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Aninatoogoog Ezhi-maamwi-minobimaadiziyang (Maples and How We Live with Them)

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ANINATOOGOOG EZHI-MAAMWI-
MINOBIMAADIZIYANG
(MAPLES AND HOW WE LIVE WITH THEM)

gaa-ozhiibigeyaan (written by)

Nathon Breu

A Dissertation Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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at

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August 2020

ABSTRACT

ANINATOOGOOG EZHI-MAAMWI-MINOBIMAADIZIYANG
(MAPLES AND HOW WE LIVE WITH THEM)

gaa-ozhiibigeyaan (written by)

Nathon Breu

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2020
Under the Supervision of Professor Marcus Filippello

This paper starts with my own personal experience of turning maple sap into maple syrup in the prologue. This is done to ensure everyone knows the process of turning maple sap into syrup since many do not know. While then discussing *Aninaatigoog* (maple tree), *Shkakamikwe* (earth) or also the environment, I explain the importance of acknowledging the existence of *Aninaatigoog* and *Shkakamikwe* as living, breathing entities as part of a kingdom. I also discuss how important it is to communicate to them like any other group or community that shares the same space that we live in. Using traditional stories from the indigenous groups in the great lakes area, focusing on the *Anishinaabeg* and their language to better understand the *Anishinaabeg* ecological knowledge or their traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). I discuss the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 using traditional knowledge to explain the importance of what COVID-19 is trying to say and to place COVID-19 in context with the ecological disruption caused by colonialism. This is all done while trying to show the importance of sugarbush and how this ceremony strengthens the community.

I also discuss some *Aadizookaan*, traditional stories and teaching of the Anishinaabeg, that have been published already. I relay these *Aadizookaan* to help show the difference in *Anishinaabeg* philosophy and compare this philosophy to a

Western philosophy. I will then use a chapter to discuss the language of the *Anishinaabeg* to help show this deeper meaning into the philosophy of the *Anishinaabeg* and the relationship to *Shkakamikwe*. This all ties into traditional ecological knowledge and correlation with the environment, along with understanding the problems we currently observe today. I also discuss the importance of sugarbushing and how, even today in this modern society that we live in, it should be more widely practiced.

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To
my beautiful wife,
and my family

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PROLOGUE

Many have enjoyed the great taste of syrup, but few have tried real maple syrup: of those who have been fortunate enough to enjoy real maple syrup, very few have made syrup. I myself have studied maple harvesting for years and have been fortunate enough to enjoy the luxury of real maple syrup before, although I have never harvested or made syrup prior to now. I have read many books, talked to several people, and learned other viewpoints on *aninaatigoog*. As I go through the process of turning *ziinzibaakwadwaaboo* (maple sap) in to *anishinaabe-zhiiwaagamizigan* (maple syrup). This process, for me, was a ceremony of sorts, as I patiently watched the *ziizibaakwadwaaboo* slowly transformed into *anishinaabe-zhiiwaagamizigan*.

A friend, Mary Schultz, gave me close to forty gallons of maple sap. She said it was the sap she harvested the day before she came to visit me from Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Since the temperature was cold that night, in the low thirties, I left the sap in the forty-gallon bucket overnight, giving me time to figure out the best method to turn this *ziinzibaawadwaaboo* into *anishinaabe-zhiiwaagamizigan*. Keeping the spirit of the process and imagining this being a family event, I recruited my children to assist me in this process. I modernized the process from how it was traditionally done. I used an electric stove instead of *mishiwaatig* (dry wood) because it was more convenient for me and my family, and I did not need to obtain a different kettle for the *ziinzibaadwaaboo*. I will divert to my children's responses; children have a natural ability to be brutally honest to a fault. Looking for my thirteen-year old's honesty, I had her read this chapter to make sure I told the story accurately.

To begin with the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* is clear as water. We tasted it and as my thirteen-year-old said, “There is no taste”. My five and seven-year-old agreed that there was no flavor to the *ziizibaawadwaaboo*. We poured as much of the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* into a twelve-quart silver metal kettle to fill the kettle three-fourths full. We placed the kettle onto the front, right burner turning the burner on high and making the element size the largest. Above our stove is a microwave: this is only important in the sense that I tied, using bread ties, *giizhikaatig* (cedar leaf) to the handle of the microwave. The *giizhigaatig* was hanging just below the kettle line toward the center of the kettle over the *ziizibaawadwaaboo*. This was done to help eliminate the *zzizibaawadwaaboo* from boiling over and foaming. I remember this from one of my many conversations about sugarbush: sadly, I do not remember who told me this to give them proper credit. Understanding the importance of *giizhikaatig* being one of the sacred medicines to the Anishinaabeg used for protection, I harvested some shortly after sunrise that morning. I offered my *asema* to *giizhik* for some of her *giizhikatig* explaining to her what my intent was, so she would be ok with me harvesting *giizhikatig*.

Once the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* was boiling, we turned the burner down to 2, attempting to find the right temperature to keep the *zzizibaawadwaaboo* from burning. As we monitored the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* closely, we adjusted the burner to 6.5, so that the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* was bubbly but not boiling. The color of the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* started to change within thirty minutes into the process: all three of my children noticed it right away, sadly even before I did. With everyone taking turns watching the *ziizibaawadwaaboo*, it was stirred every five to ten minutes throughout the day. The four of us joked with each other about not knowing how this was going to turn out and how long it was going to take. Every hour I took a picture of the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* on the

stove with the time and burner temperature. At nine after twelve we added more *ziizibaawadwaaboo* to the kettle to put the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* level back at three fourths full, and the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* was down about two inches. At around three p.m., my thirteen-year-old said she could now smell a maple scent in the air. Prior to this, none of us really smelled anything in the house except for the *wiingashk* (sweet grass), that I was utilizing. I utilize the *wiingashk* according to how I was brought up by my uncle *Giniwmaquabun* and my father *Zhingos* to protect not only the ceremony of sugaring, but everyone around and to keep any bad spirits or ill feelings away. At eight after four, we added the remaining *ziizibaawadwaaboo* to the kettle. Throughout the day we all watched the *ziizibaawadwaaboo*, discussing how this was going to turn out. At twenty-eight after five we tried the *ziizibaawadwaaboo* to see what kind of product we were turning out. The four of us were very surprised at how it was turning out. My thirteen-year-old said, "It is like a slightly sweetened water with a kind of maple flavor."

Apiichi gii'bangishimo- as the sun did set, the *ziizibaawaadwaaboo* was down to the bottom quarter of the kettle and needed more attention to keep it from burning. At this point, everyone in the house was home and could smell what they called "a maple smell" emanating throughout. The *ziizibaawaadwaaboo* had turned a dark amber color and, in our opinion, was slightly thicker than when we started the process. I say this because my thirteen-year-old and I discussed if we thought it was getting thicker and could not decide if it was thicker or we perceived it to be thicker. Unfortunately, everyone overheard our discussion so there were biases when I asked them to stir it and get their opinion. They too thought it was thicker than water: however, they did overhear our discussion so they could have mentally thought it was thicker as well. At nine after nine at night, we tried the *ziizibaadwaaboo* and everyone in the house was

surprised at how sweet the *ziizibaadwaaboo* is. After a discussion with my daughters and wife we decided that the *ziizibaadwaaboo* was done and was now *anishinaabe-zhiywaagamizigan*.

Filtering the *anishinaabe-zhiywaagimiaigan* turned out to be an adventure. Being in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to find any cheesecloth to filter the *anishinaabe-zhiywaagamizigan*. I figured that the next best thing to use would be cotton cloth, to filter out all the impurities, i.e., the dirt that may be in the sap from the bucket to the pan, in the *anishinaabe-zhiywaagamizigan*. I looked through my youngest daughter's dresser to locate a shirt that no longer fit her and was made from cotton. I managed to find two twelve-quart mason jars to store the *anishinaabe-zhiywaagamizigan*. Having obtained one of her shirts, my thirteen-year-old held the cotton shirt over the top of the mason jar while I poured the *anishinaabe-zhiywaagamizigan* over the cloth. She would tell me when it was full, and we moved onto the next mason jar utilizing the same process as we did the first time. With that mason jar filled up I poured the remaining *anishinaabe-zhiywaagamizigan* into a plastic coffee cup from the Grind, a coffee shop on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In total there was one cup of syrup in the coffee cup and two mason jars were full to the top.

The consistency is more liquid than syrup, you genuinely think, however, the flavor is amazing. This process took all day and required all of us to work as a team. Even in a controlled environment as the house and on an electric stove, all of us had to help in some way. The four of us spent the day talking and visiting with each other on a day where this probably would not have taken place, with over twelve hours of us being together and helping each other out. This was just turning forty gallons of

ziizibaadwaaboo into *anishinaabe-zhiiwagamizigan*. We did not harvest any of it. Not only will this be something that all my daughters will remember but it brought us closer together.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Time is all relative: when someone tells you to wait a minute, do they mean an actual numeric minute? What may be a minute to one person may not be a minute to another person: the person usually means that they will relatively quickly be there. As many of us sit at home and watch as the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 slowly make its way across the globe, knowing that before too long, COVID-19 will be in our community, minutes suddenly feel like hours, which start to feel like days. This pandemic brings up some valid questions. Can our community handle the pandemic, are we the people strong enough to overcome a pandemic, but more importantly is this new disease one of the voices of *Shkakamikwe* (earth), trying to give the people a message on living together as one? To be clear, this involves not only becoming one with other human beings, but one with everything around us- plants, animals, water, air, and even land. Though this paper is not about COVID-19, the impacts from the disease are profound, will be brought up throughout the paper to show that it is another sign of *Shkakamikwe* fighting back, trying to give herself, and the many other kingdoms that are not human like the animals, plants, water, and air, agency against colonialism.

In this thesis I will be giving agency back to *Shkakamikwe* using *Aninaatigoog* as the primary resource of *Shkakamikwe*. Living on the region of *Anishinaabewakiing*, the land occupied by the *Anishinaabeg*, and of *Waaswaaganig*, Lac Du Flambeau, decent I will be utilizing the western dialect of *Anishinaabemowin*, Ojibwe language. I have used the Ojibwe Peoples Dictionaryⁱ as my primary dictionary along with a wide range of speakers as my primary source for *Anishinaabeg* language and culture. To better give the reader an understanding of the *Anishinaabeg*, I have discussed the *Aadizookaanag*,

teaching stories, in chapter 2 as they relate to the *aninaatigoog*. In chapter 3 I continue the *Aadizookaanag, nitam-adizooke ezhi-dagoshin*, (The First Storytelling of Creation). Chapter 4 I discuss the migration of the *Anishinaabeg* so the reader can understand that the *Anishinaabeg* people did not originate in this location. Chapter 5 *Wijjida* (Living with Each Other) is to introduce how indigenous people viewed society and the world they lived in, this chapter is just an introduction as it is not the primary focus of this paper. Chapter 6 is on *Anishinaabemowin*, Ojibwe language, which give the reader more insight to the depth of the *Anishinaabeg* understanding of the environment which they resided in. Chapter 7 I discuss traditional ecological knowledge explaining what traditional ecological knowledge is and why it is important for everyone. Chapter 8 *Noongom* discusses current events and how traditional ecological knowledge would be useful. Chapter 9 I talk about sugarbush and the importance of it and finally Chapter 10 is my conclusion where I tie everything together using my findings from the research I have done.

To better understand the *Anishinaabeg* and *Shkakamikwe* we must know the area of land that is be discussed. The land just to the west of a big body of water called *Michigami*, Big Lake in English, is the land that is called *Miskosin*, Red Stone. This land is the traditional homeland of the *Bodewadmi*, Ho-Chunk and Menominee Nations along the southwest shores of *Michigami*, North America's largest system of freshwater lakes, where the Milwaukee, Menominee and *Kinnickinnic* rivers meet. This area was a great gathering place for millions of years even prior to contact with traders. *Michigami* has a natural bay allowing for *manoomin* (wild rice) to grow where the three rivers meet. The *Bodewadmi*, Menemonee, and Sauk and Fox would traverse the rivers to meet and

trade. The land shared its natural components to sustain life, ensure a quality of life, and celebrate the harmony amongst all beings.

One of the many reasons for gathering in this area was to harvest the maple sap, the sugarbush. I will be looking at the use of *aninaatigoog* (sugar maples, acer saccharum) and its relationship to the *Anishinaabeg* using their language and by looking at how it correlates to the environment, giving a voice to the environment through traditional ecological knowledge, TEK, and trying to understand the knowledge that has been given to the people and how it benefits all people. The time to understand this knowledge is now, before this arbitrary time ends.

The pandemic of 2020 is still expanding, feasting on what only seems to be humans. The depths of COVID-19 will not be found until much later and will have forever altered humanity. For now, it has forced people into their home and family units, making the beginning of 2020 historical. Ironically, COVID-19 is forcing people to live in communities and to rely and trust that the government is trying to take care of the people. Still COVID-19 storms through countries and communities worldwide, forever leaving its mark on society as mass graves are utilized to bury the hundreds that die each day. How does time matter now? What is a minute now to the healthcare workers in New York, as death tolls are still climbing and the healthcare field is out of supplies, not just for the patient, but themselves? How relevant is time now, or is there a relevancy to time now? Does the clock or calendar mean anything now? Do the fictitious lines that make up countries, states, and cities mean anything now, or are we all a part of a global community where we work with one another for a common cause?

Schools across the nation have been canceling classes, graduations, and all activities as fear of this pandemic keeps growing. Starting with an expansion of spring break for most school systems, they are trying to figure what exactly they can do besides cancelling the rest of the school year. However, what is spring? The idea of what constitutes the exact definition of spring is a question that I will address in my paper, using the Ojibwe language and our *Aadizookaan* and sugar bushing to obtain a better picture of what spring is by interviewing elders and sources like White, Reo, Smith, Highway, Schoolcraft, and Densmore.

The Gregorian Calendar declares that spring has arrived during the spring equinox, however, that is also relative. This is just one of many ways that humans have tried to control the environment. The time for spring cannot be the same in every region across the United States. Every community has its own definition of when spring is here, so that they can decipher when spring has reached an area, in a way that will explain the natural phenomena that are occurring. Whether or not Gregorian Calendar is utilized for this purpose, or if it is more related to the environment, spring will come when she is ready to and no sooner. Baseball fans would say that spring starts when pitchers and catchers report to spring training. Some Wisconsin residents say that spring is here when you see the first robin, and still others would say spring is officially here when the maple sap starts to run.

The changing environment and fluctuating temperatures, due to climate change, make it difficult for any of us to tell when spring has arrived. To the *Anishinaabeg*, spring has arrived when the maple sap starts to run. *Biboonikeonini* (Wintermaker) tries to stay around if he can ensure people everywhere will remember his presence, blessing us

with his *goon*, snow. If *Biboonikeonini* is around, it is time to tell *aadizookaan*, sacred stories, of how life came to be. These stories told the Anishinaabeg people how the world they live in came to be, from the fish, bear, and fox, to the river's lakes and streams, and even all the plant life relied on by everyone.

Traditional ecological knowledge is an understanding and respect for everyone's cultural knowledge and beliefs specifically when speaking about the environment. The traditional knowledge of a specific place would include all the inhabitants. Looking at the Milwaukee area the traditional knowledge would start with the *Bodewadmi*, *Menominee*, and *Ho-Chunk* and including the people that are inhabiting the area today. It is through this analyses and communication that Traditional Ecological Knowledge takes place.

The *Bodewadmi* that lived in the area, lived in such a way that included a relationship with their environment. If it was too cold out, they adapted to the cold. If the deer were moving, they would ask a deer to sacrifice itself so the family could eat; then they would go out and look for the deer and hopefully come home with food for the family. When the weather changed, so did, they. If *Biboonikeonini* was around the *aadizookaan* were told, and if *Biboonikeonini* was gone the *aadizookaan* stopped being told. With *Biboonikeonini* gone, it was time for the sap to run, time for spring. When the rice was ready, they would say a prayer and only then go out and harvest the rice, celebrating its being there providing sustenance to sustain the community over the upcoming year. They lived with the environment, in sync to what is provided to them for a millennium. The *Bodewadmi*, like other indigenous nations, adjust to the environment

as it changes. They learn how to live with and adapt to the change, not trying to control the environment.

The *Aadizookaan* were told at a time when everyone was indoors, unable to go outside because of the cold. These *Aadizookaan* helped to keep everyone in strong mental health and remember how to behave in a community. *Aadizookaan* gave insight on how to live, why the bear has a small tail and even how *Shkashkamikwe* (earth), came to be. Every *Aadizookaan* has a different lesson or teaching for the listener.

The *Aadizookaan* are passed down through the generations to storytellers. To be clear, not everyone in the community is a storyteller, in much the same way that not everyone in a community is a warrior or healer: it is a gift that is given by the spirits. A storyteller must be able to remember the stories, along with catching the spirit or the essence of the *Aadizookaan* so the teachings, lessons, could be passed on. A storyteller has the gift to be able to relay the *Aadizookaan* with the appropriate essence to ensure the message was passed on in the right way. In the next couple of chapters, I will discuss some *Aadizookaan* that have been published already. I relay these *Aadizookaan* to help show the difference in *Anishinaabeg* philosophy compared to a modern western philosophy. I will then use a chapter to discuss the language of the *Anishinaabeg* to help show this deeper meaning into the philosophy of the *Anishinaabeg* and the relationship to the environment. This all ties into traditional ecological knowledge and correlation with the environment and the problems we currently observe today. I will also discuss the importance of sugarbush and how even today the art of sugarbush is practiced.

CHAPTER 2: AADIZOOKAAN

The indigenous people in Wisconsin have stories of how the maple sugar came to their people. These stories are told repeatedly during *Biboon*, the winter months. *Biboon* is the time when *Biboonikeonini*, Wintermaker, came around and the people gathered in a warm lodge, told stories of the past, and told of how things came to be. *Biboon* is a time for reflection, replenishment, and quiet as the cold sets in, days grow shorter and snow blankets *Shkakamikwe*, the earth ⁱⁱ.

Prior to the boarding school era, was a time when families would gather more closely together, not only for warmth, but also to also help pass time by fixing damaged equipment like snares or snowshoes, or make clothing or *makizin*, moccasin or cradle boards. The children would learn from the adults how to do these things at a very young age. Not only did it occupy the children, but it also bonded the family, having everyone helping where it was needed.

Telling *Aadizookaan*, sacred stories was also done during *Biboon*. There was always one person who was gifted the art of storytelling: not everyone could remember or tell a story like the storyteller. Most of the stories were about *Nanaboozhoo*, a half-spirit, half-human, who walked *Shkakamikwe* long ago, and was known as a trickster, one who played pranks or jokes on another. His mother was the granddaughter of the Moon and his father was the North Wind. One of *Nanaboozhoo's* gifts is that he can change form, shape and appearances. It is only during *Biboon*, when *Biboonikeonini* is around, that these *Aadizookaan* are spoken of. *Nanaboozhoo Aadizookaan* can be sad, funny, romantic or scary, but they always have a teaching to guide the listeners through life's journey.

These stories would occupy the young and old alike: each time a story was told, the listener would learn another lesson from it. *Anishinaabeg* have many *Aadizookaan* that help guide them through life's trials and tribulations and help explain why things are the way they are today. One of these many stories is about *Nanaboozhoo* and the maple syrup of the *Anishinaabeg*.

I tell this story as I remember it, and with respect for the *Anishinaabeg* and *Nanaboozhoo*. One day, a long time ago, *Nanaboozhoo* was looking for the *Anishinaabeg*. He walked all over, looking for the *Anishinaabeg*, and was unable to find them. They were not hunting or fishing, nor could he find them tending to their gardens.

Finally, *Nanaboozhoo* found the *Anishinaabeg* lying in the maple grove. They were lying under the trees, letting the thick maple sap drip into their mouths. They were fat and lazy, not hunting or fishing not tending to their gardens, just lying under the maple trees drinking their sweet nectar.

Upset by what he saw, *Nanaboozhoo* went down to the stream and grabbed a *makak*, a birch bark basket or container, filled it with water, and went back to the maple grove. *Nanaboozhoo* dumped the water on top of all the maple trees, thinning the sap so it was as liquid as the water, with barely any sweetness.

Because of *Nanaboozhoo*, nowadays the *Anishinaabeg* must make a fire and heat up rocks to drop into the *makak* and evaporate the water, leaving barely any syrup there. They will have to collect a lot of the sap for them to have throughout the year. *Nanaboozhoo* also made it so that the trees would only give their sap to the *Anishinaabeg* once a year. This was to ensure that the *Anishinaabeg* would be able to hunt, fish and gather the rest of the year.

There is another *Aadizookaan* from the *Anishinaabeg* about maple sugar. This one was told by *Keewaydinoquaybun Pakwakuk* Peschel, an Ojibwe healer from Michigan. In the world of academia, Keewaydinoquaybun received her Master of Education from Wayne State University, and a Ph.D. in ethnobotany at the University of Michigan. She also won the Teacher of the Year Award in Michigan in 1975. In the 1980s, she taught classes at UWM in ethnobotany as well as philosophy of the Great Lakes American Indians.

It was the time of the falling leaves and Red Feather was helping his *Nokomis*, grandmother, prepare for winter. He placed a few goodies in the toes of his moccasins while he sat by the fire preparing for bed. He heard a noise and found a *waawaabiganoojiinh*, mouse, looking for something to eat in the *wiigiwam*. Red Feather let the *waawaabiganoojiinh* take some food, but, knowing that the people did not like the *waawaabiganoojiinh*, he told his little brother, "Go back to the forest where it is safe for you."

That winter was the hardest winter anyone could remember. The forest was all ice, and everyone was going hungry. *Nokomis* told him that there was nothing to eat today, so Red Feather went to the forest to look for food. Soon he came across a place where two paths crossed so he stopped and watched the animals go by. He saw two cold, skinny snowbirds, one very sickly-looking skunk and a plump field mouse.

Red Feather stopped the *waawaabiganoojiinh* to ask what his secret was- how he, of all the animals, was so fat and healthy during such a hard winter. The *waawaabiganoojiinh* recognized Red Feather as the one who saved his life when the

leaves were falling, and told him to get closer, so he could tell him. The *waawaabiganoojiinh* told him that the secret was the sap from the maple tree.

Waawaabiganoojiinh told Red Feather that he was so hungry that he could eat a tree, so he went to an Elm tree and asked the elm for permission to eat his bark, explaining that he was just a *waawaabiganoojiinhense*, a little mouse, and would not eat that much. The Elm bark did not taste good, so he went back home hungry. The next day he tried an apple tree: again, the bark was bitter. *Waawaabiganoojiinh* said thank you to the tree, but the *waawaabiganoojiinh* said, "I will wait until your fruit ripens." Again, he went home hungry. The next day he came across a hemlock tree, and again he went home hungry. The *waawaabiganoojiinh* was giving up on eating trees when he ran into a maple tree. The Maple tree said, "Try me, little brother." so the *waawaabiganoojiinh* started to nibble on the bark. The bark was so sweet that he continued to nibble at it, until eventually the clear sap was oozing out of the maple tree. "It is delicious and now, I share it with you, Red Feather." With that, Red Feather thanked the Maple, and thanked his brother the *waawaabiganoojiinh*, and went back to *Nokomis* to share the goodness.

The Menominee *Aadizookaan* on the maple is like that of the *Anishinaabeg*. As I remember the story, and I am not a storyteller, nor do I know the Menominee language, it is *Nantnapush*, the son of the earth, who discovered the maple's sweetness, and it was said that he roamed the earth for many years learning everything about her. Once he learned everything, he taught the people how to use certain things. He showed the people how to get the sap out of the maple. He showed the people how to make the "Y" in the tree to get the sap out of the tree and then taught the people how to make the

baskets out of the birch and sap out of the white pine to seal the baskets so they could collect the maple sap. At this time, the sap was thick and sweet and did not need to be boiled. *Nantnapush* left the people for a while, and when he came back to the village, he could not find the people. They were all lying under the maple trees, letting the sap fall into their mouths. They became fat and lazy and did not do anything.

Getting upset, Nantnapush became very large, started to scold the people and then made it rain. It rained so much that the maple sap turned to liquid and was watered down. Now you will have to work and prepare the sap before you can enjoy the sap and I am making it a hard task, so you remember not to get lazy. That is why the maple sap is the way it is today as a punishment to the people for being lazy.

CHAPTER 3: CREATION AADIZOOKAAN

Stories of creation shape the way people behave and act in society or a community. These creation stories show us more about the thought process of the people along with the belief system of a community.

Christianity has the belief that God created earth and all its beings in six days. On the first day, the earth was formed and was covered in water and was dark- then God commanded, “Let there be light,” and there it was, probably one of the most famous of the lines in the bible. On the second day he made the sky by separating it from the water and keeping it in two different places. On the third day, he separated the land from the water, naming it earth and calling the water, which now came together, sea. Then God commanded the earth to produce all kinds of produce both fruit and grains. God was pleased when the earth started to produce the sustenance that he asked for.

On the fourth day God commanded that the sky separate day and night to show when days, years, and religious festivals begin. God made the sun to rule over the day and the moon to rule over the night to help separate light from darkness. The fifth day brought God to create sea monsters and birds telling them to reproduce and to fill the water and sky.

On the sixth day, God created animals that lived on the dry lands. Then, he created Adam, who was there to name the animals. God decreed man will have power over the fish, birds, and all animalsⁱⁱⁱ

In Genesis, God created the earth and made man last to rule over everything else. Woman was even made from the rib of a man. After God created man to rule over

everything and created women out of man to be the companion of the man, but also for man to rule over, God told them not to eat the forbidden fruit. There is a snake that convinces the women to eat the forbidden fruit and subsequently doom man into sin.

In the indigenous cultures, the creation stories are very different. In indigenous creation stories everyone works together, animals and humans alike, to save the earth and support each other in the community. Creation is ongoing and we are all participants. The *Anishinaabeg* from Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake of Superior Chippewa Indians, LCO, specifically Eddie Benton-Banai, tell an *addizokaan* of the creation story. This teaching is passed down from word of mouth and sometimes recorded on birchbark scrolls.

Earth comes from a family, *Nee-ga-gee'-sis* a grandmother and *Gee'sis*, the sun. The creator of this family is called *Gi'-tchie Man-i-to'*, the Great Mystery or as some call him/ her the Creator.

The Earth is said to be a woman. In this way it is understood that women preceded men on the earth. She is called mother earth because from her all living things come. Water is her life blood as it flows and nourishes her and purifies her.

The surface of earth is given the four sacred directions: north, south, east, and west. Each direction contributes a vital part to the wholeness of the earth. Each has their physical powers as well as spiritual powers as do all things.

Creator sent his singers in the forms of birds to the earth to carry the seeds of life to all the four directions. In this way, life was spread across the earth. On the earth, creator placed the swimming creatures of the water he gave life to all plant and insect

worlds. He placed four legged and crawlers on the land. All of these parts of life lived in harmony with each other.

Gitchie Manito then took four parts of Mother Earth and blew on them using a sacred shell. From the union of the four sacred elements and his breath, man was created. It is said the *Gitchie Manito* then lowered man to the earth. Thus, man was the last form of life to be placed on earth. From this original man came the *A-nish-I-na-be* people.^{iv}

This is just one version of the creation story, and each community has their own creation story. Verna Fowler, a Menominee, tells the creation story that she knows.

Maeq-Awaetok (Great Spirit) made the sun, the stars, and the Earth. Mother Earth gave birth to *Keso* (the Moon). The Moon gave birth to twins, whose work was to finish the creation of the world. Before people came into the world, the land, rivers, mountains, and lakes were formed. After the plants and animals and other living things had all been made, a great bear with a copper tail arose from the ground beside the Menominee River. As the bear explored the land on which he lived, the Great Spirit changed him into a person. This bear became the first Menominee.

Walking along the river, the bear noticed an eagle flying in the sky. He called out to the eagle, saying, "Come and join me and be my brother." As the bird flew down, the Great Spirit changed him into Menominee as well.

The two brothers, bear and eagle, were the elder brothers, and formed the tribe's major groups or clans. The earliest Menominee chiefs came from the bear clan, while the great warriors came out of the eagle clan.

The Menominee believed that the land, like the air, could not be owned. They believed that the Land was their mother. She gave them all they needed to live. The land, air, water, plants, and animals were there for them to use. However, they had to use all those gifts very carefully so that they would be there for the people born in the future.

The Bodewadmi have their version of the creation story as told by *Wapuka*,

In the beginning there was nothing but water everywhere. No land could be seen. On the waves there floated a canoe, and a man sat in it, and wept, for he had no idea what his gift would be. At length a muskrat clambered up on the canoe and said, "*Hau*, grandfather! What are you crying for?"

"Oh!" answered the man, "I have been there a long time and cannot find any land."

"But there is earth under all this water," replied the muskrat.

"Can you get me some?" asked the man.

"Yes," replied muskrat, and dove down and came up again with both paws full of mud. He dived again and brought up a ball of earth in his mouth.

"Are you alone?" asked the man.

"No," answered the muskrat, and he called up to the canoe several animal chiefs. The first to come was the white muskrat.

"I hear that you want to see us," he said to the man.

“Yes, I want you to bring me some earth so I can make the world, and I will also create on it a good place for you to stay.”

“*Hau*,” replied the animals, “We will start at once.”

So, they all began to dive; the beaver came and helped them also. They saw their grandfather kneading the mud that they brought to him and molding it into a long column that reached from the surface to the bottom of the water. It projected above the waves, and he kept adding to it. They kept on day after day, until it was finally solid. At last there was considerable space there. It was big enough to walk on. Then the man planted a great tree there. He still added to his island.

As the man worked on the north end of the island, he noticed in traveling back and forth that the ground grew dry and dusty. He asked his animal helpers how they liked what he had made, and they told him it was a good place to sun themselves. He told them to persevere in bringing him earth, and he would make it still better. Thus, he kept on, until the world was completed. Then he told his animal friends that it would be covered with green grass and trees. He took a stick and marked out where he wanted the rivers to run, and then he had the muskrat dig out the channels.

At last the man built a *wigwaam*. When he had it ready, the muskrats were close by in a lake, so he went over and planted rushes along the shore for their benefit. Then he got into his canoe and paddled out into the ocean and called on the muskrats to help him again while he built another world. He built it up until it met the first one.

“Now,” he said, “I have it the way that I want it.”

One day he walked up to the north end of his land and found some people there. He approached them and inquired of them where they came from and when. They were the Bodewadmi, and they asked in their turn who he was.

“I am *Wi'saka*,” he replied.

“Well, we have heard of you; you must have come from above as we did.”

“No,” answered *Wi'saka*, “I have always been here, and I made this earth and all that you see on it.”

“Well,” said one, “This must be the Great Spirit.”

“Yes,” answered *Wi'saka*, “That is who I am. Who can do any more than I have?”

“But, if you are the great spirit, why didn't you put us here?”

“You came too soon, there were others to precede you,” he said to them, and they believed, and asked him what he ate. *Wi'saka* told them that he lived upon the muskrats and he ordered the muskrats to dive into the lake and fetch him yakepin roots. When he had plenty, he told them to stop, and then he gave the roots to the Indians. He showed them how to make clay kettles and how to cook their food.

Wi'saka likewise showed the people the forest he had made, and in the woods, he showed them how to peel bark and make household utensils. He showed them how to make string to tie their lodge poles together. He instructed them how to gather and prepare reed to weave mats, and how to make rush mat wigwams. The next day he told them that there would be animals in the world, and at his command deer, buffalo, and other game appeared.

No matter which belief system you subscribe to, these creation stories speak volumes to the mentality of the individual that believes in that deity. For example, in Christianity man, not woman, was created to dominate and rule over everything, and even women came from a man. Just this theory alone has started wars and been used to justify the execution and murder of countless of people. The Spanish inquisition was done for their lord, the exploration of the “new world” was done for their god. Even reading the manifesto to the indigenous people that clearly states if you do not believe in our god, we will kill you. For this ideology, they were more than willing to torture, rape, and pillage, even so far as to taking a suckling baby from her mother and throw her into the water saying “Swim, piggy.” This was all done in the name of their god. As it states in their creation story, man was created to dominate over everything^v. First Timothy 2 talks about how a woman in church cannot speak and must dress modestly with decency and propriety, women should learn in quietness and full submission and will not have the authority to rule or teach men^{vi}. This is justified because Adam was formed first and then Eve, and it was not Adam who deceived, it was Eve. Genesis 3:16 even says the husband is to rule over the wife.

When pastors or preachers are questioned about these passages, some claim times have changed, but tell that to a LGBTQ or women who is trying to have an abortion for her own reasons. We can see this concept carry over into modern society. Women had to fight for all the rights that they have today, which they continually equality with men. The women’s suffrage movement lasted from 1848-1920 and the work continues today^{vii}. Even with the Women’s Right Movement, women are not free from domination by their male counterparts. Today, we have a me-too movement sweeping through the country because sexual assault is so prevalent with men not doing anything

to stop it^{viii}. Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, Matt Lauer, are just a few of the famous people that the me-too movement outed for using women for their own pleasure^{ix}.

How is this acceptable in any society? These are our daughters and mothers, our caregivers. Indigenous women are disappearing from all over the United States and Canada, but few even talk about it, unless you are an indigenous woman, then you are worried sick^x. Women who are as equal across all categories as their male counterparts will still make less money than men. Now people sit in judgement apparently the bible is only applicable when it is time to control someone who has different values or interprets the bible in a different way. Or is it true, according to Ephesians 5:23, that a husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the savior?

The environment is controlled by man too. Genesis 1:28 gives man the authority or right to rule over the fish of the sea and every living creature that moves along the ground^{xi}. Man has continuously tried to rule over the environment, hunting animals to extinction for his own pleasure^{xii}. Dams have been created to generate electricity causing a disruption in the natural flow of the rivers. This disruption affects the animals in it and around the rivers and land that is flooded by the dam. Some of the disruption prevent fish from spawning or prevent water to be used for sustenance, and it disrupted entire communities. Hoover Dam, one of the most impressive man-made, structured dams is just that dam. It destroyed the Diné people's pastures and destroyed many of their villages as the water backed up, creating a lake and drying up the Diné communities. People who once relied on herding and the river for survival, to nourish themselves and their sheep, and to water their gardens, are forced into a more desolate

state of having to figure out how to survive on the land that the United States gave them. No longer can they be nomadic as they once were^{xiii}. Once again, man is controlling the environment, forcing the water and animals into what humans' desires. There is no respect given to the environment: it is there simply to be controlled by man. I don't intend to tear apart and make fun of the Bible: The Bible is a great book from a historical perspective and has many great teachings and lessons in it. If there were only more people on the world that would believe in the bible's words, the world would be a better place teaching such as, do not judge others or treat others like you want to be treated. Ezekiel 47:12 even says, "And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing." Ezekiel states that these natural gifts of trees provide food and medicine, though he does not implicitly state that these gifts of the trees should not be altered we can presume that they should be taken care of, not manipulating them. This should be understood much like humans should not control, dictate, or murder people however humans have even managed to manipulate all the before mentioned a plethora times throughout history. All cannot be created equal if we are to believe all these passages are in fact true and not manipulated by man. Even Revelations 22:2 speaks of these same trees healing nations, "Through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

The indigenous creation stories paint a different picture altogether of a thought process that includes everything and everyone. In every indigenous creation story,

everyone is helping; animals help the humans, and the humans help the animals, because they live in unison with one another. The indigenous creation stories even talk of living in unison and no one's needs are above anyone else's: everyone and everything is given a voice and agency. Just like in the Christian creation story, the indigenous stories continue after the story of creation, from stories of how the bear received his short tail, to why we sugarbush. These stories are about working together and helping, just like in the Aadizookaan of sugarbush. Women are given equal respect to men and are not seen as objects to be dominated, nor do any of their Aadizookaan give authority to rule or dominate anything.

I am not intending to imply that the indigenous communities are somehow better because of our belief system or because of our creation stories. Indigenous people are indigenous people's worst enemies. They are always sitting in judgement waiting as if a panther has found its prey to pounce on the first person who says they may know something. "Who is he or she, are they even Indian? they are not full blooded? they do not speak the language? you do not even look Indian? where did they learn that ceremony from, my way is the only way." Those in Indian country will understand those questions. Or do I need to show you my card to prove my "Indianness"? I will get judged harder by my own community for what I write than any scholar that will read my work. Many will not even read my work and speak ill of me because I am not dark enough or for whatever ill-conceived reason, they may have instead of listening to what is being told. Poupart discusses how indigenous people suffer from historical trauma and violence that has had detrimental effects on the indigenous people today^{xiv}.

Just like the bible, the teachings are only good if you practice them. No one is perfect; hence everyone needs to collaborate to arrive at the best logical conclusion on what is best not just for a certain group of people but for everyone, humans and animals of every kind including the environment and everything she possess and allows us to use. What is important is what is best for everyone.

Catholic Monarchs Isabel and Ferdinand sought to establish a uniformly Christian state by expelling Jews in 1492 and then Muslims in 1502. This created large numbers of both groups to convert to Christianity to avoid expulsion and before this to avoid persecution. Knowing that both Jew and Muslims where converting to escape persecution along with ensuring only truly faithful Christians remained within the realm, the Inquisition was formulated to inquire into everyone's religious faith and practices but also into their lineage. Only those who could demonstrate their ancestry to those Christians who resisted the Moorish invasion were secure in their status in the realm. Although these Catholic monarchs appear to be doing what they feel is right and important in the catholic realm, they, as do many people, ignore the death and persecution of other humans because of their belief system. These monarchs put themselves and their beliefs before their fellow humans under the guise of being religious.

Prior to colonization and the loss of language and culture from the United States policies on dealing with the indigenous people, there was not persecution for being different. Light skinned or dark, long hair or short hair, four legged or winged, etc. everyone was respected for what they are. That is not to say that there was not fighting amongst the indigenous people, because there was however, in broad terms everyone

and everything was respected. The fighting that took place was much different than the fighting that takes place today, deaths were paid for with gifts or death of the accused^{xv}. Colonization of the indigenous people has made for a closed-minded society where now there is some people who sit in judgement and critique those who are not as dark or may not live on a reservation. There is even judgment passed for those people who leave the reservation looking for an education, and a less desolate life. It is not to say that living on the reservation is bad, but most reservations are desolate and filled with poverty again due to the United States Indian Policies. After all, the United States Declaration of Independence does state “merciless Indian savages” as a descriptor of how the founders of the United States thought of the indigenous communities^{xvi}.

CHAPTER 4: MIGRATION OF THE ANISHINAABEG

The Anishinaabeg are also known as the Three Fires Confederacy. They consist of people from the Ojibwe, Bodewadmi, and Odawa communities. They are often referred to as the Algonquian People. The Algonquian people originate on the East coast of the United States up in the region of Maine. Written on birch bark scrolls is story of the migration that the *Anishinaabeg* people took during their migration to the North and Midwest. The scrolls enlighten those who read them to the trials and tribulations that occurred during the migration. It was told to the Anishinaabeg during this migration to look for where the food grows on water. The food that grows on water is the *manomin*, good berry, wild rice.

Many have speculated on what caused the *Anishinaabeg* to migrate and leave the East. Some have translated this as fear of the white people coming, while others say it was disease that they were fleeing. Through my knowledge that was passed down from my Uncle and Father and the research of interviewing elders, reading books on indigenous history and philosophy, and participating in various ceremonies, I believe that the *Anishinabek* migrated due to what we now call global warming.

At one point in time, this area was covered with layers and layers of ice. The ice slowly melted over time, creating different land structures including the Great Lakes. The environment did not just stop warming up- it continued to warm up, as it does now. Humans have just exacerbated the process with the multiple layers of pollution. Because the environment was continuously getting warmer, the ice and snow continued to melt, causing mass amounts of water to be thrust onto the land. Just like there is concern for the coast to be underwater with the melting of Iceland, there would have

been some concern on the part of the people living in the area. They would have been more aware of changes in the environment because they relied on and lived every day in their environment, relying on her for sustenance and protection, even small changes would have been noticed.

For the past 400 years plus, the sea levels have been for the most part stable: however, 8,000 years prior, the water was not as stable. Analyzing the soil gives insight to what may have happened to the Atlantic Coast. Bottom samples that were obtained from between 20-90 meters contain one or more empty shells of the common edible oyster, *Crassostrea virginica*^{xvii}. This specific oyster only lives in tidal zones in depths of only a few meters. Considering the mass of the glacier that covered the Great Lakes Region, it could be plausible that the coast was shrinking during the glacier melt.

Looking strictly at the sediment, coarse-grained sands on the shelf are iron-stained and solution-pitted. Sediment that would have never been a shoreline would not represent with iron stains or pitting. This indicates that this sediment would have been a shore at some point in time. Topographic evidence of former lagoons and estuaries exists in the form of submerged beach ridges and filled marine canyons and channels.

Archeologists have dated Clovis projectile points in the Atlantic Coast back to some 12,000 years ago when the present continental shelf was still exposed. The water rise would have chased any nomadic being away. Left behind would have some tools and the maritime wildlife. The oldest dated marine shell midden on the Atlantic Coast is on Sapelo Island, Georgia. This midden contains the earliest pottery dating to about 3,800 years old. To obtain the older pottery and shells, researchers would need access to the continental shelf and would need to go down approximately 50- 60 meters to

obtain sediment samples from around the time when the continental shelf was coastline. The shelf southeast of New York has been buried by recent clayey silts. Most of the Gulf of Maine is too deep to have been exposed 11,000 years ago, and much of the shallower part has received a blanket of post glacial silty clays, or it is covered with ice-rafted cobbles and residual concentrations of glacial till that greatly dilute any possible stone artifacts. The shallow central area of Georges Bank (300 to 400 km. east of Boston) is also unfavorable, owing to great postglacial shifting of sand waves. There remains an area of about 250,000 square kilometers off the Middle Atlantic States that is most favorable for the search for submerged habitation sites of early man^{xviii}.

Looking at even the older school of thought, it was believed that the indigenous people crossed the Bering Strait. The melting of the glacier still caused a significant amount of flooding to eradicate the coastal regions. Helen Tanner puts the first migration into North America at around 16000-10000 B.C.E., though the newer scholarship says that indigenous people migrated from the northeast around a similar time frame. By looking at the Clovis points and how they were distributed throughout the United States it can be determined that people migrated from the north. Clovis points indicate that there were villages in the areas that the Clovis points were located, at some point in time. So, anthropologists are finding that there are more Clovis points north east and the Clovis points lessen going south and as they move west. What this means is that there was a migration from the north going south west as the Clovis points became less and less. In either migration there is little evidence to argue that water in any form played a significant role in their migration^{xix}.

CHAPTER 5: WIIJI'IDIDAA (LIVING WITH EACH OTHER)

The Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace has been cited by many scholars as the first constitutional document. This document has shaped many other constitutional documents including the United States Constitution. The Great Law of Peace does not mention color to describe another person. It refers to their specific nations, such as Cayuga, Oneida or foreign nations, or alien nations. There is no reference to Black, Red, Yellow, or White people or race of a people^{xx}. This Great Law gives instructions and guidelines on how to live in the world, and how-to live-in harmony with all that reside in this world. At no point in this Great Law does it speak of exclusion by means of color, or ethnicity, including the four-legged creatures, trees or plants. This document was an inclusionary document and talks about how to deal with people who are not inclusive, including what needs to happen to declare war on such people.

Traditional Anishinaabeg teachings do not see the color of a person's skin. Richard White points out in his book *The Middle Ground Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region 1650 -1850* that relationships were not based on the color of a person skin. In fact, kin relationships were more important than the color of a person's skin. Some of these relationships were made for safety reasons or money reasons: however, the fact remains there was not discontent because of the color of someone's skin^{xxi}.

Similarly, Professor Cary Miller writes about the *Ogimaag* (chiefs) in the Anishinaabeg communities. She looks at the roles of the Anishinaabeg chiefs in the community. In her book there was no mention of skin color as pertaining to a person^{xxii}.

The references to individuals in these books was regarding French, Huron, or English people, identifying them by their citizenship and not the color of their clothing or skin.

Some teachings speak of a circle of life or a medicine wheel. This symbol can be seen on most Indian reservations across the United States: it is usually a circle with a line going from east to west and north to south. Depending on the community, its colors and where the colors are located can vary. Most commonly the black is in the south, the white is in the north, east is the yellow, and west is the red. It is in this circle that there is a representation of the four races of people: Red, Black, Yellow, and White. As I was once told, the circle is not complete without each race of humans and we all need to work together to keep the circle of life strong. Though this circle of life did not materialize till after colonization, it is a testament to how the Anishinaabeg, and other nations, were not fearful of or against any cohabitation. The color of a person's skin is as relevant as the color of their eyes. Color was only implemented after colonialism by the United States for whites to have control. Race and color of a person is a made-up belief to implement oppression and segregation. As this philosophy of color was forced onto Americans and other colonial empires, more and more people began adapting to the theory of color instead of using a nationality, which is when this concept can be seen taking root in Indigenous societies. The only thing most Indians were against were and are an aggressive and unhealthy way of living, but not against a specific people, let alone an arbitrary color.

The codification of race inherits this concept of whiteness. Whiteness is a more modern take on how to categorize specific people. This concept was derived to establish hierarchy and access to rights. The "white" were granted better treatment and

more rights compared to those categorized as nonwhite, which enabled keeping the undesirables away and letting the desirables have more rights. Over time this concept of whiteness has changed and continues to change as people figure out more ways to restrict access. Before the Civil War, the Irish were not classed as white: however, nowadays an Irish person would be considered white, despite what the actual color of the person's skin was. So, to say that the Anishinaabeg migrated for fear of the white man in any way seems to be a stretch. Could there have been some fear? Perhaps: however, Indigenous people were trading goods with the Vikings before 1492 and there did not seem to be any type of discourse between the two groups. If there would have been fear of the white man then there would have been some recorded fighting with the Vikings and not trading with them.

CHAPTER 6: ANISHINAABEMOWIN

Language defines how humans view life and everything around them. If you believe in Christianity, you would believe that man was here to rule because that was the language used in the bible, specifically Genesis. English is a noun-based language with an emphasis on ownership, whereas *Anishinaabemowin* is a verb orientated language that puts an emphasis on something or someone doing something to or someone or something. In *Anishinaabemowin* there are four types of verbs, something is just happening, someone is doing something, someone is doing something to someone, and someone is doing something to something. The English language also affords the opportunity to switch words around to sound less degrading and mean, or more degrading and meaner, depending on the intent of the speaker. A person can say that someone is economically disadvantaged, or you can say someone is simply poor. In *Anishinaabemowin* poor is *gidimaagizi* coming from *gidimaag*, pity, pitiful, poor; *izi* she or he is in a state or condition. Sugarbush was a time of renewal. A time of spring, *zaagiyangidwa*. A time of opening, opening one's heart, soul, opening of the buds opening of life and most of all, springtime is the opening of a time of love where new life is starting. Families would come to gather after long winters and harvest the maple sap, laughing and joking, enjoying the comforts of being close to each other. Women, children with elders and some men would *Zhiwaagamizan*- boil the sap.

Hidden in languages is a uniqueness that must be looked at. If people do not stop to look at what is going on around us, we will become one big monoculture society, open to various diseases and pathogens that could eliminate humans, much like the dinosaurs, though the dinosaurs were not eliminated by disease: they were eliminated

by a force that was outside of their control and in the control of the environment that they lived in. Through this diversity we can have a better understanding of one another and the world that we live in. The need for using the laboratory to change a genetic makeup, is unnecessary, as the indigenous people have the knowledge to create different species of plants. Through understanding these indigenous languages, we can understand how to live in the environment as a cog in the wheel, not a conqueror.

With around six thousand fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin and roughly four thousand of them sixty-five and older^{xxiii}, it becomes imperative that we grasp onto the language before it becomes a zombie language^{xxiv}. Since COVID-19 has been attacking the elderly population, along with those that have an immunity deficiency, our language is at even more of a risk. The elders hold the traditional knowledge that has been passed down from generations, and if we do not learn it all, the teachings could disappear along with the language.

Doodem (clan) in *Anishijnaabemowin* (Ojibwe language) is derived from the word doodaw- to do something to an animate object. *Zaagibagaa* is often referred to as the budding of the plants. *Zaag* (sprout/ opening) *bag* (leaf) *aa* (in that condition). If we just look at the morpheme *Zaag* we also see the morpheme *Zaagi* (love/ treasure). This connection cannot be overlooked, it gives a different perspective on how the *Anishinaabeg* (Ojibwe people) lived, viewed, and thought of themselves and the world they lived. *Anishinaabemowin* (Ojibwe language) has a greater sense of being. Indigenous people understand that plants take in nourishment and gets rid of its waste. There is little difference between plants and animals. We can even see plants moving, migrating due to changes in temperatures.

It is also important to understand that even a simple concept of spring is different in the eyes of the *Anishinaabeg*. *Ziigwan* (spring) is different than *zaagibagaa giizis* and different from *Iskigamizige giizis*. *Iskigamizige giizis* refers to the time when the sap is running, which is also linked to spring. *Isk* (lower liquid level) *gam* (liquid, body of water) *iz* (act on it by heat). *Ziigwan* morphemes into *Ziig* (pour) and *wan* makes *Ziig* a noun, translating into “pour place”, referencing the amount of rain that is associated with spring. *Giizis* translates into month, sun, or moon, which can be derived by context. In some of these communities, spring has arrived when the thunder beings have come back, while others recognize spring when they hear certain frogs croaking. Some communities will recognize spring when a certain plant starts to bud or when the mother bear kicks the babies out of the den.

The concept of spring is fluid: you could have spring several times in one year or even have multiple spring events happening at the same time, much like 2018 in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area. This area, along with others, had thunderstorms in January, indicating spring, which was followed by copious amounts of cold weather and snow, indicating winter was once again upon us. *Iskigamizige giizis* was met with confusing temperature and weather patterns that affected the harvest, which also affected all the humans and animals, who relied on the sap for nourishment. Then there was April, which was met with high temperatures, which was followed up with record breaking snowfall, cold, and then temperatures in the sixties. This was a done in the span of a few days.

In *Minowaki* “*mino* good *aki* land, Milwaukee, we have this understanding that the land was good and bountiful in some way. The land called *Minowaki* is just to the west of

the *michigami*, “Michi big *gami*, Lake Michigan, the world's largest freshwater body system. The landscape made an excellent natural port, which was perfect for several wild rice beds that sustained the communities in the area. The port is where three rivers connected *Kinikink*, Milwaukee, and *Menominee*. This not only allowed access to communities further away but provided more sustenance to the area. This sustenance is not just in the form of water and transport but also provides nourishment for the plants and animals.

Every place in the world has connections to the environment they live in through their language. Language is how communication takes place, through sound or motions, humans, animals, even plants and trees have a capability for communication, at least with their same species. This form of communication is another language like Ojibwe, Ho Chunk, or even English. “The extinction of languages can be seen as part of the larger picture of worldwide near total ecosystem collapse. Our failure to recognize our intimate connection with the global ecosystem lies behind what we will call the biolinguistic diversity crisis facing us today”^{xxv}.

Here around the Great Lakes, Anishinaabemowin teaches us the connections we have with the environment including cosmology. It is a verb-orientated language that reflects relationships and energy. Everything around us is a network of relationships. The simple western concept of the cardinal directions takes on a whole new meaning looking at it through the *Anishinaabeg* language and views. *Waabanong* (east) is derived from the word *waaban* -meaning it is tomorrow or it is dawn. *Waaban* can be broken up into *waab* bright, white, grey, pale; it is in a state or condition to see him or her. This too, is an oversimplification, as the Anishinaabeg have a clear understanding

that in the east comes the sun, which is also responsible for light, which gives us the ability of sight. *Zhaawanong* (south) is referring to that place where the heat comes from. This stem from the root word *gizhaate* -which means it is hot, implying weather. *Gizhaate* can be also broken up into *gizh* hot; *aate* it is in the light. We can also see that the Anishinaabeg understand that the heat derives from the south. *Ningaabii'anong* (west) the place of our relatives, derives from *ningaabaawadoon* which means dissolve it or melt it in a liquid and *ong* which is a locative; directly translated would be the melting place. This is where the sun melts into the sunset, where the milky way travels, the place where our relatives travel to when they pass. *Giiwedinong* (north) derives from *giiwe* she or he goes home, returns. The *Anishinaabeg* used the north star as a guidance to ensure a safe return to their home or their destination. This understanding of the language shows that the Anishinaabeg had a greater sense of being, that they were just one of many beings on this land that need to be nurtured.

Emigwan, spoon, Mequon is located north of Minowaki and is where the Milwaukee river has a big turn. *Waagosha* (Many Foxes, Waukesha), *Waawaatesaa* (Firefly, Wauwatosa), *Emikwaan* (Spoon, Mequon), *Ozaawaaki* (Golden Land, Ozaukee), *Ginoozhe* (Pike, Kenosha), *Waabikaa* (White Metal, Waupaca), *Michigami* (Great Sea, Michigan) and *Waasa* (Far Away, Wausau) are just a few example of *Anishinaabemowin* (Ojibwe language) utilized in this area describing the community. By understanding the description used to describe a community by the indigenous people in the area, specifically looking at the Bodewadmi in this case, we get a better understanding of how they viewed the environment. Acknowledging this presence also gives the environment agency, a voice, as an independent living entity.

Anishinaabemowin holds the beauty and the inclusivity of all beings, understanding how everything works together as a community and is united by a common cause. *Anishinaabemowin* shows no ownership as it all consists of actions being done to animate or inanimate beings. This is unlike the English language, which is a noun-based language, where ownership of items plays an important role. This is played out throughout history as you see humans strive to obtain ownership of items that cannot be owned. These “items” include and are not limited to women, land, and animals. In *Anishinaabemowin* you do not see this underlying desire to have ownership, in fact it is very much the opposite. Some of this is not in the language, so much as in the culture. However, culture also produces language. Language is how humans communicate and can give the teachings of creation, which also influence the behaviors of humans. By learning *Anishinaabemowin* we can have a better understanding about the people, their culture, and their teachings. Through this understanding, a friendship, or kinship, could be extended where the sharing of knowledge could be done, improving society and the world. This mutual understanding and respect would translate into giving *Shkakamikwe*, all that is on her agency, respecting *awesiinyag* and *Shkakamikwe* as a culture with its own language and teachings that need to be learned.

CHAPTER 7: TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Traditional Ecological Knowledge is an understanding of the environment that a community has lived in over many decades. This knowledge is usually passed down through generations: the ability to listen to the environment and adapt to what *Shkakamikwe*, the earth, is needing and providing at any given time. Time has created this paradox of knowledge, where the past tells us how to handle future events when they happen. The Cherokee did not have a smallpox dance or ceremony until there was a threat of the disease^{xxvi}. Once they realized there was a disease, there were people in the community that would fast and talk to their spirit helpers to find a cure or be given a ceremony for smallpox^{xxvii}. The Cherokee passed that ceremony, along with other knowledge, down to the next generation and so on. As this COVID-19 spreads, elders are fasting for a cure, along with western medicine trying to design a vaccine or treatment. As this disease strikes fear into the hearts and souls of people, they turn to their deity for help and guidance, much like they did during plagues of the past.

People possessing the knowledge that has been handed down from generations past, have been given the responsibility to keep the ceremonies alive and to help the people who want and need it, if they are willing to listen. The people who have this knowledge know they do not have all the answers, because times change and so does the scientific knowledge. They have scientific knowledge about the environment along with the ability to understand that knowledge of their environment. Respecting the values of all walks of life, including and not limited to, the four legged, the two legged, the fliers, the swimmers and the crawlers, is the backbone of traditional ecological knowledge. Once you have accepted this level of knowledge, then you do have a true

understanding of traditional ecological knowledge, TEK. If there is no respect for another person's beliefs or values, how can there be respect given back? Given that the environment is the forefront of TEK, if you do not respect the environment and how others may view it, then you do not understand TEK. Respect builds respect. To better understand the environment and understand ecological knowledge, you must give respect to the environment, plants, animals, air, and water, acknowledging that these beings are animate, full of life, and have their own unique spirit that can, and does, get killed or influenced by others, just like humans.

Indigenous communities have been dealing with global warming for over a millennium. We understand that millions of years ago, proven by western science, the earth had a much colder environment. This time period was known as the ice age, when vast sheets of ice covered most of the United States- thick sheets of ice that were plowing over everything that stood in their way. These glaciers forced communities to move and constantly adjust to what they were doing. As the environment got warmer, the ice sheets started to melt and slowly retreat. As the environment kept getting increasingly warmer, the melting ice made rivers and streams where communities would eventually settle. The Great Lakes were formed from the warming of the environment.

As the ice melts water must go somewhere, especially the sheets of ice from a glacier. Massive amounts of water would have come from these glaciers melting, so much so that it would have affected communities that lived near water. The melting glacier and subsequent waters that rose, forced movement of entire communities away from the now rising water. Archeological evidence shows communities were buried under water^{xxviii}. A massive increase in water is the only explanation for these

communities being buried beneath miles of water. The *Anishinaabeg* have stories of living on the east coast and migrating to the place where food grows on water. These stories brought the *Anishinaabeg* to the Midwest. Their ability to utilize their traditional ecological knowledge helped sustain the *Anishinaabeg* during their great migration.

This knowledge has been passed down through the millennia and is, in some cases, written down. As the time changed, so did their knowledge. As the environment went through changes, so did the *Anishinaabeg*. There was not a smallpox dance or ritual until there was an encounter of the disease. Looking at the *Anishinaabé* language and how they interacted in their environment shows that they understood the environment as a living, breathing entity. They made petitions or offerings to plants and animals when they were needed and being harvested. They would speak to the spirits of the land for help and guidance, along with placing food out for those same spirits. There was not a feeling that their lives were more important than the lives of any of the plants, the trees, or any of the animals on their various kingdoms, all lives were equally important including the one that they lived upon, *Shkakamikwe*, or the earth. They believed that they had a direct effect on the environment and would adapt to the changing environment and all that lived on her listening to what each kingdom, animals, plants or trees, told them. Each kingdom would give them a set of teachings to help them learn. Wildcat discusses how these animals and plants have the original teaching pertain to themselves and have the same rights, being equal as humans^{xxix}.

The violence that has taken place on the land for millennia has caused great effects on the land, much like when a child grows up in a violent atmosphere. That child will have a greater chance of showing violent behaviors. Therapists and psychologists

have reinforced this theory. All these kingdoms of plants and animals, including *Shkakamikwe* have been soaking in all the violence and turmoil from around the globe, just like a child would.

These teachings that have been passed down through generations were naturally adapted by the people being taught. This adaption may not be immediate, however as the times change and weather changes, the adaption happens. As time changes, and the environment naturally changes, the way we do things changes. Before global warming, humans were all about driving and factories and did not think about all the pollution being dumped into the air. Before humans knew about the problems with Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane, more commonly called DDT, they were spraying public beaches and the people on them, giving many of them serious health issues^{xxx}. Time helps us learn from past mistakes, letting us know what works and what doesn't, even telling us that some situations may require something specific. Those that hold that knowledge know and will guide others, if people are willing to listen.

Healers often say to harvest a plant from the area that you live in. The rationale behind this is that this plant would have been taking in the same good and bad that the environment gave to you. This means that the plant would have the natural enzymes needed to help you recover from whatever cold you caught. All these plants are alive just like everything else is in the environment. These plants can and do communicate with other plants: just because humans do not hear or see this communication does not mean that the communication is not going on, just like the spirits. Some people can communicate with them, others cannot. It does not mean that the spirits do not exist. As

medicine is being overexploited and overused, new disease pathogens adapt and grow every year. Viruses adapt and become immune and new diseases and viruses are born.

CHAPTER 8: NOONGOM

Once again people are being shown that the environment cannot and will not be controlled. As almost a warning to people to change their actions, a virus of epic proportions appears. Slowly this virus takes over China, rapidly plaguing their country, killing thousands in its wake. Governments order citizens to stay away from China, China orders everybody to stay inside to prevent the spread of this virus. Streets normally laden with the hustle of over a billion people are now quiet, as if tumbleweeds can be seen blowing through the parking lots and streets of major cities, and yet the virus continues to spread and kill^{xxxix}.

In Cotacachi Ecuador, seeds are gathered in the aprons and cradled as if they were their *wawas*, the Cotacachi traditional name for baby. The Cotacachi people are taught that plants and animals are all part of the connections between *Runa* (indigenous people). This gives them the teaching of conservation and respect, a value that has been lost. The Cotacachi people, respecting their teaching, have good communication with the land. In return, the land gives them good harvests. Decolonizing embraces both indigenous and nonindigenous peoples and is proposed as an active response to the ongoing erasure of place by the forces representing globalization^{xxxix}. Listening to the environment and living with the environment, instead of trying to control her, helps the Cotacachi people survive in times of struggle. Their traditional ceremonies guide them on how to behave and what to do. Their closeness to the environment also allows the Cotacachi people to understand the environment, so they can adjust what they are growing to what the environment is telling them.

While people are hoping and praying that this ungodly virus stays in China and does not invade Europe, killing hundreds of thousands of people, the virus starts to take over Europe. Because people don't know what to do or how to control this virus and how to stop it from taking over, the virus starts to send everyone into a panic. Many in the United States feel the virus will never reach across the great sea but ask an indigenous person how well that sentiment works out. Millions in Europe are being infected, people are dying, and no one can stop this virus. The United States shuts down its borders to ensure that the virus stays overseas^{xxxiii}. COVID-19 is forcing humans to open their eyes and look at the environment and how the constant manipulation of her, the environment is causing more harm than good. In a desperate attempt to try to get humans to give her agency, to live more with the environment and not against her.

For years the Eastern band of Cherokee have the oldest living agriculture tradition on Southern Appalachia. Living on approximately 56,000 acres of land, they have been able to provide a more modern venue for continuing cultivation, selection and, innovation, respecting their traditions and cultures^{xxxiv}. The Cherokee have been able to modify plants through traditional practices of plant-breeding, without going to a lab and changing the plants' genetics. They made a better crop through trial and error by finding plants that tasted better, looked better, and had better yields and understanding their language and culture. The Cherokee do this all without claiming ownership of the seeds or the plants. The Cherokee celebrate their biodiversity of plants, language, and culture every year at the Cherokee Indian Fair, not only providing sustenance for the community, and living off the land but also respecting the environment and living with her. The Cherokee did this cultivation without constant manipulation of the environment, manipulation that could have created greater problems.

Then the virus hits the United States! New York gets hammered with deaths and sick people. Record numbers of people start getting sick exacerbating all their resources^{xxxv}. New York gets hit so hard that hospitals are overwhelmed with patients and have no personal protective equipment, PPE. Ventilators, machines used to breathe for patients when the patients can no longer breathe for themselves, are out of supply. With supplies dwindling and the number of patients on the rise, soon medical personal will have to decide who lives and who dies^{xxxvi}. This is not even discussing that the medical personnel do not have the appropriate equipment to protect themselves when these patients arrive. Overworked, these medical professionals go into their shift knowing that one of these days they, too, will be infected because of the lack of PPE.

In society today, we can see this need for man to be in control of everything. Man has tried to dominate the environment by placing dams to create lakes and regulate water. Wetlands and swamps are filled with soil so man can build cities and factories on the land. Walls are put up to regulate the flow of people. The United States was formed on the premise of God's word, to control the environment and all that is on it. There is no agency given to anything that is not of the same belief system. "I understand that the sentiment 'all my relations' includes language, culture and landscape. We expand our responsibilities to include our environment as part of our kinship. Indigenous knowledge is not just indigenous peoples, it's for our mutual survival."^{xxxvii}

Mardi Gras and Fat Tuesday just finished a couple weeks ago. People from all over gather and celebrate. Louisiana and Washington get hit just as hard as New York, causing a state of emergency in both places^{xxxviii}. Louisiana's biggest and longest celebrations, lasting for over a month, now may have infected millions of more people

from all over the United States^{xxxix}. Governors are looking at the trajectory of the virus and are saying it will be worse than what we have seen in New York. As it stands, the virus has now infected so many people in the United States, that it surpasses every other country^{xl}. With more and more people getting sick every day, the virus has landed here in the United States. The world is in a panic and now the mighty US is sent into a panic.

Sugarbush proceeds as planned, trees are tapped, and sap is collected. Not only does *inintig* provide us with his sweet sap that we use as a food, it is also a medicine. Many healers say that when you harvest a medicine, it should be in the area you live. The plant has taken in some of the same things that you have taken in. If healthy, the plant could have some natural defense against whatever sickness is around. So, the *Aninaatigoog* is giving us a year of healing for the people.

Athletic events start to delay their season as the panic starts to spread. The National Basketball Association, NBA, cancels their season. Then the National College Athletic Association, NCAA, cancels the March Madness tournament after a few games were played in empty arenas. The Major League Baseball, MLB, postponed their season, indefinitely canceling their spring training. Major League Soccer, MLS, and the National Hockey League, NHL, announce canceling their seasons as the 2020 Olympics postpone the upcoming sports. Schools from the university systems to grade schools start to cancel classes indefinitely, extending spring break by a few weeks with the possibility of not coming back at all. Universities start to lock doors to buildings and kick everyone out of the dorms, preparing for the worst to happen. Commencements are being canceled or delayed and high school graduations are up in the air as schools

decide if there should even be a prom. Schools try to figure out how to teach students while they are at home. Some schools have programs already in place, so this is more of a natural progression, as other school's rush to get lessons and work out to students. The responsibility of teaching our kids now falls on the parents who still need to work and do other things.

The western ideology on how to live with the environment can be observed by the actions toward the environment, such as the placement of dams to control water, burring lakes, rivers, streams, and swamps to build a concrete environment. People live in this concrete environment where everything is controlled, giving little respect to the environment or what she provides. There is very little concern for the environment as a whole, except for how the environment affects humans and how humans can control her. Everywhere you look there are attempts to control the environment by humans. With a click of a button, most of us have power or lights. At a turn of a knob, we have water to drink or wash with. Not all of us are fortunate enough to have these luxuries, for many of us come from communities in a first world nation and do not know what it is like to rely on the environment for sustenance.

Now states start to go on lockdown. Governors tell residents to stay inside for the next fifteen days as isolation from the virus, trying to keep it from spreading. Because the virus has a two to fourteen-day incubation period before symptoms can be seen, health experts' figure that fifteen days should be enough time to prevent the spread. The nation goes into a panic as the stock market falls in record setting fashion setting record lows^{xli}. People race to grocery stores and clear the shelves of everything^{xlii}. Toilet paper disappears first, then Lysol, then the food. Most of the people are panicked and are

preparing, as though it was the apocalypse, which maybe it is. People are told that there needs to be social distancing, a phrase many never heard before but are now becoming accustomed to-six feet of separation between people to prevent the spread of this virus.

If people took a step back and looked at the environment and the world as a being, instead of a place to conquer and control, some of these tough decisions would stop becoming tough and become simple. Vandana Shiva talks about a loss of biodiversity among our plants. In the beginning of the twentieth century there were 7,098 apple varieties documented in America. 96% of them have been lost^{xliii}. We now have only 4% of the apple varieties: this is not referring to any other species of plants or animals. Humans put themselves in control of the land and all that is on it. This mentality has brought about industrial farming, which has taken the plants, of all kinds, out of the hands of the people and placed them in the hands of big industry. As soon as organizations like Monsanto genetically alter a seed the company claims all rights to the seed and the subsequent plant that is grown. This has taken the knowledge away from the people, the farmers who worked with the plants, and put it into an industry. The only purpose of an industry is to make money, not to look after the wellbeing of you or I, let alone the environment around us. It is this mentality that objectifies the environment instead of viewing it as a relationship needing to be looked at, cared for, and nurtured, like any relationship. Dr. Mercola, an American alternative medicine proponent, and an osteopathic physician discusses how we should be using Biodynamic Agriculture. People should be viewing the farm as a living breathing organism, taking care of her as such. Not only will quality of life increase but also the quality of the food increases. Every species is an integral part of the environment, the key is letting them work with you and for you instead of spraying them with pesticides and using fertilizers to control

her, the environment. This thought processes has you farming the soil, the healthier the soil the more nutrition you receive out of the food. It is straight translation into the food the we eat and the health of the people eating. Not only does this method help fight climate change it also leaves the soil in a better condition than the year before^{xliv}.

Death tolls rise across the world, Italy is running out of places to put all their dead bodies. The virus seems to be uncontrolled and destroys whomever it wants to. This virus does not care about man's wants, desires, or needs. No country has seen the plateau yet and all are racing to get a handle on this virus. Many states are bracing for the impact of this virus as it slowly arrives, infecting one person, then the next. However, with people on lockdown, and not busy in their hustle and bustle to make money, smog is clearing up from few cars running and factories being shut down. The rivers in Italy are clear, with no water traffic. With people on lockdown and the virus still spreading and killing, what will man do? So far, every attempt to control the virus has failed.

So often in life we are controlled by the weather-what is taking place outside. People complain if it is cold, snowing, raining and even if it is hot. Science has tried to control nature, making nature submit to humans. Humans have changed rivers, made lakes, moved landscapes, all for the selfishness of people. These same people have created a concrete living environment, where they can control their environment, thus creating a "monoculture of the mind" where only their culture and perception matters^{xlv}. People have forgotten that the environment, the earth, is a living breathing entity, even with gentle and not so gentle reminders of global warming, changing weather patterns, and new diseases like the H1N1, more commonly called the swine flu, which was responsible for infecting over 22 million people killing thousands more. President

Obama enacted a state of emergency calling the swine flu a pandemic^{xlvi}. Hospitals and skilled nursing facilities were being plagued by vancomycin-resistant enterococcus (VRE), and methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA,) antibiotic resistant diseases that infect the weak and can kill them^{xlvii}. People from all over the world are experiencing changes to their environment that they live in, with very few people listening.

Wisconsin with just over five hundred confirmed cases and five deaths goes on “Safer at Home” program^{xlviii}. Everyone except essential businesses are ordered to close and everyone is ordered to stay at home by Governor Evers, unless for essential items like groceries, for the next thirty days, relying on people to do as they’re told and stay six feet away from each other and stay at home hoping to stop the spread of this virus. What are normally very busy cities and areas are now desolate, with tumble weeds blowing through parking lots and streets with barely any cars on them. Reported cases of infections are on the rise and death tolls are rising: no end seems to be in sight. No one seems to know how to stop the spread, how to control the virus, and how to protect the people. Humans from all over the world are pleading for help as death tolls keep climbing.

Humans have been so acclimated into a concrete environment where everything can be controlled with a switch that they have forgotten how to listen to the environment. It is not that the indigenous people hold the secret to all the mysteries of the universe: however, they have had to listen to the environment and learn from her in order to survive. These are not some uneducated people making up ideas as they move along through life. These people have studied and understood life as they were just one cog in

a wheel. This concept of indigenous people believing in mother earth is a colonized thought process that was adapted into the mainstream culture in the 1980s to show support for the indigenous people in the United States. But for indigenous people, practicing any type of tradition, even speaking their indigenous language was a federal crime. Many practices and customs went underground, and the language and culture started to be forgotten and lost at an extremely alarming rate because of the United States' Indian policies.

COVID-19 now a household name and an enemy of many. It threatens everyone's very existence. Changing the world as we know it, the COVID-19 is now knocking on our doorstep. Communities are now relying on each other more than ever. Money is running out for families as they are ordered to stay home, companies close and now, with their children home, their food bill goes up. Families are forced into taking care of one another and living as a family again, hoping that their family stays intact, and they do not lose their homes, jobs, and even their vehicles.

As time goes on, we can turn to seeds of the plants we harvested to provide us sustenance when the grocery store can no longer provide us food. These seeds will have the natural enzymes to live in the environment that they just came from, or perhaps there are seeds from the past that might work better under these changing conditions. Seeds that were planted have an amazing memory, carrying the natural immunities and ability to survive the changes in the environment. When the climate gets warmer, the environment, including plants and animals adapt with the change. The seed, in its essence, is all the past evolutions of the Earth, the evolution of human history, and the potential for future evolution. The seed is the embodiment of culture because culture

shaped the seed with careful selection^{xlix}. Through the seed we will not only be able to eat but we will be able to establish a culture where we are decolonized and able to support ourselves. With a healthier crop, in turn, we will be healthier and happier and with farming back into local hands, have a stronger, safer community.

All the technology and all the advanced education in the world is not defeating the COVID-19 virus. Humans, who some claim are here to dominate and control everything, are being destroyed, while the plants and animals seem unaffected by COVID-19. In fact, the environment seems to be doing better with factories and cars not polluting the environment as much as they were- a subtle slap in the face of “humanity” by someone as if to wake the people up. Even with the pandemic, people still do not want to listen to what to what the environment is trying to say, perhaps in denial that humans are not in control.

Mark Schwartz, a professor at University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, has been studying the changes in spring for years. Dr. Schwartz monitors maple trees to decipher when spring has arrived. From the time the bud starts forming to when the leaves have fully come out, even monitoring when the leaves fall off the *aninaatigoog*. Dr. Schwartz records and monitors the data, along with when the leaves fall. This data is collected and from its information Dr. Schwartz can track the arrival of spring from year to year. Schwartz and his colleges have started a Status of Spring Network which tracks spring across the United States using different plants in the different areas to track when the arrival of spring take place. Using the status of spring website, people can observe how temperatures and the arrival of spring changes over time.

Understanding that different communities have their own niche on when spring arrives, most would say that spring has arrived when the maple sap starts to run. Before colonization this was a celebration of spring. Families would get together after a long cold winter and celebrate the coming of spring by harvesting the sap and rendering it into maple sugar or syrup. The women, children, elders, and some men would stay in the sugarbush camp harvesting the maple sap and making the sap into sugar while the men would go, and repair damages done to buildings over the winter, hunt, or fish.

Communicating with the environment that you live in would be beneficial, like living with a roommate. You communicate with your roommate to help ensure everything goes smoothly in the house: if there is an issue it is talked out between the roommates. The same thing is happening to humans everywhere, the environment is trying to get our attention and get us to acknowledge that the environment is alive. No one is perfect: however, with illness after illness, such as the Spanish influenza, AIDS, and Ebola. the changing weather patterns, melting of glaciers, and animals disappearing or going extinct, or in some cases rapidly declining like the honeybee, maybe, just maybe, someone is trying to get humans' attention and get humans to change their actions. As the saying goes, if you give a man a fish he eats for a day, teach him how to fish he eats forever. But what if the man does not want to hear?

Now with COVID-19 people are forced into fending for themselves and families are becoming more closely knit, something that has not been done in a long time. These ceremonies, like sugarbush, not only provided sustenance, but also created a family in the community where everyone pitched in to help. This process alone taught the people how to work with one another and help one another for the greater good. Now with

COVID-19 people are having to rely on the community, in some cases for survival in other cases to not get this deadly sickness, however, most importantly to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The environment, in many ways, is improving with everything on lockdown. There may be more plastics and other toxic items being utilized that are hurting *Shkakamikwe* by creating more waste however, many of the pollutants are not being put into *Shkakamikwe*. This improvement should not be a sign to take the attention away from global warming and the environmental crisis that is affecting everyone but to visually see how unhealthy humans are living. The concern for the environment and what is and has been happening to her is replaced with the COVID-19 scare, a virus that the environment made, perhaps as a teaching for humanity to change their behavior. Perhaps the answer to the problem is literally under our feet. My understanding is that *Shkaamikwe* provides everything that we, humans and animals alike, need to sustain life. If she made this disease, then there is a natural cure out there; all we must do is ask her or find the right indigenous person that already knows what the cure is. Somewhere, globally, there is an indigenous person that knows because they know and do talk to *Shkakamikwe*. This is not the first-time plagues have swept through the countryside, or mass casualties have happened due to environmental pushback. Some people say these are warnings for the people to wake up. People can listen to the advice of those educated, and let new thoughts process through, where there can be a group collaboration- no political agenda, just an agenda to find out what will work the best to fix the COVID-19 and the people of the world, slowly rebuilding an economy that will help everyone globally to ensure no one goes hungry and no one goes without medical care. We are a community of people where we need to be taking care of one another. It

should not take a pandemic like COVID-19 to show humans, especially those that claim superiority, how truly fragile we, as humans, are.

COVID-19 creates a sharp reduction in economic activity as we watch oil prices falling to record numbers¹, causing the price of a barrel of oil to fall below the cost to produce it. to get away from the oil industry and start implementing the use of more renewable energy to start to boost the economy and get people going to work.

Lines are arbitrary- man has used imaginary lines throughout history to give possession of something. These lines separate land giving ownership of the land and everything on it to a human. (Fanon says “the colonized world is a compartmentalized world). The animals and plants that reside on this land, which has been divided up by these man-made imaginary lines, are now property of the human, state, country, or any other governmental system. These lines are, once again, shown to be all arbitrary and a way to set and gain control. From the crusades to the Doctrine of Discovery lines have been used to rule and control indigenous people by the western society. Human suffering does not even matter when it comes to control of these imaginary lines. These lines are about power and money, not about humanity or even *skakamikwe*, the environment. Even while death tolls are climbing, people are still going to the streets to protest the stay at home orders. Seven confirmed cases of COVID-19 that were traced back to voting in Wisconsin. Lines do not matter until you are the person that feels wronged by someone else’s lines. Now everyone stands here at the peril of *Shkakamikwe* as the COVID-19 virus races around the world, not caring about anyone’s arbitrary lines or anyone’s feelings. Modern science still has not figured out a vaccine or any real treatment for COVID-19 but knows that it is highly contagious and very deadly,

as worldwide death tolls approach 300,000, and still people are worried about these arbitrary lines. There is no sense of community or kinship in the world. Politicians keep fighting about political rights and agendas while people are dying and millions more are going without food. In some ironic way, *skakamikwe* is healing herself and all the other life forms are starting to heal themselves from the lack of pollutants being forced into the world much like COVID-19 has done to humanity. *Aninaatigoog* is still producing the sap and the harvest still goes on. Perhaps there is healing in the maple sap or the healing is in the fact that people are getting together and being a community, laughing, talking, and enjoying their time while they harvest the sweet goodness from *inninatik*. This also brings the people closer to the environment, one step closer to being able to listen to the *Shkakamikwe* and all that live on her.

Haile Selassie, Crown Prince of Ethiopia, who is believed in the Rastafarian religion to be the direct descendant of Jesus Christ. spoke to the United Nations in 1936 about the atrocities that were happening to his people^{li}. Lines were clearly violated; many people were killed, and land was stolen, given new names and new ownership. The same people lived there but it was no longer their land, it was another nation's land. Robert Marley also wrote a song using Selassie's speech to the UN. The song, War, is about the disparities that are in front of us even today. He starts right away in his first verse, "Until the philosophy which hold one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned everywhere is war.^{lii}" No one person is better than another person this also includes the animals, the plants, the water, and even the air we breathe. Humans, as advanced as they claim to be, have forgotten how to communicate and live with *Shkakamikwe* along with all the beings that are on her and utilize her for shelter, nourishment and even a home. This philosophy of man dominating

over everything brings nothing but death and destruction, not a civilization of equality. A true civilization is where everyone would have a voice and everyone's knowledge is respected like in TEK.

Call it a kinship of everyone and everything that makes the world our world- everyone needs to start enjoying all beings, no matter if they have two legs or four legs, no matter if they can fly, swim or crawl, a plant or tree, even the air we breathe and the water we all rely on for life. Everything is a part of a civilization, and it needs to be respected as such. "That until that day the dream of lasting peace, World citizenship, rule of international morality, will remain but a fleeting illusion to be pursued, but never attained. Now everywhere is war^{liii}." COVID-19 is forcing people to rely on the hope and faith that other people in their perspective communities would not jeopardize the health of each other. Politics aside, there should be a common goal for all, survival. There is no place in life or society for politics and/or money to be more important than other lives, other lives including, but not limited to, all animate and inanimate beings. This also includes all knowledge that goes with the beings that live here on earth. which states that as long as the color of a man's eyes are no different than the color of the skin everywhere will be war. These statements are a proof of how everyone needs to work together for the better good of the globe.

CHAPTER 9: SUGARBUSH

Sugarbush is still practiced today in various communities across different nationalities. Riversedge celebrates spring every year by harvesting the maple sap when it starts to run. With modern facilities and equipment, they tap several trees on the land, harvesting the sap and making maple syrup. Trying to be respectful of the traditional homelands of the *Bodewadmi* and Menominee, they tell stories of sugarbush from those communities. They often try to incorporate as much of the language and culture they can without being disrespectful to the culture. They have reached out to the various communities to make sure what they are teaching and talking about is correct and not perpetuating the cycle of misinforming on the indigenous cultures.

In Milwaukee, near 51st Street and Lloyd Street, a family taps the maple trees in front of their house. Paul, the gentlemen whose taps are in front of his house, has been tapping the trees for the last three years. He uses modern technology to tap the trees and render the sap. He uses a propane stove to heat the sap, utilizing forty gallons at a time. He said he only tries to boil forty gallons at a time because anymore, he feels, would be too much for him to do by himself. Paul usually gets eighty gallons a season, producing slightly more than a gallon of syrup. He shares the syrup with family and enjoys the time with his wife and the product for the sweet nectar that the *aninaatigoog* has given him.

Paul is unfamiliar with the customs of the indigenous people who used to call this area home. They are making their own tradition for their family while at the same time, enjoying the sweet nectar of the maple tree that the creator has provided for them. Unaware of the medicinal properties and how much healthier it is, or even how they are

giving the environment, specifically the maple tree, agency, they use this as a bonding time for his family, a time to enjoy each other's company waiting for the warmer weather, which is just around the corner, while also enjoying the beauty of nature.

Just a few blocks away in the Washington Heights neighborhood, the whole block is tapping the maple trees. With about twenty taps on the block, they are using metal cans and plastic bags to collect the sap. Almost every collection apparatus was full when I was in the neighborhood. Some of the sap had a yellow color to it and other sap was clear like water. I knocked on several doors but got no answer, even leaving a note at a house that had three taps. I, unfortunately, did not get any response from anyone in the neighborhood. Was this due to the unprecedented and historical lockdown of the city from the COVID-19 virus, or were there other reasons? All I can do is observe a neighborhood in the City of Milwaukee actively harvest sap. Hopefully, the neighborhood is putting the sap to good use and bringing the neighborhood community closer together.

Mary Panyard Schultz has been harvesting maple sap on her property for seven years. She watched her father tap trees when she was about seven. Having this memory from her childhood sparked her to want to learn how to tap trees herself. She taught herself how to tap and harvest the sap from the maple trees on her property. Mary and her husband tap between twenty to forty-five trees each spring. She says that is as much as two people can handle by themselves. She uses the sap for her own personal use, making syrup and some candy. Every year Mary looks forward to spring, the time when the sap runs. Each year Mary recalls the date of spring changes: one year the sap ran around February 12, followed up the following year the sap running in

late March. Mary cares for the maples the best way she can but is unaware of a specific ceremony she should do. However, she offers up her tobacco and says thanks for the amazing sap.

At Ledge View Nature Center, located in Calumet County, Wisconsin, land was turned into a county park about forty years ago. It is now a 105-acre county park land where Ledge View cares for the maple trees. They manage one hundred and eighty to two hundred taps every spring, strictly following a guideline of the tree being at least ten inches in diameter and healed from previous harvests. Here they tell traditional Iroquois stories of how the maple tree came to the Iroquois people. Ledge View sells some of the syrup it makes, but most is given to the public as taste samples. Some of the syrup is also donated to a local ice cream shop, which is added to the ice cream to make a special maple syrup ice cream.

There were maple sugar groves all over the area providing communities with sustenance for millennia. Sugarbush was so important to the Ojibwe and other communities that they ensured the rights to harvest the maple sap in their treaties. The bigger picture is that harvesting the sap was a time for communities to bond and enjoy each other's company. This bonding would form a strong close-knit community. Everyone looked out for the wellbeing of everyone else. During a time when we all need to be more aware of everything around us, and need a "close community", it helps to have something that everyone can bond over and bring everyone together if only for a short period of time. The process itself is not short: however, people do not have much time to spend any more in this fast-paced hustle that society has become. Maybe

COVID-19's slowing down of society will open the people's eyes to see there is a better way.

This process has me wondering- if people today were able to do these traditional practices in the area like sugar bush, would we be a stronger, more close-knit community? Would families have as many internal problems or would this gathering ceremony, bring everyone closer together creating a more open, free environment? Schoolcraft writes about how close communities were, even the United States documented how they wanted to eliminate the closeness of the indigenous communities. LaDuke writes about how we need to reclaim the traditional land's names, that there are meanings deeper than the surface in the traditional names.

I grew up learning the traditions and history of the *Anishinaabeg*, Ojibwe people through my father Zhingos who is from the Lac Du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians and my uncle Giniw Makwa from Keeseekoose First Nation, Saskatchewan, Canada. It is with their teachings, the many ceremonies, the different communities, the numerous scholars, and the several elders I have spoken with that I have arrived at these conclusions.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

As the United States' death tolls rise to more than eighty thousand, without hitting their peak on deaths or cases and no end in sight, the environment improves as humans go into isolation. Smog is clearing and rivers are running clear; life is returning to them without human influence. The environment clearly can heal herself and handle whatever is handed to her. She can create life as well as clearly take it away. Estimates in the United States conservatively are two hundred and forty deaths, with the CDC telling the public to brace ourselves as we have not seen the worst, if you follow our guidelines and stay at home. Now the quarantine extends to the end of April 2020 again if everyone stays at home, relying on everyone to live as a community and think of everyone else^{iv}.

The knowledge that humans carry grows each passing day as science figures out new and improved ways of doing things. Sometimes these ideas save money or save time on production, sometimes, even saving lives with new medical findings. Human knowledge has given up predictions on what the COVID-19 virus can do and will do. This knowledge will be passed down for generations to come with stories of how we survived the COVID-19 pandemic. Medicine will be found both from *Shkakamikwe* and from the pharmacy and will be handed down for generations. This pandemic will forever become a part of the traditional ecological knowledge that should be shared with everyone. Life has been inundated with new modern marvels, homes, electricity, etc. all to make humans more comfortable in their environment creating a concrete jungle.

These items have taken away from what is truly important, community. Communities all over are coming out in different forms to unite and learn about the environment and what she can offer. This is observed in the sugarbush that takes place

every spring, a time-consuming process that bring a community together for the enjoyment of that sweet nectar that the *aninaatigoog* has gifted the people. Even in the COVID-19 pandemic, *aninaatigoog* gave her nectar to the people to use and enjoy, reminding the people that *Shkakamikwe* provides if we would just listen to her. This knowledge is to be shared with everyone, not just in the United States, everyone worldwide. COVID-19 is crumbling countries and testing governments around the world: the only way to survive is by using traditional ecological knowledge. We are just a natural disaster away from having to once again rely on *Shkakamikwe* and her generosity for our survival. That knowledge of the sugarbush could save humans along with other TEK.

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