didn’t...it just felt uncomfortable. I thought that I was coming there to, not necessarily, well I guess to entertain too, but to show what **we** (emphasis) were about, to show a little bit of our culture, and you know, we worked really hard on our dances and for people to see this and to enjoy this and to kind of like bring my family to your family--at least that was my understanding, at least that’s what my mother taught me: “This is what you’re going to do. You’re going to show these people what we do at our ceremonies and blah blah blah” And then I kind of was like and...you get your picture taken....Ok...it just felt a little odd....We were different. We were something to look at. I didn’t want us just to be something to look at. I wanted us to be somebody to talk to, you know, talk to us, ask us questions, or things like that...What’s my name...Yeah. What do you want to do? What do you learn about in school-we got questions like, “Do you live in tee pees? Do you live in wigwams? You know, that was a long time ago, so we got a lot of those, for lack of a better word, very ignorant questions, you know, I don’t want to be mean, maybe they really did think that’s how we lived...I came away feeling uncomfortable and I came away feeling like...maybe the next experience would be better but it would kind of like be the same, and I kind of approached my uncle and said I really didn’t like doing this, and my uncle, as well as my mother and as well as all of my aunts and uncles, they all felt like: “Just ignore

that...just ignore that, and continue to dance with your uncle- -just ignore all of that,” you know... (Paula)

From Paula’s standpoint, she had come to teach the other/outside about her culture, to let them peer into her world, by sharing her ceremonies and rituals in dancing for them, but instead, she was met with an identity contingency tied to her race, the stereotype of the stoic Indian, mute, yet exotic outsider, forever fixed in a historic past, incapable of feelings, especially of grief, and denuded of her humanity. Along with the dominant culture’s projection of blame onto the Indigenous peoples for the crimes committed against them, came the cognitive perversion that they had no right to grieve because they were the culpable ones (Leary, 2005).

The product of this interchange - - the fetishized photograph of Paula in her regalia alongside adolescent white children--existing in a hyper reality created by television and glossed over with ignorance and racism, encapsulates the *simulacrum*, the simulation of the other, in its interrogation of the stereotype of “Indianness.” In her “encounter,” Paula had run smack into Anishinabe writer Gerald Vizenor’s “mythic postindian warrior.” In Vizenor’s *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (1994), he uses a photo of Andy Warhol’s silkscreen of American Indian Movement spokesperson, Russell Means. *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (1994), Vizenor plays ironically with the manner in that the dominant culture, in its desire for dominance, has demeaned and disempowered tribal culture. Vizenor (1999) visualizes the projection of the Other, with its Indianness, as the final endgame of Manifest Destiny, “the simulation of dominance” (p. 8):

The *indian* is a simulation, the absence of natives; the *indian* transposes the real, and the simulation of the real has no referent, memory or native

stories. (1999, 1)...Natives are the presence but manifest manners court *the authentic evidence* of absence, the romance of ethnic dioramas and cultural simulations (p. 26).

Vizenor (1999) quotes Jean Baudrillard's (who becomes a character in his book) *Simulacra and Simulations* to underscore this idea: "It is the generation by models of the real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it" (p. 9).

Nowhere is this notion of the hyperreal more present in the interviews than in the theme of the denial of the participants' Indigenous identity by Indigenous People themselves because they do not fit the phenotypical stereotype. For Michael, who relates a childhood and adolescence deformed and tormented by this denial, the need for acceptance and belonging to an Indigenous community became a life-long quest, punctuated by a clash between his self-identity and that perceived by others because of his phenotype. To accept his "nativeness" required a paradigm shift of sorts:

I'll be honest. It was difficult because you know, from when I was younger I accepted my nativeness. From the time that I was, I would say from the time that I entered into school, I was extremely proud. People would ask me my name and I would be like it's such and such, and they'd be like, that's cool, and as I started getting older, I started getting ridiculed by Native Americans because I am not your archetypal Native American, you know, I don't have the flowing black hair. You know, my hair is curly and I don't necessarily possess all the features of the quintessential Native. Umm, you know, I'm mixed, like most. Unfortunately. I didn't have the benefit of keeping it within my tribe. Ummm, so yeah, I'm a mixture, but it just, it was never really easy. I remember when I was around 9 or 10, I went to go visit some of my childhood friends and there was a group of Senecas who stayed upstairs from them and they were your typical Haudenoshonee. They looked...they had Asiatic features, actually but I guess almost like Inuit, like Eskimo, but they looked native as compared to me, so that when I would tell them that I was Native, they wouldn't necessarily believe it and they would look down upon me like most ethnic groups when they see a mixture. They're not readily accepted right off the

bat. You actually have to earn their acceptance and just growing up between African Americans and Native Americans it was really, really difficult trying to straddle those two lines, ummm when I was 11, 12 or 13, I became fed up and grew up in a Spanish neighborhood and as I became friends with my neighbors their culture, their way of life appealed to me, and they accepted me for who I was, you know, they accepted me as one of them and it was a feeling of belonging that I'll never forget because I've never really had anything like that since then umm to the point where I completely assimilated into that culture and became that identity disregarding my own ethnic makeup, learning the language, learning the history, I became totally engrossed, even in school when people would ask me what I was I'd say I was this particular race from Latino culture and that's really what I delved into, umm especially mastering the Spanish language, that's learning my culture figures, everything in order to maintain that identity that's what really, really kept me grounded. I was pretty much a chameleon in my youth so, you know, To this day people still come up to me and say "Aren't you this?," and actually to be honest with you, I was dishonest, I'm actually Native American and now people may feel a sense of betrayal, it's really how I feel about myself and not how they think about me,... I would say this. Because I grew up in Latin culture, that's still very much part of me, You can hear it in my mannerisms, the way I enunciate in English. Someone said to me, "If I were to talk to you, I would think you were Latino, just because of the way you carry yourself. You don't carry yourself like a black man or a Native American man, you carry yourself like an Hispanic, so in that way, I would say my mannerisms, I understand that I still kind of border that line but as an adult I would say that within the last 4 or 5 years, I have really come into my own and started to embrace who I am and to a certain extent, I feel I'm dishonoring my ancestors in trying to perpetrate as something else though I understand that, you know, if a child is raised by wolves, he'll act as a wolf, even though he's a man and that may be the case but once a person comes to self actualization and realizes what they are, they have to take it upon themselves to embrace that and move forward. There's no point in necessarily living in the past. Take it with you, learn from it but don't let it rule you. (Michael)

Michael describes a journey through the myriad of simulations that obstructed his choice of a preferred identity as an Indigenous person. By presenting as outside the stereotype of "Indian," Michael's identity contingencies trailed him through high school and college, until his quest for "belonging" was finally resolved by being able to "pass" in a mixed Latino community. The strong emotional component that accompanied this quest is

described as one of bereavement, of grief for his ancestors whom he betrayed. He sought acceptance by his own People whom he felt rejected him because of their fears, imposed by the dominant culture, that only the stereotype of the mythic postindian warrior was acceptable to the federal government's standards at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

This "authentic Indian," seen as a fragment of the popular imagination, was discarded when Michael came to "self-actualization" and recognized that it is not the way that one is regarded or treated, but who one is that determines that person's identity. Michael broke free of the "stereotype threat in the air" that Steele (2010) described above. He rejected this stereotype, despite the pain and grief that it caused him to give up an alternate identity. He pierced the veil of the simulacrum. Michael demonstrates the trickster qualities of the genius of Indigenous Peoples in navigating his journey toward identity that Vizenor (1999) details: "Natives have always been on one road of resistance or another, creating post-indian myths and tricky stories in the very ruins of representation to/of modernity. We are post-indian storiers at the curtains of that stubborn simulation of the *indian* as savage, and the *indian* as a pure and curative tradition (p. 21). Thus, for Michael (and Vizenor) the post traumatic slave syndrome was resolved when it was confronted by a cultural bound ("trickster") identity. Healing came on the heels of this reassertion of cultural identity.

3. Living in two worlds: Assimilation and annihilation

W.E.B. Du Bois (2003) offers compelling insights of a "double consciousness" that he experienced as an African American male. It evokes the often repeated theme in the interviews of the surreal, or hyperreal experience of "living in two worlds":

Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out

from their world by a vast veil. I had thereafter no desire to tear down that veil, to creep through; I held all beyond it in common contempt, and lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows.... It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness--an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (p. 9).

Response to the denials of their Indigenous identity that the participants faced took several turns. Like Michael, some report that they attempted or pretended to assimilate with the African American and Latino cultures, where they could “pass,” although they never lost the sense of who they were. But this was a painful process, and it brought new meaning to their expression of “living in two worlds.” As Michael shares, as much as he wanted to feel that he belonged, this privileging of Latino over Indigenous culture represented a betrayal of his ancestors and his community that he could not tolerate.

For some, it was an iterative process of leaving the Reservation to attend school, to pursue vocational interests or to marry outside the Indigenous world, although there was always the thought that they would return someday. Like the Amish concept of “Rumsprunge,” the interviewees describe their venturing outside as an extended leave that was a necessary part of becoming who they were. Assimilation was just another cloak they tried on for size.

For one participant, coming to Poospatuck from Shinnecock meant ironically giving up some of her “Indianness” to assimilate into the Unkechaug culture. Louise had been on the “pow wow” circuit for nine years with her family, and her interactions were with Indigenous Peoples from all over the continent.

Well, my experience was a little different because I grew up until I was 9...I was born in Southampton and my father's from Shinnecock, so I was exposed to it from his point of view in life and he was deeply entrenched. I grew up travelling the pow wow circuit as a child, so all my friends were all Native American from all over the country so I had a little broader view of what it was like. Unfortunately, once we moved up here to Mastic to the Poospatuck where my mother is from, it was different here because they didn't travel, my cousins didn't travel the circuit. They didn't grow up with friends who were, umm, Mohawks, and things like that because they were native from another state, umm, so I struggled and then tried to, how can I say, leave off some of that Indianness, so I could assimilate just with my own family. (Louise)

Louise's narrative bears witness to the historical reality of the Unkechaug: as one of the first Nations to be encroached upon as early as the 15th century, there was no buffer zone between them and the colonizers who searched them out for their nautical and whaling skills, and for their wampum production in the 16th and 17th centuries (Strong, 1997).

As Chief Lone Otter (Donald Treadwell) refers to above, the Dutch and later the English traded with them and took their land in illegal "land grabs," for example, and undermined their currency through the technological introduction of the awl (1988). Poospatuck was less isolated, less financially stable in the 60's than the Shinnecock Reservation when Louise and her family returned there. As Strong (in press) points out, in 1966 a welfare case worker described it as the "one of the most slum ridden communities in Suffolk County." The average income of a family was \$1500, considerably under the \$3000 eligibility requirement for the anti poverty programs. Chief Red Fox reported that few had central heating and "everyone is poor."

The poverty and the focus on maintaining the Maslovian hierarchy of needs intact left little room for private instruction in her ancestry. Even growing up "on the pow wow circuit" did not necessarily mean that one was "tutored" in Unkechaug history or culture. Ironically, learning the culture by immersion, rather than having it taught in school

(where it was not), or on a parent's lap, meant that the culture was learned by participation and engagement in it, as Louise points out: "... It was different degrees, yes. Growing up and I don't... I guess my mother, they were raised with their pride and their knowledge, but it wasn't as deep as it is now as they've gotten older. I think that they were so busy with their lives in terms of working and putting food on the table and just trying to survive that it was different here."

Interviewees do not refer to learning about their history from their parents directly; it was an oblique, parallel educational experience, in which they lived the experience of their culture and watched their parents as they manifested the culture through their actions, ceremonies and rituals. As many participants put it: "we just lived it. It was who we were."

This could be a generational issue, though, because most of the parents interviewed who are "middle-aged" (40's to 50's) report that they found they needed to be more active in teaching their children about their ancestry, their culture and their beliefs than their parents were. Precisely because of the seduction of "hip hop culture," MTV, the effects of the media, passing as African American was something parents felt they needed to guard against lest the children assimilate into African American culture and escape their ancestry:

First of all, their parents are going to have to step up their game in order to teach their children. Because it's a whole lot easier to assimilate into a community where you look like everyone else that is of a different race. It's easier to assimilate with what you see on television. It's much more difficult to step back and to learn-if you don't learn about being Native American on television-you know, it's not in the videos, it's not on the radio; it's not what they are being bombarded with. What they're being bombarded with is hip hop, baggy jeans, or I should say skinny jeans this week, just America as a whole. It's easier to assimilate and be down with what's new and hot. And being Native American in this society is not new

and hot. It may be the flavor of the day, but for the moment, but it's not new and hot, and there's nothing cool about it. (Winona)

Winona relates how she struggles with this danger of assimilation in parenting her children, and describes how they share with her the bullying and the name calling of their peers who pressure them into assimilating into the in-group, African American culture. She describes how necessary it is for her to be proactive, spending time with her daughter, educating her about who she is and where she came from:

I think that for my daughter, she started to have a very difficult time with people calling her names or saying that she wasn't this, she wasn't white, she wasn't black, she wasn't Indian, and she started to get very angry about what she looked like and what category she fit in, so I think it was through, that's probably where it started in when she was in kindergarten, when I started to tell her who she was and where she came from and to build her confidence in that she's a princess-she's the grand daughter of the chief and you will still hear her say to this day that she's a princess, and it gives her that step up, she feels **good** (emphasis) about it so, so, that's really I think the best way that I can answer that. (Winona)

Building self-pride from within was essential because in her peer group, "Native was lower than black," and children sought the prize of an in-group identity in the African American community.

Several interviewees report that marriage to an African American spouse complicates the issue of raising a child in tune with their Unkechaug culture. It is clear, however, that there is no compromise position, and that the Indigenous is privileged over the African American for the respondents. As Anna Lee points out, there are several protective factors legally in most Indigenous Nations that guard against outsiders maintaining a foothold on the Reservation, such as the inability to vote or to stay on the Reservation if they remarry an outsider after the death of their Indigenous spouse. The Unkechaug Nation is no exception:

Yes, yes, so that was something, you know, to learn, even now I'm married now and to say to my husband, you can never remarry if you want to live here. If you marry an outsider, it's much harder. I was with an insider at one time and we didn't make it but it's still even harder being with an insider because my house is built on my property. Now say we built my house on his property and we split up, you get what I'm trying to say? I'd get to move off his property, you know. It's pretty interesting, you know? (Anna Lee)

Anna Lee finds that it is in parenting that issues of assimilation become most complicated. She discovered that she needed, as Winona reports, to be more “take charge,” assertive, protective and directive than her parents’ generation was with her to teach her daughter about her Indigenous identity:

Yeah because my parents didn't talk about it all the time, my mother and them was really laid back about it, and I'm not. I'm like this is what you are and this is what you have to do and you know, I don't want her to go away. She knows that already. She's going to go to college here. I've already built her a home. I've done it all for her to be here. This is her home. This is how I feel. This is her home, so she'll go to college and she's going to work with the deaf. That's what she wants to do. (Anna Lee)

It is also precisely because of her daughter’s Indigenous “gifts” that she sees it is necessary for her to stay close to her Indigenous roots, and not yield to the pressure of assimilationist pressures and mentalities to turn her back on her Indigenous cultural, intuitive self. She describes the situation in which she learned about her daughter’s gifts, and how this called for an inter-generational teaching moment around who she is, and how this involved the entire family:

I just let her now right from jump street what she was. You are Indian and you are different and you know, maybe because I had to learn a different way I want her to know from what you are, by showing her different things and seeing different things and you know she understood right from day one so when she had the knowledge to understand.... She was a very special girl when she was born... in Indian times they called it "being born with a veil over her face." She was seeing things that she wasn't supposed to be seeing at the age of three, so that's when you had to start explaining to her...At first we thought that she was telling tales but she kept bringing

it up everyday the same things over and over again, so we kind of knew that she was telling some type of truth to it and what three year old knows what to lie about at three years old, so finally my parents said to me, "I think she's really seeing something, and she's telling you what she's seeing, she's constantly bringing it up." So my dad asked, questioned her about it and umm he said, I'm going to question her and you're not to say anything and see how she does with it." And she explained that people were visiting her and umm they must have been in the 1900's the beginning of the 1900's because they were dressed in old settler's clothes. He said, she wouldn't know that at three years old. She explained to how they were dressed to my father. She said they have a little girl but she always looks like she's dressed in little boys' clothes. Yeah, she always, explained them right to a tee. We can't bring it up to her now because she gets nervous. She doesn't want them to come visit. The doctor says she keeps it in the back of her subconscious mind. But he says as she gets older she'll be able to handle, as she gets older but you know they're very nice, they never asked her to go anywhere. They used to visit every night and say hello and you know stuff like that and umm she was OK with it. She never...she still slept in her room every night, never was scared, you know, so obviously whoever they were, they were very welcoming to her, you know, they were warm and inviting, It stopped I guess at the age of 6. It just, you know... (Anna Lee)

In Anna Lee's description, wanting to protect her daughter and maintain her feelings of security and identity necessitate living and being surrounded by her culture and her family. Making a place for her, setting land and a house aside are all protective safeguards to prevent her from leaving and losing her Indigenous gifts. Maintaining the "who" and the "what" as she describes of her daughter's Indigenous essence or "Indianness" requires that she be surrounded by those who love and cherish her and value her special, intuitive gifts. She is a valued resource and a touchstone for the entire community. She encapsulates the reverence for tradition, respect for ancestors and intuition that Leary (2005) describes as paramount.

As Winona describes it, her father's example as a person living the ideals of the culture was a large part of her ability to stay centered and not become enmeshed in another culture. She developed her Indigenous identity, her "Indianness" that she shared

with her family, attending the pow wows, inter-relating and inter-facing with her extended kin network in cooking, serving, singing, dancing. It is in the interactions - - participating in ceremonies and rituals between and among people in which her identity was forever forged:

Winona: I assimilate on a daily basis but it's on the surface. I know who I am and where I come from and I don't have to prove that to anyone. I don't have to show that to anyone. I don't have to wear a ribboned shirt to step out of this community. I don't have to wear stickers on my car to say where I'm coming from. It's within. It's I know who I am and where I am come from and the outside doesn't matter.

Interviewer: What makes you so different, resilient, so strong, whereas other people have succumbed to that? What do you think about your experience is different?

Winona: My father. My father was very, very...he spent his life engaged in strong Native American culture, history, uh, he lived his life very engaged in the culture from a young child. If I look back on the pictures they were engaged in pow wows, they were hunting bows and arrows. They were fishing. They were very...that's just who they were. He always made sure that we understood who we were....Understanding who you are, in your space of things. I mean you could be in a square box but your space is who you are -that's the space that you occupy. You're in it. That is your Indianness. That doesn't mean that we don't have other things within us. But there's a spot in that in all of us regardless of what our outside appearance is-we are all touched by that- we all have a commonness, that Indianness and it's not truly something that can be explained- - it's not whether you spent time on the pow wow trail, if you went from pow wow to pow wow with the other Native people that you meet or the experiences that you have. (Winona)

No one put a name on the interactions that they shared with each other. This commonness that came to be identified as "Indianness," and this natural way of being and communicating, presenting themselves and sharing themselves with each other, is what constituted their cultural identity, who they were for Winona. It also demonstrated by extension, who they were not because it is in the denials of their identity by the dominant culture that their identity was constructed and formed in this dialectical process. It was in their interactions and their interpretations of the meaning of those interactions that led to

their development and maintenance of their identities. They were made to acknowledge that they were “different” but understood on a “different” level that they were one and the same because of their repeated, constant intensifications of presenting themselves to each other. The significance and the sharing of signs gave meaning to their life and to their world.

For the Unkechaug Nation, as discussed above, whose history has taught them that the cost of assimilation can mean the loss of their land, as well as their way of life (Strong, in press), assimilation is something to guard against, to fight against tooth and nail, according to the respondents who see the role of parent as the gatekeeper of assimilation. When asked, for example, what their advice is for the next generation of Unkechaugs, all the respondents answered in the following way: get more education, and “marry Indian.” Assimilation then, is seen as a form of genocide, of annihilation, of partnering with the colonizer.

For the Unkechaug, as discussed above, the question of who has blood right is inextricably woven into the nature of their cultural identity. It comes up again and again in the interviews. For one respondent, it is what keeps her up at night and reminds her of promises made to her mother: not only to return to the Reservation, but to be a steward of the community and the land for the Unkechaug generations to come:

The land issues. That’s going to be one of the toughest ones, I think it’s the one that is going to put us back on the cover of Newsday. I think it’s the one that can cause great distress and controversy and maybe even lead to violence on the Reservation, It’s kind of a tough thing to be told, “You need to go. You need to move.” I think that could lead to it. I really do and the Reservation is –there has been violence there. There has been acts of violence committed against other people there, gunshots over money, over land and this will probably lead to it too. Which is I think one of the biggest reasons why people haven’t pushed the issue. Who is going to say it first? Who is going to bring it to court? And it has to be. It should have

been done a long, long, time ago, but people were looking for votes, people were looking to get into Council, people were looking for favors, umm, it should have been corrected when it was first presented to Judge Signorelli. It should never have been thrown back into our hands where we would do the certification, and a lot of people was opposed to that even people in my own family thought that we should have been able to certify ourselves and I don't think that is the case. I think it should have remained in court and uhh in an objective forum where people looked at the facts and at the information: "Who are you? How are you related to this person? How are you connected here? And do it that way. I think a lot of people were very uncomfortable with that. I think a lot of people knew that they didn't have any information to back it up and my family had nothing to hide, and not everybody can be related to us, you know, somebody's lying. Somebody is not telling the truth, you know. And I just think we would just have been in a better situation because there was people that were willing to move and to take our homes there and it would have been a revitalization and it just never happened. (Paula)

She steps up to the plate, when the local courts would not touch the issue, despite the knowledge that it will be a bloody and thankless battle for her. She demonstrates how the issue of maintaining family, and taking care of family (those unable to live on the Reservation who have blood right) is an essential part of being Unkechaug. The fact that this is an uncomfortable issue reflects the assertion stated above that the Unkechaug are a family, a community, and define themselves by who they are as well as by whom they are not.

The denials of Indigenous identity by insiders, outsiders, teachers, mayors, assemblymen, grocers and the community itself have torn the Nation apart. Efforts for unity, cohesion and healing that emanate from the community itself have healing potential. A renewed invigoration and intensification of cultural identity, as expressed through language, ceremonies and the building of a new community center, are positive, healing ways the Unkechaug Nation is addressing the many traumas, attacks and insults to its integrity, on a personal and on a communal level.

4. Identity is Community: Poospatuck in Celebration

Ohh, it was... how would you say, mind and body shivering to see them doing it (dancing at pow wow) because it brought back the feeling of being Native American, you know, and anybody that goes over there and they do that and they get there and they don't know if they're Native American and they have that feeling and that shivering, it's...they are Native American because only Native Americans can feel (emphasis) that, you know. And if they do the war dance and all that, you can feel that in you and you want to get up and you want to get with it too and get out there and start dancing, you know, but hey you're in the bleachers where you can't dance in the bleachers. It's really thrilling. (Scott)

In describing his experience at the pow wow, Scott, a tribally enrolled, blood-right member of the Poospatuck Reservation encapsulates what it means to be an Indigenous person. In his perception of “mind and body shivering,” he evokes the essence of a shared communal, viscerally and spiritually felt experience, which epitomizes Indigenous cultural identity. It is at once all-encompassing in his description and paradoxically distancing. It defines who the Unkechaug are, and who they aren't. Participating in this quintessential ritual that defines them as a community, the dancers publicly perform as they come together in healing ceremony to celebrate the past, present and future, their children, ancestors, and history. In remembering and reminiscing, so that the traumatic historical memories are not lost or dissipated, the rhythm of the drum, the heartbeat of the community, compels and invites them to come together and dance--to show the world who they are.

Other residents describe what the pow wow or June Meeting meant to them and to the community, and highlighted its importance for uniting them and for serving as a means to teach their children about their identity through living it:

The meaning of June Meeting (pow wow) for me was that we came together as one on that day. Everyone pitched in and helped one

another...I wanted to participate in June meeting to keep the tradition going on and on. If we don't keep it going, it will die, and we don't want it to die. We want it to continue. The only way to teach a child about their heritage is to live it. In this way, they can see. When we have our June meetings, they participate in it and dance and just live it. They see you living it, so it becomes part of their lives. (Suzan)

June Meeting was also traditionally a fundraiser for the church, which was organized mostly by the female elders and mentors, who used June Meeting also as a teaching tool about their culture and history. Duane remembers the organizers fondly and reflects on how they were helpful in learning about his history and culture:

That's why having the June meetings and the different get-togethers, the church, I think, she (Martha Maynes) had something to do with that, kept the people's focus on their history, on their culture, you know, but other than that, I don't think, you know, I think Abby Langhorn was another person that kept the reservation in focus, you know, so other than that, I think Donald (Lone Otter aka Donald Treadwell) was very helpful to me personally, you know, in the culture of the reservation. He would talk and mention things. When I met him he was almost completely blind.

Duane's testament to Lone Otter (Donald Treadwell)'s mentoring is even more striking because of his reference to his blindness and persistence in publishing his history of the Unkechaug Nation despite his physical problems.

Many Unkechaug practice a syncretic form of spirituality that incorporates both Indigenous and Unkechaug beliefs. For example, at the funeral of Chief Lone Otter (Donald Treadwell), the traditional ceremony was followed by an Indigenous one, with singers and the drum, and followed by a bonfire.

Several participants, including Gerald, refer to the role of the church in keeping Indigenous beliefs, customs and rituals alive "underground."

Gerald: The church, the oldest mission church in the state of New York and the church was organized as a means of uniting the community in

order to protect the Indian way of life and a lot of ceremonies were hidden underground and the church was a façade in many ways for the maintenance and survival of traditional practices.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Can you give me an example of that?

Gerald: Sure. June meeting. June meeting is in a traditional way, the feast of flowers and it literally means to rejoice over those that passed. There's the June meeting, what we do is we do many celebrations to honor those that passed on in the previous year and to and remember our ancestors as our celebration traditionally took place over several weeks, culminating in the celebration here at Poospatuck and, uh, it is still continually practiced, but the church changed the name from the Feast of Flowers to June meeting and made it kind of a Christian celebration so that there was all the church services, but when, after services there were also traditional celebrations but they were all hidden underground in the guise of Christian ceremony.

Interviewer: How about now-the role of the church. What would you say it is?

Gerald: The role of the church being...is kind of a landmark status itself because of its age and the church is a very unique church because Indian prayers are said in the building now instead of having it go underground and it has become a means that we can coalesce around to continue our more traditional way of life, so it's not necessarily a conflict the way it was set up to be in the past (Gerald).

For one participant, Leslie, however, there is a conflict between Indigenous and Christian beliefs and she makes reference to her refusal to partake in the rituals and ceremonies, such as the sweat lodges, which she sees as not acceptable nor consonant with her Christian belief system:

It just, I guess you don't really think about it until things come up, when people invite you to the sweat box...I don't know the name of what it was when I turned them down. They were like, "why", and I said. "You have to be careful what you conjure up," but he's not Christian, so that's why it never came across his mind. He didn't think about that...I was invited to a umm, some kind of ritual or ceremony a few years ago, actually from someone from Shinnecock, umm, but I didn't (go), because I'm a Christian... you have a fine line to walk in terms of that. So the rituals, I wouldn't probably be a part of at all, in terms of bringing spirits, you know, going into, delving into that side of it, no, that's not for me. So I haven't actually taken part in any ceremonies. (Louise)

Louise has very clear boundaries between Indigenous and Christian beliefs around the spirit world. Clearly, there is no homogeneous perception of spirituality among the Reservation, although culture and community, as exemplified in June Meeting, is shared by all. As Scott describes the church's role:

We have a preacher that comes from the outside. And our church has a turnover of religions about every ten years. For a while it was Baptist, the next time it was Methodist, the next time it was Episcopal. It never stays the same. The only ones that keep it a specific religion is the Bell family. They held the church together, so I'm not really into the church but even the way us Native Americans think, there is a god. You know the rest of them they have that mental god where ours is also physical and that's what holds us together and any tribe you go to from the Pequots to the Midwest to the South, even to the Aztecs and the Incas, and you go to the Canadian Indians which are actually Cherokee, and some of the other tribes up there in Canada, even the Eskimos, have their religion. (Scott)

June Meeting however, was not about personal belief systems but about coming together as a community to celebrate as a Nation, inviting other Nations to take part in it. Strong (1996) points out that June Meeting was traditionally used as a courting ritual where Indigenous People could be introduced. Sherman described how his father befriended a member of another Indigenous Nation at a June Meeting and tried to set him up with his daughter, but he refused.

Winona relates that June Meeting was a fundraiser, a show for the tourists, but the real event occurred after they went home:

Pow wow is what takes place at night when all the people have gone. It's the ceremony, the song, the dance, the communication, the revisiting of people you haven't seen in a while who weren't out on the pow wow trail, the camaraderie of family and friends and the gathering, you know, it's so much more than just singing and dancing on the stage and selling food and jewelry. It's... it's behind the scenes, it's at night, it's the set up, it's the travel, it's the whole—everybody driving in raggedy cars behind each other getting to the next place and I mean it was a job but in the end, what you did after hours, that's what it's really about, and that's not something you talk about. It just is. . . .Umm hmm, it just is. It's one of the things that

I think that he said that we didn't know that we were Native American, that we were different until someone came here and told us. We were just who we were and we didn't know we were any different until they told us, so that's when we realized that we were different than. (Winona)

These interactions occurred, as Winona points out, after the tourists went home, or to put it another way, before the colonizers arrived. Winona also describes the colonizing experience here because before Columbus, there was no definition of themselves in relation to the Other. They would, like every Indigenous Nation, refer to themselves as “the People.” There was no “Indian” before the bizarre and absurd meeting between colonizer and colonized in which Columbus “named” them “Indians.” As Leary (2005) points out, the dominant culture's definition of them as “savage” and “un-Christian” (without souls) served to separate them from themselves as the “out-group.”

During the after event at pow wow, when the adults got together, Sherman remembers a “joke” that he heard when he was a child, listening to a song of the elders who were making fun of the audience at the pow wow. The song describes the puzzlement of an Indigenous man who comes to the Reservation with his new car and drives it all over hoping for some compliments from the residents. Instead, he is ignored.

It just didn't make any sense to him, you know, he had a brand new car and it was wonderful and he kept it for about 6 months and he got hit in the parking lot and a big dent in the side, and he was upset about that. He drove it back to the Reservation and then people started coming out of the houses and said “Hey great car. When did you get it?”...And there's a whole cultural thing about that thing and I'm still thinking about it, trying to figure out the various different levels and aspects of it. Why would people not recognize one of their fellow family members or individuals until something was damaged or you know not brand new or prime anymore? And it's still one of the stories that goes through my head on a regular basis...Uhh I threw in their possible pride and one of the things is maybe other individuals don't have as well things like a new car or how could he afford that until it became damaged and it became like everybody else's and there was no above us or below at that point. (Sherman)

Sherman ultimately understands that it is a morality tale about a classless, non-capitalist, egalitarian society, in which, as he discovers “there was no above us or below us at that point.” It reflects a description of a world without hierarchies, fences or restrictions on one’s freedom.

Scott’s description above of what the pow wow meant to him can also be seen as a metaphor for the modern Unkechaug Nation in their relationship with their cultural identity, and with their struggle to see that identity recognized by the dominant culture, as well as by other Indigenous People. Their cultural identity, once in danger of being lost and now being rejuvenated and revitalized with the discovery of their ancient tribal language, is at odds with the stereotype portrayed by the hyped-up media of the “Indian” who lives in a teepee without running water and speaks in monosyllables - - the image that was conjured up by the children who were lost on the Reservation and afraid they would be “scapled;” it is not the “Indian mascot” wielding a tomahawk against the avengers of the competing team, or the New Agers in their spiritual bankruptcy seeking to appropriate their sacred ceremonies. Nor is it the stereotype conjured up when Paula danced and the children wanted her picture but did not want to talk to her about who she was and what her hopes and dreams were.

Where Scott and the other respondents see themselves as connected to their ancestors and their past and thus to the future, outsiders (as the lawsuits demonstrate) repeatedly deny their claim to history and continue to wage war on them. They know who they are but their self-conscious awareness is interrupted, questioned and attacked, as Paula describes above. Whereas their neighbors, the Shinnecock Indians were awarded federal recognition status this December, the Unkechaug, like the dancer in the bleachers,

sits by and waits his turn to spin and dance to the drum for all to see. If you did not know who you are, the speaker says, the music and the dancing will awake in you the genetic memory of the ancestors, their trials and tribulations, and with the shivering, involuntary response to dance comes the powerful, compelling desire of a strong, resilient people perched on the brink of a new era, to make their identity and their presence known, heard, respected and honored once more.

5. Defenders of the patrimony, the culture, the children and the gods

Don't you know the Jackson Brown song, "Lawyers, Guns and Money?" You need to defend yourself, you need to have the financial independence to resist any encroachment, and you need to defend your land against anyone who wants to take it from you by whatever means necessary, because this effort we just overcame was an effort to destroy us as a people and they were coming after us and we successfully defended ourselves and hopefully for the next hundred years we won't have to do that again, but you never know. (Gerald)

The struggle for survival alluded to above was successfully fought on several levels: legally, when the Nation fought for recognition of their sovereignty in court against Gristedes, by meeting the "Montoya criteria;" economically, with the communal funds from the smoke shop sales; socially, by coming together as a cohesive group to fight off the aggressor, and psychologically by decolonizing themselves of the dominant society's projected confusion onto them about race and culture. Gerald is vehement in his declaration that "we are dangerous to the outside world and they want to annihilate us."

Coalescing around cultural issues allowed them to define who they are, what they want for themselves and their children, and to determine how they can protect themselves against assimilation and annihilation to maintain themselves intact as an entity, as a whole. The decolonizing program that issues from these "givens" targets the children.

Beyond the generally agreed upon concepts of what the Nation is, and what its

history is, arise specific definitions of who they are as individuals, and this is most evident in discussions around education and parenting. The focus is on developing pride in the children to develop a strong ego structure that cannot be whittled away by peer pressure, bullying, racism or the lure of the media:

They (the parents) never had it--the pride that we have as being native, of Unkechaug, the pride of that. We're beginning to set up the language program which will help give them back that pride. The fact that they haven't had that pride all these years because it hasn't been taught to them all these years is umm...it's hurtful to them as individuals because right now they're walking, walking that fine line of the fact they are mixed...Right now were trying as a community and as a tribe to give that Indianness if you want to call it back to them, their culture, their sensitivity as to who they are, that they can stand up and be proud, this is who I am, learning my language, I'm learning my culture, my history and I'm proud of where I live. That's what were trying to do today. (Gloria)

Gloria, who refers to herself as a "facilitator" of the new educational and language programs, hopes to be able to raise the funds to build a private school on the Reservation. Since their school contract was sold to another district and they were "slid through" without supports, it would give children advantages that her generation never received. In very strong and direct language, she states that the Nation refuses to have their children scapegoated. She reports that the Reservation children are routinely targeted and expelled without parent meetings while other children are given preferential treatment:

Instead of sitting down with the school system and figuring out what's wrong, if it was a white child, uhh they would call the parent to come in-let's sit down and talk about it and then make a decision about it but granted our parents are not all that easy to get along with, but make the effort to try...We'll set up a high tech program as far as computers and as far as everything our kids would get if they were rich enough to go to a private school (where) they would get in their own-that step off, that push up, they will have it 110% and it will follow through. There's a school in NYC, I think it's Harlem school, it's a private school and that's what they're doing for their children. Giving them their multi-cultural, well, its not multi cultural, it's an all black school, but they're giving them that knowledge that an all white school or private school would have for their

children and it follows them right to elementary, the mid school the seniors, college and they have even a mentor system, that when these kids graduate and they get out to the outside world, they come back and they mentor the kids that are coming up now. That's what I want to see in the school system that's coming up now for our kids. I'm not saying that all the teachers in Center Moriches¹ are like that but it's not what it should be and our kids know it, that's why sometimes they have a rough time over there and sometimes they give them a rough time because they know they're not accepted for who they are as native people. (Gloria)

Gloria's thoughts and feelings echo Leary's (2005) discussion of how African American children act out when they intuit that there is no relationship between teachers and students, or teachers and parents. Like the Reservation children, they enact the self-fulfilling prophecy that they are meant to fail because that is the preferred message of the dominant society. Children and parents internalize the dominant culture's message that the children remain uneducated and unskilled and do not buck the system through class advancement. They do not embrace their cultural identity that would give them this "step up" by developing pride and self-esteem, the necessary ingredients for success in an academically competitive market.

Gloria sees the school system as complicit in "seeing the children for who they are not." Her model reflects a circular vision of the future in which the children mentor each other and continue the process of instilling pride and self-esteem to ensure academic success. Gloria looks to the example of an African American school in Harlem that demonstrates the affinity that Gloria feels toward those educators and parents who are struggling for their children to survive in a world where they do not have a chance on their own because of the structural oppression facing them as well.

Thus, the program for instilling cultural identity is as crucial for the survival of the children as winning the Gristedes case: without pride in who they are, they will not

choose to embrace this Indigenous identity and fight against assimilation. The violence that Fanon saw as a mandate in liberation from oppression of the colonizers was acted out in the courts in the Gristedes case symbolically through capitalist domination, arrogance and ignorance about history. Although Gloria's program leaves out the guns and the lawyers, it rests on the hope that the smoke shops will fill the coffers. Toward this end, positive parenting is the means to achieve this objective of school success.

Gloria does not mince her words when she describes her parenting plan that focuses on developing a positive and healthy cultural identity. She directs her children to look unwaveringly to her as a model, and instructs them on the ethical mandates of living as an Indigenous person:

The first thing I taught my kids was the only person that you've got to answer to is me. Anybody else out in the streets, I don't care if their teachers, other kids...I'm the bottom...the buck stops with me. You are a Native person, you live on the Reservation, act like you are who you are. Treat people the way you want to be treated. Respect people and they'll respect you. And that's not necessarily Native but that's the way you are. If you went off here and went to a different tribe and they'll tell you that money doesn't make you Native, the costumes don't make you native, the fact that you live on a reservation doesn't make you native, it's who you are as a person and how you treat people, how you treat native and how you respect people and how you respect nature. (Gloria)

Gloria breaks it down for them succinctly: being a Native person consists of acting in accordance with a moral universe in which respect is accorded to others and to nature. It is in the relationship, the manner in which a child or person interacts and presents him or herself to others that the meaning of their identity or Indianness is made manifest. This is how others interpret being "Native." It is not about the regalia or living on the Reservation or having money- - it is not about class, but about how one relates to others,

and carries out their actions toward others with respect. This echoes the preeminence of relationships that Leary (2005) describes.

Other participants describe another essential facet to this “Indianness,” which Gloria references, namely “living with integrity--which means to do the right thing for the right reason, even when it doesn’t feel good” (Winona). This might entail looking after an elder, or taking in a child who has been abandoned. Also, it involves “honesty - - that when you say something, you mean it and do it” (Charles).

Charles describes how he was demoralized and humiliated by a history teacher in high school who went around the room forecasting the future success of all the students, and singled him out and announced to the class that he would “never amount to anything.” Charles reports that he still feels the sting of this racist and classist attack on him. Later on though, he demonstrates how he acted with integrity when he sat on the school board, and chose to defend this same teacher against unfair attacks to deny his pension “because it was wrong.” This ethical code drives the commitment that Gloria demonstrates above to the children, and is the basis for all action and interaction among the Unkechaug people.

This treatment of according respect also extends to the world of nature and sentient beings. Winona describes the unwritten laws and beliefs that comprise this moral universe:

Winona: I think it was just the way we did things. The way we would bless our homes. The different ceremonies in terms of giving back to our gods and to Mother Earth and the respect and the, I would say, the laws that we lived by. To always respect Mother Earth. To respect all living creatures. To never take more from the earth than you need. To, umm, never leave too many tracks, but take care of what you have in the meantime and be good to one another. To treat each other as you want to be treated. I mean. There are...we have our own commandments, you know, we don’t have

necessarily, uh, the kind of Bible that, you know, other cultures have, but we have our own laws and standards and it's all based in good things in terms of taking care of what you're supposed to, not being a bad person.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about the laws and the standards? Can you give me an example?

Winona: Well, for instance we never try to kill anything and the only time that we... even for my children, because we believe in reincarnation, we never know who is going to come back as what and so for my children, you know, pretty much, we try not to kill, or to think of things like that because it could be one of our relatives. It could be somebody coming back and having to live their life a certain way because of something in their past. Umm, even animals and the squirrels. You never know how many times you're going to come back and you're not always going to come back as a man or a woman. So we need to learn to respect all of Mother Earth's creatures. (Winona)

Winona essentially chronicles the characteristics of this ethical worldview, that how one acts in relation to other sentient beings has repercussions that are universal, and that all levels of creation need to be accorded respect, and meant to be treated as precious. It also implies a holistic eco-spiritual dimension, that there is no hierarchy in nature or in the universe and that all of Mother Nature's creatures equal humans in their significance. Treading gently on the earth and an absence of greed in taking more than one needs to survive are components of this system.

These, then, are the elements of the ethical code of the Unkechaug Nation, as described and interpreted by the participants. An emphasis on honoring the elders and ancestors should also be added, since this theme is woven throughout the interviews. This code includes the following: living with integrity, treating others, nature and all sentient beings with respect, not taking more than one needs to survive, honoring one's word and holding up the value of a classless, holistic universe, presided over by "Mother Nature" or the Creator, in which actions have meaning and repercussions, and relationships with

all of the natural world, including animals and humans, are perceived as being among equals: “just family.” These are the cultural values that underpin Unkechaug identity.

6. Pay It Forward: The Spiritual is Political

A theme that punctuates the interviews and around which all the voices of the participants coalesce, is that of responsibility to the community, the culture, the preservation of the land and the people, of “paying it forward.” It promotes respect and reverence for their lifeways, their culture and their land. The idea of giving back to their ancestors, and transforming the Reservation to fit the needs of the children and the generations to come reflects the cyclical and circular nature of Indigenous experience: “That when a promise was made by our ancestors to take care of this land and to take care of this people and that’s the reason why we are still here and we have to continue to keep that promise. If we keep that promise then we will protect our future generations; if we don’t keep that promise, then our future generations will be in danger.”(Gerald)

Gerald’s commitment stems from his realization that this obligation to be a steward of the land and a protector of his people is a promise that is intrinsic and inherent in the phenomenological reality of an Indigenous person. Historically, it predates the individual. It is a promise made by one’s ancestors, and in fulfilling and keeping that promise, one follows a “spiritual path,” that is described as actualizing one’s commitment. It is the *raison d’etre* of being Indigenous.

Gerald relates that he knew he was Indigenous “from consciousness,” and sought it out throughout his childhood and early adulthood by participating in weekly family gatherings, despite three-hour trips to get to his grandparents’ home. Attending Longhouse socials and later by becoming politically active in college led to a lifelong

commitment in leadership and assertion of Indigenous rights, sovereignty and self-determination. Reflecting Hart's (2010) dictum that for Indigenous Peoples, the spiritual is political, Gerald's interest and involvement went beyond the social aspects his brothers were attracted to in the culture, and became crystallized through his political activism in college and his later involvement in the "Red Power" Movement of the 70's:

For me, it turned very political and when you get into the political side you recognize how significant the cultural side is. You know, because the politics is about preservation of culture, and the Indian symbol (mascot) protest galvanized for me the significance of the political side. Plus, when I was (in college), they had the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) takeover of the building in Washington DC, Wounded Knee in 1973, and in 1971 the Plymouth Rock demonstration, where instead of burning it down, they poured red paint all over it. I mean, for me at 18 or 19 years, it was very significant. For me it turned political fast, you couldn't help it, can't help get political when you get involved in Indian rights. And they had the drum at (college) and I learned a little about the songs there at the time, social songs and the different types of songs. (Gerald)

By providing us with a road map for his journey, Gerald accentuates that this commitment had a kind of natural progression to it, leading to his study to become a singer and a spiritual leader. There is no hint that along this road there was ever a question of turning back- - the road led toward the fulfillment of his promise to realize a commitment to his people and his culture and to his spiritual development. He describes this as an intimate, personal relationship "with the Creator without any boundaries or intermediaries," deepening with every step forward to honor this commitment:

It's (being an Indigenous person) not a religion. It's a way of life... You are walking a spiritual path... In our way, you are asked to walk and live and conduct yourself in a certain way and you try all the time to do that. And you just don't forget about it until the next time. You think about it all the time, and you say, you suffer a little bit so that the Creator sees and hears you. And that's what it's about. (Gerald)

This commitment carried a responsibility to protect the land that Gerald has sought to accomplish by means of utilizing his training and experience as a businessman to fight to maintain the sovereign rights of his people in the State and County Legislatures and in the court systems. He defends the integrity of the culture of the Unkechaug through the revitalization of language and culture. This responsibility is the motivating force behind the current Cultural and Language Revitalization movement on the Reservation and educational programming initiatives for children. It entails working to protect and safeguard the land, to make room for the off-Reservation blood right members who have no land, and to make sure that the people who are living there have the blood right to be there.

Most of the participants in this study have served multiple times on the Tribal Council in various positions, and are involved in the different programs for cultural and language revitalization and educational initiatives. The extent to which they are active and the seriousness with which they accept this burden of their responsibility reflects their urgently felt, intergenerational commitment to each other, their ancestors and their children.

It is in the responsibility to the children and to the next generation that these promises are fulfilled, as Gerald states, “in making sure that the ceremonies (Corn Festival) take place, these socials, ... and you make sure you have the kids actively involved in them.” Since it is going to be the children’s legacy to uphold and carry forward this commitment to the Nation, the emphasis on involving and overseeing their participation in the ceremonies to develop a sense of their cultural identity, extends this promise to the next generation, who will then “pay it forward.”

For Michael, in his 20's, the push to revive the language program reflects this concept of the "spiritual is political." He is committed to bring back the voices of his ancestors, to recapture the power of the Unkechaug People to "speak with their spirit" and "communicate with their gods:"

I would say that it's of the utmost importance because through language one is able to maintain a connection, a firm anchor to their culture. Through language, it takes you to an entirely different level so that you're able to communicate with your gods, so that you're able to communicate with your people, you speak with your spirit and it allows you to experience life in a way that people who are actually able to live within their culture and have their language, they flourish. And oftentimes it's taken for granted so the importance of this language revitalization is to sink our teeth, take a firm hold and snatch back what has been taken back over the years. (Michael)

Michael's involvement in the revitalization of language and culture takes on mythic proportions here to return to what the Unkechaug Nation once had, their ability to communicate with their gods in that "world that we have lost." It allows for better communication and unity within the Nation, and for the culture to flourish. It enables each and every individual to participate fully in their cultural and tribal identity. It is his hope that when the culture and the language are revived, that the community will also flourish, to return cyclically to "the Nation's former glory."

Michael's strong terminology of "snatching back with our" teeth what was lost, highlights the visceral quality of this struggle to recover a power that was lost through colonization and oppression. It speaks of the class struggle of the Indigenous People who have been disenfranchised of their power to communicate, thus rendering themselves mute and alienated from each other, their "spirit" and "their gods." Reconnecting to the natural and metaphysical realms restores balance and harmony. Since the revitalization and renaissance of the culture demands the commitment and involvement of each and

every Unkechaug individual, this mandate to “pay it forward” is a dominant theme in every interview, and as described above, cuts across age and gender boundaries.

Rayna decided to make the commitment to run for the Tribal Council right out of high school. She was inspired by her grandmother and other ancestors who were on the Council in the past. She felt she could be a positive, enervating force since she was coming out of the younger generation:

I got involved young because I didn't really, I felt like a lot of issues like, I thought it was time for the new generation to take over and like get newer views on how to try to get the Reservation running like a good way. Like coming up as a child honestly I didn't know much of the tribal council really doing much for the community and I never understand like why are they running if they're not going to use their position to try to make things better, so that's why like that's what made me really want to get involved because I want to like...I was hoping to be there like to change a voice, a new outlook on things and then when I had children it really made me, like, OK I want better for my children, because me growing up and always saying I was from the Reservation, people looked at me funny as if... like... they didn't (believe it)... because I was a really smart girl! (Rayna)

Rayna saw that she could make a difference by helping to eradicate the stigma she struggled against that Reservation children were not “smart. ” This is the legacy of racism that the Unkechaug social worker faced and described above in this “self-fulfilling prophecy” because of their identified race and class traits that the children should fail. Indicative of the intergenerational transmission of trauma and grief, this carries a legacy of defeatism and failure.

Rayna brought a new, decisive attitude to the Council and a commitment to make “change for the better.” She did not want her children to have to deal with these stereotypical, racist “encounters” that she had, and felt it was her mandate to shore up the children, take charge and bring “new ideas.” She details her concrete, directive efforts at including both older and off Reservation blood rights in the socials and parties the

Council arranged. She feels this made for a wider inclusion and more sense of “unity” than had existed before.

This need for unity is also shared by Suzan, who reflects this desire in her hopes for the future of Nation and the country as a whole: “I hope, first of all everyone came together as one, work together, be united. That’s what we need on the Reservation, and once you have that you can go forth. To be together as a one Nation- - that ‘s not just on the Reservation- - it’s all over, if we can get together. More communication would be good too.”

Reaching out to other Indigenous communities, to the outside community and creating a stronger cultural program were other ideas that Rayna brought to the table. She felt that both children and adults could be brought even closer through storytelling and participation in the entrepreneurial activities on the Reservation, such as the wampum making factory.

For me, I don’t think we have enough funds right now, but hopefully in the future we can have more but like I don’t think there’s enough to teach the children. Everybody has different stories to tell from their elders and from their families but I think they need and we need to know more like from the 12,000 years and I don’t think half the children may even know that and half the adults may not know. Honestly, I think (we need) a program for adults and children that’s teaching more about how we began and we survived and the different cultural beliefs that we had. (Rayna)

Rayna emphasized a more hands-on quality to her educational philosophy, to support and enhance their pride and self-esteem that she knew would positively impact school achievement. Rayna refers to the cultural history of the Unkechaug Nation, that was pre-eminent in the production of wampum for trade up and down the eastern seaboard, and recommended the children visit the wampum shop on the Reservation to visualize the concrete realities of the way their ancestors lived and worked: “I think it will make them

feel better about themselves because by knowing where you came from gives you a better outlook...on who they are, where they came from, and what they can do to make themselves, and their family better. That's the thing. It's (the Reservation) such a small area so that if everyone works together we could make great things happen." (Rayna)

Rayna believes that her generation will bring positive, healthy change through a new vision of hope and unity to the Reservation. In her program for change, she interrogates the male leadership model, and suggests that a woman could be chief, in which case, she states she would certainly run for that position. She references the work of the Unity Project that uncovered that many residents lacked skills and education. She feels this lack made for a passive, defeatist attitude among the older generations, limiting their ability to fight successfully for their land and their rights:

Yeah. I actually think my kids should have it a little easier because of the new, because of this current generation that's trying to work on things, because for a while it was at a standstill where I think some of the elders were pretty much just like, "oh well." Sometimes a Native Americans, and I guess that's why we lost so much of our land, we always just kind of accepted things for the way they were and never fought like, you know, the way umm we would fight now in this current day, but see I think that was a problem for a long time. I think things are different now because now more people are more educated and they realize what we had, have....More educated meaning umm even with the Needs Assessment we realize that people didn't finish their high school degrees...I think I would tell them umm you learn something new every day. There is so much new out there to learn, Don't stop umm you know like, don't get discouraged, don't stop trying to learn more, you know about where you came from, where your ancestors came from and also trying to umm live it and teach it while you can because you know this way you have a better understanding of it. Just learning about it is one thing but if you try to put yourself in it, it makes more of a difference. (Rayna)

Rayna sees the trademarks of this new generation fulfilling this commitment to the Reservation through action: to live a different reality, to replicate the mindset of the

ancestors and to emphasize the importance of education, not only in attending school but in learning about the history of the Unkechaug Nation.

Rayna also believes that her active, political commitment, attending rallies, meetings of the Legislature and court sessions in which the Unkechaug smoke shop cases were deliberated strengthened and reinforced her connection to her community. She describes the court hearing, in which the Unkechaug history and very existence as an ancient Nation is denied and the opposition virulently defamed them:

Oh it was nasty-it was terrible (laughter) and actually...they had the senators of the state had a hearing in the city that we went to. They took a busload and umm you know they're like, "Oh, the Poospatucks are bootleggers, and half of them are not natives." And I'm like, I think that's very sad how they can just sit here and tell us what we do or who we are and I was so happy because the attorney, Jim Simermeyer was present and he was like, "No we have this..." (document), you know, proving he was like, I was kind of so happy that they had him to go back after them on our defense. They were like umm basically challenging us to this and challenging us to that. It just seemed we were just basically bootleggers that everything we do has something to do with cigarettes. Like we were here before the smoke shops and we're going to be here after, you know, and that was like what we were trying to, that was our message to them...I mean you can't...this is how many of us live and just helping our community because I mean there was times growing up, we only got a street and a half, we were the last people that got paved, or get plowed during the winters when we had the bad snowstorms We've tried to get out-the men in the community have to help shovel and even going in your roads at times, we didn't get free good help from the government. It was so funny, I remember one of the parents called for a stop sign it took years for them to give us a stop sign. I mean all of these issues that was so hard because we didn't have the funds to do them. Now we can pay one of our own members to plow us out, able to pay our own members to do work, you know, like and not have to depend really as much on the government, and of course we have more because of the shops and we're able to do this, but its like we found a way to kind of help our community and now you want a piece of it, but when we wasn't making nothing, you didn't give two cents about us, so that's how I felt hearing that type of stuff. (Rayna)

For Rayna, her “encounters” with racism occurred not only in the classroom, but in the courtroom, leading to anti-capitalist feelings of alienation and reinforcing the structural demarcations along “cultural alliances” or class lines. Her commitment to educate her community, both old and young, emanates from these experiences. She points out that they now have the ability, due to the funds made available by the smoke shops, to stand up to the dominant culture’s attempt to keep them economically unstable and dependent. Remembering the poverty brought home for her the reality of the smoke shop experience: no one was there to help us and now they - - the state - - “want a piece of us.”

The elephant in the living room, the smoke shop issue, or the “new buffalo,” has residents divided, although no one contests that the climate, the physical composition of the Reservation and the new spirit of hope that has been discovered are derived from these communal profits. Rayna would like to see one large smoke shop, from which everyone on the Reservation would prosper as they do with casinos. In the same way that the Medici financed the Italian Renaissance, the renaissance of culture, language and education on the Reservation is being bankrolled by the sovereign privilege of the Unkechaug Nation to sell cigarettes tax-free. As Duane sees it, this change is palpable:

You know, people seem to be motivated, you know, in a positive way, you know. They’re starting to take an interest in the Reservation. They’re starting to feel a part. They’re getting their homes fixed up, and creating jobs for them. A lot of people resent the smoke shops but people are making a living and they’re motivating themselves and their kids. It seems like they’re getting hope again....they don’t have that defeatist attitude I thought they had when I first moved here. (Duane)

The smoke shop owners directly financed the new community center, tuition for college scholarships outside the Stony Brook tuition programs that were negotiated with the

Tribal Council and the university, and the physical revitalization of the Reservation whereby each family was given a lump sum of money to put toward the renovation of their home. This influx of capital has dramatically changed the face of the Reservation. The commitment that the leaders have is further elaborated in maintaining their sovereign rights, of which selling cigarettes tax-free is only one aspect.

This responsibility to be a caretaker of the people and the culture and a steward of the land is literally inter-generationally transferred from one generation to the next, and in the case of one participant, on the deathbed of her mother. Paula remembers her mother and her grandmother (the one who was referenced above who spoke Unkechaug) reminding and admonishing her to fulfill her responsibility to the Reservation. It was not until her mother asked her to satisfy her moral obligation that she realized what this promise, a legacy handed down from one generation to the next, actually entailed:

Paula: We had moved and she was diagnosed with cancer ...and I gave up my job and I came back to take care of her, not thinking anything was going to happen to her, and when I could see that she wasn't getting any better and I knew what she was going to ask. And then she said to me, "I need you to come back home." And I said, you know, "Well, you know, I'm here Mom, I'm not going to leave you" and she said, "No, I need you to come back home. It's time for you (emphasis) to come home." So again, you know, I heard those old words that my Great Aunt said and all the others said: that it's your responsibility, it's your responsibility, it's your responsibility.

Interviewer: What was that responsibility for you?

Paula: To hold on to that land. Because in reality is, holding on to one piece of land is holding on to another piece of land, and holding on to another piece of land and holding on to...there is no fences, you may see some but it's all one piece of land, you know.

Interviewer: It's all one family.

Paula: It's all one family. (Paula)

What could be more binding than a death-bed promise? The land represents the physical manifestation of the Unkechaug Nation's cultural and spiritual bonds, and their relationship to the spiritual and metaphysical realms. Other Algonquian Nations, namely the Montauketts and the Mattinecocks had lost their land base that has made their political, economic and cultural cohesion difficult (Strong 1996). For Paula, who had moved away from the Reservation, married an African American and was living in an upper class suburb, there was no question that she would fulfill this promise, despite the ambivalence of her husband. She was coming back "with or without him."

Like Rayna, Paula expresses her indignity and anger that she needs to prove the existence of her People the dominant society denied based on a confusion of race and culture. This intergenerational transmission of trauma and grief has rendered it necessary for Paula to come "full circle:"

Paula: It's saving a culture, and a culture that really did exist and I sometimes get so angry because I feel that we have to, a group of us that we have to explain to the outside community that this is a real culture, that this really was a community of people, a part of a Nation that really truly existed and I think to the outside community, they don't see that. They see it as 52 acres that is completely populated by you know a group of people with no Native American bloodline at all trying to make a buck and driving around in a hot rod. If you listen, if you go there and you listen, you will hear my mother's voice, you will hear my grandparents' voices, you will hear the chiefs' voices, you will hear the elders' voices, and I know that that sounds so corny, but it's not. They're there. And I think that they have spoken to each and every person that is trying to make a difference. They are speaking to them. There's no choice now. We have to move forward. We have to do this.

Interviewer: What are the voices saying?

Paula: Don't let our voices die. My ancestors suffered many cold winters, you know, suffered without medical care, you know sometimes without maybe not enough to eat, suffered from the racism that was, you know, the next street over, and they suffered and they survived and they kept that land for a reason. And it doesn't have anything to do with Marlboros or Newport. I mean I want people to make a living I really, really do, but we

have to take some of this and we have to generate it into something really positive also. (Paula)

The ancestral voices that Paula refers to are being heard by many on the Reservation. The participants in this study insist they must break free of the trauma and grief generated by the denials and accusations against them. To use Michael's words: they need "to sink their teeth in and snatch back" their power. They cannot allow the land to be stolen, and now they have the wherewithal to make this contest a serious one: the capital.

Paula's motivation also emanates from a dialectical process, from that denial of her phenomenological reality as an Indigenous person that she encountered on the occasions she was forced to be photographed while dancing for white audiences. Taking back her reality, her humanity and dignity as an Indigenous person and acting in a social justice activist role, Paula eviscerates the stereotyped mascot image of herself and comes full circle to an acceptance of her vital and urgent role in the struggle to keep her land, culture and spiritual connections intact. In answer to Vine Deloria's question above, "who will hear the voices of the land?" Paula responds wholeheartedly that she has heard their call to arms and has taken up the struggle. There is no turning back: "We have to do this."

By drawing their line in the sand, the respondents in these interviews attest to a new reality on the Reservation. They have broken the intergenerational transmission of trauma and grief to assert their cultural identity. They prioritize the teaching of their children, the revival of their culture and ceremonies, their language and their relationships. As Brave Heart and De Bruyn (1998) point out, it is only through the healing on a communal level that the cycle of this intergenerational transmission can be

stopped, and the attendant traits of post traumatic slave syndrome can be replaced with healthier, more adaptive ways of interacting with themselves and outside communities.

Unlike their parents' generation that taught their children to "ignore" and "pay no mind" to the external denials and threats, the participants know intuitively that it is through education and the revival of their language and participation in cultural ceremonies and rituals that the culture will survive. They recognize the urgent and immediate need to make this cultural revival a reality in the face of threats by outside businesses, politicians, the mayor of New York City, the lure of hip hop culture and media blasts. In these excerpts, the interactions between parent and child about "who they are" and "what they are" bring this home.

On a communal level, taking this concept of cultural identity even further, with the revival and renaissance of culture and language, the Nation's leaders and supporters are breaking free of the chains of trauma and grief. They push forward their commitment, as reflective of Jace Weaver's "communitist values," and responsibility to be stewards of the land and protectors of their cultural legacy, for themselves, but mostly for their children. The participants in this study assert that they are actively engaged in a struggle to bring their Nation back to what Michael called its "former glory," to recreate and to return to the "land they have lost," and reconfigure it into "a community that would be a dream to live in." This community would reflect their ideals, values, worldviews, beliefs and ethics, ever in connection to the land, the ancestors, the children and the Creator.

VIII. Conclusion

1. Indigenous social work practice: A contemporary model

This project has centered on the voices of the Indigenous members of the Unkechaug Nation in an effort to showcase their cultural identity, pride and history to promote cultural competence and understanding by outside social workers. The participants in this study have shared how they have struggled to maintain their Indigenous identities amidst oppression, colonization and denial of their Tribe in the face of schoolteachers, court battles, mayors and legislatures that would seek to deny them their sovereign right to exist. They have contributed stories in which they have been stereotyped, demeaned and humiliated, bullied and marginalized in their oppression and discrimination by the dominant culture, and of the meaning of the loss of their lands and the attendant freedoms attached to them. They have also explored their hope of regaining a sense of community where their “Indianness” can find full expression and healing can occur. They are reeling from their success in the court battle to maintain their sovereignty and are aware of how fatal this attack could have been, if it were not for the community coming together and acting as one under the guidance of Chief Wallace and the Tribal Council. This court case also highlights the relationship with outsiders as a conflictual one, in which they needed to fight for their existence against attempts to annihilate them.

The relationship with outsiders, then, has changed little since contact and colonization. The recent reference to the assassination of Bin Ladin as “Geronimo,” enemy of the American people, attests to this. Indigenous People have to be constantly wary of outsiders who have cheated them of their land, are currently attempting to take

away their financial success in selling tax-free cigarettes, and must always be looking over their shoulder at the politicians, legislators and the local police who harass them.

The participants in this study look to history to try to make sense of this colonizer-colonized relationship. As Leslie points out, she needed to look beyond the Eurocentric version to learn the “other side:” “Everything was European, European, European, jammed down our throat. And I hated history for that reason because it wasn’t my history. It wasn’t my history because I didn’t excel in it because to know your enemy, to know the other side, you have to read about them and know about them.” This reference to the dominant culture as “the enemy” is a significant factor in working with members of the Unkechaug Nation. This is further elaborated by Chief Harry Wallace (2010):

Our culture and economic freedom and sovereignty have always been here. We define ourselves by our culture, our history, our shared values, our community and who we are as native people. No culture stays static or is frozen in time. Those who study the Dutch culture New Amsterdam discovered that the language usage is different. There are changes in makeup and the way you live. What makes culture so vibrant is that it's not stagnant. We are a people whose history is premised on survival. In all the things that have happened in our history, we have survived. They tried to take all of our land, move our people and repress our economy and culture, trying to banish us from the face of the earth. You can erase people off the legal books but human beings are not so accommodating.

This struggle to survive against the continuing assaults of the dominant culture clearly affects the way that the Unkechaug Nation relates to outsiders, and echoes the question broached at the beginning of this study: how can social workers practice effectively with the Nation? The Indigenous social worker on the Reservation provided a substantial description of how Western, Euro-centric models had failed her in working with her community, and related how she has returned to her Indigenous roots in relating to her community by reflecting the values that the Nation holds dear.

In fact, the description the Unkechaug social worker provides of her decolonized relationship with the community encapsulates an ideal summary of the skills, qualities and understandings necessary to perform **her** function. She is culturally grounded in the reality of her local context and responsive to the needs of her community. She practices within the norms of the community's cultural values in a relevant and authentic manner.

First and foremost among these values is the primacy of culture and relationships - - to act in those relationships with respect for the individuals' self-determination, self-affirmation and self-identity. In short, her work with individuals and the community is a microcosm of the same goals that the Nation is fighting for to maintain its sovereignty - - its self-governance and self-determination, legally, politically, economically, socially and spiritually. This correlation is no accident because it is in the health of the community where individuals discover and derive their well-being. Identity is community.

The social worker is rooted in the community's values, beliefs, customs, actions, informal and formal helping systems and methods of advocacy and empowerment. The social worker must work to reverse the power imbalances in the individual and the community; to fight against isolation and alienation; she must recognize her limits and her need to pay attention to her own life and self to live in balance and harmony. She must look to the community for guidance to resolve conflicts and build unity and consensus, and do this from a position of strength and egalitarianism, not recapitulate the dynamics of colonizer and colonized. She must heed Yellow Bird statement (2005) that "social work is colonization."

In order not to be the colonizer, the social worker must put the Nation's needs above her own professional interests. She must make use of spiritual tools such as the

medicine wheel as a vehicle for healing the trauma and grief. She needs to use reciprocity and empathy in her relationships, with sharing of her personal history and struggle to be recognized as authentic and genuine and to allow for an egalitarian relationship with her community members. Her ethical responsibility and commitment is to the individual, the family, the community and the natural world, especially to the land. It encompasses the spiritual world and that of all sentient beings. She works within the cyclical web of interdependent and inter-related organisms that make up the Indigenous universe.

In short, being a social worker in an Indigenous community means reflecting back to the community the very ideals of that community, as expressed in their cultural identity, which has been described by the participants in this study. It is in performing her “role” that these ideals become enacted. When, for example, she acts as an expert witness in Child Protective Services (CPS) removals, she reflects her training in “Indian” law in following the legal precedents of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. She follows through with the Unkechaug participant’s statement above that “we take care of our children. We don’t adopt them out.” She represents the wants and needs of the community in this endeavor as well.

In other words, her actions and behavior reflect the cultural ideals of the community, not that of an outside, state regulatory system. Her mandate comes “from the wigwam out.” Her work reflects the communitist values, of uniting work and community authentically, within an ethic of care and responsibility, to help heal the community and its individuals through the restoration of cultural practices and the affirmation of underlying beliefs and values. When possible, she identifies support from the external systems to meet the needs of the community, but always within a culturally embedded

context of collaboration and full participation of the community and the support of the Tribal Council.

When she reached out to Stony Brook University's School of Social Work for assistance with the Community Needs and Assets Assessment, to Stony Brook University, she embraced the community's goals to access support through the technologies that the School of Social Welfare was able to offer in a joint project with Dr. Carolyn Peabody. She did not capitulate to Western domination and colonialist practices in this outreach effort. This project was by definition a collaborative, participant based and inclusive venture that included many Reservation residents and trained the trainers to interview residents in the community. She worked with Chief Harry Wallace and the Tribal Council to have the community's needs met because she recognized that collaboration with outside agencies can be helpful, but as her experience warned her when returning to the community, it can also be harmful.

This job description of an Indigenous "practitioner activist" is different from that of the professional, Western social worker who creates an atmosphere of professional objectivity and distance, keeps boundaries intact, limits self-disclosure and engages in an Evidence Based Practice program directed by Western values. These techniques focus on individualism and individuation and would only foment an intensification of shame and be offensive for the participants whose voices are heard in this study.

The binary, capitalist thinking of what Yellow Bird (2010) calls the "professional imperialist" social worker reflects a dominant, authority-based belief in the superiority of Western knowledge. This thinking creates the separation of mind and body, natural and spiritual worlds, and emphasizes individualism and individuation at the expense of family

and community. The emphasis in this technology on internal causality and materialism could only intensify the marginalization, alienation and feelings of dehumanization and victimization that the participants describe. They are hallmarks of the relationship between colonizer and colonist that is to be avoided at all costs.

In contrast to these systems, Yellow Bird (2005) describes how the non-Western, neuro-decolonizing technologies of Empowerment therapies such as Mindfulness and Meditation can be useful and helpful, especially for children, to enhance their attention and concentration skills and provide them with tools for self-regulation and self-esteem. They are culturally consonant because Indigenous cultures have a long history of meditative practices, such as smoking the peace pipe and engaging in vision quests. Learning mindfulness, he found, is ideal for improving children's attentional and concentration skills, of increasing positive classroom behaviors (listening skills, e.g.) as well as their learning capacities (Yellow Bird, personal correspondence).

Faith (2010) points to the efficacy of working with individuals in a group, and emphasizes the importance of this for Indigenous People, especially for substance abuse work with spiritual, healing ceremonies. It is only in healing the community that the individual can be healed. Sharing and reciprocity in groups provides a potent healing environment. The social worker, according to Faith (2010), emphasizes egalitarianism and uses herself as a vehicle for healing.

The values, beliefs, worldviews and helping ways that are endemic to the community, as presented here in the voices of the participants of this study, echo these cultural and spiritual ethics. The prominence of relationship, connection, commitment and responsibility to the ancestors, family and especially children, in restoring reverence

for the culture and the land, honoring the egalitarian position of every sentient creature within an ethos of spirit, unity and community, are the ideals that are indicated here as foundational for the Unkechaug Nation.

The emphasis, always on the children, as reflected in the interviews, concern for their well-being, their self-esteem, their ability to negotiate the Scylla and Charybdis of identity politics, is in the forefront of this platform for the future. The projects which focus on the development of a new school on the Reservation reflect the priority of the children's well being. Development of pride through self-esteem through learning of the ancient Unkechaug language and wampum making skills will create a different world for the next generation of children, and buoy them in their struggle to maintain their Indigenous culture and values in the outside world. To privilege their Indigenous identity above hip hop culture and the assimilationism of the dominant culture will give them what one participant called "a leg up." These are the "helping ways" that are evident in the interviews.

2. The non-Indigenous social worker and the Indigenous community

For the non-Indigenous social worker, this skillset that is necessary for work in an Indigenous community can only be respected but not adopted because it is intrinsic to and embedded in Indigenous worldviews, beliefs, spiritual ceremonies, cultural norms and ethical responsibilities. Commitment to the land, the community and the Nation, to the ancestors as well as the future of the Nation: these ethical mandates cannot be separated out into a definable *Code of Ethics* as NASW has done. Nevertheless some of their more salient qualities can be mentioned and highlighted as goals in working with the Unkechaug Nation.

“Living with integrity” and doing the right thing whatever it costs are admirable and universal. They are not, however, Kantian categories that can be pulled out of their cultural, eco-social and eco-spiritual contexts. In short, Western social workers are not ethically or culturally prepared to follow these strictures and commitments, although they can learn from them and internalize them in their own way. As Weaver (2010) points out, it is not entirely possible to be “competent” in another culture. Instead, social workers need to focus their energies politically on supporting issues of social justice for Indigenous People.

When we are working with Indigenous Peoples, social work is a political act as issues of social injustice, loss of control, unresolved land claims and compensation for past and present oppressions become central to the services provided. Political action and attention to policy issues should be a more central part of social work in such contexts. The search for culturally relevant social work knowledge and for what is universal in diversity calls for a critical exploration of the foundational values and beliefs of social work in which...diversity can be celebrated and domination replaced by interdependence and mutual learning (p. 274).

Social workers in the dominant culture need to work alongside of Indigenous People, to act as “allied Others” to the Indigenous “practitioner activist” in pursuing the aims and goals of Indigenous communities, especially in the fight for reclamation of lands and sovereign rights that are continually being contested by the dominant society. Issues of survival for Indigenous People, such as issues of sovereignty for the Unkechaug, or deciding who should determine who is Indigenous and who is not, and fighting for better health care to end health disparities are other avenues that social workers can support. To combat the stereotyping and dehumanization of Indigenous People through the use of sports mascots needs to be addressed. Reparation for past injustice needs to be attacked head on, and social workers can perform a service in setting

up and supporting truth and reconciliation commissions. What Indigenous social workers refer to as the “biopirating of spirituality” by New Age practitioners, such as that leading to two deaths in New Mexico this summer by individuals who were not Indigenous, needs to be addressed (Yellow Bird, 2010). Social workers, according to Yellow Bird (2010), need to fight alongside Indigenous People to maintain or to acquire items that have been lost, such as ancestral remains, that have been appropriated by museums, for example, or gravesites where ancestors have been “relocated.”

Social workers need to use the skills that their programs have prepared them for: advocacy, legislative work, letter and grant writing, attending hearings and speaking out in support of Indigenous rights. Social workers need to follow the lead of community leaders, the guardians of the Nation. They should be sensitive to the history of continual oppression, and allow them to set the agenda since they are the experts.

When invited onto the Reservation, as the School of Social Welfare was, community, collaborative, participatory research projects can be efficacious. Participants described the outcomes of the Community Needs and Assets Assessment as positive, educational and informative. They remarked about the positive changes on the Reservation that resulted from it. They spoke about the importance of the ongoing grant-writing initiatives and collaboration with the Cultural and Language Revival programs. This study grew out of the participants’ statements and concerns about the importance to them of the younger generation learning more about their culture.

When social workers are called in, they need to be mindful of the cultural ideals and values of the community. Their struggles to maintain their cultural identity should be respected. Social workers need to study Unkechaug political history and follow the

legislative suits such as the pending suit by Mayor Bloomberg. For this Reservation, it is imperative to read both Chief Lone Otter (Donald Treadwell)'s History (*My People: The Unkechaug*, 1992) as well as John Strong's in press monograph, *The Unkechaug: A History*. Strong's discussion of the history of the Algonquian People (1997) and his more popular cultural history that highlights the cultural "articulation movements" on Long Island (1998) are also necessary for an understanding of their current issues.

Social workers need to know the history of the West in the Indigenous Holocaust and to work toward reparations. For Indigenous People, however, the most important issue is that of the loss of their land, as the Unkechaug also indicate in these interviews, and any and all support to that end is vital. But in order to do this, social workers need to be decolonized of their professional social work education, and to take stock of their personal as well as their professional lives lest they are perceived as more harmful than helpful to the communities they hope to serve.

Social work schools need to place more emphasis on the teaching of the history of Indigenous People in this country. As Suzan stated, "Remember the history- - and always remember the history!" One recommendation would be White Earth Reservation Indigenous activist Winona La Duke's book, *The Militarization of Indian Country* (2011), details the history of land seizures of Indigenous lands by the US government, which were later used for military and industrial sites, including nuclear testing, uranium and coal mining. Curricula need to highlight ways social workers have been complicit, and been co-opted by the dominant culture such as the removal of children during the boarding school era. Used as instruments of the state in supporting colonial injustice in the forced sterilization of women, social workers need to understand their history so they

do not repeat it. As part of these courses that emphasize learning about the history of Indigenous People in this country (and elsewhere), social workers should be asked to be politically active in writing grants, legislative advocacy, testifying in Congress to support initiatives and programs that force reparations and admissions of past crimes against Indigenous People. One way to introduce students to these issues is to have an NASW Legislative Education Advocacy Conference (LEAD) in the Schools of Social Welfare. As Leary (2005) points out, healing goes both ways.

Most importantly, what social workers need to do, is what Vine Deloria (1992) insists on, and that is a “leave us alone” policy because as Weaver indicated, the helping systems are in place, and have been for thousands of years. As Winona reminds us: “Like a family that presents well to the outside--what goes on in the house is what the family is--not what is exposed to the outside. The Reservation is a bigger case of this, just like every other community.” The Indigenous social workers and the experiences of the participants in this study indicate that it is the colonizer who needs to be policed, not the Indigenous communities. As Gray and Coates indicate (2010):

The cause of the Indigenous Peoples of the world is a just one, as is the cause of all communities and social workers trying to deal with their home-grown problems. If people are indeed the experts of their own lives, then let social work enable people to live their lives and set their problems in effective and culturally appropriate ways (p. 272).

3. On Process: Final remarks

This paper has focused on the challenges and the rewards of working with Indigenous People as an outsider, but not much has been stated about the personal

process this has entailed. From the very beginning of working on the Community Needs and Assets Assessment almost five years ago, it has felt like I was walking a tightrope in which I fell many times onto a supportive net that the Directors of the joint project, Dr. Peabody and Veronica Treadwell, MSW, as well as the Unity Project members and my participants provided for me. I had to learn how to walk this tightrope and negotiate my public and personal personas.

For example, I had wanted to have the survey instrument we used for the Community Assessment include questions on mental health, substance abuse and suicidality and was strident in my recommendations. The Indigenous community clearly rejected these ideas and stated that questions on these subjects would be seen as intrusive and invasive and ultimately affect the community perception that was already out there -- that we were trying to gather information that could be used against them. Thus, it could compromise the entire project. It did not matter how much I knew or what my training was: the Reservation was unique in terms of its history, its internal issues and its politics. I was not putting together the reality of their experience with the effect that this had on the members of the Reservation community in terms of their need to protect themselves from outside interference. I learned to be sensitive to this reality in their history, and to defer to them in these areas. It was a decolonizing moment for me, and also a chance for me to learn humility because all of my training and experience was irrelevant, even harmful, if I could not integrate it in ways that were helpful to the community.

I also found that I needed to take a step back and catch myself (again that net was always there under me) from personalizing issues, and to look at the larger picture of the history of the relationship of the Unkechaug Tribal members with the outside world and

also their particular struggles politically inside. For example, it proved impossible for me to get the amount of interviews I had originally hoped for, although I did get a sample from each core family. People were polite to me but would not accept my request for an interview. It must have seemed that I was obdurate because I kept going back to them because I did not get it. This obstinacy did not help me and I had to learn to unpack it. If they had been rude and hung up on me, it would have been more obvious, but because it was not about me, they treated me gently with courtesy, and eventually I got it. Eventually! I developed a sensitivity to how a polite but firm manner was neither a personal rejection nor an invitation for more discussion. It was a response I could learn to hear and heed with humility and gratitude.

I learned to use humor, sometimes at my own expense to deflect potential conflict and to affirm that the Unkechaug members were the experts. I was aware of how rare it was to be invited in and to be able to discuss the intimate issues that came up in the interviews. Sometimes I represented the presence of the other and I recognized that it was important for me to use distraction by way of humor to lighten up the moment and an opportunity to use social work engagement and empathic skills such as sharing and reciprocity.

Some of these issues were familiar to me coming from a Latino background. My grandfather was Cuban and my grandmother was Venezuelan but born in Mexico. Issues of time, respect for the priority of family and culture, and the importance of sharing and reciprocity are also intrinsic to Latino cultures. This family cultural history gave me a “leg up,” but as I have said above, the unique history of the Indigenous people in this country makes it more difficult for because it has been a constant, recurring battle for

domination by the dominant culture. The recent representation of Osama bin Laden as “Geronimo-enemy killed in action” reflects this oppressive stance.

My skills sometimes seemed inadequate but the positive aspects of being persistent and obstinate are that I did not give up and pushed through to overcome my personalizations. I acquired humility and learned to listen, feel, see and hear from a different vantage point so that I could walk across the tightrope and make it to the other side intact with the assistance and aid of the Unity Project members, the respondents in my study and the navigational skills of the Unkechaug social worker.

In this dissertation, I have explored the history of oppression toward Indigenous People, especially the members of the Unkechaug Nation. I have reviewed the perspectives of many Indigenous scholars on the role of social workers. I have studied the voices of the respondents of this study to understand how they are able to maintain a positive identification as Indigenous People despite the anti-Indigenous ideology that they have faced. I have developed principles for a culturally grounded approach to social work and described the focus on the children of the Reservation, the reverence for the land and the respect for family and community, of the meaningfulness and enjoyment of celebrating ritual and ceremony as a People, and of the belief in the future of the Unkechaug Nation. Hopefully, this information will be helpful to outsiders who seek to support Indigenous People, particularly the Unkechaug Nation, to maintain positive contact with their cultural identity.

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To Whom It May Concern,

As Chief of the Unkechaug Nation, I hereby give permission to Catherine Carballeira, to undertake her dissertation project, *Indigenous Identity among Individuals of the Unkechuag Nation: Implications for Cultural Competence in Policy and Practice*, by interviewing the blood right members of the Unkechaug Nation.



Chief Harry Wallace, Esq.

**STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY
COMMITTEES ON RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

APPLICATION FOR EXPEDITED AND FULL COMMITTEE REVIEW

NOTE: Save this file to your computer before continuing to fill it out. **Checkboxes can be activated with a mouse click and text boxes will expand with user input.** For reference, leave the **current, online version** of the Handbook for Investigators open on your computer while filling in this form. The Policies and Procedures Handbook for Investigators as well as links to federal policies can be found here:

<http://www.research.sunysb.edu/humans/humansubjects.html>

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Section I. General Protocol Information

I. A. Protocol Title

Indigenous identity among individuals of the Unkechaug Nation: Implications for cultural competence in policy and practice

I. B. Protocol Department (List all involved)

Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare

I. C. Primary Research Personnel

1. Principal Investigator: Carolyn Peabody, Ph.D.

(**MUST** have SBU faculty status or BNL clearance as a PI)

Campus Address: HSC< Level 2, School of Social Welfare

Zip:

Campus Phone: 4-3165

Campus Fax:

Email: cgpeabody@gmail.com

2. Study Coordinator: Catherine Carballeira, MSW

Phone: 245-7133

Fax:

Email: carballeira56@yahoo.com

** **Research Category**: (For each person, enter the appropriate value in Sections I.C. and I.D.)

1 – Interacts directly with human subjects in research that does not involve drugs, biologics, or devices;

2 – Interacts directly with human subjects in research that involves drugs, biologics, or devices;

3 – Only interacts with human data or human tissue in this research activity

I. D. Additional Personnel (Attach a separate sheet if study requires more than 5 people)

Name (Last, First)	Degree	SBU Status*	Department	Direct interaction with human subjects?	Currently CORIHS-Certified?
Morgan, Richard, Ph.D.		Faculty	Social Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Brandwein, Ruth, Ph.D.		Faculty	Sociaal Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Campos, Angel, Ph.D.		Faculty	Social Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Blau, Joel, Ph.D.		Faculty	Social Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

* Status: Faculty, Resident/Fellow, Graduate, Undergraduate, Other (specify)

NOTE: All personnel listed on this application must satisfy SBU's requirement for training on the "Protection of Human Subjects" and "HIPAA in Research" in order for this application to receive final approval; Visit: <http://www.research.sunysb.edu/humans/trainopts.html>

I. E. Research Funding (Check one of the following)

- Not Seeking Funding Internal External Internal & External Seeking Funding

NOTE: If you are seeking or have secured funding, **upload a copy of the grant proposal** and refer to [Section 24](#) of the Handbook for required consent text and related policy.

Grant Title:

(note: the grant title may be different than the CORIHS title)

Project – Task – Award # (if funded externally)	Funding Sponsor

I. F. Research Locations (Check all locations that apply for this study)

- Dental School/Clinic GCRC Hospital HSC LI Veterans Home
- Cancer Center Mod M (Metabolic Treatment Unit)
- Satellite (Tech Park, East End Clinic, etc.) W. Campus Other: Poospatuck Reservation
 BNL

Will the proposed activities be conducted in whole or in part at another institution?

- NO
- YES → Is it a multi-center clinical trial (e.g., Oncology Group, ACTG, Pharmaceutical Sponsored Study)?

YES

NO → Provide name(s) of participating institution(s) and indicate their role(s) in the study (**attach all relevant IRB approvals**)

I. G. University Hospital Involvement

Does this research involve the use of University Hospital patients, facilities or records?

- NO YES → complete the required UH application
<http://www.research.sunysb.edu/forms/uhappl.doc>

I. H. Investigator-Initiated Protocols

1. Is this proposed study investigator-initiated?
 NO → Proceed to Section II
 YES → Answer the following questions (#2 - 4)
2. Does this research study prospectively assign human subjects to intervention or comparison groups to study the cause and effect relationship between a medical intervention and a health outcome?
 NO
 YES → You must comply with the clinical trial registration requirements detailed at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/research/humans/2005humsub.html#viii> if you anticipate publishing in a member journal of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors listed at <http://www.icmje.org/jrnlist.html>
3. Does this research study involve a drug, biologic, or device requiring issuance of an IND, BB-IND, or IDE (respectively) from the FDA?
 NO
 YES (see note below)
4. Has a patent been filed or is it possible that a patent can be filed for the technology associated with the study intervention?
 NO
 YES (see note below)

NOTE: If answer to either question 3 or 4 above is checked YES, you are required to consult with SBU's Office of Technology Licensing and Industry Relations (OTLIR), N5002 Melville Library, (631) 632-9009.

Section II. Lay Summary and Detailed Project Description

NOTE: (All text boxes will expand with user input)

- II A.** Describe in lay terms the scientific significance and goal of the study. If applicable, include detailed procedures involving human subjects. Upload full protocol in addition to text below.

This is a dissertation study in the School of Social Welfare, with Carolyn Peabody, Ph.D. as the Principal Investigator, and doctoral student Catherine Carballeira, MA, MSW as the Study Coordinator. This is an exploratory qualitative study of Native American (Unkechaug Nation) perspectives on cultural identity using mostly in-depth, structured interviews and purposive sampling techniques. The unit of analysis is the bloodright members of the Unkechaug Nation. The purpose of this study is to develop important guidance that will provide "cultural sensitivity and competence" for outsiders who work with the members of the Unkechaug Indian Nation from the Poospatuck Reservation, including teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers and other health professionals.

In the words of Native American social work professor, Hilary Weaver

practicum/internship year and over the last three years as a Steering Committee member of this jointly named venture, "The Unity Project," which undertook the Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Among the results of the Needs Assessment, in an almost unanimous response from the community interviewed, which constituted 100 of the 153 adults living on the reservation, the adults indicated that the youth of the reservation did not know enough about their culture, and that this was a concern to them (see attached report, "Comprehensive Needs Assessment" in Appendix I). 93% of the interviewed people responded "yes" to this query. 80% indicated that they would like to see a museum on the reservation to help build community pride. The issues, then, of knowledge about their culture being passed on to the next generation, and of creating historical memory in the form of a living legacy of a museum, are endorsed by adults in the tribe as meaningful and serious concerns. Almost all of the residents (97%) interviewed agreed that they would be willing to work together with the Unity Project toward translating this concern, making the transmission of their cultural identity to the next generation, a reality.

The present study seeks to inform social workers' and other health professionals' current modus operandi of working with Unkechaug Native Americans to reflect this reality in their work with their clients, in what social workers term "cultural competence." Since very little empirical work has been done, especially with social worker "outsiders" to the Native American community in general and the Unkechaug Nation in particular, this study would offer a snapshot in real time of how the Unkechaug people feel about working with outsiders and how they think the relationship with social work outsiders can be improved in ways that support their positive identification with their culture.

It would also address gaps in understanding that impede social workers and health professionals in general from understanding and working effectively with the Unkechaug Nation, such as the misunderstanding that they are receiving "entitlements," rather than payments for compensatory justice. Demonstrating how Native Americans have secured their rights to services through treaties and contracts in which they have given up their land and been promised services in return, should offer a necessary corrective to the view of Native Americans as receivers of "welfare."

Another goal of this study is to support a redefinition of policy. The issue of self-determination is at the heart of the matter of issues of Native American sovereignty. Certainly the central issue is who decides who is a member of a Nation or a tribe. The non-Indian majority should not define who Native Americans are. Each Native American Nation should have the ability to define the politics that determine who is a member-not the federal or the state government or the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Non-Native Indian policy should be re-written to reflect the reality of the Native American Nation, not the stereotypical misunderstandings of the dominant, non-Indian culture.

Therefore, in supporting the documentation of Native Americans' ability to retain connection to their cultural identity in the face of the undermining of the effects of the dominant culture, this study will help further the social work mission of supporting communities which have been targeted, and enhance the ability of social workers and other health professionals to work effectively and compassionately with this tribe

II B. Describe subject recruitment procedures.

The final question on the recently completed, collaboratively produced, Community Needs Assessment asks the respondent if he or she would be willing to engage in a further interview conversation. Blood right members who agreed to a further interview are among the respondents who would be tapped for this study. If further subjects are needed, a snowball technique will be utilized, asking the bloodright members who have participated if they would recommend an individual who would be appropriate for the study. The writer would then contact the individual with the permission of this interviewee.

II C. List all inclusion/exclusion criteria for subject entry or use of data/tissues.

The unit of analysis for this study would be tribally enrolled members of the Unkechaug Nation living on the Poospatuck Reservation. Blood right membership entails being tribally enrolled, and consists of a process of documentation of lineage which must be confirmed by the Tribal Council. Although many blood right members live off the Reservation, this study will only include those who are residents of the Poospatuck Reservation and who are bloodright. There are approximately 153 adult residents living on the Poospatuck Reservation and 100 of them participated in the Needs Assessment survey. Further, this study will concentrate on those individuals who, in their Needs Assessment interviews, presented with a strong Indian identity.

II D. Describe the potential risks and benefits to subjects and discuss potential problems related to those risks/benefits.

Much of this application has focused on the marginalization and oppression of Native American people, and reflects the effects on the Unkechaug people of this oppression and racism by the dominant culture. Protecting privacy and confidentiality are crucial, as are efforts to guard against marginalizing and disempowering the interviewees.

Securing the permission of the Unkechaug Nation chief, Harry Wallace, before this study was proposed to CORIHS entailed a series of visits with the chief and a meeting with the tribal council during which this study was discussed and presented. Unkechaug social worker, Veronica Treadwell, MSW, has also provided insight and advice on the project proposal, and had to sign off on it before the Chief would agree to give his approval. This study has been received as promoting and benefiting the individuals of the tribe with the discussion of tribal members endorsing positive aspects of Indian identity, and therefore of fitting in with the needs and the wants of the individuals of the tribe to continue to encourage and foster cultural programming of an affirmative nature, along the lines of the above referenced tribally sponsored language revitalization and micro-economic development programs. This study, then, is clearly seen as a benefit for the individuals of the tribe.

Another benefit would be in the enhancement of cultural competence in working with the members of the tribe, which would include not only social workers but other health professionals such as doctors and nurses, as well as teachers and school administrators.

After the interviews are completed, I will then ask for a meeting with the interviewees in the form of a focus group, taking the information presented back to the group. The emphasis of this dialogue will be on how the members of the tribe can work together to support the community's efforts in supporting strong cultural identification, affirmation and empowerment. Thus, the goals of this study will be furthered through this mutual reflection, and the mission of social justice in supporting these principles will be served

through this process, which will hopefully allow for positive changes in policies, funding and practice for the individuals of the tribe.

II E. Describe specific procedures to be used to ensure confidentiality of subjects' data (including, if applicable, the option of obtaining the data anonymously) and discuss potential problems related to confidentiality or other ethical problems. (Certificates of confidentiality may be necessary if a principal risk of the study is breach of confidentiality, where such a breach could place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability, or damage to their financial standing, employability, insurability, or reputation. Visit NIH Office of Extramural Research for information; <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/policy/coc/>)

Privacy and confidentiality will be addressed in the following manner. Consent will be given in writing at the time of the interview, and a number will be coded for each interviewee and assigned to each tape and transcript. The consent forms and the interview tapes will be kept separately in a locked cabinet in Stony Brook University's School of Social Welfare for a period of five years after the study is accepted by the School of Social Welfare Ph.D. Committee

II F. Discuss, in detail, your consenting procedures. Specifically address how the capacity to consent will be assessed for all subjects. To satisfy this requirement, please refer to [Sections 12](#) and [13](#) of the online version of the CORIHS Handbook for Investigators. If it is your intent to request a waiver of informed consent, type N/A in the box below.

There are two parts to the consenting process when working with a Native American Reservation. The first is obtaining consent from the Chief of the Nation, and the second is securing individual consent from each participant. I have obtained permission from the Unkechaug Nation chief, Harry Wallace, and the Unkechaug Tribal Council to pursue this study (see attached document: "Letter requesting permission of the Unkechaug Nation," and "Letter of Approval from Tribal Chief"). As a result, this writer has been given permission by the tribe to undertake this study, which would entail qualitative interviews with blood right individuals of the Unkechaug Nation residing on the Poospatuck reservation.

I will obtain individual consent from each subject at the time of the interview, which will consist in the subject reading and signing the consent form, and being asked if he or she has any questions about the form. Since each subject has already signed a CORIHS approved consent form for the Needs Assessment, he or she is familiar with this process. The subject will be advised that if he or she is uncomfortable with any of the questions, he or she will have the power to refrain from answering that question or to stop the interview at any time.

Capacity to consent is not an issue since all of the subjects are adults and speak English.

Section III. Subject / Data Research

III. A. Type of Study

1. Will this study **involve ANY interaction** with human subjects (including obtaining consent)?

- YES → answer **Sections III. B – E** and continue with the remainder of the application
- NO → select the type of research you will be conducting from the list below and then skip to **Section III. F Consent Issues (Do not answer Sections III. B – E).** Multiple responses may be selected.
- Review of data that exists at time of application submission (e.g., medical records, school records, databases)
 - Review of data that does not already exist at the time of application submission
 - Analysis of existing biological specimens (i.e. specimen already on lab shelf at time of application submission)
 - Analysis/review of data collected at a collaborating institution/site
 - Prospective collection of anonymous, discarded clinical samples
 - Other (describe):

III. B. Subject Information

1. Subject gender for this protocol: Females only Males only Both genders
2. **Total number** of subjects at all locations needed to complete this study and answer the research aim: 25
3. If multi-center study (i.e., Oncology group, ACTG), what is the expected TOTAL number of subjects who will be fully enrolled at SBU?
4. Provide statistical justification for the number of subjects listed in Question III. B. 2 (i.e., power analysis). If qualitative research, so state, and provide general justification for the total number of subjects proposed:

There are approximately 153 adult residents living on the Poospatauck Reservation and 100 of them participated in the Needs Assessment survey. This study will concentrate on those individuals who, in their Needs Assessment interviews, presented with a strong Indian identity. Since not all of the 100 participants who responded to the Needs Assessment and agreed to participate in a further study were bloodright (N=77), and not all of the bloodright individuals endorsed a strong Indian identity, the population from which I could draw was smaller than I expected.

Thus, this study would include 25 interviews with blood right members of the Unkechaug Nation presenting as having a strong Indian identity. A purposive quota sampling approach will be used with gender and age groupings. I want to make sure that people are represented from the elder as well as the younger groups. These age groupings would allow for a diversity of voices across the generation span and could be analyzed and coded by age group and gender to assess generational and gender differences. As many participants as possible who have lived on the Reservation their entire lives will be tapped, and this group can also be compared in terms of their strong Indian identity and identification as blood right, to those who have left the Reservation and returned, of which there are a substantial number.

5. Duration of subject participation (# hours / days / weeks): 1- 2 hours

6. Will subjects be withdrawn from therapeutic procedures (e.g., “washout periods”) prior to or during their participation in this study?

NO YES → Describe the risks involved and address rescue medications/procedures

7. Will those consented for this study be limited to specific ethnic or social group(s)?

NO YES → Describe below:

Adult Native American bloodright residents of the Poospatuck Reservation

8. Federal mandates require that you include minorities (including American Indians, Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Black [not of Hispanic origin] and Hispanic) in your research unless you can justify their exclusion. Are you including minorities?

NO, minorities are not included (Justify your response in the box below)

YES, minorities are included

9. Federal mandates require that you include non-pregnant women (age 18+) in your research unless you can justify their exclusion. Are you including this population?

NO, inappropriate with respect to the health of the subjects (e.g., drug being studied has been shown to cause ovarian tumors in animal studies)

NO, inappropriate with respect to the purpose of the research (e.g., a study of a drug for the treatment of prostate cancer, or a study investigating men’s role in household chores)

YES

Other (describe below)

10. Federal mandates require that you include minors in your research unless you can justify their exclusion. Are you including minors?

NO, covered under another distinct protocol (i.e., Children’s Oncology Group)
→ List the title and PI of that distinct protocol:

NO, inappropriate due to lack of safety data in studies conducted in adults

NO, inappropriate with respect to the health of the subject (e.g., drug being studied has been shown to cause growth defects in animal studies)

NO, inappropriate with respect to the purpose of the research (e.g., study of treatments for Alzheimer’s disease, or a study on the causes of divorce)

YES

Other (describe below)

This study explores adult Native Americans' experience only.

III. C. Vulnerable Populations

III. C. 1. Indicate which of the following populations could possibly be included in the research. **Check all that apply and answer questions if asterisk population is selected.**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minors, ages 0 – 17 *
[Complete Section III C. 2] | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-English Speakers *
[Complete Section III C. 4] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fetuses / Pregnant Women *
[Complete Section III C. 6] | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonviable/Questionably Viable Neonates *
[Complete Section III C. 5] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals Unable to Consent for Themselves *
[Complete Section III C. 3] | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Women of Childbearing Potential *
[Complete Section III C. 7] |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economically Challenged | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigator or Self |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educationally Challenged | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minorities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employees or Subordinates of Investigators | <input type="checkbox"/> Normal Volunteers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Member of Investigators | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students or Trainees |

*** Instructions:** If you did not check any of the * populations: minors, those unable to consent for themselves, non-English speakers, non-viable/questionably viable neonates, fetuses/pregnant women and/or women of childbearing potential, proceed to **Section III. D** (Subject Recruitment). If you checked a * population, answer the corresponding questions below.

III. C. 2. Minors, ages 0 - 17

a. Will you obtain parental permission? Refer to [Section 10](#) of the Handbook for Investigators for applicable exceptions.

- NO → Justify below and state why you will not obtain parental permission
 YES → Refer to [Section 15](#) of the Handbook for Investigators for the current format

b. What is your assessment of the risk/benefit in this study?

- Minimal Risk
 More than minimal risk with possible direct benefit

- Slightly more than minimal risk without the possibility of direct benefit (both parents must give permission)
- Other → Justify below

c. Will you obtain minor assent? NOTE: IRB will decide when assent will be obtained for 8 – 11 year olds. Generally, assent is documented between 11 – 17 year olds.

- NO → Review [Section 10](#) of the Handbook for Investigators and justify below
- YES → Upload assent form. Review [Section 15](#) of the Handbook for Investigators for format and requirements.

III. C. 3. Those Unable to Consent for Themselves

a. Will the study involve either minimal risk or more than minimal risk with the possibility of direct benefit?

- NO YES

b. If your subject population will include adults who will not or may not have the capacity to give informed consent, provide justification for inclusion of these subjects, discuss how surrogate consent will be sought, and provide detailed steps to be taken to ensure additional protection of the rights and welfare of this subject population. (Refer to [Section 13](#) of the Handbook for Investigators for specific information)

III. C. 4. Non-English Speakers

a. How will you ensure that the information you provide will be understandable to the subjects? Refer to [Section 12](#) of the Handbook for Investigators for specific requirements.

- The IRB-approved English version of the consent form(s) will be translated into a foreign language and an affidavit of accurate translation will be submitted at a later date as an amendment
- I will use the OHRP method – Upload short consent form (used only for minimal risk studies)

III. C. 5. Nonviable / Questionably Viable Neonates

For detailed information involving the use of neonates in research, see [Section 9](#) of the CORIHS Handbook for Investigators. Contact the Office of Research Compliance with any questions (2-9036).

a. Which category is applicable to your research? (You may select both if appropriate)

- Neonates of Uncertain Viability
- Nonviable Neonates

b. Does your research satisfy the criteria outlined in **Section 9** of the Handbook?

NO → Justify below

YES

III. C. 6. Fetuses / Pregnant Women

a. Where scientifically appropriate, have preclinical (animal) studies and clinical studies been done on non-pregnant women to assess potential risks to women and fetuses?

NO YES

b. Risks to fetus are:

Caused by procedures holding out the prospect of direct benefit for the woman or fetus

Minimal and no direct benefit but the purpose of the research is to yield important biomedical knowledge which cannot be obtained by any other means

c. Explain the risk/benefit to fetus and/or mother. Review [Section 9](#) of the Handbook for Investigators for specific consent requirements.

III. C. 7. Women of Childbearing Potential

CORIHS requires specific language in the consent form for such instances where women of childbearing potential are included in the subject population of research involving the administration of drugs / tests/ devices with either known or unknown risks to a fetus.

Please consult [Section 14](#) of the Handbook for Investigators for specific language to include in the consent form.

a. Will this study involve the administration of drugs/ tests/ devices with either known or unknown risks to a fetus?

NO YES

b. How will you ensure that pregnancy does not occur during the course of the study?

(Select all that apply)

Counseling on birth control and /or abstinence

Pregnancy test during the study

Pregnancy test prior to initiation of the study

N/A

III. D. Subject Recruitment

1. Will subjects be paid for participation?

NO

YES → Provide details of remuneration (i.e., total amount and prorated scheduling)

Subjects will be given a \$20 incentive fee for their interview, which will take between 1-2 hours

2. Will physicians or staff refer subjects?

NO

YES → Referring physicians or staff must NOT receive incentives to recommend subjects for study participation.

3. Will your subject population consist of West Campus departmental subject pools (e.g., psychology, political science)?

NO

YES → Participation in studies may be offered for credit in class but students **MUST** be given other options for fulfilling the research component that are comparable in terms of time, effort, and education benefit. **Please list alternative activities below.**

4. Describe any other recruitment methods such as the use of advertisements, flyers, and media scripts that you will use in this research and include copies with this submission.

None-the individuals who will participate have already agreed to a further study when they participated in the Needs Assessment survey. If further interviewees are needed, a snowball approach will be utilized, asking the bloodright members to recommend a member of the tribe endorsing a positive Indian identity who would be willing to speak with me about it. I will contact this individual with their permission. The Chief and the social worker might also be able to suggest individuals who would be appropriate.

The Interview Guide which follows has been approved by the Chief and the social worker (please see attached document: Interview Guide).

III. E. Drugs, Devices, Radiation (Attach a separate sheet as needed)

1. **DRUGS** – List all study drugs, including experimental and control

Trade & Generic Names	FDA Approved?	FDA Approved for <u>use indicated in protocol?</u>	IND #
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

For all drugs listed, upload the following as applicable:

- **Investigator Brochures** (for all experimental, non-FDA approved drugs)
- **Package Inserts** (for all FDA-approved drugs being used off-label or for any FDA-approved drug specifically being investigated in this study protocol)
- Completed copy of **FDA form #1572** (Statement of Investigator Form)
- Completed copy of **FDA form #1571** (IND Application Form)

For all drugs listed that are **non-FDA approved** or non-FDA approved for the use indicated in this protocol, **justify exemption** from obtaining an IND # in the text box below (See http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_99/21cfr312_99.html - FDA 21 CFR 312. 2 {Applicability} (b) to determine if your research satisfies the five points listed):

--

2. DEVICES Upload an Investigator’s Device Brochure as applicable

	Device 1	Device 2
Trade & Generic Names:		
IDE # & Holder:		
FDA approved?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
FDA approved for the <u>use indicated in this protocol</u> ?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Device risk – Significant?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
** IDE category:	A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/>

**** IDE Category** - Category A: Experimental/Investigational; innovative device, not previously approved
Category B: Non-experimental/Investigational; proven technology, new application

a) For devices that are **non-FDA approved** and **do not have an IDE #**, justify use below: (see: http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_99/21cfr812_99.html - FDA 21CFR 812.2)

b) Explain device risk justification for each device listed:

--

3. RADIATION – What form(s)? Include amounts and schedule of administration

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic X-Rays | <input type="checkbox"/> Radiation Therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radioisotopes | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, describe: |

--

III. F. Consent Procedures

A subject may not be involved in research (including collection/study of their tissue or data) unless informed consent has been obtained. A waiver may be requested under limited conditions.

1. Type of consent to be obtained: **(SELECT ONE)**

- Written Consent → Upload a copy of the consent form with this application
- Waiver of Consent → Describe, in the text box below, how this study meets all four conditions listed in [Section 12](#) of the online Handbook for Investigators. These criteria must be documented by the PI before the IRB considers granting this waiver.
- Waiver of Documentation of Consent → Specify, in the text box below, which of the two criteria listed in [Section 12](#) of the online Handbook for Investigators pertains to this study. (**Note:** Examples in which this waiver may be requested include a web-based consent, telephone survey, or anonymous survey.)

2. Does this research involve a web-based consent/survey?

- NO
- YES → Describe the security measures taken to ensure confidentiality. If you will be using an independent research organization or internet-based data gathering firm to collect responses, provide information about the firm (company name, description of primary activities, etc.) and upload a copy of their privacy policy with this application.

3. Is deception involved in this research?

- NO
- YES → Justify below and upload a debriefing statement that will be provided to subjects.

4. How and where will consent be obtained?

Co nsent will be obtained at the time of the interview and will consist in a process of asking the subject to read and sign the consent form.

5. If subjects are unable to give consent (e.g., minors or those mentally impaired), describe how and by whom permission will be granted. If minor, how will you assess assent?

N/A

III. G. HIPAA

1. Does this research involve the collection of health information from e.g., medical records, healthcare providers, or direct interaction with the subjects? Health information includes

physical or mental information regarding the status, diagnosis, treatment and /or prevention of a physical or mental condition of the type that is now, or could be in the future, covered by health insurance.

- NO → Skip the next question – Continue with Section III. H.
 YES → Answer the next question

2. If you answered **YES to III G. 1**, select one of the following four (4) statements that best applies to the privacy of the health information and follow the steps as indicated. HIPAA Forms may be accessed here: <http://www.research.sunysb.edu/humans/hsforms.html>

- Subject's authorization for collection and use of their health information will be obtained via the consent form.
- The health information being accessed or used is de-identified. No identifiers on the **HIPAA De-identification** form will be retained. **Complete** and **upload this form** with the protocol application. In addition, upload the spreadsheet or case report form (CRF) you intend to utilize to collect your data in a de-identified manner. The name of the individual collecting the data on the spreadsheet/CRF must be included.
- The health information being accessed or used constitutes a limited data set (LDS), i.e., no identifiers on the **HIPAA LDS** form will be retained. **Complete** and **upload this form** with the protocol application. In addition, upload the spreadsheet or case report form you intend to utilize to collect your limited data set. The name of the individual collecting the data on spreadsheet/CRF must be included. **Note:** The LDS differs from de-identified health information in that an LDS may contain a) a unique identifying number, characteristic or code (e.g., a registry or study number), b) elements of dates, and c) address information including town, city, state, zip code (BUT NOT street address). The entity from which you obtain your data will require that you sign a data use agreement to assure subject privacy.
- Some or all of the subject identifiers on the HIPAA LDS form will be retained but subject authorization WILL NOT be obtained. **Complete** and **upload a HIPAA Waiver of Authorization** form with the protocol application.

III. H. Subjects Data / Biological Specimens

1. Data collected for the study will be obtained:

- anonymously (no way to link sample with subject identity): No identifiers listed on the [De-Identification form](#) will be used.
- in a coded manner (a link to the subject is retained; it is possible to find out the identity of the subject from whom the data were obtained, i.e., initials, social security #, medical record #, etc.)
- in a fully identified manner (e.g., name)

2. Is banking of data (e.g., 'registry', etc) proposed for future, as yet unspecified research?

- NO
- YES → Refer to [Section 18](#) of the Handbook for policy

3. Does this research activity involve the collection of biological specimens? (check all 'yes' answers that apply)
- NO->Proceed to Section IV.
 - YES, specimens will be obtained from future, discarded clinical samples
 - YES, specimens will be obtained from procedures performed specifically for research
 - YES, retrospective collection (specimens have already been obtained, i.e., already "on the shelf")
4. Biological specimens collected for the study will be obtained:
- anonymously (no way to link sample with subject identity): No identifiers listed on the [De-Identification form](#) will be used.
 - in a coded manner (a link to the subject is retained; it is possible to find out the identity of the subject from whom the data were obtained, i.e., initials, social security #, medical record #, etc.).
 - in a fully identified manner (e.g., name)
5. Will the analysis of the specimens be able to provide information that has known clinical significance for diagnosis or prediction of a disease state for either the subject or the subject's family members?
- NO
 - YES → Refer to [Section 19](#) of the Handbook for policy
6. Is banking of biological specimens proposed for future, as yet unspecified research?
- NO
 - YES → Refer to [Section 18](#) of the Handbook for policy

Section IV. Other Questions

1. Please list the expected number of years this study will be active: 3
2. Does this study intend to follow subjects for life? NO YES
3. If this is an investigator initiated study involving a non-FDA approved use of a drug or device, provide an abstract from all relevant literature references that includes a comprehensive analysis of the safety profile of the drug or device. (Example: Medline search)

4. Will data be reviewed by an independent Data Safety Monitoring Board?

NO

YES → provide the name of the Data Safety Monitoring Board or describe how the Board was constituted. You must include this information in the “Confidentiality/Protecting the Privacy of Your Health Information” section of the Consent Form.

5. Does this study have a Data Safety Monitoring Plan? (Note: all GCRC protocols are required to have a DSMP)

NO

YES

6. Does this study utilize a Contract Research Organization (CRO)?

NO

YES: Name of organization:

7. Does this study utilize a Contract Research Laboratory?

NO

YES: Name of laboratory:

8. Will this research use third party information such as family history or sexual contacts?

NO

YES → Describe protections for consent and/or privacy of third party:

Section V. Conflict of Interest (to be completed by the PI)

1. If this activity is, or will be, funded by a sponsor, does the associated contract/agreement allow for an enrollment bonus or incentives (i.e. a sliding scale payment to the institution based on the number of subjects enrolled or number of subjects enrolled within a given time frame)?

N/A

NO

YES → Provide detail below including amount and scheduling of the incentive:

2. Do any investigators listed in Sections I. C. and I. D. (Research Personnel) of this application have a **significant (personal) financial or commercial interest** in the conduct or results of this study (e.g., consulting fees, honoraria)? Refer to [Section 24](#) of the Handbook for Investigators for the definition of financial interest.

NO YES → Provide detail below:

3. If you answered **YES** to either of these questions, has your potential conflict of interest been disclosed in the consent form, per SBU policy?

N/A NO YES

Section VI. Certification of Principal Investigator

My electronic signature that will accompany the submission of the application and all supporting documents to CORIHS certifies that the research described in this application and supporting materials will be conducted in full compliance with Stony Brook University's Policies and Federal regulations governing human subject research. Furthermore, I will:

- Conduct all aspects of the project as approved by CORIHS,
- Promptly report any revisions or amendments to the research activity for review and approval by CORIHS prior to commencement of the revised protocols, with the only exception to this policy being those situations where changes in protocol are required to eliminate apparent, immediate hazards to the subject,
- Promptly report any unanticipated problems or serious adverse events affecting risk to subjects or others,
- Assume full responsibility for selecting subjects in strict accordance with the inclusion/exclusion criteria outlined in the application materials,
- Use only CORIHS-approved, stamped consent forms for studies in which consent form(s) have been approved for the research activity, and
- Ensure that all personnel involved with human subjects, or human data and/or biological specimens during the course of this research activity are trained in the Protection of Human Subjects and HIPAA in Research, in full accordance with SBU policy on this matter.

Section VII. Certification of Co-Investigators

My electronic signature certifies that:

- I am fully cognizant of the details of the protocol, and will conduct all aspects of the study as approved by CORIHS
- I will promptly report to the Principal Investigator any unanticipated problems or serious adverse events affecting risk to subjects or others
- I will not be involved in any aspect of the study for which I have not been trained, or conduct any procedure in which I am not certified/licensed.

Section VIII. Certification of Department Chair/Departmental Review Committee

My electronic signature certifies that I have reviewed the application and all supporting documents pertaining to this research protocol and that I attest to the scientific merit of this study and the competency of the investigator(s) to conduct this project.

Note: If the department chair or member of the departmental review committee is an investigator on this study, s/he can electronically sign as PI if his/her role is as principal investigator, but s/he cannot additionally sign this certification as the chair or member of review committee. The preferable signatory is the Chair (if the investigator is on the review committee), your Dean (if the investigator is the chair), or the VP for Research (if the investigator is Dean). Official designees of these signatories are also acceptable so long as the designee is not a subordinate to the investigator in any way.



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COMMITTEES ON RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
Established 1971

Research Consent Form

Project Title: Indigenous identity among individuals of the Unkechaug Nation
Principal Investigator: Carolyn Peabody, Ph.D.
Study Coordinator: Catherine Carballeira, MA, M. Phil., MSW

Purpose

You are being asked to volunteer in a research study, *Indigenous identity among individuals of the Unkechaug Nation*.

The purpose of this study is to gather information from bloodright individuals on their Native American identity, in order to develop important guidance that will provide "cultural sensitivity and competence" for outsiders who work with the members of the Unkechaug from the Reservation, including teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers and other health professionals.

Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. In doing so, you are agreeing to be interviewed. Your part will be to answer some questions about yourself and your children, if you are a parent. It should take no more than two hours of your time. The interviews will be audio-taped.

Risks

The risks to you are minimal. They might include a breach of confidentiality or stigmatization by the dominant society for endorsing pride in a Native American identity. All efforts will be made to make sure that confidentiality is not breached and that Native American identity issues will be treated with respect and sensitivity for maintaining a strong cultural identity despite how the dominant culture has portrayed and treated Native American people.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits that are expected but your participation will help further the effort to document the needs and strengths of the people living on the Reservation.

Confidentiality

We will take steps to help make sure that all the information we get about you is kept

private. Your name will not be used wherever possible. We will use a code instead. All the study data that we get from you will be kept locked up. The code will be locked up too. If any papers and talks are given about this research, your name will not be used.

All tapes and transcriptions will be held for no more than 3 years for reference in the process of analysis, development of findings, conclusions, writing and any publications that may result from this effort. Thereafter, the data will be destroyed.

We want to make sure that this study is being done correctly and that your rights and welfare are being protected. For this reason, we will share the data we get from you in this study with the study team, Stony Brook University's Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, applicable Institutional officials, and certain federal offices. However, if you tell us you are going to hurt yourself, hurt someone else, or if we believe the safety of a child is at risk, we will have to report this.

In a lawsuit, a judge can make us give him the information we collected about you.

You will be paid \$20 for your participation in the study. By accepting payment for participating in this study, certain identifying information about you may be made available to professional auditors to satisfy audit and federal reporting requirements, but confidentiality will be preserved. Please note that if you earn \$600 or more in a calendar year as a research subject, you may have to pay taxes on these earnings.

Costs to You:

You do not have to pay anything to be in this study.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT IN THIS STUDY:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be.

You have the right to change your mind and leave the study at any time without giving any reason and without penalty

Any new information that may make you change your mind about being in this study will be given to you

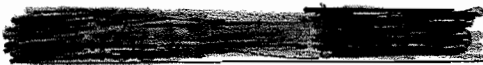
You will get a copy of this consent form to keep


You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this consent form

Questions about the study or your rights as a research subject:

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Dr. Carolyn Peabody at (631) 444-3165. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Ms. Judy Matuk, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at (631) 632-9036.

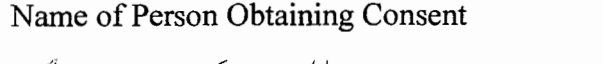
Your signature means that you have read the information contained in this letter, and would like to volunteer in this research study.


Name of Research Participant


Research Participant Signature


Date

Name of Person Obtaining Consent


Catherine Carballera
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

10/18/09
Date

Appendix 4. Interview Guide

Interview Guide

I. Childhood, Education and Relationship with Mentors

- Tell me about the ways your parents and family taught you about your Indigenous heritage?
- Tell me about your earliest memories with June meeting, i.e., the tribe's pow wow?
- Were there other Indigenous ceremonies your family participated in?
 - What was their meaning for you?
- Was there anyone who was important to you who shared with you information about your cultural heritage, such as oral histories?
 - Tell me about them.
- Tell me about your school.
 - What was the background of the kids who went there?
 - Were they mostly white, black or native?
 - What was that like for you?

- Do you remember any specific incidents about being Indigenous or with non-Indigenous people as a child?
 - Tell me about them.
- Did you spend time with kids from off the Reservation after school?
 - Tell me about them.
 - How was that for you?
 - What kinds of things did you do?
 - Around what ages did things change, or did they?

2. Adult Indigenous Experiences

- How have you participated in rituals, cultural events or ceremonies on the Reservation since childhood?
 - Tell me about your role in them
 - What's it like for you to participate in them?

Are there other ways that you have learned about your culture as an adult besides attending the spiritual and cultural events on the reservation?
 - What's that alike?
 - How does it affect how you see things?
- Tell me about the ways that you share with your children your knowledge and feelings about their Indigenous heritage?
- Tell me about your everyday interaction with others who live on the Reservation?

What about your interaction with Shinnecock individuals?
- How often are they?

When you interact with other bloodright individuals, do you find that

these interactions are different in any way from your interactions that you have with non-blood right individuals?

- What would you want them to know and feel about being Indigenous?

3. Off-Reservation Experiences

- Have you participated in ceremonies and cultural events on other Reservations?

What were they like for you?

Have you had any experiences where people responded or reacted to you in a certain way just because they found out you were Indigenous?

Can you tell me more about that?

- What has your experience been with helping professionals (doctors, teachers, nurses, social workers)?
 - Can you paint a picture for me of what these experiences have been like for you?

What did you find helpful and/or harmful in these interactions?

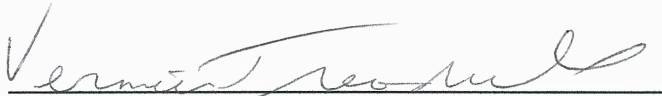
- Have you ever lived off the Reservation?
 - Tell me about that.
 - If not, would you ever be likely to?
- How do you relate to the Indigenous community who live off the Reservation?
 - How would you describe their experience living off the Reservation?
- Are you aware of any incidents where you or others from the Reservation felt that they were treated badly because of their association with the Reservation?
- Tell me about that.

Veronica Treadwell, MSW
Abbey Lane
Mastic, New York 11950

May 6, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I have read Catherine Carballeira's dissertation entitled, "Indigenous Identity at the Poospatauck Reservation: Implications for Culturally Grounded Social Work Practice and Policy." I hereby give permission for Ms. Carballeira to publish what she has written about me, as well as mentioning me by name, making use of the paper we co-wrote for the SUNY Albany 2007 Diversity conference ("Working with a Vulnerable Population: The Unkechaug Nation at the Poospatuck Reservation") and listing my professional responsibilities on the Poospatuck Reservation.


Veronica Treadwell, MSW

5/6/11
Date

 5/6/11

MARLENE ALTUNIS
Notary Public, State of New York
No. 01AL6163705
Qualified In Nassau County
Commission Expires 04/02/20 15