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**OJIBWE ARTS RELATIONSHIPS:
TRAVERSING CULTURAL EMPLACEMENTS**

A Dissertation in

Art Education

by

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Abstract

The purpose of my dissertation research study is to explore how Ojibwe participants' relationships within localized contexts construct, imply, and convey meaning through cultural arts production. Through this study, I seek to understand how relationships with the local contexts inform various Ojibwe art practices and processes. The central concerns of my study are to expand and shift art education disciplinary framings and value sets that behold American Indian cultural art forms as artifacts.

I investigate situated meaning making processes (e.g. cultural influences) embedded in Ojibwe cultural arts practices as a means to expand upon arts-focused ontology, that I define as an embodied and emplaced way of being within a particular ecology, while generating particular art forms. Ojibwe artists' processes of cultural production are of extreme importance, which includes the harvesting, collecting, and cleaning of intended cultural art materials within northern Minnesota woodland ecology. My interests to investigate Ojibwe artists who produce works within local Ojibwe contexts are a means to move beyond static representations of American Indian art as cultural artifacts relegated to the past. Rather, I aim to rupture this static understanding in order to attend to the lived complexity of ecological thinking, learning and communicating relationships within particular place-based contexts. Shifting focus in arts production-processes to an interconnected exploration of lived experience within interwoven ecologies constitutes differing requirements contingent upon a slower and expansive inquiry that attends to the complexity of lived experience.

I draw from multi-sited ethnography methodology as a means to broach the complexity of Ojibwe lived experience, meaning making processes, and arts practices. Multi-sited ethnography affords a dynamic and flexible approach to investigate the ensembles of

relationships that intertwine and influence Ojibwe artist-participants arts ontology. Multi-sited ethnography also views Ojibwe artist-participants as co-constructors, or para-ethnographers of the research, which decenters my role of the researcher in addition the focus of the study. Decentering my role as researcher influenced my postionality among Ojibwe artist-participants; shifting among positions of laborer, house sitter, animal care-taker, learning-artist, and friend among others. In addition to phenomenological data accrued from my decentered positionalities, I utilized field notation, photographic and video documentation, as well as informal conversations as an open concept of interview as methods of amassing data. The multi-positionalities generated research ethics of care (Noddings, 1988, 2002; Slote, 2007). Ethics of care corresponded with formulating trusting relationships with Ojibwe artist-participants over a span of three-months time. I posit ethics of care and respectful representation in research writing broaches critical proximity of lived experience through descriptive narratives that are comprised of participants' arts processes, personal histories, and voices.

Throughout my research I aim to draw comparisons and relationships among Indigenous knowledge frameworks expressed by Ojibwe artist-participants, academics (Barnhardt & Kawagley 2005; Cajete, 2000, 2005; Vizenor, 2008), and Western conceptual theories of emplacement (Foucault, 1986; Pink, 2011) and relational-materialism (Anderson & Harrison, 2008). In doing so I aim to demonstrate positive differences and correspondences while also examining the shortcomings of Western conceptual theories when discussing Indigenous worldviews, creative processes and products. I believe that the Western education paradigm has much to learn from American Indian ways of thinking, being, teaching and learning in general and from the Ojibwe specifically.

I explore how Ojibwe participants' processes and works, which are formulated upon

interspecies relationships within localized ecological contexts, and expand upon Foucault's conception of emplacements. I posit that reframing artworks, as places comprised of body, mind and ecological relationships, otherwise noted as emplacements, foregrounds artists relationships that are integral and interdependent within the web of relational-experience.

Furthermore, my exploration of relational materialism does not fully explain Ojibwe participants' relationships within particular contexts nor do I intend it to do so through a singular perspective. Rather, I set forth to broach connections between Ojibwe artist-participants' explanations and non-Native theoretical considerations as a means to generate relationships between and among peoples rather than attempt to derive a reductive representation of Ojibwe artist-participants' meaning making processes and relationships within localized communities and interconnected ecologies.

My intention and hope is that Ojibwe artists' creative works may serve as access points for readers and future students within art education settings to Indigenous knowledge and life-ways, which can enhance, expand, and generate opportunities to learn from and with/in local ecologies to inform an ontology of interspecies interdependence; a way of living, being, and thinking through reciprocal relationships.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The purpose of my research study is to explore how Ojibwe participants' relationships within localized contexts construct, imply, and convey meaning through cultural arts production. Through this study, I seek to understand how relationships with the local contexts inform various Ojibwe art practices and processes.

Product oriented businesses (art.com) or organizations such as the Getty Center for Education in the Arts (Jagodzinski, 1997) that generate print reproductions or educational content often use the term, artifact, as a descriptor for American Indian material culture and artwork. The descriptor can also be traced to The National Museum of the American Indian, as it states on their website, "The NMAI cares for one of the world's most expansive collections of Native artifacts" (Smithsonian Institution, 2013, About the Museum, para. 1). Rather than perpetuate a discourse that frames American Indian material culture and sundry art forms as belonging to the past I seek to expand and shift art education disciplinary framings and value sets that behold American Indian cultural art forms as artifacts. Similar to art educator Kristen Congdon and Kara Hallmark's (2012) text, *American Folk Art: A Regional Reference*, that focuses on and provides access to the importance and vibrancy of folk art, which is often over-looked and marginalized, my aim is to focus on the processes, meaning-making relationships, and cultural vibrancy of Ojibwe artists. My intention and hope is that by doing so, Ojibwe artists' creative works may serve as access points to Indigenous knowledge and life-ways, which can enhance, expand, and generate opportunities to learn from and with/in local ecologies to inform an ontology of interspecies interdependence; a way of living, being, and thinking through reciprocal relationships among people, materials, and animate beings. My concerns are derived from personal experiences as a youth involved with the Boy Scouts of America, an immersion

experience with Ojibwe living in Minnesota prior to this study, and the dearth of content pertaining to contemporary American Indian art practices and processes beyond a commonly selected representative grouping of diverse artists such as James Luna (Ballengee-Morris, 2008; Desai, 2002), Charlene Teters (Delacruz, 2003), Jaune Quick-To-See Smith and Hock E Aye also known as Edgar Heap of Birds (Ohnesorge, 2008), George Longfish (Büken, 2002; Sullivan, 2009), Allan Houser and George Morrison (Montiel, 2005; Vizenor, 2006, 2008). My interests in investigating Ojibwe artists who produce works within local Ojibwe contexts are a means to move beyond static representations of American Indian art as cultural artifacts relegated to the past. Rather, I aim to rupture this static understanding in order to attend to the lived complexity of ecological thinking, learning and communicating relationships within particular place-based contexts. Shifting focus in arts production-processes to an interconnected exploration of lived experience within interwoven ecologies constitutes differing requirements contingent upon a slower and expansive inquiry that attends to the complexity of lived experience.

I believe that the Western education paradigm has much to learn from American Indian ways of thinking, being, teaching and learning in general and from the Ojibwe specifically. Historically, American Indians have been positioned as recipients of Western enlightenment through educational and religious reform framed by assimilationist intentions (Adams, 1995; Fear Segal, 2008; Slivka, 2011) and “labeled as nomadic, monolithic, undifferentiated, idealized communities” (Büken, 2002, p. 46). I concur with cross-cultural studies scholar Ray Barnhardt and Yup’ik scholar A. Oscar Kawagley who state, “There was very little literature that addressed how to get Western scientists and educators to understand Native worldviews and ways of knowing as constituting knowledge systems in their own right” (2005, p. 9). My goal is to seek aspects of art making within Ojibwe worldviews that open up and challenge preconceived

Western understandings of American Indian cultural art and the assimilationist paradigm however coded and sedimented, while expanding current conceptions of cultural art practices and pedagogy. Reframing the direction and flow of influence from the Western paradigm to an American Indian worldview decenters the power/knowledge relationship embedded in education institutions and reframes learners as “his or her own teacher and that learning was [is] connected to each individual’s life process” (Cajete, 2005, p. 77). Indigenous worldviews frame learning not only from their immediate human community but also from the abundances experienced ecologically as Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete explains,

All things of Nature were teachers of humankind; what was required was a cultivated and practiced openness to the lessons that the world had to teach. Ritual, mythology, and the art of storytelling combined with the cultivation of relationship to one’s inner self; individuals used the family, the community, and the natural environment to help realize their potential for learning and a complete life. (2005, p. 77)

Learning within an Indigenous framework becomes “education for life’s sake” (Cajete, 2005, p. 70). Similar to art educator and ethnographer Kryssi Staikidis, whose collaborative research with Mayan painters sought to “develop insights...for transformative curricula” I believe that this study has the potential to expand current teaching and learning practices in art education as Indigenous ways of knowing expands Western conceptions of relating within the world (2006, p. 122). Banard and Kawagley state, “Non-Natives, too, need to recognize the coexistence of multiple worldviews and knowledge systems, and find ways to understand and relate to the world in its multiple dimensions and varied perspectives” (2005, p. 9). Throughout my research I aim to draw comparisons and relationships among Indigenous knowledge frameworks expressed

by Ojibwe artist-participants, academics (Barnhardt & Kawagley 2005; Cajete, 2000, 2005; Vizenor, 2008), and Western conceptual theories of emplacement (Foucault, 1986; Pink, 2011) and relational-materialism (Anderson & Harrison, 2008). In doing so I aim to demonstrate positive differences and correspondences while also examining the limitations of Western conceptual theories when discussing Indigenous worldviews, creative processes and products.

Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous knowledge is based upon relationships within local ecologies, interspecies interactions, and survival. It is imperative to discuss Indigenous knowledge, since Ojibwe artist-participants' worldviews are impetus for and integral to creative actions, processes, and products. Understanding is slow and methodical explained by cross-cultural studies scholar Ray Barnhardt and Yup'ik scholar A. Oscar Kawagley:

Their [Indigenous peoples] traditional education processes were carefully constructed around observing natural processes, adapting modes of survival, obtaining sustenance from the plant and animal world, and using natural materials to make their tools and implements. All this was made understandable through demonstration and observation accompanied by thoughtful stories in which lessons were embedded (Cajete 2000; Kawagley 1995). (2005, p. 10)

Although Indigenous ecological relationships have been sustained through careful observations based upon survival, these qualities “represent tendencies rather than fixed traits,” as Indigenous ways of knowing vary as much as each individual tribe differs from each other and ecological demands vary from place to place (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 11). Prior to examining how Ojibwe artist-participants' ways of knowing and understanding impact their actions and their values, I set out to examine broad tendencies and qualities formulated through modes of learning

that comprise American Indian epistemologies. In doing so particular differences between American Indian epistemologies and dominant Western ideologies that remain influential within education systems are compared.

According to Barnhardt and Kawagley, Indigenous peoples have learned “through direct experience in the natural world...the particulars come to be understood in relation to the whole, and the ‘laws’ are continually tested in the context of everyday survival” (2005, p. 11). This approach to knowledge differs in competency by comparison with dominant Western education systems, in which standards-based assessment is “based upon predetermined ideas” of what is deemed valuable knowledge and “then is measured indirectly through various forms of ‘objective’ tests” (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 11). Indigenous knowledge is continuously practiced and adapted to lived experiences within local ecologies intimately related to survival. Tewa scholar, Gregory Cajete explains, “tribal education worked as a cultural and life-sustaining process. It was a process of education that unfolded through reciprocal relationships between one’s social group and the natural world” (2005, p. 70). Cajete also emphasizes that Indigenous knowledge frameworks include “not only people but plants, animals and the whole of nature” as being interdependent and co-influential beings rather than ordered solely upon a human-centric community (2005, p. 70). Reciprocal relationships with one’s surroundings and other beings imply that “use of material technology was elegant, sophisticated, and appropriate within the context of traditional society (Cajete, 1994)” (Cajete, 2005, p. 74). Cajete (2005) explains that there are seven common and uniting knowledge foundations that orient the “sacred directions to education...the Environmental, the Mythic, the Artistic, the Visionary, the Affective, the Communal, and the Spiritual” among American Indian tribes and other indigenous peoples (p. 73) (Table 1). Since each foundation is based upon tendencies rather than fixed traits and are

interrelated, they may be core conceptual frameworks to be embraced and explored in contemporary indigenous education.

Table 1. Seven tribal foundations of American Indian knowledge. Adapted from Gregory Cajete's (2005) article titled American Indian Epistemologies. pp-74-76.

Environmental Foundation	<p>Connects a tribe to its place, establishes the meaning of tribe members' relationships to their land and the earth in their minds and hearts.</p> <p>The natural environment was the essential reality, the place of being.</p>
Mythic Foundation	<p>Archetypal stories that describe the cosmology and explore guiding thoughts, dreams, and explanations in the language and cultural metaphors of a tribe.</p> <p>The mythic represents the tribe's worldview and is taught, learnt and practiced through storytelling.</p>
Visionary Foundation	<p>Psychological and spiritual experiences at the individual level that to lead or result from a tribe's practices, rituals, and ceremonies.</p> <p>American Indians apply the visionary foundation to access knowledge deep within themselves and the natural world.</p>
Artistic Foundation	<p>Symbolic knowledge represented through the practices, mediums, and forms that express personal meanings and understandings.</p> <p>The artistic mediates the mythic and visionary foundations and becomes a source of teaching as it both integrates and documents learning processes.</p>
Affective Foundation	<p>The emotional response to learning, living, growing, and understanding in relationship to the world, ourselves, and each other.</p> <p>The affective mediates the environmental and communal foundations, the feelings for place and community.</p>
Communal Foundation	<p>The community (the family, clan or other tribal social structures) is the primary learning context.</p> <p>Communal experiences are tied to history and tradition while remaining highly contextual, flexible and informal.</p>

Spiritual Foundation	Religious expression of ecological psychology that underpins the other six foundations.
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Cajete's proposed mythic, visionary and artistic foundations inform central conceptual foundations of this dissertation as each produces additional lines of thought along side of Ojibwe artist-participants' meaning making processes. In doing so, additional interpretations are generated, which extend rather than reduce participant data to closed-forms of representation. The environmental, communal, affective, and spiritual foundations continuously inform and influence the expressive and interpretative qualities of cultural art production and are discussed in conjunction with the mythic, visionary and artistic foundations. Cajete explains that the mythic foundation is expressed through stories; the act of storytelling "presents the script for teaching, learning, and participating in the stories that guide a people" (2005, p. 74). Storytelling conveys meaning through use of metaphor and through ecological relationships. Similarly the artistic foundation "express[es] the meanings and understandings we [American Indians] have come to see" (Cajete, 2005, p. 74-75). American Indian art therefore translates storytelling through which meanings and teachings are conveyed. Otherwise stated, American Indian art is storytelling conveyed through processes, media, and forms. The artistic foundation also interprets the visionary foundation, "their [American Indians] inner psychology and their collective unconscious" (Cajete, 2005, p. 74). The intertwined relationship between the mythic – art foundations and visionary – art foundations are expressed and explored throughout this dissertation as survivance stories. Anishinaabe literary theorist and author Gerald Vizenor states,

Native survivance is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent. Survivance is greater than the right of a survivable name. Survivance

stories are renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry. (2008, p. 1)

Vizenor posits that American Indian storytelling through contemporary creative literature not only continues to reference traditional American Indian cultural values and relationships but also convey resistances to Western cultural hegemony. I am extending Vizenor's neologism and viewpoint of literary survivance to include visionary creations of cultural artworks as Cajete claims the art foundation "acts as a bridging and translating foundation for the Mythic and Visionary foundations" (2005, p. 75). In particular Ojibwe language expressed as oral tradition, or storytelling, is intimately related to "philosophy, cultural teachings, and spirituality" and these intersections are also taken up through Ojibwe art (Peacock & Wisuri, 2002, p. 18). Ojibwe authors Peacock and Wisuri, state, "The aesthetic philosophy, medium, and music of the Ojibwe tell our story. Our art has been strongly influenced by the land upon which we live, [and] by our encounters with animals" (2002, p. 35). Therefore, Ojibwe artist-participants' ideas, artistic processes, and meanings are framed as survivance stories as each artist-participant continues to perpetuate Ojibwe cultural values and ecological relationships through creative acts and works, while resisting Western cultural narratives that position them as tragic victims of dominance and their artworks as artifacts held as static objects relegated to the past.

Emplacements, Arts-Ontology & Relational Materialism

I investigate situated meaning making processes (e.g. cultural influences) embedded in Ojibwe cultural arts practices as a means to expand upon arts-focused ontology, that I define as an embodied and emplaced way of being within a particular ecology, while generating particular art forms. Ojibwe artists' processes of cultural production are of extreme importance, which include the harvesting, collecting, and cleaning of intended cultural art materials within northern

Minnesota woodland ecology. Ojibwe participants' practical knowledge in relationship to their arts processes corresponds and expands anthropologist Sara Pink's (2011) theory of emplacement "that recognizes the competing/performing body as part of an ecology of things in progress...an organism in relation to other organisms and its representations in relation to other representations" (p. 354). Pink's use of emplacement is a way of being within a particular place with a focus upon competition rather than reciprocity as described by Cajete (2005).

I begin with Pink's notion of competing bodies within fields of relation since Ojibwe artists-participants' ways of being within localized ecologies generate ensembles of relations and contexts in which creative acts are produced. Specifically, Ojibwe participants' artworks are material sites imbued with cultural knowledge, ecological interspecies relationships, as well as personal, familial, and community relationships. Ojibwe artworks are therefore comprised of lived experiences that have the potential to become pedagogical sites beyond the overly reductive and static denotation of artifact. Interpreting Ojibwe artworks inherent complexity as pedagogical sites, or as places constitutive of the artists' relationships, with Cajete's Indigenous knowledge foundations expands the same term of emplacement used by French philosopher Michel Foucault (1986).

Foucault expresses that "we live inside a set of relations that delineate sites, which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another" (1986, p. 23). Foucault's explanation of how emplacements are composed is similar to Pink's, which stresses the importance of interactive relationships that compose our lived experiences and how our lived experiences compose particular places. I explore how Ojibwe participants' processes and works, which are formulated upon interspecies relationships within localized ecological contexts, expand Foucault's conception of emplacements. Foucault extrapolated emplacements as

belonging to two domains, utopias and heterotopias. Utopias are “sites with no real place...they present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down” (Foucault, 1986, p. 24). I am concerned with Ojibwe heterotopias, emplacements “that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites...can be found within the culture” (Foucault, 1986, p. 24). Framing Ojibwe cultural art as emplacements directs my inquiry to the ensemble of relations that compose Ojibwe cultural artworks. Particularly, Cajete explains the art foundation is the nexus of the mythic (storytelling) and the visionary foundations, a complex intertwining of personal, communal, and natural relationships that comprise Indigenous artworks. I posit that my conceptualization of Ojibwe cultural works expands Foucault’s heterotopian emplacement since participants’ works challenge static conceptions of American Indian material culture as artifacts marginalized within Western art paradigms “or relegated to the field of anthropology” (Ballengee-Morris, 2008, p. 30). Ojibwe cultural works are composed of ensembles of relations within particular places and are intimately intertwined with participants’ worldviews and lived presences.

Ojibwe cultural artworks are composed of particular languages or symbol sets intended to convey an idea, a story, a critique, and perhaps a resistance imbued with the physical energy of the maker, time, and perhaps most importantly, relationships. But, in the process of discerning or interpreting the artist’s intention and meaning of the artwork, the researcher may at best deduce a partiality and at worst reflect the viewer’s ethnocentric epistemology. So, by considering Ojibwe cultural artworks as emplacements, beyond the quality of the art object as a thing, shifts the emphasis upon relational experience among participants and formulates research ethics. The ethical considerations were contingent upon forming caring and trusting relationships over the

three-months time based upon my understanding of respectful representation of participants stories and lived experiences. I posit ethics of care (Noddings, 1988, 2002; Slote 2007) and respectful representation in research writing broaches critical proximity of lived experience through descriptive narratives that are comprised of participants' arts processes, personal histories, and voices further described in Chapter III and VII.

I posit that reframing artworks, as places comprised of body, mind and ecological relationships, otherwise noted as emplacements, foregrounds artists relationships that are integral and interdependent within the web of relational-experience. Ojibwe artists' ontology is impacted by interspecies relationships among people, materials and animate beings and corresponds with qualities that compose relational materialist arts ontology. My use of ontology here and throughout this dissertation is concerned with theorizing ways of being, living, and dwelling as a means to explore Ojibwe artist-participants meaning making relationships within localized ecologies. A relational materialist approach accounts for human and non-human actions, which acknowledges that

everything takes-part and in taking-part, takes-place: everything happens, everything acts. Everything, including images, words and texts...Hence a relational-materialist approach departs from understandings of the social as ordered *a priori* (be it symbolically, ontologically, or otherwise) in a manner that would, for example, set the conditions for how objects appear, or as an ostensive structure that stands behind and determines practical action. (Anderson and Harrison, 2010, p. 14, italics in original)

I explore how relational materialism corresponds with Ojibwe arts-processes and integral aspects of Indigenous worldviews such as interdependence, respect, and animism in order to

broach relationships with Western theories, while exposing their limitations. My exploration of relational materialism is inspired by Ojibwe artist-participants' own conceptions of their processes and this realization developed over the course of study with them while in Minnesota. Furthermore, my exploration of relational materialism does not fully explain Ojibwe participants' relationships within particular contexts nor do I intend it to do so through a singular perspective. Rather, I set forth to broach connections between Ojibwe artist-participants' explanations and non-Native theoretical considerations as a means to generate relationships between and among peoples rather than attempt to derive a reductive representation of Ojibwe artist-participants' meaning making processes and relationships within localized communities and interconnected ecologies.

Formative Experiences

My dissertation topic emerged from personal experiences while visiting with Ojibwe in northern Minnesota as I participated in a cultural immersion course offered through The Pennsylvania State University in May 2010. My topic also grew out of mis/understandings of American Indian cultures that I experienced as a youth in the Boy Scouts of America.

I was surprised that there was an opportunity to visit and learn among those who self-identify as Ojibwe as it was described in the course description:

[S]tudents explore and understand the worldview of the Ojibwe (also known as the Anishinaabeg), one of the largest aboriginal communities in North America.

[...] Most of us are taught history facing west, but history in this course will be taught from the perspective of indigenous people facing east. The course members will participate in the sweat lodge ceremony, pipe ceremony, big drum ceremony, and intertribal traditional powwow, and they will visit several spiritual/ceremonial

lodges. Students will explore indigenous ways of knowing (science) as they engage with and learn from more than 30 leading Ojibwe educators, traditional elders, political leaders, artists, and medicine men and women. [...] They will listen to storytellers; canoe the headwaters of the Mississippi River; explore traditional foods, plants, and medicines; participate in ceremonies; explore the natural world with indigenous environmentalists and biologists; and learn about the American Indian Movement (AIM) from one of its founders. (Penn State Outreach Marketing and Communications, 2012, para. 1-3)

Such an opportunity seemed impossible to me having only learned about American Indian cultures from Pittsburgh suburban public schooling and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). The former was lean on the topic and the latter was a warped appropriation. I found my personal experiences within the BSA organization similar to anthropologist Luke Lassiter's, who wrote in *The Power of Kiowa Song* that the Boy Scouts "beheld 'the Indian' as exotic, as mysterious, and most predominantly, as a figure of antiquity" (1998, p. 23). I was researching American Indian students' drawings in Carlisle, Pennsylvania at the Cumberland County Historical Society during this time, critically analyzing multiple discourses, a curriculum guide, and student artwork for evidence of assimilationist intentions (Slivka, 2011) after having read Joel Spring's (2008) text, *The American school: From the Puritans to No Child Left Behind*, which has an American Indian perspective embedded throughout. Both the pictorial and textual excursions into American Indian lived experience seemed distant, isolated, and partial; I earnestly sought for a field experience. A rush of thoughts and images prompted my memory of a passage in a Boy Scouts manual:

You may recall that Meteu recounted the legend of the Lenni Lanape Indians during the final part of the Ordeal Ceremony. Among the things he said: ‘In a great and honored Order, into which can be admitted only those who unselfishly desire to serve others, there must be a lofty purpose. You were selected for membership in the Order because your fellow Scouts saw your sincerity and acceptance of the high ideals of the Scout Oath and Law.’ (BSA, 1989, p. 7)

...

The moon was out in the woods at Camp Heritage on the night I was initiated as a member of the Boy Scouts Order of the Arrow. I sat outside my tent in silence and began to feel hunger pangs. Out of the dark, I heard fallen twigs snapped and leaves underfoot. Startled, nervous, and excited, I knew they were coming for me. Two boy-scouts dressed as Indians summoned me, wrapped a piece of cloth across my eyes and took me through the woods. They led me to an unknown location in the woods, took the cloth off of my eyes, and sat me down with those who were summoned, which marked the beginning of our initiation ceremony into the Order of the Arrow. Several large bonfires were lit; they were at least fifteen feet in height. We were told:

Eat you nothing but the scant food you’ll be given. Learn by fasting, sacrifice, and self-denial to subordinate personal desires to the spirit’s higher purpose. [...]

Spend the day in arduous labor, working gladly, not begrudging, seek to serve, and thus be faithful to the high ideals and purpose of the Order of the Arrow. [...]

All your strength will be required when you face the isolation that a leader often faces. So tonight beneath the heavens sleep alone upon your groundsheet. (BSA, 1989, p. 11)

...

There was much appropriated from American Indian cultures by the Boy Scouts, and much that was warped and romanticized; yet these were formative experiences for me as a youth. The BSA ceremonies generated my interest, excitement, and fascination with American Indian cultures. I was steeped in appropriated symbolic representations, from proudly wearing the white Order of the Arrow sash embroidered with a red arrow over one shoulder, to multi-sensory experiences of war reenactments that depicted Chief Hiawatha scalping white soldiers. I participated in backpacking trips through Pennsylvania State forests, earned eleven merit badges, and looked forward to the weeklong summer camp trips to Heritage Reservation located in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania. I learned survival skills such as building a lean-to structure for shelter out of locally harvested natural materials, leatherwork, basketry, how to tie knots, fish, boat, build fires, cook, in addition to enjoying a hike or a swim in Lake Courage. When I was inducted into the Order of the Arrow, while on Heritage Reservation I was not permitted to talk for the entire duration of the ceremony and following service project known as the Ordeal. All of the newly inducted members and I worked on improving the quality of the dike located on Lake Courage. The sun beat down upon us as we removed debris and plant material growing on the surface, as well as restacked rocks in order to maintain structural integrity of the dike. When it was time to eat lunch we were given thinly filled ham and cheese white bread sandwiches and small iced tea cartons. I had never drunk iced tea before and the new flavor was difficult to bear, but I drank it anyways, since this was the only liquid that was provided.

Prior to the Order of the Arrow, Ernest Thompson Seton organized a youth group named “the Woodcraft Indians” and he utilized “Indian ceremonies” to structure the organization (BSA, p. 18). Seton’s efforts inspired the founder of the Order of the Arrow, Dr. E. Uner Goodman, in 1915 to “use the lores and legends of the Delaware Indians in their new brotherhood” (p. 18).

These events would both inform and deform my early understanding of what I thought it meant to be an American Indian and how to represent an Other's culture. Ultimately my early boyhood experiences were informed with romantic, idealized, and warped conceptions of American Indian peoples and their cultures. We repeated the oath at the close of our Ordeal:

I do hereby promise, on my honor as a Scout, that I will always and faithfully observe and preserve the traditions of the Order of the Arrow, Wimachtendienk [Brotherhood]. Wingoloauchsik [Cheerfulness]. Witahemui [Service]. (BSA, 1989, p. 10)

After the mis-education concerning American Indian cultures, which was mythologized from an ethnocentric viewpoint, I felt as if I were tightly bound in the *dikinaagan*, or cradleboard, while visiting among the Ojibwe course-speakers in May 2010. I listened, watched and unknowingly became intertwined within Ojibwe life-webs as they re-educated me from my youth experiences. Positioned as a listener and an outsider, I was visiting among and receiving the “best” of the Ojibwe, as expressed by one of our speakers. Course-students and I experienced a variety of Ojibwe personal histories, beliefs, and local cultural events within the Red Lake, Leech Lake, White Earth, and Mille Lacs reservations (Figure 1). My experience in 2010 was eye opening, challenged my preconceptions that were influenced by my experiences with the BSA, and generated a newfound respect for Ojibwe peoples and their culture, as sovereignty and cultural autonomy were stressed as a resistance narrative to non-Native assimilationist intentions.

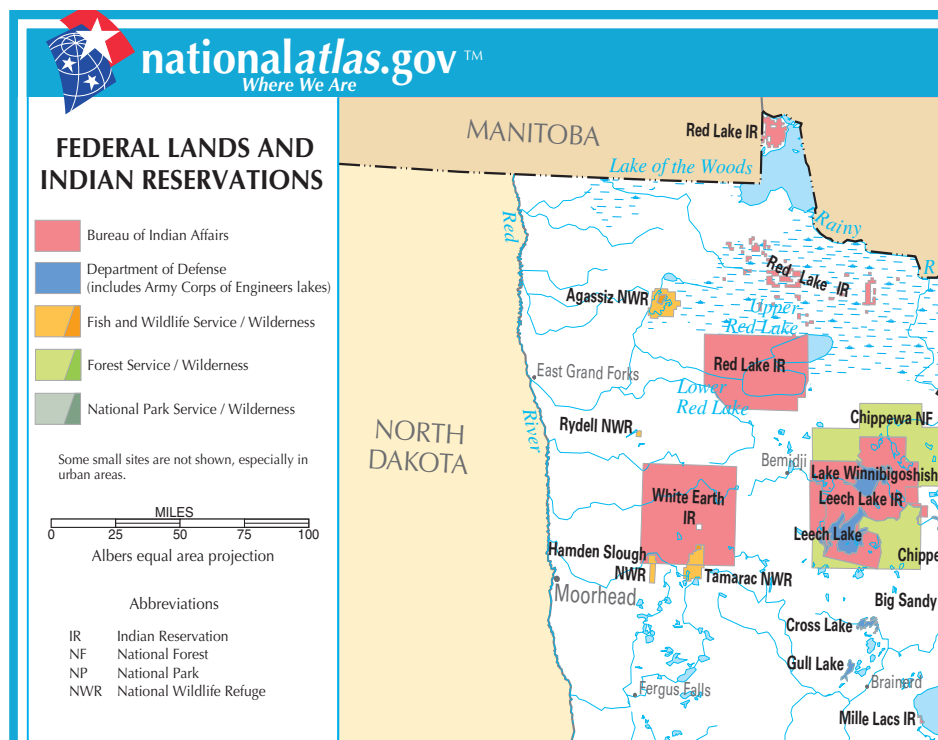


Figure 1. Detail of visited Ojibwe Reservations while in Minnesota. National Atlas of the United States, January 15, 2013, <http://nationalatlas.gov>

The initial field experiences in 2010 generated sadness, anger, outrage, surprise, as well as connections to my own beliefs of an interconnected ontology, which cultivated feelings of empathy. These feelings and thoughts led to a desire to return to northern Minnesota, to learn from Ojibwe artist's about their experiences and artistic processes more thoroughly and slowly over a longer period of time. I had to face that what I thought I knew of American Indian lived experience was warped and incorrect, appropriated and enacted by non-Natives, since the early influence of Seton and Goodman. My 2010 field experiences in Minnesota catalyzed my interest to learn more about how Ojibwe artists' creative processes and cultural products inform their way of life, thinking, and relationships within local communities. I was curious if Ojibwe artists' creative works were acts of resistance to assimilate into non-Native culture, while affirming their own, or if the creative works functioned in different ways. Further, I was curious about how

Ojibwe artists' process and cultural products functioned in relation to Ojibwe culture in general. Lastly I was curious to determine how Ojibwe arts may expand current educational conceptions of American Indian art as well the potential for expanding art education pedagogy, curricula content, and cultural art research. I meditated upon these issues, which generated two research-as-art works (Figures 2 & 3). In creating both works I investigated relationships among representations and personal experiences; the creative processes generated ways of thinking and relating to my research concerns. Art theorist, Graeme Sullivan states, "Locating information networks, articulating research problems and questions, and conceptualizing project designs are part of visual arts research as the structure of a project is visualized and realized" (2009, p. 190). Both visual artworks and processes fostered a nascent understanding of complex relationships intertwined with lived experience and generated a preparatory foundation for fieldwork. Two years later I returned to conduct research with local Ojibwe artists pertaining to meaning making processes.

Slivka, author and artist.



Figure 3. Meditating upon George Catlin's representations, assimilationist intentions, usufructuary rights, and experiences with Ojibwe during the 2010 immersion course. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author and artist.

Inside/Outside Research Relationships

I chose to enter into contexts that are not my own for my dissertation research as a means to redress the decontextualized abstractions I had learned from the BSA, which required the need to build trust through respect and through reciprocal collaboration. Indigenous scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith explains that even with an inside research model, a process of reciprocity, time, and devotion to a “dynamic relationship” where “trust will not only be reciprocated but constantly negotiated” (1999, p. 136) is necessary for ethical and reflexive research. My approach to cultural arts research is not from an insider’s relationship to community, as Tuhiwai Smith explains, but I believe the same considerations of reciprocity, time, and relationships are salient factors of ethical research. Yet, Indigenous scholar and activist Hunani Kay Trask

describes Native and non-Native cooperation as “collaborationist elite who, like the previous missionary party, looked to economic exploitation of Hawai’i and our Native culture to advance their power” (1999, p. 93). Trask’s perspective on reciprocity with cultural outsiders specifically addresses Hawaiian cultural relationships, yet this notion is not too far removed from North American indigenous peoples’ experiences with outsiders who are only interested in resource extraction and cultural hegemony. While my research is not with Hawaiian peoples, it is with Indigenous peoples who may have similar perspectives of outsiders.

Furthermore, dominant non-Native people in the U.S. continue to manufacture a reified identity conception of American Indian peoples and their cultures. This construction of an American Indian identity is denoted throughout my dissertation as *indian* to signify the constructedness and cultural hegemony of American Indian identities through multifarious discourses posited by Anishinaabe literary theorist Gerald Vizenor. Vizenor writes in *Fugitive*, “The *indians* are the romantic absence of natives...The *indian* is a simulation and loan word of dominance...The *indian* is...the other in a vast mirror” (quoted in Owens, 2001 p. 15, italics in original). There are many examples of popular culture *indian* identity markers that perpetuate racist discourses: as sports mascots, in sports memes like the ‘tomahawk chop,’ manufactured material culture such as Halloween costumes, marketing performances during a Victoria Secret campaign, screen-print t-shirts by The Gap, in addition to a music video produced by No Doubt and a movie characterization of Jonny Depp as Tonto.¹ These markers continue to represent non-

¹ Victoria’s Secret televised a fashion show during which one model adorned a feathered headdress, turquoise jewelry, and a fringed bikini. The online article pertaining to the formal apology can be accessed at: <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/entertainment/2012/11/victorias-secret-apologizes-to-native-americans/>. Further the Gap t-shirts imprinted with the words “Manifest Destiny” were pulled from production and online information can be accessed at: <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/entertainment/2012/10/gap-pulls-manifest-destiny-t-shirt-from-shelves-after-social-media-outcry/>. Disney’s “The Lone Ranger” film has cast Jonny Depp to

Native cultural hegemony and invention of the *indian* identity (Wilson and Yellow Bird, 2005). These multifarious forms of ownership-as-invention signify that the United States is not a *postcolonial* country, which complicates my positionality as a white, male, academic neophyte and my relationships to systems of power and knowledge, particularly my personal history with the BSA, in American Indian social contexts. These strained cultural relationships perpetuated through popular culture insensitivity, governmental failed treaty promises, forced assimilationist intentions during the Indian boarding school era, and cultural genocide has tainted research possibilities with Indigenous peoples in Indigenous communities and therefore raises the question, “How does an outsider pursue intercultural relationships as a form of research that respects indigenous cultural authority, voice and meaning-making processes?” This research question concerning ethics is ever-present even though it is not one of the initial questions that drove the design of my research project. I attend to research ethics of care through multi-sited ethnography methodology and narrative writing in Chapter III and VII.

Explanation of Field Research

I built upon a three-week field experience offered as a course entitled *Exploring Indigenous Ways of Knowing Among the Ojibwe*. The main thrust of this 2010 course was to meet and listen to a selection of northern Minnesota Ojibwe who instructed, reflected upon, and discussed Ojibwe beliefs, traditions, and personal narratives in addition to active engagement in a variety of Ojibwe cultural events in local ecologies, or emplacements. I returned to northern

perform as a Native American named Tonto. More on non-Native’s cast as Natives can be accessed at: <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/mobile/article/johnny-depp-tonto-talks-horse-second-lone-ranger-trailer-146248>. An article concerning the music band No Doubt’s apology for appropriating Native American cultural signifiers can be accessed at: <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/entertainment/2012/11/no-doubt-apologizes-to-native-american-community-for-video/>.

Minnesota, May 10th 2012 to engage in ongoing conversations, visitations, and arts processes, among other events with local, self-identified Ojibwe artists (Figure 4).

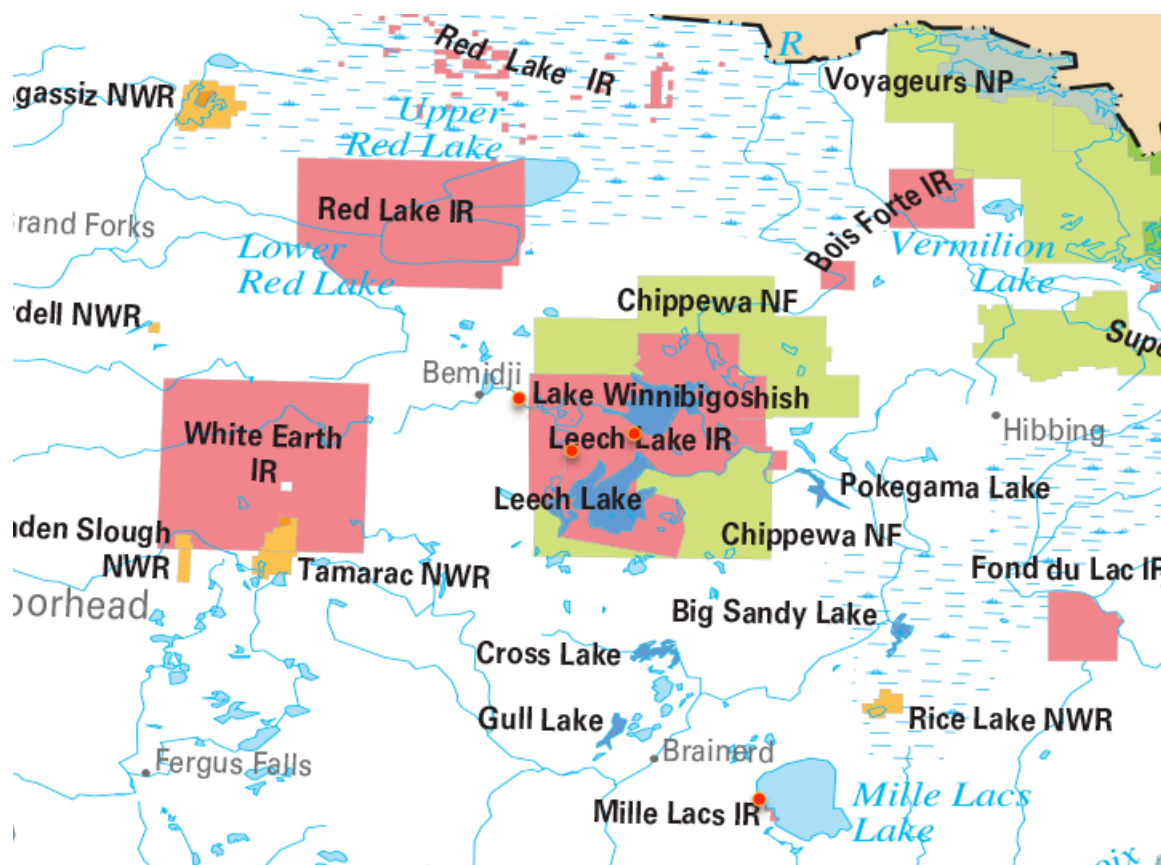


Figure 4. Detail of approximate locations of artist-participants' homes. National Atlas of the United States, January 15, 2013, <http://nationalatlas.gov>

I was supported and aided by Dr. Bruce Martin, who organized the field experience and operated as the field officer and instructor. Dr. Martin personally knew a selection of local, self-identified artists living near and on Leech Lake, Red Lake, White Earth, and Mille Lacs Reservations and supported my research endeavors by providing contact information for a number of possible participants. Throughout the first week of May 2012, I shadowed Dr. Martin's group of students and participated in six seminars. These early encounters in the field were didactic as they were part of the course offering, but aided in transitioning my emplacement

from State College, Pennsylvania to northern Minnesota, known as Ojibwe country to some of the locals (Appendix A). Early didactic experiences of the 2010 course, particularly those held on the campus of Bemidji State University, were transitional places for course students, Ojibwe speakers, and me since these places grounded cultural expectations and understandings from everyday Ojibwe lived experiences and served as familiar educational places for Penn State students. These transitional meeting places describe Foucault's (1986) heterotopian emplacements, which appear to be "simple openings, but generally hide curious exclusions" (p. 26), since the ensemble of relations that comprised them opened up access to Ojibwe speakers' theoretical knowledge and excluded Ojibwe practical knowledge safeguarded by the perceived familiarity of the institutional setting. Although, neutrality is contestable since the institutional setting may have also served to authenticate learning experiences demanded by Penn State authorities, or (dis)empowered Ojibwe speakers within educational-institutional places that they have been historically excluded.

Engaging Potential Participants

In between seminars, I made phone calls and sent emails to prospective participants, those who were identified as Ojibwe artists or crafts(wo)men. The following conversation led to meeting Melvin Losh and broached ethics between researcher and potential participants.

...

"Hello?" Losh's sister-in-law answered the phone.

I spoke, "Hi. My name is Kevin Slivka and I'm interested in talking with you about your art processes and artworks. I'm from Penn State University and I'm doing a study about local Ojibwe arts and I was wondering if you would like to meet and talk?"

[A pause.]

“Who are you?” she stated directly, which also seemed to be tinged with slight agitation.

In a rattled and slightly shaken tone, “Bruce Martin suggested that I contact you about your craftwork, your beadwork, and buckskin bags.”

“Oh...” she replied in a lighter intonation perhaps acknowledging a connection to Dr. Martin. “You really oughta talk to my brother-in-law, Melvin, who is the real artist. He will be better to talk about that. But I don’t feel right just giving you his number. I’ll call him and ask him if it is okay and then I’ll call you back.”

“That would be great. I really appreciate it and thanks for talking with me.” I hoped Melvin Losh would be open to meeting with me. As we ended our conversation, I frantically scribbled Losh’s name and the word *master quill worker* on my contact sheet. There, I noticed his name and contact information also provided to me by Dr. Martin. I resisted conveying this to Losh’s sister-in-law, since I felt it more appropriate to defer and follow her decision to determine if Losh was interested.

Shortly thereafter Losh and I talked through a re-iteration of the previous introduction. “Well, what are you doing today?” asked Losh, “Why don’t you come over.” Taken aback and extremely surprised at Losh’s expressed interest [since he was the first to do so] I quickly gathered my field journal, digital camera, tobacco, photos of my artwork, and a water bottle. Losh’s directions led me to Bena, a small town about 35 miles east of Bemidji located within the boundaries of Leech Lake reservation. I drove carefully through two well-worn strips of dirt surrounded by green grass, Losh’s front yard. An upturned brown cardboard box sat atop a table several yards away from the front entrance of his house. I stopped my car in close proximity to the table and the upturned box as I collected my courier-style bag. As I emerged from the car I encountered swarming flies.

...

One cultural difference was evident in the simple communication and embrace of the handshake. Many of the Ojibwe I met engaged in the handshake as an offering of a gentle embrace to acknowledge the other's presence, negatively described by some non-Natives as a "dead fish." Comparatively the handshake of many non-Natives has been described as a vice and interpreted to indicate an implied dominance and a self-centered positionality. This seemingly common and simple encounter can determine the outcome, perception, and quality of a relationship, and often denotes a power dynamic inherent to divergent epistemologies. Some of the Ojibwes' recognition of presence through light touch is an indicator that humility is an important binding and defining quality (Tafoya, 1989). Initial meetings were dramatically influenced by these seemingly insignificant ontological qualities. I attend to one particular event during which I missed an opportunity to offer tobacco to a White Earth band member-informant and how my actions impacted the intercultural dynamic in Chapter II.

I made efforts to contact eighteen potential informants including Ojibwe and non-Ojibwe although not all of those contacted were interested in participating, nor were all of my attempts of contact reciprocated and/or followed up with further conversations. As I contacted potential participants and arranged to meet with them at locations of their choice, I no longer attended seminars with Dr. Martin's students (Appendix B).

The conversations and meetings that ensued with informants and participants produced leads and suggestions for prospective participants known by those I was visiting. I privilege participant authority and suggestions in guiding the direction and flow of the study because "cultural difference" as Bhabha explains is,

the process of the enunciation of culture as 'knowledgeable', authoritative,
adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification [...] is a process

of signification through which statements of culture or on culture differentiate, discriminate and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity. (1994, p. 50)

Following Bhabha's notion of cultural difference participants' narratives and perspectives are embedded throughout the text which illuminate personal stances and processes that inform, demonstrate and extend my critical interpretations as a theoretical underpinnings of the study.

I also made conscious choices to either pursue relations with particular participants, or to pass by other informants due to time constraints as well as perceived level of interest. My intention was to include the participation of four to six self-identified Ojibwe artists or crafts(wo)men. There were five participants at the close of my nearly, three-month field research (Table 2 & 3).

As earlier described, I met Melvin Losh through a cold-call to his sister-in-law, whose phone number I acquired from Dr. Martin who designed and implemented the field experience two years prior. Martin had contact with the Losh's while attending the Leech Lake Powwow's as they often managed a cultural arts tent. Melvin Losh's sister-in-law suggested that I contact him as he was the master quiller, after checking with him first. Losh primarily works with porcupine quills on birch bark both as lidded boxes and as flat panels intended for bandolier bags. He also is a prolific bead artist. I had met Duane (Dewey) and Teresa (Bambi) Goodwin based upon an informant whom I had met during my previous 2010 visitation. Dewey Goodwin is the art instructor at Leech Lake Tribal College and works primarily as stone sculptor, but is skilled, like many an art teacher in a wide array of media. Bambi Goodwin has been affiliated with the local area schools in various capacities and works primarily as a functional potter as well in beadwork. I met Jim Jones Jr. during a conversation with a local informant who taught Ojibwe

arts at Bemidji State University. Jones is the Cultural Resource Director for the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and builds birch bark canoes, engages in flint knapping, and creates replica pottery based upon archeological excavations. And lastly, I had met Pat Kruse through Melvin Losh's suggestion during a conversation concerning his relationship and involvement with an art exhibition held at the Tweed Museum in Duluth, Minnesota. Kruse is a birch-bark artist who creates baskets and flat pictorial work composed of the natural varieties of coloration found in the bark.

Table 2: Participants discussed in depth. An expanded itinerary of my study can be found in Appendix C.

Primary Participants	Tribal Affiliation and Residence	Creative Medium	Occupation	Time with Participants: Conversations, Art making, and/or Labor	Forms of Data Collection
Melvin Losh	Leech Lake Band Member - resides	Quill and Bead work: Quill boxes, Bandolier bags, pipe bags, moccasins, regalia	Artist	Approx. 71 hours	Informal interviews, photographic and video documentation, field notes, practical experiences harvesting birch bark, trimming and cleaning the bark into oval and circular shapes, dying, sorting, and applying porcupine quills to birch bark

Duane (Dewey) Goodwin	White Earth Band Member, resides near Leech Lake Reservation	Stone work: Alabaster, African Wonder Stone, Dolomite, Brazilian Soapstone Paints watercolors and acrylic	Art Instructor at Leech Lake Tribal College, Artist	Approx. 260 hours	Informal interviews, photographic documentation, field notes, practical experiences harvesting spruce roots and birch bark, carving Brazilian soapstone, cutting elk hide for a workshop
Jim Jones, Jr.	Leech Lake Band Member and resides on Leech Lake Reservation	Replica pottery, flint knapping, birch bark canoes	Cultural Resource Director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), Artist	Approx. 48 hours	Informal interviews, photographic documentation, field notes, practical experiences harvesting and splitting spruce roots and cedar logs and harvesting birch bark

Dewey Goodwin, Melvin Losh, and Jim Jones Jr. are the primary participants of this study. I had spent the majority of time with the three Ojibwe artists over the three-month time frame and all three are discussed in depth (Table 2). I had also engaged both Pat Kruse and Bambi Goodwin as well, but less often, therefore both Kruse and Goodwin are discussed as supporting participants who illuminate particular concepts and influences of Ojibwe meaning-making processes (Table 3).

Table 3. Participants I either had spent less time with or had a change in participation and who are supportive to the overall study.

Supporting Participants	Affiliation and Residence	Creative Medium	Occupation	Time with Participants & Reason for Support status	Forms of Data Collection
Pat Kruse	Family affiliation with Mille Lacs band of Ojibwe and is a Red Cliff Band Member, Resides on Mille Lacs Reservation	Birch Bark work: Pictorial-layered bark collages, baskets, winnowing trays, mirror frames	Artist	Approx. 18 hours – over 3 hours of driving from other participants and infrequent contact	Informal interviews, photographic documentation, field notes, attended a birch bark basket workshop at Mille Lacs Indian Museum, practical experiences creating two birch bark baskets
Teresa (Bambi) Goodwin	White Earth Band Member, resides near Leech Lake Reservation	Clay work: Functional pottery, smudge bowls Painting and beadwork	Substitute Instructor in local schools, Artist	Approx. 160 hours – not interested in participating initially, but decided later to become a participant	Informal interviews, photographic documentation, field notes, attended and cut elk hide for a hand drum workshop

Research Questions & Chapter Summaries

I developed three questions to guide my field research in order to access the artists' processes, meaning-making choices, relationships to the community, and how the artworks inform particular communities.

- How is meaning constructed, implied, and conveyed in multiple and various Ojibwe arts (e.g. craft, fine art, performance)?
- What relationships are constituted through the artists' practices and/or products?
- In what ways do the artists' practices and/or products inform local contexts, identities, and cultural positions?

My travels through Ojibwe country implicated me as a participant-observer within Ojibwe networks. Relationships with participants were cultivated through participant observation and informed the transmission of information as points of “access to insiders' world of meaning,” where access has been marginalized, diminished, forbidden, warned against, refused, or never pursued in dominant hegemonic spheres (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 15). The benefits of a multi-sited methodological approach (Marcus, 2006; 2011) to cultural arts research and my methods of ethnographic field research are discussed in Chapter III. I also discuss the importance of arts processes and products, in Chapter III, as they relate to interpreting intercultural relationships.

I discuss several historical influences in Chapter II that impact Ojibwe artist-participants' creative practices and everyday lived experience. Particularly I explore blood quantum as it affects participants' belonging within Indigenous communities in addition to access to funding, artistic support, and the long standing disagreements set forth in numerous land-based treaties with the U.S. government. Further, I discuss particular demographics of Leech Lake Reservation and the historical influences that have formed the city of Bemidji. Lastly I critically examine

several sculptural works, which I describe as roadside simulacra, and discuss the accompanying narratives seemingly established within the city-center of Bemidji.

I discuss my methodological approach in Chapter III. Specifically, I discuss the affordances of a multi-sited ethnographic methodology and how I attend to these affordances throughout the dissertation. I also attend to representation in research writing and my approach to lived experience as a form of critical proximity in addition to my research methods.

I discuss Ojibwe porcupine quill artist-participant Melvin Losh in Chapter IV. Particularly I explore how Losh's embodied art practice is a mode of thinking about his relationship to porcupine quills and how they co-influence the production process. I also explore Losh's relationships to his immediate community on Leech Lake reservation as well as his efforts to generate a supportive network that sustains his cultural production. Furthermore, I discuss Losh's arts ontology in relation to Vizenor's notion of survivance and the intimate importance the arts are Losh's lived experience. Additionally I discuss Losh's beadwork for bandolier bags and the multiple forces of influence that are embedded historically and situationally within the bandolier bag. Lastly I discuss my own cultural art learning processes with Losh, sorting, dying, and manipulating the porcupine quills in order to create a quilled birch bark box.

I discuss Ojibwe stone sculptor-participant Duane (Dewey) Goodwin in Chapter V. Particularly I explore Goodwin's relationships among his teaching, pedagogy, and art practice. Additionally I discuss how, like Losh, the stone material is integral to the arts processes imbued with animate qualities. The spiritual foundation becomes intertwined with the visionary and mythic foundations during Goodwin's arts practice and is related to Vizenor's notion of survivance and Foucault's emplacement. I also explore correspondences among several

intensities that were experienced with Goodwin: the passing of Uno the German Shepherd, a tornado-like storm, a fishing excursion, and the act of remembering through gathering, preparing, and making birch bark baskets. Similar to Losh, I also explore my art learning processes with Goodwin that occurred over a five-day sculpture workshop, during which I created a figural bear sculpture in Brazilian soapstone.

I discuss Ojibwe cultural resource director-participant Jim Jones Jr. in Chapter VI. Particularly I explore Jones' relationship to natural materials such as spruce tree roots, cedar trees, and birch bark as they are integral for the production of birch bark canoes. I discuss the process of discerning and procuring these materials in addition to historical and intercultural relationships that impact Ojibwe lived experience within localized ecologies and their usufructuary rights to hunt, fish and gather on ceded land. I also draw comparisons between Jones' involvement with historical trade route reenactments that utilize Jones' birch bark canoes and the political and pedagogical implications of these reenactments. Additionally, I explore Jones' reconstruction pottery and the relationships that are imbued during the creative process as well as signified through the use of the pot. Furthermore, I discuss Jones' active presence within the localized community as the cultural resource director and his work to preserve an Ojibwe presence in northern Minnesota by determining through archeological survey if potential land-developing projects are Ojibwe cultural heritage sites.

Lastly, I summarize my research study in Chapter VII and the import it has for art education, cultural arts research and the implications for philosophical and ethical considerations of intercultural relationships and the role of the arts.

Chapter II: Historical Foundations

I set out to describe several historical contexts throughout this chapter that were reoccurring macro-level themes and topics that have influenced and complicated Ojibwe artist-participants personal narratives, arts processes and cultural works. I begin with the multiple names, Anishinaabeg (the plural version of Anishinaabe), Ojibwe (also spelled Ojibwa or Ojibway), and Chippewa used to describe tribal affiliation. The uses of these names are dependent upon context, positionality, and institutions of power and knowledge such as the U.S. federal government. Federal treaties between American Indian tribes and the U.S. government often invented tribal names or based them “on names given by other tribes” as land rights were ceded and territorial borders were drawn (Pierotti, 2010, p. 6). Blood quantum is also discussed in this chapter as an additional measure that worked to construct an authenticity discourse concerning American Indian tribal affiliation and identity. Ultimately the multifarious discourses of re-naming, drawing territory borders to usufructuary rights to hunt, fish and gather, in addition to biological quantification are inventions and cultural hegemony of American Indian peoples.

Also in this chapter I discuss a brief overview of Ojibwe reservations in Minnesota and in particular Leech Lake Reservation where I spent the majority of my time with artists-participants who resided on or near the reservation. Lastly, I discuss the arts within the field of relations such as historical practices of Ojibwe art forms, tourist art forms and market affordances and constraints.

Chippewa, Ojibwe, or Anishinaabe

Trained as a music educator Frances Densmore, eventually became self-trained ethnomusicologist and made 2,500 wax recordings of numerous American Indian songs and “had over 20 years of direct experience” primarily among the Ojibwe (Archabal, 1979, p. v).

Densmore's views of American Indian culture were "typical for a 19th Century Christian woman," saving what she thought was going to be lost due to assimilationist intentions like "[m]any ethnologists of her era thought Indian culture would-and should-get trampled in the American march of progress" (Smith, "Friend" of the Indian section, 2013, para. 1 & 4). She sought "to preserving what few white Americans cared about: Native American music" (Smith, "Friend" of the Indian section, 2013, para. 1). Although, after forty years of field work with America Indians studying music and cultural patterns, she ultimately felt "bitter that 'her' Indians never compliantly dissolved into America's melting pot" (Smith, "Friend" of the Indian section, 2013, para. 5). Accordingly, Densmore discusses Ojibwe resistance to assimilation in relation to her findings concerning the name "'Chippewa' ...[as] it has never been adopted by the older members of the tribe" (1929, p. 5). Rather, Ojibwe or "'A'ničīna'be,' meaning 'original or first man' (*anic*, first, *nabe*, male)" are preferred. Yet the translation of the name, *Anishinaabe*, has been misrepresented and incorrectly perpetuated according to Ojibwe historian William Whipple Warren who preceded Densmore's work pertaining to Ojibwe culture. Warren was of Ojibwe and Pilgrim heritage and was the first to have written a comprehensive history and ethnology of Ojibwe life-ways from an "insider's" perspective. Warren has claimed that *Anishinaabeg* (the plural form), also spelled, "An-ish-in-aub-ag...is derived from An-ish-aw, meaning without cause, or 'spontaneous,' and in-aub-a-we-se, meaning the 'human body.' The word An-ish-in-aub-ag, therefore, literally translated, signifies 'spontaneous man.'" (1885, p. 56)

Still the less accepted name Chippewa, a remnant discourse of cultural dominance "is comparatively modern and is the only name under which the tribe has been designated by the Government in treaties and other negotiations" (Densmore, 1929, p. 5) remains on present-day Minnesota state forest signage. According to Gerald Vizenor, "[m]ore than a century ago, Henry

Rowe Schoolcraft, a student of geology and mineralogy and ethnology, named the Anishinaabeg the Ojibwa; he reasoned that the root meaning of the word Ojibway described the peculiar sound of the Anishinaabe voice” (1984, p. 17). Yet, the meaning of the name Ojibwe is muddled as it has also been determined by early Christian missionary, George Copway to have been inspired by the puckered style of moccasins, which were “gathered on top from the tip of the toe, and at the ankle” (cited in Vizenor, 1984, p. 18). Furthermore, Copway’s interpretation differs from Warren’s and both wrote during the 1850’s. Warren deciphers the Ojibwe name to be “composed of O-jib, ‘pucker up,’ and ub-way, “to roast,” and it means, ‘To roast till puckered up,’” which alludes to how the Ojibwe treated their captives during times of war (1885, p. 36). Even though the meanings of Anishinaabe and Ojibwe have multiple and competing narratives, both names were used interchangeably throughout my visitations and conversations over the three-month field study with participants.

The Ojibwe continue to live within local ecologies found in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and Canada for hundreds of years. Long before contact with the French in the 1600’s, the Ojibwe were with the Ottawa and Potawatomi as one people, only to split at the “Straits of Michilimacinac” during a great migration from the east across the St. Lawrence River (Warren, 1885, p. 81). Warren reported the story as an old priest told it to him “after filling his pipe and smoking of the tobacco [he] had presented:”

Our forefathers, many string of lives ago, lived on the shores of the Great Salt Water in the east. Here it was that while congregated in a great town, and while they were suffering the ravages of sickness and death, the Great Spirit, at the intercession of Man-ab-o-sho, the great common uncle of the An-ish-in-aub-ag, granted them this rite [Me-da-we religion] wherewith life is restored and

prolonged. Our forefathers moved from the shores of the great water, and proceeded westward. The Me-da-we lodge was pulled down and it was not erected, till our forefathers again took a stand on the shores of the great river near where Mo-ne-aung (Montreal) now stands...In the course of time this town was again deserted, and our forefathers still proceeded westward...till they reached the shores of Lake Huron...Again these rites were forgotten, and the Me-da-we lodge was not built till the Ojibways found themselves congregated at Bow-e-ting (outlet of Lake Superior), where it remained for many winters. Still the Ojibways moved westward, and for the last time the Me-da-we lodge was erected on the Island of La Pointe, and here, long before the pale face appeared among them, it was practiced in its purest and most original form. (Warren, 1885, p. 79-80)

...

earth diver led them

food on water replenish

resilient presence

...

Figure 5. Haiku inspired by an Ojibwe migration story. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Blood Quantum

Ojibwe speakers from the 2010 immersion course and research participants discussed blood quantum as a power-based discourse and biologically derived status used to impose very specific identity qualifications on American Indian peoples in order to be recognized by the U.S.

government.² Blood quantum is a positivist discourse established to authenticate American Indian racial identity based upon lineage. Blood quantum is a specific percentage of American Indian blood needed to be categorically recognized by the United States federal government. A minimum of twenty-five percent American Indian blood is necessary to qualify as American Indian by the U.S. government. This distinction is made in order to control and manage U.S. governmental monetary support, treaty agreements, land allotment, and other social support systems. Although blood quantum definitions have changed since its inception, it has created and complicated American Indian authenticity discourses that often deny a flexible and fluid conception of contemporary lived experience (Spruhan, 2006). Ultimately, blood quantum impacted ways that individuals and collective American Indian tribes function within the borders drawn and set by the U.S. government. Racial identity has a very complicated and central role in defining historical and ongoing relations within tribes and between American Indians and non-Native populations.

Non-Native capitalistic perspectives have oversimplified American Indian familial orientations as being socialistic and are often described as being similar to crabs in a bucket: if one attempts to climb out, the group will work to pull it back in. Other analogies have been expressed as ways in which American Indians describe each other due to relationships with immigrant cultures. One such example is if one were called an apple: red on the outside and white on the inside, or as a birch bark tree: white on the outside, and red on the inside. These memes perpetuate the complex bifurcated positionality imposed by assimilationist and immigrant influences that were enforced militarily and politically, through educational processes, biological

² See Spruhan, Paul. (2006). A legal history of blood quantum in federal Indian law to 1935. *South Dakota Law Review*, 51(1) for an in depth examination of blood quantum and the antecedents from British colonial rule to American statehood.

measurements, and other multiple epistemological and cultural impositions (e.g. media, cinema, and professional athletic mascots). Additionally American Indian identities are complicated by individual choice, just as any person's identity is due to intercultural-marriages, familial relationships to hybrid religious beliefs or practices in addition to any number of factors and influences. Ultimately, the aforementioned analogies and monikers create and intend a negative difference as authenticity discourses. I must caution readers that oversimplifying appearances, cultural practices, and relations from negative comparisons miss the imperative relationships implicated within artworks, which remains the impetus of my study. I discuss these ways of thinking since Ojibwe informants, participants, and speakers have discussed them during the 2010 immersion course and during my field research. Particularly, birch bark artist Pat Kruse discussed his difficulties in gaining community support because his skin is very light. Kruse states during our first meeting, "I had to fight a lot around here...here put your arm next to mine [I position my arm adjacent to his]. See I look like you." Kruse's family is interracial, his mother is Ojibwe and his father of European decent, therefore his physical appearance has been a complex issue within the broader Ojibwe and non-Native communities where Kruse constantly rebuttals doubt. Although, negative differences expressed as binaries were also less important to some Ojibwe that I had met. Even though these contemporary frictions at times describe internal tribal relations, ultimately blood quantum is and remains to be a non-Native construct created and enforced as a United States federal discourse to define Indian and tribal affiliation.

Blood quantum is but one strand in the power/knowledge systems that Anishinaabe literary theorist, Gerald Vizenor describes as the reverse striptease based upon literary theorist Roland Barthes' (1957) *Mythologies*. Barthes posits the striptease is reliant upon spectacle, ritual and pretense, which begins with a removal of signs (e.g. clothing) in order to return the female

dancer to her ‘natural’ state. The dancer engages in the ritualistic dance maneuvers as a cloak in order to resist static power relations or as Barthes states the dancer engages in “exorcising the fear of immobility” (1957, p. 85-86). Similarly, Vizenor posits tribal cultures have been held in static power relations through a reverse striptease, which is also reliant upon spectacle, ritual and pretense. Vizenor states,

Familiar tribal images are patches on the ‘pretense of fear,’ and there is a sense of ‘delicious terror’ in the structural opposition of savagism and civilization found in the cinema and in the literature of romantic captivities. Plains tepees, and the signs of moccasins, canoes, feathers, leathers, arrowhead, [...] conjure the cultural rituals of the traditional tribal past, but the pleasures of the tribal striptease are denied, data bound, stopped in emulsion colonized in print to resolve the insecurities and inhibitions of the dominant culture. (quoted in Madsen, 2009, pp. 27-28)

Vizenor’s notion of the reverse striptease demonstrates that the perpetual-static representation is a form of covering up what appears to be Native with *indian* signs and resonates with Native American literary theorist and author Louis Owen’s claim that the *indian* identity, “are the Others who must be both subsumed and erased in a strange dance of repulsion and desire that has given rise to one of the longest sustained histories of genocide and ethnocide in the world” (2001, p. 16). Both physical signs of the *indian* and the scientific discourse of blood quantum signify the constructed qualities of the othered-*indian* and through the othering-process tribal identities have been fixed with no refuge or solace from generalized spectator gazing. Blood quantum has a direct impact on Ojibwe artist-participants’ work when they apply for grants, funding for technology, arts materials, or workshops or when they enter arts competitions,

exhibitions, or are pursued and represented by museums and galleries. The Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA) of 1990 impact these aspects of their cultural arts production. IACA was passed as measure of protection against both misrepresentation and authenticity, which

is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits misrepresentation in marketing of Indian arts and crafts products within the United States. It is illegal to offer or display for sale, or sell any art or craft product in a manner that falsely suggests it is Indian produced, an Indian product, or the product of a particular Indian or Indian Tribe or Indian arts and crafts organization, resident within the United States. (Indian Arts and Crafts Board, para. 1, website)

The Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA) of 1990 is intended as a measure of protection from misappropriation and misrepresentation by non-Natives or those who are not recognized by the federal government due to insufficient blood quantum. Particularly the IACA problematizes the reified and racialized name of “Indian” as a label for particular tribal affiliated artwork and establishes such labeling a violation of the federal law. Rather, particular tribal affiliation must be identified by the names and standards outlined in federal legislation, which is driven by appropriate blood quantum levels that ultimately assign the “Indian as a member of a biological group and Indian as an incompetent ward” (Spruhan, 2006, p. 49). Blood quantum has been unevenly utilized, defined, and implemented, yet the IACA relies upon blood quantum as the sole discourse to validate authenticity and protection services intended to be guaranteed by federal law.

Ojibwe Reservations in Minnesota

There are six Ojibwe reservations that are recognized as The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe by the U.S. federal government: White Earth, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Bois Forte, Fond du Lac,

and Grand Portage. The seventh Ojibwe reservation is Red Lake, which is “original tribal land that has never been ceded to the federal government. The Red Lake Anishinaabeg were not moved from one place to another; the members of the reservation hold in common the title to their land” (Vizenor, 1984, p. 31). Red Lake Reservation is unique in that the remaining six Ojibwe reservations have been divided up, or allotted, first by the Dawes Act of 1887 and later the Nelson Act of 1889, the Steenerson Act of 1904, the Burke Act and Clapp Act of 1906, while Red Lake has not.³ These acts have diminished “the number of acres of tribal land...[yet] the boundaries of the treaties have remained the same” (Vizenor, 1984, p. 31).

Leech Lake Reservation and the city of Bemidji

Leech Lake reservation was established in 1855, three years prior to the admittance of Minnesota to the Union. I passed through Leech Lake reservation while driving west to Bemidji where my initial lodging was arranged. Roadside signs signaled the boundaries and hailed my position that I entered American Indian territory. The Leech Lake band of Ojibwe (LLBO) has 4,132 registered members and own only five percent of the total 864,158 acreage. This was the smallest percentage of tribe-owned land compared to all other Minnesota tribes. State parks such as Itasca State Park combined with National forests occupy over half of the land. The federally owned and operated Chippewa National Forest alone cordoned off 225,000 acres of reservation land leaving the remaining land privately owned by non-Native’s (LLBO, 2013, Demographics section, para. 2). During my initial passage through the Leech Lake reservation, while in route to Bemidji, I could not have predicted that I would spend the majority of my research in such close proximity to Leech Lake reservation.

³ See www.llojibwe.com under the “History” tab for an overview of each federal act that delineated tribal rights to land allotment procedures and requirements, and the resource extraction that ensued.

I lived in a dormitory room at Bemidji State University (BSU) during May and through part of June. During the latter half of my study, I was welcomed by the Goodwins, to stay at their home, a threshold space within the margins, between Bemidji and Leech Lake Reservation. Both housing arrangements were centrally located to three Ojibwe reservations: Leech Lake to the east, Red Lake to the north, and White Earth to the west and south; further southeast of Bemidji is Mille Lacs Reservation, the fourth reservation I spent time on talking with informants and participants. *Bemidji* is derived from the Ojibwe word *Bay-may-ji-ga-maug*, which translates to English as a “lake that traverses another body of water” (Indian Country Today Media Network [ICTMN], January 19, 2011, para. 3). Lake Bemidji, or *Bemijdigamaag Zaaga’igan*, is continuously crossed, or smudged with water from the Mississippi River that enter the southern portion of the lake and leave as amalgam eastern waters.

The city of Bemidji began with the first white settlers, the Carson brothers, in 1888. They “built a log trading house which for several years was the only store in the region” nearby Lake Bemidji (Hagg, 1942, p. 24). By 1896 “the population of the settlement had increased to about two hundred” and the *Bemidji Pioneer* newspaper began publication (Hagg, 1942, p. 26-7). 1897 marked the year in which the surrounding county, Beltrami, was organized and recognized in legislation. Interestingly, the population grew to nearly five hundred in 1898, which was aided by offers of “free land” (Hagg, 1942, p. 32). Two years later, in 1900, “Bemidji had 2,183 inhabitants” (Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce, 2011, History of Bemidji section, para. #3). Yet, homesteads in Beltrami county were only enabled by a federal treaty with the “Chippewas of the Mississippi, dated March 19, 1867...these [Ojibwe] bands ceded to the United States the greater portion (estimated at 2,000,000 acres) of the lands secured to them by the treaty of 1865 [...] The territory ceded to the United States by the treaty of 1867 contains what is now the city

of Bemidji” (United States Supreme Court, 1913, p. 1386).

Paul Bunyan, Logging, and *Indian* Simulations

There were four exits to access the city of Bemidji while travelling west on Route 2. The first exit led directly to Bemidji State University (BSU) via Paul Bunyan Drive. Paul Bunyan Drive, the main access from the east, cut through the landscape as I passed a logging depository, where limbless trees were stacked in high pyramidal configurations as if they were matchsticks organized for packaging. This sight has been an ever-present aspect of the landscape as recalled by loggers’ tales of Paul Bunyan, recorded during the early 1900’s:

I suppose everybody’s seen pictures of the big log loads we used to haul in the woods in the old times. Loads piled up, ten or twelve rows of logs on top of each other, and the teamster standin’ alongside the load, and the top log way up in the air there above his head, and I can tell you them pictures ain’t no exaggeration nor nothin’ out of the ordinary. Three or four times as high a man’s head I’ve seen them loads many times...In Paul’s [Bunyan] camp, though, we had ’em higher’n any you could ever of seen in any of the pictures. (Shephard, 1924, p. 96)

In close proximity to the spectacle of logs, my gaze was met with a billboard advertisement for Bemidji Woolen Mills that included a white man dressed in a flannel shirt. Interestingly the juxtaposition of the post-logging event, evidenced by the field yard full of cut and naked trees, and the billboard conveyed a particular narrative-construct of a white cultural ideology of place-based ownership rooted in Manifest Destiny and informed by another logger’s

tale of Paul Bunyan that mythologizes the Minnesota landscape, the Mississippi river, and American mountain ranges⁴:

All them thousand lakes up in Minnesota is nothin' but Babe's footprints where he used to travel with the tank. One day Babe slipped and the tank tipped over and sprung a leak, and that's what started the Mississippi river. Paul dug it out with a shovel so he'd have a good route for his log drive...throwing a shovelful of dirt on each side as he went along, and so that way he made the Rocky Mountains and the Alleghanies at the same time, just incidentally, as you might say. (Shephard, 1924, p. 134)

All those who enter the city of Bemidji on Paul Bunyan Drive and wish to enter the city center must pass a large-oversimplified-erect and awkward statue adjacent to the visitor center. A painted-statue-form of Paul Bunyan displays a red-and-black-flannel-shirt, blue pants as if jeans, a beard and capped off with the form of a hat. It was as if every person who drove their vehicle on Paul Bunyan Drive unknowingly conjured up enough friction from the rubber tires on hot-summer-afternoon asphalt to give rise to the genie, the myth, the presence of the larger-than-life lumberjack. Adjacently located to the conjured phantom is a painted-statue-form of Babe the Blue Ox (Figure 6). Both statues have been apart of the city's landscape since 1937 and tourists are often seen standing in front of the mythical protagonists in order to record their presence with the unlikely phantoms.

⁴ See Julius W. Pratt's (1927) *The Origin of "Manifest Destiny"* for the earliest accounts of the phrase, Manifest Destiny and the underlying intentions. Specifically, Pratt details that John O'Sullivan printed an 1845 excerpt in the *Democratic Review* that states, "between us and the proper parties to the case, in a spirit of hostile interference against us, for the avowed object of thwarting our policy and hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions" (cited in Pratt, 1929, p. 797-798).



Figure 6. Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, downtown Bemidji, MN. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Another large, oversimplified, erect statue depicting a stereotypical American Indian, one reminiscent of a cigar-shop sculpture, stood in front of Morrell’s Chippewa Trading Post and completed the dialectic of Paul and Babe from across the street. It was painted to show tan pants as if buckskin and adorned a feathered headdress. Ojibwe literary author David Treuer continues, “His hair is pulled back in two long iron braids and one arm is raised with palm out, in the old ‘How’ pose so familiar to most Americans. For many years Morrell’s iron Indian was the only Indian in town” (2012, p. 139) (Figure 7). They seemed polarizing yet both exhibited a similar aesthetic of a mythical past interpreted by the surrounding non-Native community and signified the exclusionary discourse described by Treuer.



Figure 7. Indian sculpture with salute, downtown Bemidji, MN. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Vizenor called into question the name, category, and racial marker of *indian* as a “hyper real construction” created by colonial discourse to reflect the maker rather than the indigenous people as Louis Owens explains,

European America holds a mirror and a mask up to the Native American. The tricky mirror is that Other presence that reflects the Euro-American consciousness back at itself, but the side of the mirror turned toward the Native is transparent, letting the Native see not his or her own reflection but the face of the Euro-American beyond the mirror. (2001, p. 17)

Painter George Catlin and photographer Edward Curtis aided in creating and popularizing the hyperreal *indian* constructions by adding pictorial elements and posing individuals for their compositions. These *indian* representations were also perpetuated through American popular material culture as American studies historian Gülriz Büken describes,

At the turn of the 19th century, when there was a vogue for decorative mementos of the old-time ‘wooden Indian,’ the commercial exploitation of the Indian image was too lucrative to be overlooked for humanitarian concerns. Hair combs in the shape of Indians, inkstands and letter openers, mugs, vases, and an expensive line of sterling silver flatware with finials of Indian warriors and dancers, patterned after George Catlin’s paintings of 1830, were sold by Tiffany & Company in the 1890’s. (2002, p. 50)

These practices objectify Native peoples, oversimplify their cultural and individual complexity, and generate power/knowledge dynamics that position Native peoples lacking cultural sophistication and sovereignty. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of both statues in relation to each other is that the early-19th century ideological discourse is still evident in current day Bemidji. Tom Robertson of Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) reports that “a study last year [2009] found that three-quarters of Indians, and 90 percent of those living on nearby reservations, think the Bemidji community is not welcoming to people of all races” (2010, para. 4). Robertson reports on a proposal for a new statue of Shaynowishkung, otherwise known as Chief Bemidji, which is another *indian* representation found near the city center. The 1950’s-era statue of Shaynowishkung is “not a respectful representation” and displays a similar aesthetic to Morrell’s *indian* (Robertson, 2010, para. 2). The salient difference between both representations is that Morrell’s *indian* is not intended to represent a particular person, rather it is demonstrative of the stereotypical understanding of American Indian peoples in general, while the statue of Shaynowishkung is supposed to be of a particular person who has living relatives and is not a non-Native construct. Yet, Shaynowishkung becomes absorbed into the same stereotypical aesthetic and understanding, which ultimately is endemic to power/knowledge systems of

representation. Needless to say both portrayals are racist and stereotypical, which unfortunately resonate with those who comprise the Bemidji community. Perhaps the Bemidji community feels as Treuer writes,

it [Bemidji] is surrounded by Indians, literally – White Earth, Red Lake, and Leech Lake reservations form the points of a triangle in which Bemidji sits at the center, and the combined reservation population outnumber the population of Bemidji two to one. Bemidji still has a ‘circle the wagons’ kind of feel to it. (2012, p. 138)

Control as surveillance through the mirror, described by Owens, creates an Ojibwe absence in Bemidji where the perpetual presence of Paul Bunyan, Babe the Blue Ox and Morrell’s *indian* imply an anxious sense of ownership.

Owens describes the Native role in the American narrative as being the tragic hero which signifies anything beyond this discourse s/he is nothing. For example, the tragic hero also known as “the vanishing Indian, [has been] immortalized by James Earle Fraser’s 1915 iconic sculpture *The End of the Trail* (Büken, 2002, p. 50). R. David Edmunds, historian of Native American peoples, describes Fraser’s sculpture as, “a defeated Plains Indian warrior mounted on a bedraggled pony; the man slumps forward, his head hanging down on his chest [...] Obviously, both the Indian and his culture are descending into oblivion” (1995, p. 718). Fraser grew up in South Dakota throughout the late 1880’s during which much of western expansion has already occurred and many of the treaties between American Indian tribes and the federal government have been signed since the treaty system ended in 1871. By the time Fraser had completed his monumental version of *The End of the Trail* in 1915, boarding schools for American Indian children were in place since the late 1870’s and John Gast’s 1872 painting *American Progress*

was widely distributed as a print described by education historian David Adams as showing “the Indians...as the pathetic remnants of a vanishing race retreating before the rush of civilization” (1995, p. 26). Furthermore, The General Allotment act also known as the Dawes Act of 1887 was passed and viewed as “the possibility of smashing the tribal bond and setting Indians on the road to civilization” (Adams, 1995, p. 17) and Edward Curtis produced a photographic image titled *Vanishing race – Navaho* in 1904 that depicts several Diné, or Navajo on horseback with their backs toward the viewer while they ride into the picture frame on a dark and indeterminate path. Ultimately, such representational images of American Indian peoples have mirrored racialized discourses and federal policies driven by the desire for natural land resources.



Figure 8. Powwow Indian sculpture, downtown Bemidji, MN. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

The roadside simulacra are juxtaposed by yet another representation; a metal sculpture of an American Indian powwow dancer adorned with a headdress, a dancing stick, and a feathered bustle (Figure 8). Viewing the metal powwow *indian* through Owen's notion of the tragic hero lens infers this statue beholds the Native as a static relic of the past riddled free from any complexity and/or contradiction since the statue, like those previously discussed depict generalized features and only signifies *indianness* through the accompanying material signifiers: a roach headdress (created from porcupine leader hair), the dancing stick, and bustle. Interestingly the dedication reads, "Niiemii, (meaning – "he dances") dedicated to all powwow dancers in memory of Janet Esty (Indian Arts supporter)." The artist, Wanda Odegard, a non-Native, created the sculpture to memorialize a white patron of American Indian arts in the form that encompasses "all" powwow dancers. Odegard's sculpture has very little to do with celebrating the complexities, intricacies, and autonomy of American Indian peoples and their cultures. Rather the sculpture implies control through the mirror, a mode of surveillance that is employed as erasure; erasure of particularity and any sense of critical proximity mediated through the art piece. Odegard's sculpture conveys that the *indian* is thankful and/or grateful to dance for their (white) patron and to be held as a tragic hero for their culture. These non-Native constructs create and reinforce a closed and oversimplified understanding of Native lived experience and culture through static and stereotypical representations.

The roadside simulacra perpetuate the visible narratives of power/knowledge dynamics but places of business like Morrell's Chippewa Trading Post thrives on the profits of selling tourist-oriented collectables such as arrow points, screen printed shirts, jewelry boxes, books, and sundry trinket-like items. Morrell's also sells material culture artworks made by local Ojibwe (Figure 9). The proprietors will purchase the cultural works from local Ojibwe such as

birch bark baskets, dancing sticks made from turtle shells, beaded jewelry, painted wallets, red pipestone and ceremonial pipes, quill boxes made by Melvin Losh, and replica pottery made by Jim Jones Jr. and mark them up for resale. Morrell's is usually not a primary space for selling cultural works as the powwow circuit may be, since the store is dependent upon the influx of tourists and their purchase price is a bit undercutting for the artist. Büken explains that ceremonial objects or symbolic religious imagery such as "Hopi Katchinas on whisky decanters, Navaho Yei deities on coffee mugs, and rituals like the Hopi Snake Dance on silver jewelry, inexpensive ceramics, and postcards" become secularized when trading posts and other commerce driven places such as pawn shops sell them (2002, p. 50). Büken's point is exemplified in Morrell's trading post, but the relationship between non-Native owners and Ojibwe artists is complex as each party leans on each other in such a way that the trading post and the local pawnshops become places of need. Need is ever-present within these shops, particularly when an artist needs money quickly and the shops survival is dependent upon the Ojibwes' cultural works to fill their inventory; both sets of needs culminate in fulfilling tourist desires for American Indian material culture. The local Bemidji pawn shops and Morrell's trading post are examples of detached cultural exchange in which the tourist who enters into these places of business can walk amongst representations of Ojibwe culture without ever having to meet and converse with an actual Ojibwe person. Audrey Thayer, head of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in Bemidji, states, "When you're doing change in perception, it doesn't happen overnight [...] It's Native and non-Native in this part of the country, of hesitation of trusting each other" (cited in Robertson, 2010, para. 16).



Figure 9. Interior view of Morrell's Chippewa Trading Post showing a wide variety of birch bark baskets for sale.

Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha states, “In the postcolonial text the problem of identity returns as a persistent questioning of the frame, the space of representation, where the image – missing person, invisible eye, Oriental stereotype – is confronted with its difference, its Other” (1994, p. 66). The ongoing struggle between the Bemidji community and the local Ojibwe peoples is signified by the constant presence of Ojibwe resistance to being overlooked and silenced by the non-Ojibwe community. In addition to updating the inaccurate representation of Shaynowishkung, Bemidji business owners have incorporated Ojibwemowin, or language, on their doorways that convey the phrases “*Boozhoo*” (Hello) and “*Miigwetch*” (Thank You), although *boozhoo* has been adapted and incorporated by the Ojibwe from the French greeting of

bonjour. This inclusion is a small visual presence of Ojibwe culture and peoples that has only been in place since 2005.

Similarly, literary scholar Deborah Madsen describes Vizenor's notion of a terminal creed as a belief statement that generalizes understanding of "the tribal ideal of balance" through the lenses of pride and narcissism, and are left unanswered when questioned, ultimately ending "conflict through the definitive triumph of an absolute" (2009, p. 32). The terminal creed as described by Madsen is a Native authenticity discourse often taken up to promote a romanticized version of Native past as a return to the past through the present without any sense of hybridity or immigrant influence. Vizenor explains,

Depersonalize the word in the world of terminal believers and we can all share the good side of humor in our own places. Terminal believers must be changed or driven from our dreams. Until then we will continue our mission against terminal creeds wherever and whenever we find them. (1994, p. 94)

Therefore, terminal creeds produce closure and static representations and are also embedded as non-Native discourses. Whether the terminal creeds are produced by Native or non-Native alike, they ultimately generate closure to possibilities, lived imaginaries, and alternative stories of the past and present; they are often communicated through representations of dominance, or dominant forms of representation similar to the Bemidji roadside simulacra. I never witnessed anyone recording his or her presence amidst the *indian* sculptures. Perhaps their doubled presence rendered them redundant in the eyes of the tourist or perhaps exposed an artful display of the all too common masked reality, that the city of Bemidji is Native country and if one ignores the nervous ticks on the surface than we can all enjoy our friends Paul and Babe.

Paul Bunyan Communications Services

The local network for communications services in the northern Minnesota region for the past sixty years have been under the purview of Paul Bunyan Telephone, recently renamed to Paul Bunyan Communications. The communication service covers not only telephone, but also television and Internet options. So those within the area, including residents of the surrounding reservations have Paul Bunyan Communication services linking them within the structural and ideological networks. Ironically, those with Internet accounts have the handle @paulbunyan.net after their account name; one must pass through the mythic past of the Paul Bunyan narratives in order to generate a virtual online presence. Or, perhaps the presence of one's Ojibwe name preceding @paulbunyan.net is a resistance-narrative of the undeniable, physically-ever-present Ojibwe as socioacupuncture that dissolves "historical time...and the pale inventors and consumers of tribal cultures are exposed when the pressure in captured images is released" (Vizenor, 1988, p. 46).

The Bemidji Smudge

The waters of *Bemijdigamaag Zaaga'igan* smudge or blur, but smudging is also a ceremony practiced by the Ojibwe and many American Indians marked by the slow burning of locally harvested sage, a soft-pale-green-scrubby-plant described similar to eucalyptus, but when I visited with artist-participant Melvin Losh at the Memorial Day Powwow he said, "What *is* that?" directing his question to me with a smile. "It smells like marijuana." He laughed. A man passed behind us with burning sage within an abalone shell. Losh cocked his head back over his right shoulder and saw the man, who overheard his declared question. Both men met gazes in a brief moment. "Oh." Losh said. "I thought it was marijuana." We both laughed.

I found this event to be perplexing. Losh, having lived his life on the reservation must have known the smell of burning sage, leaving me to think that his declarative statement was intentionally stated to illicit my interpretation of the burning sage, particularly whether or not I had any practical knowledge of marijuana and its odor. I did recognize that burning sage smells similar to marijuana from my earlier excursion in Ojibwe territory during the 2010 immersion course. Dr. Martin, the course instructor would burn sage within Bemidji State University dormitories where we were housed and would have to explain to the resident assistants on duty that it was sage and not marijuana being burned. Ultimately, I recognized that sage was being burned and not marijuana. The glances exchanged between Losh and the Ojibwe gentlemen burning sage seemed to convey the notion that Losh's query was not naïveté, but an exchange that connoted an outsider was present. Perhaps my hesitation to answer Losh's question that I knew it was sage and that I didn't acknowledge that it smelled like marijuana opened up the possibility for a laugh, which diffused any perceived tension due to the query.

Usually an abalone shell is used to hold the smoldering dried-sage-plant and either stoked by waving a feather or hand and is offered to participants in ceremony to cleanse bodies, spirits and spaces-in-between. But there is concern from the Pacific Northwest tribes that the abalone shells "represent Grandmother Ocean, and they should be used in ceremonies with water, not burning" (Borden & Coyote, website, para. 14). Smudging is a purification process, a sacred tradition, a marking of becoming different, clean, and prepared for an embrace of another life-form as an intimacy and a ceremony.



Figure 10. Burning sage in a gifted smudge bowl made by Bambi Goodwin, which depicts a leaf from a hibiscus bush that lives in front of the Goodwins' house. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Bambi Goodwin, strong, petite and near sixty, climbed up a spiral-staircase carrying several small examples of her grandsons' and granddaughter's smudge bowls from her bottom-level-studio. "I always work up to the last moment, before I sell my work," recalled Goodwin as we looked over photographs of her stoneware-smudge-bowls marked by wax-resisted images of feathers, bears, hummingbirds, cranes, bison, leaves, among others (Figure 10). "I can always tell as I pack them up which ones are going to go right away." [Goodwin recollected her successes at art fairs]. I picked up one of the smaller-clay-smudge bowls and the smooth-grooved-cool-to-the-touch bottom of the bowl revealed a pattern of a turtle shell. "I do different patterns on the bottom and experiment with the glazes on the inside" she said. Some of Goodwin's glazes are

painted together so that the fields of color are blurred and blended together. “No one else is doing [smudge] bowls like this.” Goodwin continued, “You can wash it out really easy after you use them and they last longer than the abalone shell. The shells will break or have holes burned through them over time.”

...

in abalone shells, ecological networks, a home-away-from-home
 lie the crumpled-and-balled-uprooted-sage,
 flames sparked
 two marked an intimacy, consumed and produced a third,
 smoke arose \approx waters smudged
 origins swept over, cleansed and permeated

...

Figure 11. Poem inspired by an Ojibwe smudging ceremony. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Insider/Outsider Relationships: Smudging Identity Preconceptions with Tobacco

They took more pollen, more beads, and more prayer sticks, and they went to see old Buzzard. They arrived at his place in the east. “Who’s out there? Nobody ever came here before.” “It’s us, Hummingbird and Fly.” “Oh. What do you want?” “We need you to purify our town.” “Well, look here. Your offering isn’t complete. Where’s the tobacco?” (You see, it wasn’t easy.) Fly and Hummingbird had to fly back to town again. (Marmon Silko, 1977, p. 113)

Meeting and formulating relationships between informants was often fraught with apprehension as I was unsure as to whether our meeting would generate ongoing communication. The following narrative demonstrates the nuances of cultural difference, my unknowing

engagement with power/knowledge relationships, and the purposeful centrality of observing and respecting cultural practices.

...“You have nothing to offer that I want,” A White Earth band member stated matter-of-factly as he sat next to me in the casino restaurant looking over his cup full of coffee.

I stared down into my own cup of coffee, looked up, and tried to explain, “Well, I want to be an agent of decolonization, for change...”

He interrupted, “An agent! Agents took our children away from us, agents...” Concern gave way to laughter.

I course-corrected, “Agent is perhaps not the right word...an advocate.” I paused. “Yeah, it [agent] isn’t a positive word...” We continued to laugh together.

He expressed with concern, “Well you’re going to do your dissertation, take what you want and leave.”

I paused, then explained, “Well, there *is* a possibility for others to learn about Ojibwe [cultural lifeways and arts processes] by doing this...” We continued to talk for two hours over our steak, potato, and broccoli meal while sipping on coffee. He pulled out his phone and scrolled through some images he took of some of his artwork: paintings, dancing sticks, and headpieces among other items with fabric paint applied in Ojibwe cultural patterns. We talked over some graphite drawings I did in my sketchbook, the limits of the English language, how Ojibwe language connects with culture and making meaning, and the effects of assimilation.

He said, “I looked at those photographs during the Boarding School Era and all I see is dead in the eyes.”

Eventually, the waitress took our plates.

I dipped my hand into a plastic bag and said, “I’d like to offer you some tobacco.”

Laughing heavily, he exclaimed, “So, you *did* learn something. You should’ve given this earlier, it means: ‘He’s okay, he can walk here, we know him.’” He chuckled. “Forget about that confusing earlier stuff.”

“I meant to, but just didn’t...” My words trailed off and ended as I failed to convey my intention. I was at a loss trying to explain and attempt to describe my hesitation. I knew how to initiate intercultural relations based upon my 2010 immersion course experience, but I allowed my anxiety and Western manners to supersede my understandings of exchange when requesting the time and aid of a self-identified Ojibwe. Similar to Leslie Marmon Silko’s excerpt at the beginning of this section which describes an incomplete request, I felt regret as he brushed the tobacco that fell between our hands and onto the table into his girlfriend’s hands who came up to our table as the conversation came to a close.



Figure 12. Dried-whole-leaf tobacco used when meeting with Ojibwe participants given to me by Dr. Martin.

Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Respect and reciprocity are generated through Ojibwe relationships, which are prefaced by and formulated upon the gift of tobacco when requesting advice, help, or guidance (Figure 12). Tobacco may be offered in prayer or prior to an excursion in the environment to harvest

manoomin (wild rice), birch bark, spruce roots, or medicinal plants. The gift of tobacco signifies humility, reverence, and interconnectivity, which perhaps acknowledges any imbalance incurred through personal action. Inherent to this understanding is sensitivity to the sustainability of the immediate ecology and the tightly woven interconnectedness that some Ojibwe practice as an anti-hierarchical relationship with each other and the natural environment (Wilson & Restoule, 2010). Some Ojibwe ontology closely aligns with anthropologist Howes' (2005) notion of emplacement, which "suggests the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment" (cited in Pink, 2011, p. 344). But, the gift of tobacco from an outsider, particularly from a white researcher can be a complicated matter, or so I thought. As an outsider, it was difficult to discern who among the massifying label of Ojibwe accepted tobacco and continued to practice such exchange, especially when the offering of tobacco differs region to region. Specifically, First Nations Anishinaabeg have slightly different modes or expectations concerning the exchange and purpose of tobacco. For example The Traditional Peoples Advisory Committee (TPAC), from the University of Manitoba explained the sacredness of tobacco and the relationships that are inferred through exchange:

When giving tobacco, place it in front of the Elder and state your request. The Elder indicates acceptance of your request by picking up the tobacco. If you hand it directly to the Elder you do not give him/her the opportunity to accept or pass on your request it takes away their choice. Always speak to the tobacco BEFORE handing the tobacco to the Elder. (cited in Wilson & Restoule, 2010, p. 41)

I was not aware of these protocols, as they were never expressed or corrected during either excursion in 2010 or 2012. Tobacco was always offered directly from the giver to the receiver; those that the giver wished to respect, though I delayed such an offer with the White

Earth band member. The two-hour conversation with him demonstrated my anxieties, his challenges to my presence, and revealed that cultural art had the potential to formulate intercultural relationships. Yet, my anxieties of our meeting generated walls and roadblocks since I hesitated to offer tobacco, a gift and exchange that presumed my request and conveyed respect. Although contradiction lay between the statements issued by TPAC and my personal experiences with Ojibwe informants and participants, perhaps there are multiple ways in which tobacco may be gifted and that there is not one singular, *authentic* mode of operation when using tobacco to formulate relationships between researcher and Ojibwe participants as long as respect and the sacredness of tobacco is observed.

Teasing Out the Complexity of Forming Relationships as Research

Relationships are complex and are informed by multiple power/knowledge relationships as Foucault reminded us that, “Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power...Power passes through individuals. It is not applied to them” (1975/1995, p. 29). The insider/outsider relationship commonly refers to a seemingly objective outsider observing those who subscribe to a particular cultural epistemology. Interpretivists have troubled this model and determined that observational data can reflect the researcher’s epistemic and cultural purview rather than generate an understanding of insider’s lived experience. The crisis of representation was exacerbated by researchers’ presupposed distanced observation in relation to their subject, which ultimately challenged anthropological claims and repositioned phenomenology as legitimate approach to cultural research. Sociologist Margareth Kusenbach (2003) suggested that one shortcoming of phenomenology is that it is “meant to reveal the universal, invariant structures of the life-world,” which is based upon “bracketing” researcher preconceptions of

what is perceived through experience (p. 457). Reason (1998) explained researchers “may develop an openness to what is going on for them and their environment that allows them to bracket off their prior beliefs and preconceptions and so see their experience in a new way” (p. 266). “Bracketing off” implies a sidelining of oneself in order to experience anew, an understanding of ones’ own qualities or biases that may impinge upon an initial openness. Bracketing is meant for researchers to refrain from “contaminating (from the outside) their pure experiences of those (particular) phenomena” (Maso, 2001, cited in Kusenbach, 2003, p. 457-458). This notion fails to acknowledge that perception is an act of interpretation.

Indigenous scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith explained that there are “multiple ways of being an insider and an outsider in indigenous contexts” (1999, p. 137). Specifically, Tuhiwai Smith stressed the need for constant, critical reflexivity since the inside researcher is implicated in the consequences of the research process as family and community relations are often involved. But, the inside research model does offer particular advantages as community support networks may already be in place (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 135). Although my return to northern Minnesota was substantiated through prior contact with several Ojibwe “insiders,” I was supported by a network of relations that Dr. Bruce Martin had with numerous Ojibwe. Dr. Martin’s relationships were assembled in part to serve a cultural immersion course, titled “Indigenous Ways of Knowing,” which has been enacted, pedagogically speaking, for nine years through The Pennsylvania State University. Although prior contacts and networks of relations were in place, I remained an outsider, which, I believe called for heightened critical researcher reflexivity.

Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) insider researcher scenario is different when compared to the consequences of the outsider researcher model explained by indigenous scholar Hanuni Kay Trask,

At some time in their professional lives, anthropologists live with Natives who are in struggle, dispossessed, and, in some other abstraction, the anthropologist has no obligation to aid the people he or she studies, to withhold information that threatens the people or is considered sacred or privileged to them, or to be a part of their struggles, whatever they may be. (1999, p. 127)

Trask attends to the objective stance that anthropologists have taken without any sense of ethical or moral action (praxis) to counter lived inequalities of indigenous peoples. Additionally, Trask alludes to a lack of transparency, openness, and shared lived experiences (e.g. the phenomenological qualities) in academic cultural research. She implicates academic researchers who approach their intercultural relationships as a form of business, as those involved like commodities without any attempt to learn from them and *smudge* their own cultural epistemic purview. Specifically, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has argued that anthropology has been the most influential academic field in defining "primitivism" through the "ethnographic 'gaze'" and the indigenous communities often perceive anthropologists as the "epitome of all that is bad with academics" (p. 67).

Indigenous scholars such as Trask and Tuhiwai Smith maintain that their voices, cultural practices, and material culture are misrepresented, appropriated, and extracted by the researcher. Historically, research has been intimately linked to colonization whereby the earliest relations began with the construction of the "Indian as Other and then inhabiting that constructed

Indianness as fully as possible” (Owens, 2001, p.18). Spivak elaborates upon the researcher/researched relationship in defining Others:

[T]he desire to explain might be a symptom of the desire to have a self that can control knowledge and world that can be known” and that ‘the possibility of explanation carried the presupposition of an explainable (even if not fully) universe and an explaining (even if imperfectly) subject. These presuppositions assure our being. Explaining, we exclude the possibility of the heterogeneous.
(cited in Owens, 2001, p. 15-16)

Here Spivak attends to the humanistic discourses that characterize historical cultural anthropology, where an imposed rationality was upheld as the means for constructing conformity from a supposed objective stance. Poststructural and postcolonial theorists thus perceive the humanist postulation as “totalitarian and hostile” to difference (Gandhi, 1998, p. 27). Throughout my field research I established my positionality as one that was sympathetic and empathetic to Ojibwe participants’ perspectives. This does not mean that I transformed myself to one who would do anything for access as in the historical example of Frank Cushing. Cushing lived among the Zuni during the late 1800’s and then inhabited a “constructed Indianness as fully as possible” (Owens, 2001, p.18). Cushing achieved his “Indianness” by wearing Zuni garb and imitating Zuni ceremonial activities upon his induction as “a priest in the Bow society” as a means to discover intimate cultural information and infiltrate the tribe for personal gain (Shanley, 2001, p. 35). Rather, I sought for a shared epistemology of a lived ontology based upon my own preconceptions of an anti-hierarchical and interconnected way of being. My process was hesitant, slow, and riddled with anxiety, since I did not know if I would develop relationships based upon

my preconceptions. Ultimately, my slow and hesitant approach began to reveal an ethics of care in regards to intercultural research.

Tuhiwai Smith posits that “problematizing the indigenous is a Western obsession” and that continued efforts to map, illustrate, and explain the ‘indigenous problem’ stems from racist and sexist discourses that inevitably blame “indigenous poverty and marginalization even more securely on the people themselves” (1999, p. 91). Tuhiwai Smith further states that academic research has exacerbated tensions between insider and outsider relations due to academic discourses that continue to frame Native peoples as lacking or problematic insofar as the “locus of a particular research problem lies with the indigenous individual or community rather than with the other social or structural issues” (p. 92). Therefore, Tuhiwai Smith concludes, “research is believed to mean, quite literally, the continued construction of indigenous peoples as the problem” in indigenous communities (p. 92). I sought to discern and learn from Ojibwe artist-participants as a means to expand and challenge current art education issues related to cultural arts pedagogy and curricula. Since these were my aims I sought an ally position that was genuinely interested in participants’ artwork, art processes, and relationships, rather than position them as problematic indigenous peoples who are in need of correction. I learned that becoming an ally occurred throughout my offered labor in harvesting raw materials necessary for cultural production, an outcome that I wouldn’t from benefit monetarily but would as a learning experience. Becoming an ally also rested in bringing food to share, joining participants on road trips, housesitting while participants travelled, feeding their horses and caring for participants’ dogs. Becoming an ally developed during the slow, sometimes quiet visitations, watching the television, sitting around a campfire, or riding as passenger in their vehicle. Becoming an ally also meant that I didn’t ask prodding questions, rather our conversations took on a circuitous

route concerning topics deemed appropriate by participants, which further resonated with Kusenbach's (2003) go-along method, but ultimately resonate with the Indigenous knowledge worldviews of reciprocity.

Tuhiwai Smith put forth an agenda for indigenous research that targets overarching endeavors of survival, recovery, development and self-determination in tandem with decolonization, healing, transformation and mobilization; "processes which can be incorporated into practices and methodologies" (1999, p. 116). Each labor event of harvesting raw materials for Ojibwe cultural production, whether for spruce roots, birch bark, cedar logs, porcupines, or for long days of clearing fallen trees, fixing fence posts, and documenting the devastating damage left by the powerful July storm were practices of survival, of recovery, and healing. Healing was central among several participants. Specifically, I was asked by Melvin Losh to help him from the hospital during a biopsy and brought him food as he experienced difficulty eating due to benign tumors in his stomach, and I helped bury Uno the German Sheppard a long time family member and friend of the Goodwin's. Throughout my study I situated myself as an ally with Ojibwe participants following their leads, respecting their wishes, and allowing events to slowly unfold.

Chapter III: Methodology

Methodological Considerations

I engaged with participants in their sociocultural context and formed relationships based upon arts-mediated events. My cultural arts research is a multi-sited ethnography in which participants co-construct and in/form the research based upon the embedded local narratives and the heterogeneous perspectives that constitute the local contexts/ecologies. Anthropologist George Marcus (2011) clarifies:

Multi-sitedness represents three things – the objective relations of a system which can be studied independently of ethnography (e.g. a network); the relations set into play as an artifact of a research design (...this is the reflexivity of the fieldwork); and the para-ethnographic perspective, [...] the ‘native point of view’, which is always spatio-temporal, that the ethnography works within for its own purposes and produces results in conversation with. (p. 28)

My presences with Ojibwe artist-participants within localized contexts impacted and influenced our interactions with each other as well as how participants engaged in creative and cultural processes. Therefore, as I pursued Ojibwe artists’ meaning making art processes, I also engaged in meaning making processes with them. Our interactions and relationships constituted and in/formed “the relations set into play,” and as such, they were equally important to data generated through interviews, or the “conversations with” participants (Marcus, 2011, p. 28). I posit that arts-mediated events played a role in building relationships and served as generative spaces between participants and researcher. Ojibwe artist-participants’ reception of me, my intentions, and our nascent relationships were presupposed by my apprehension, anxiety, hesitancy, and power/knowledge relations that Marcus (2011) posits “displace the classic trope

of ‘being there’” (p. 28). This displacement was constituted by “temporal concerns and anxieties” and impacted “moments in the flow of events” (Marcus, 2011, p. 28). Because of these rich and diverse possibilities, I pursued arts-mediated events with a multi-sited ethnography in order to access the lived-qualities that constitute Ojibwe artists’ meaning making arts processes and their relationships to community.

I utilize multi-sited methodology to attend to the complexity of social relations and their corresponding networks. Arts-mediated events and processes open up access to everyday lived experiences and emplacements that expand beyond the “being there” discourse embedded in ethnography. My daily involvement with participants informed relationships with Ojibwe artists and served as “mediations and interventions...of third spaces – reflexive domains within scenes of social action – regimes of living, global assemblages – in which questions of ethics are considered” (Marcus, 2011, p. 30). My intention was not to change preexisting relationships, networks of social relations, and privilege my “being there” as a catalyst of self-important altruism, rather, I simply acknowledge that my presence may have impacted how participants interacted with me, the content that they chose to share and not share, experiences they were comfortable with me researching, and the arts processes they have engaged in. Lastly, my purpose in disclosing the importance of forming relationships with Ojibwe participants is to posit that had I approached them in a closed-off manner that conveyed my primary identity and purpose as being institutional-educational solely for extraction purposes then my role of an ethical researcher would have been compromised. The purpose of my cultural arts research is Ojibwe art processes, meaning making, and community relationships, yet ethical inquiry into social relations became an unintended generative contingency. Due to the focus and constraints

of this dissertation, ethical inquiries into social relations are discussed as implications for future research at the close of Chapter VII.

Multi-situated experiences and open-ended conversational interviews generate the content and form of this dissertation. Art theorist Graeme Sullivan emphasizes that “Sharing knowledge does not rely on language framed in certain ways such as Western conceptual structures; rather, it is contingent on a respect for voice and making the opportunity to listen” (2009, p. 172). Respecting cultural differences and participant voices, as Sullivan stresses, is an important aspect of my study and the dialectic involving cultural dialogues; without it, relationships may fail to coalesce and ethical representation may be jeopardized. Therefore listening within intercultural dialogues is contingent upon a compassionate empathy for another and exemplifies anthropologist Sarah Pink’s (2009) investigation of embodiment and subjectivity, which privileges the “importance of the affective, material and sensory aspects of the live and mediated performances” (2011, p. 344). Pink’s earlier work further informs a shift in emphasis from embodiment to emplacement, which “enables a fuller interpretation of [...] a place-event with a complex ecology” (2011, p. 344). Both concepts of embodiment and emplacement became reoccurring themes during many of the multi-situated experiences with Ojibwe participants, since particular arts processes were both site specific and interconnected to complex ensembles of relations.

In my study I sought to work mutually with participants as a means to decenter my role as authoritative researcher in determining how art processes and practices formulate meanings and community relationships through multi-sited research, which according to Marcus creates “collective aspects of research [...] seeking epistemological mutually interested alliances with partners or counterparts as subjects, or with research” (2011, p. 22). Therefore, the importance of

shared experience, friendship, and communication are key factors interwoven and dependent upon participation as research. Further, Sullivan (2009) explains that material or digital representations of objects have potential to “communicate and connect with others [and] do so in multiple, changing ways where meaning is continually negotiated according to various perspectives, practices, and positions of power” (p. 170). Here then the art object or representation becomes site and source capable of influencing intercultural relationships and researcher access to practical knowledge, the meaning-making processes of lived experiences. Sullivan (2009) explains:

It is in relationships rather than images or objects where the value is located. It is within the ensemble of art making, interpretive scope, critical perspective, institutional constraints, and cultural influences that meanings are both made and questioned. (p. 175)

Since, meaning-making lay within the production of relationships, art production and objects are access points to particular relationships. Therefore artworks and processes serve as a nexus between diverse cultural spaces and have the potential to mediate participants’ experiences of meaning making through relationships. Further, indigenous scholar Ladislav Semali and critical pedagogue Joseph Kincheloe (1999) stress the importance of knowledge in indigenous communities through “relationships among things” (cited in Sullivan, 2009, p. 172) rather than the retaining and transcription of information for the betterment of the individual as a form of representation. Specifically, if culturally driven field research is approached by maintaining an objective stance through observation alone then an extraction model is generated rather than forming relationships among participants within their respective local ecologies. These relationships reinforce the importance of art materiality as performances within communicative

events that function as emplacements rather than as representational artifacts. Cultural artworks as emplacements therefore are composed of spatial and embodied relationships within complex ecologies. I pursued the relationships among body, mind and place through the theoretical concept of emplacements comprised of sensory and affective perceptions illuminated with participant narratives, the interconnectedness of experiential events, and objective fields of relation as a network.

Writing the Experiential Body: Generating Critical Proximity

There is an instability concerning sensorial experiences, as we are startled, as we notice, perceive, look, and then attempt to see; as we inhale, sniff, sniff once more, and again to take-in our surroundings; as a sound pierces and passes through our bodies and as our bodies perceive it, as it creeps in without pause, as it announces presence it confirms our own. Sensorial perception isn't linear or stable, we seek a return to the initial barrage, sometimes for clarification, waiting for a repetition, or acting immediately, perhaps defensively if we perceive stimuli that fail to generate meaning from solidified, categorical schemata.

I pursue writing as an experience rather than a transcription of interpreted events in order to oscillate between the practical, or local knowledge (e.g. phenomenological) and the critical objective (e.g. reflexivity), which attends to the simultaneous impossibility of participant observation. In other words the phenomena, the fleeting and the passing, the indelible and the indiscernible, which were recorded, felt, and remembered are presented as lived experience; one proximity of perception shown in a second proximal degree as a written form. The third degree of proximity entails objectifying my ensemble of relations to/with/among the participants, events, and local ecologies, otherwise expressed as reflexivity. In response to phenomenology of lived experience sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1990) explains, "the critique of objectivism and its

inability to apprehend practice [lived experience] as such in no way implies the rehabilitation of immersion in practice” (p. 34). Bourdieu claims that active participation of the practical “is another way of avoiding the question of the real relationship of the observer to the observed” (p. 34). Bourdieu is critical of phenomenology as it “fails to objectify the objectifying relationship [...] it is unable to analyse the conditions of the production and functioning of the feel for the social game that makes it possible to take for granted the meaning objectified in institutions” (1990, p. 26-27). I agree with Bourdieu’s critique concerning the limitations of phenomenology but with one distinction: that active participation attends to the complexity of meaning-making relationships as an *additional* mode of proximity to critical objectivity. Oscillating between both the phenomenological and the critical, my research positionalities are smudged in attempts to generate the spaces in-between the practical (lived experience) and the objective (distanced interpreter). In doing so, I explicitly implicate my researcher-positionality in the ensemble of relations among the Ojibwe artist-participants’ personal narratives, arts processes, labored events, and everyday lived experiences as I set out to discern meanings of Ojibwe arts and arts processes in relation to communities and selves. Anthropologist Kathleen Stewart posits,

[N]arrative and identity become tentative through forceful compositions of disparate and moving elements; the watching and waiting for an event to unfold, the details of scenes, the strange or predictable progression in which one thing leads to another, the still life that gives pause, the resonance that lingers, the lines along which signs rush and form relays, the layering of immanent experience, the dreams of reset or redemption or revenge. (Stewart, 2007, p. 5-6)

Similarly, I write intercultural intertextuality and common experiences inspired by the Ojibwe smudging ceremonies, during which the sacred sage plant is burned as a purification

process, imbued with qualities of pause and transition. Therefore smudging as a metaphor and process of writing, sullies representational reductionism or explications, which often qualify objective academic writing. I purposely set out to generate experiential meanings through the writing process that resist closure of Ojibwe meaning making processes as well as signify my multiple positionalities experienced within the ensemble of relations. Further, there are textual relationships among prose, reflexive writing, and literary references that correspond between relationships with Ojibwe participants and my positionality as a researcher. Fictocritical author, Amanda Nettelbeck (1998) explains narrative forms of literary criticism in her introduction to *The Space Between: Australian Women Writing Fictocriticism* are

concern[ed] with self-reflexivity; with the fragment as a mode of figuring the partial image rather than the whole organism; with intertextuality as (to invoke Mikhail Bakhtin's term) a 'dialogic' tool; with the bending of narrative boundaries and the crossing of genres. (p. 3)

Nettelbeck claims the collision of literature and postmodernism generated fictocritical texts “*as* something other than a hermeneutical exercise (spilling as it does continually into the features of fiction), and it suggests that the critical text can be used to *do* something other than explication” (1998, p 4). I pursue writing as a smudging process as a means to delay and resist dominant forms exclusively written as disassociated and objective representations. My fidelity to lived experience breaks with linear explications of data as I draw sequences together through corresponding themes, relationships, and/or intensities. Therefore, smudging is less about a style of writing; rather it is a methodological consideration that resonates with fictocriticism,

blur(ring) the distinction between literature and criticism. That blurring occurs not only through the irregular intrusion of a slippery subjectivity (the subject ‘who

says I') but also through various other devices that insert ambiguities into the text
 [...] fictocriticism...is a way of speaking, a mode of performance. (Nettlebeck,
 1998, pp. 5-6)

My approach to writing storied data gestures to how, where, when, and what seem to be imperative qualities of experience with Ojibwe artists while in Minnesota that illuminate how relationships within local contexts inform participants' arts practices and processes. This writing process alludes to the relationships and meanings sought for throughout the field-inquiry process. The chosen excerpts of experiences do not expose pre-existing meanings, rather meanings were generated in-between relations through the dialogism of artworks, the close proximity of shared spaces, harvesting natural materials, a shared sense of exhaustion, or frustration from biting deer flies and piercing mouthparts of the mosquitoes, or of the shared sense of feeling the sweltering heat, and simultaneous excitement of discovering exactly what you were looking for, or the laughter of miscommunication. Writing storied data are performances of my body-mind relationships to/with participants' emplacements. Writing is a process of living and making through body-mind-place relationships in order to generate critical proximities to participants' lived experiences and arts processes to become modes of experiences as accesses to excesses.

...

memories swarm me

writings invoke the lived blur

laughter unravels

...

Figure 13. Haiku inspired by the process of translating experiences to the written language. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Cultural theorist, Jane Simon (2010) argues for a critical proximity “in relation to critical writing about the visual...which pays attention to the variable degrees of nearness between criticism and its objects, and which seeks to respond to texts on their own terms” (p. 1). Rather than respond to texts, I sought to respond to embodied experiences and to living beings inhabiting, doing, and being in particular cultural ecologies. Through my approach, I also sought to blur any unnecessary “split between the material and the conceptual or...between visual experiences and written ideas” (Simon 2010, p. 2). Simon’s (2010) notion of critical proximity was exemplified by Raymond Roussel’s poem, *La Vue*, as “the image of an eye pressed up to an almost imperceptible picture...a tiny image in the top of his souvenir pen” (p. 3). I extend Simon’s critical proximity through writing beyond the visual to all sensorial experiences. My intension is shared with Simon’s (2010) declaration, “description is not mere transcription of the visual [sensorial experiences]; it actively makes something visible [accessible]– it is generative” (p. 9). Description exposes the particularity of experience, generates access to lived events and meaning making connections while one reads, experiences, and enacts the performativity of the text (Barthes, 1974). Further Simon (2010) claims linguistic translation produces “a descriptive skin which is ‘as close as possible to the being which becomes perceptible through it’” (p. 11). Description of sensorial experience was generated through the minute details of redolent smells, curious touches, affectual feelings, and heightened chills being accompanied by flies, gnats, birds, squirrels, horses, frogs, bears, foxes, dogs, coyotes, trees, and plants within ecological networks and with others.

Writing as critical proximity generates an ethical practice concerned with the “relationship between corporeality and textuality; on the performance of identities through the act of writing; on culture and its many representations” (Nettelbeck, 1998, p. 9). Writing as

critical proximity privileges the particularity of the local and the contingencies as partialities that comprise generative, rather than reductive, phenomenological research. The text exists beyond the notion of a proxy and becomes a site for multiple relationships drawn together from Ojibwe and non-Ojibwe worldviews and theories. Ultimately, the text produces critical proximity, “Rather than representing a ‘new’ form of knowledge, the fictocritical can suggest ways of entering, drawing together and changing already familiar fields of knowledge” (Nettlebeck, 1998, p. 7). Similarly, Stewart works to generate openings or ruptures in “an ordinary world whose forms of living are now being composed and suffered, rather than seeking the closure or clarity of a book’s interiority [...] I am trying to create a contact zone for analysis” (p. 5). Rather than create a text that explicates the meanings, the purposes, and intentions of a particular lived experience (e.g. the Ojibwe artists’), I sought to generate critical proximity of lived experiences *as text* in hopes that my writing may approximate Vizenor’s notion of socioacupuncture. In doing so,

Socioacupuncture reverses the instrumental documents, cold data is deflated, historical time is dissolved, and the pale inventors and consumers of tribal cultures are exposed when the pressure in captured images is released. (Vizenor, 1988, p. 46)

Writing as socioacupuncture, in this sense, *does* something. I explore resistance writing through the experiential body *and* reflexivity *and* intertextuality, through multiple forms of inquiry. Ultimately, I employ fictocritical writing in order to generate correspondences among the complex interactions of ecological relational fields that constitute Ojibwe participants’ lived experiences and arts processes. Ecological relationships include communities and the ensemble of relations that constitute them. Researcher-experiential data of these fields are explored

through writing in order to cultivate a respect for cultural difference while forming elective communities based upon mutual trust, respect, and friendship between participants and researcher.

Research Methods

While in the field among Ojibwe participants, I embraced the study as an open-concept, participant observation model that was “defined (and) or redefined specifically by reference to the actual study setting” (Jorgensen, 1987, p. 18). Change in focus and methods occurred slowly as the fieldwork unfolded. According to anthropologist George Marcus (2009), “there is not only a tolerance for, but even an expectation of, a shift in plans in fieldwork” (p. 22). In particular, my first question involving meaning-making processes was ephemeral; a phantom I sought and chased after in the field with Ojibwe artists. Even though elusive, I pursued the vapors, hints, and glimmers of interactions that I thought would generate affects of surprise, which would then give way to particular cultural meanings.

I clearly communicated my purpose to each contact that I made while in the field, in which I divulged my name, where I was from, my intention of inquiry concerning meaning processes of Ojibwe art making and relationships within the community. Additionally, I expressed to participants those I was visiting while not in their company, in addition to how I came into contact with them. I aimed to be as transparent in my relations as possible, asking permission to take photographs, waiting for invitations to return another day, for art-making events, for attending workshops, meals, and other events like the Memorial Day Powwow (Appendix D).

Since I refrained from direct and formally constructed interviews, which I felt would disrupt the flow of unfolding events, I listened intently, sometimes refraining from field notation

until I left the company of the participant. During other moments I openly wrote field notes while with participants, and on occasion I was directed by the participant to record particular information. Conversations and visitations unfolded as an immersion “go-along” model “by spending a particular yet comparable slice of ordinary time” with participants that ranged between two and twelve hours, although most events averaged between five and six hours (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 463). The immersion model also reinforced reliability comprised of repeated conversational and artistic content, which offered moments for me to follow up on unclear information, or moments in which I could ask questions that could clarify my interpretations (Jorgensen, 1987; Kusenbach, 2003; Leavy, 2011).

I employed aspects of an oral history approach within the framework of ethnography to investigate artistic processes, personal histories, and community relations of Ojibwe participants, which “positions the researcher and participant[s] in a collaborative relationship [...] in which both parties are integral to the data generation process” (Leavy, 2011, p. 8). This approach “assumes that meaning isn’t ‘waiting out there’ to be discovered,” or uncovered, “but rather that meaning is generated during the research process” (Leavy, 2011, p. 7). Since the oral history method is limited to conversation, to the unstructured-open-ended interview, I pursued situational meaning generated between the Ojibwe participants and my varied roles as an arts researcher, apprenticing artist, laborer, friend, and house caretaker, in order to articulate relationships that seem influential and formative of arts-mediated experiences.

Moreover, participant observations occurred regularly and ranged from observing participant-artist processes from the margins of the event to participation at the center of particular events which is described by curriculum theorist and educational anthropologist Kimberly Powell (2006) as lessening the “distance [between Self-Other] by engaging in the

mutual construction of learning” (2006, p. 37). Such lessening has been called by Michelle Fine (1994) to “work the hyphen,” which stresses the importance of participation while remaining far enough away from fully engaging within the participants’ practical field of knowledge (cited in Powell, 2006, p. 37).

Every arts-related learning event with Ojibwe artists was founded on open invitations made by participants. Prior to documenting processes, cultural objects, or environments I requested permission from the participants, which occurred regularly throughout the study. At times, I was often invited to attend community art classes and workshops, an art opening, or to simply return the next day for a visit or to harvest materials needed for a particular cultural project. Other times, I requested to return either the next day, or another day later in the week for continued experiences.

Over the course of study among Ojibwe artists and in some cases their families, the notion of meaning making weighed so heavily upon my inquiry process, ever-present in my mind that I eventually decided to abandon the notion of meaning. The weighted absence became filled with my focus on relationships. Although, this too was a focus in the beginning, it resided in the secondary question: What relationships are constituted through the artists’ practices and/or products? My newfound focus upon relationships did not necessarily redirect my inquiry; rather, I came to realize that the divisions between the two questions were illusionary. While among Ojibwe artists, a heightened sense of importance lived and breathed through inter-human and inter-species relationships, harvesting expeditions, fishing excursions, and shared meals. Ultimately, these relationship-oriented experiences generated openings to participants’ past storied experiences, which resurfaced in their cultural production and artwork.

These slight shifts in thinking about my questions impacted my intentions to broach (or not to broach) specific cultural knowledge concerning symbolic signification, since some cultural signs required ceremony, the aid of an elder, and/or were specific to Ojibwe life-journeys. While among Ojibwe participants, it became apparent through a loose and open model of interview, that “meaning” signified a metonymic construction of relationships. I pursued this construction over the implied intention of a semiotician who sets out to define meaning (e.g. what is signified) through the relation and communication between sign systems (e.g. signifiers, visual and/or material forms of culture). Since I pursued the interconnectivity of embodied relations as meaning-making processes, inter-human and inter-species relations emerged and impacted cultural production prior to conveyance of meaning in/through/by Ojibwe artworks. Specifically, meaning-making processes were difficult if not impossible to discern simply from the art-object alone since the artists’ intentions were indirectly discussed through relationships among particular ecologies.

The artists’ intentions were conveyed through stories and generated particular significance of their relationships within local ecologies. Through open conversation, Ojibwe participants offered cultural information of significance to their specific ontological beliefs. Specifically, I set out to study Ojibwe arts processes and relationships to community, which were expanded upon by experiencing “the role of place in everyday lived experience” (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 463). These place-based and ecologically networked experiences generated ethical considerations for cultural art research, expanded access to participants’ relationships to places, which exposed meaning making connections and continuously directed the flow of the study.

Authorship and interpretive meaning making that constitute academic research writing challenged me and my approaches to share lived experiences and artworks with Ojibwe

participants, since writing is a process of knowledge production (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). So, I have been left to answer the question, “Whose meaning is represented in your research?” This pithy question recalls the crisis of representation that challenged the status quo of anthropological scholarship, a question that has produced the “reflexive turn” since the 1980’s (Marcus, 2007, p. 18). Presence of Ojibwe voices, declarations, stories, challenges, and teases of my presence convey Ojibwe sovereignty and respect for cultural difference and autonomy.

Writing Methods, Intertextual Weavings

I have woven together selected events, occurrences, and reflections as stories. Each strand is contingent upon the others so as to generate a web, spun from field notes, arts-mediated experiences, memories and photographs in order to resist static representations, while simultaneously generating access points to lived experiences with Ojibwe artists. I encountered the local web of relations while visiting among Ojibwe residents of Leech Lake, White Earth, Red Lake and Mille Lacs reservations. The web operated not only as a network of social relations that mobilized information and connections, but also served to protect and resist against outsiders, those potentially perceived as threats. Accordingly, the legend of *Asibikaashi*, or spider woman, is the Ojibwe origin story told about the dream catcher, which catches both good and bad dreams within the web, only to enable the good dreams to pass through the center opening and down through the feathers to convey to the dreamer. The web of stories that compile this dissertation offer access points to lived experiences, written to generate critical proximity and ensemble of relations within ecologies among Ojibwe participants. Participants inhabit their own particular webs woven of their own accord, which are contingent upon historical relations between Ojibwe and non-Natives, informed through Ojibwe cultural heritage, oral tradition, and every day survivance (Vizenor, 2008). Participants’ narratives of personal experiences of arts

processes and relationships to community are presented as survivance stories that surpass the confines of my dissertation. Participants' perpetuate their own lived stories without any obligation to any of my interpretive claims.

Chapter IV: Melvin Losh's Survivance Stories

An Arts Ontology: Losh Becoming-Porcupine

Survivance is a practice, not an ideology, dissimulation, or a theory. The theory is earned by interpretations, by the critical construal of survivance in creative literature, and by narratives of cause and natural reason. (Vizenor, 2008, p. 11)

I explore Melvin Losh's creative process through ongoing conversations, observations, harvest-events, and art-making events as he created quill boxes and beaded bandolier bags. His relationships to porcupine quills, birch bark, and interconnections with his community are also discussed. The following survivance stories explore Losh's relationships among his creative processes, his materials, and his communities theorized as Indigenous knowledge arts ontology, which I posit expands a relational materialist ontology. A relational materialist ontology is a differential way of being in the world that absolves human/nonhuman hierarchy since "[n]on-human forces are always involved" (Hultman & Taguchi, 2010, p. 529) as co-constructors of *our* reality. This way of being is inherent to Indigenous knowledge systems as Cajete explains:

Everything is related. This premise is based on acute observation of the entire web of life in order to gain insight into relationships among all living things. Such observation was used in making a living that was unobtrusive and life enhancing. (2000, p. 77, italics in original)



Figure 14. Losh with porcupine quills working on a birch bark lid. Courtesy Melvin Losh, artist.

Losh held the porcupine quills in his mouth so that they jutted out between his lips, the pointed end of the quill hidden in his mouth (Figure 14). From time to time, he rolled them around as if they were a bunch of toothpicks pursed between his lips. He inserted a modified three-inch metal-tipped plastic throwing dart along a blue inked pen line drawn to represent a flower and inserted a randomly selected quill into a perforated birch-bark-surface. His dart-as-awl held in his left pinky finger, accompanied a pair of RevlonTM angle-tipped tweezers in his other hand. His right hand strategically inserted the follicle end of the quill through the birch bark, shifted the tweezers in his right hand, located the follicle, and pulled it partially through the

bark, leaving most of the length exposed on the outer side of the bark as it once was on the porcupine. Losh continued to clutch the tweezers as he bent the pointed tip of the quill into a parallel perforation located across from the laced perforation along the ink line. He pulled the quill tight with the tweezers and oscillated between both ends that protruded through the underside of the bark, tightening his impeccable work. In order to speak Losh clenched the protruding quills between one side of his mouth and talked from the corner of the other side. “I almost gave up on birch bark,” he explained, “It was very hard. I learned a lot from Catherine Baldwin, a master quiller, but mostly it was hit or miss. She said ‘go with the grain on the birch bark’ so I kept trying. Now I’ve been doing it for over 30 years [...] I can usually get one box done in three or four days, but I’m also working on multiple projects; sometimes three or four boxes...and I only use road kill; the first one was shot by my father. People know I use them [porcupines], so they’ll sometimes come by and try to sell them. And I don’t like to do that, so I just gave 20 [dollars] for it and tell them that I wouldn’t buy from them again [...] When I’m done with them I take them back into the woods with tobacco and when I go back, there’s nothing but a pile of quills...They’re [quills] like rubber-bands when you soak them. Once they’re in the bark they hold like staples...Sometimes when I run errands, I can’t wait to get back. Hehe [Losh chuckled] there was this little kid who interviewed me for a class project and he said that I was addicted to the quills and I thought to myself that I must be. No one has ever said that to me before. Ain’t that something?” He laughed and I smiled and acknowledged his deep commitment to his art.

“Sometimes, I don’t know where this is coming from.” Losh continued to reflect on his artistic process and aesthetic choices, “A woman once told me that ‘our ancestors are working

through you to keep this alive.’’ Losh’s humility in reference to authorship seem to resonate with Densmore’s (1929/1979) observation,

(T)he Chippewa share with other tribes...their high standard of excellence. Those who could not do a thing well either refrained from any attempt to do it or admitted that their work was not good. Those who excelled were given honor and, if their skill were particularly marked, they claimed that it was of supernatural origin. (p. 6)

Although Densmore’s interpretation of the Chippewa standards of excellence attends to Losh’s humility for and resistance to claiming authorship of his artistic processes it also oversimplifies his apprenticeship with Ms. Baldwin and leaves the natural materials and lives associated with his work unaccounted for. Densmore’s account also seems to position Native artists either having or not having a *natural* propensity of practical knowledge and those who do not lack the inclination to learn. Another possible explanation of Losh’s practical knowledge and his statement of “not knowing where this [creative process] is coming from” is Bourdieu’s explanation of *habitus*, or one’s immersed position within the field of relations. Bourdieu explains habitus as

systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures...which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (1990, p. 53)

Habitus explains Losh’s practical knowledge through predetermined learning systems evident in his credited apprenticeship with Ms. Baldwin in addition to the unwavering support from his

mother and father stated in another conversation as external motivators and “structured structures” that enabled his pursuit of creative processes. Additionally, Losh described his personal development of technique as “hit or miss,” trial and error, which suggests flexibility in his level of risk-taking as outcomes without a conscious mastery of the operations involved in his work. Losh’s slow disassociation from his teacher, as an apprenticeship evolves, would support Bourdieu’s theory of habitus since Losh continues through Baldwin’s influence and structuring structures yet unconsciously works to solve new process-based problems during arts production. Yet, habitus also oversimplifies Indigenous knowledge in general and Losh’s creative arts ontology in particular. Losh’s statement of learning through trial and error implies the quills and birch bark, the nonhuman agents, are constitutive to and co-constructors of the creative process. His ritualized and methodical process also generates a sense of getting lost in his work, as indicated in his statement of not knowing “where this is coming from.” Theorizing Losh’s arts ontology through Densmore’s explanation of Indigenous knowledge as being either *natural* or *supernatural* oversimplifies and overlooks how multiple relationships are involved.

Rather, a relational materialist perspective posits that Losh isn’t lost in the process he is merely decentered. Even though Losh’s gift of energy, concentration, pre-drawn planning on the bark, and the theoretical and practical knowledge passed to him by his teacher suggests his human-centered authority throughout the process, Losh has continuously refused an authoritative stance, suggesting that an intimate relationship with his materials reciprocate influences. While Losh fully engages in the process, the materials become constitutive co-constructing agents. Interesting, Losh has often described the qualities of his quill box in progress as “being alive... They just jump out of my hands sometimes when I work on them... Sometimes they end up across the room [from me].” An oscillation occurs between his willed intentions and the

materials' affordances. Losh's intimate knowledge of porcupine quills is expanded in the following description as he responds to a message I had sent concerning porcupine quills as an inspirational design for hypodermic needles:

Hi, Kev: I ran into the Porcupine Quills, that could possibly be used as a hyperdermic [sic] needle, I read some of the comments and some of them, do know a bit about the porcupine and their Quills, but they have not experienced what I have with the Quills, I have been stuck in the fingers, hands, lips, tongue, where the tooth meets the gums, the right and left side of my mouth and the most painful is the roof of my mouth and to top it all off I have swallowed [sic] many of them. When the quill enters the flesh of animal or human, it start [sic] to soften immediately from the inside moisture and where the quill is part way into the flesh it is soft inside and quite solid on the outside and if you try to pull the quill out, it fully flairs [sic] out and 9 times out of 10 it will break at that point where it is soft and hard, you know what I mean!, Ha! and within afew [sic] hours the most horrible infection will begin and the animal with the quills stuck, will eventually starve or die of the infection, unless a Vet, puts it to sleep and removes them One by One, with many x-rays taken to see if any of the Quill has been left behind, which will get infected and cause sickness or cause a huge bump, this is the immune system kicking in to protect the animal, isn't this fascinating? I didn't know I knew all of this, I hope you enjoyed reading it. (personal communication, December 18, 2012)

Losh's metaphorical consumption is also a literal consumption: he swallowed many quills over time. This supports Springgay's (2005) body-knowledge relationship, in which touch

“informs how we experience body knowledges as encounters between beings...touch is a way of *thinking through the body* as opposed to *about* particular bodies” (p. 35, italics in original).

Interestingly, despite his numerous encounters with the quills being stuck in various parts within his mouth and his hands, Losh continues to generate a critical proximity or intimacy with the quills as a way of thinking through his body as well as the porcupine's. This critical intimacy aligns Losh's commitment with a relational materialist arts ontology. Over time, his circuitous path through art processes and acknowledgement of the experienced difficulty in producing quillwork on birch bark demonstrates a perseverance, passion, and intimacy, which he later translates as an addiction pointed out by a child-interviewer. I believe this is supported by Losh's intimacy and embodied knowledge of the quills and expands Bataille's (1988) notion of intimacy:

Intimacy is not expressed by a *thing* except on one condition: that this *thing* be essentially the opposite of a *thing*, the opposite of a product, of a commodity – a consumption and a sacrifice. Since intimate feeling is a consumption, it is consumption that expresses it, not a thing, which is its negation. (p. 132)

Here then, Losh's arts ontology is less human-centered as non-human entities, the quills in particular, activate his intimate and creative engagement, which shift perspectives from quills as things to agents of consumption and sacrifice.

Losh's respect and care for the porcupine reside much deeper than refusing to kill the animal for his work. He generates a critical proximity to the animal as he metaphorically consumes the quills when he holds them and rolls them around in his mouth, a threshold and ceremonial passage before being inserted through the bark. The birch bark, the external skin of the tree is harvested to become the figural skin of the porcupine. The harvested quills are then

sorted for the necessary size to rule out any imperfections or points of weakness in the quills along with removing any leader hair that may have been harvested along with them (Figure 15). The quills are then bathed several times in cool water in order to clean them. Soap is not used since it changes the quality of the quill. The quills are then dried on newspaper. Some are dyed, with powdered RIT™ dye, which entails another ceremonial process, selected and soaked in a small cup of water until softened and readied for use (Figure 16). Losh's process of procuring, selecting, and washing is veneration, a ceremony of preparation for use in the creative process.



Figure 15. Sorting my quills from the leader hair intended for my quill box. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.



Figure 16. Losh dying quills in black RIT™ dye. A screen capture from the YouTube video, “Mel Losh Dying Quills – Part 1: 5-22-12.” Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author. Accessed from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEKEAdQjsjU>

Losh generates critical proximity during each portion of the preparatory ceremony through touch, which culminates as the quills are held within his mouth, ultimately marking his becoming-porcupine theorized through Springgay’s notion of touch as a mode of thinking through the body. Upon leaving the critical intimacy of Losh’s mouth they are borne anew, held in time while held in the bark. His work becomes an extension and veneration of the porcupine’s life as it informs his own. Cajete elaborates upon Indigenous art as a means of ceremony,

The ceremony of art touches the deepest realms of the psyche and the sacred dimension of the artistic creative process. The sacred level of art not only transforms something into art, but also transforms the artist at the very core of his or her being. (2000, p. 46)

Together the quills and birch bark become a vessel emplaced beyond the literal qualities of a box as a figural semblance of the porcupine's and Losh's life coming together as a smudge. Cajete highlights the lived qualities of Indigenous art,

For much of the Indigenous art, the "aliveness"...was the primary aesthetic criterion, rather than beauty. This did not mean that Indigenous artifacts were not beautiful...their inherent beauty was a natural byproduct of their "life." (2000, p. 46)

Therefore, the quill box is never ceases to live, due to Losh's anti-hierarchical ontology ritualized through a shared creative process with the materials. Both Losh and the collective influences of quills, birch bark, and sweet grass, which is stitched into the inner lip and outer lip portion of the box, engage in an active presence, a story of intertwined connectivity and survivance mentioned in the epigraph as "a practice, not an ideology, dissimulation, or a theory" (Vizenor, 2008, p. 11).

Over time the quilled birch bark vessel will change coloration, it will be picked up and investigated with the touch of fingers, smelled by noses, and observed by inquisitive gazes; all human acts met with a material conveyance that perpetuate Losh's active presence, his relationships to his teachers, family, community, and interspecies ecological interdependent humility. These ensembles of relations converge as Losh's quill boxes are generated and become defining relational experiences of his objects transforming them as places for experiences, as emplacements; intertwining the observer, the artist, the porcupine, birch bark, sweet grass and all of their histories as Cajete explains, "All relationships have a natural history. People have a history in a place and a history of relationship to each other. People have a history with regard to plants, animals, nature, and all things in nature" (2000, p. 77).

Postindian Survivors: Losh Harvests Birch Bark

Losh's quillwork is dependent upon his use of birch bark as a skin that supports the quills in their multifarious representations. The following narrative explores his relationship to birch bark during a harvesting scenario through Vizenor's (1999) neologism postindian.

Losh drove his black Chrysler sedan, windows down, as we traveled out to Winnie Dam to check and see if the birch bark was ready to harvest. "It's [birch bark] really the best when it just pops right off rather than having to push it." [pause] "It might be too early yet, but we will see" he said. After several turns we pulled off the paved road near an opening in the woods marked by tire tread and a mound of green grass growing between them flanked by thick spindly shrubs that gave way to trees. "I'm not driving back there." So we walked our way into the woods.

"See those trees over there?" [Losh stated without gesturing but directed his gaze to the right.]

"Yeah." I replied. "They have red or black sections." Colored bands ranged four to six feet or more in height wrapped around the birch trees, a revealing scar like the exposed layer of skin cut away from a blistered injury.

He explained, "Basket makers cut a lot back here and too deep. They cut into the cork and the tree [surface] cracks and blackens. These trees will die. So you don't want to cut into the cork. The tree will re-grow the bark, but it takes a long time." The trees stand as postindian survivors when not cut too deep and the bark re-imagined as baskets, quill boxes, or pictorial panels. Postindian refers to a resistance to *indian* simulations, according to Vizenor, "the name *indian* perpetuates manifest manners...modern manners that have carried out the notions of manifest destiny...and cultural dominance" since the name *indian* was invented by "Christopher

Columbus and his rogues [who] carved the name *indian* on a cruise, a new slave name of discovery” (1999, p. 156). Therefore, as the cut trees rejuvenate a new skin, of different colorations and textures than once was, the birch trees resist a tragic ending and closure (e.g. death) since Ojibwe ontology has been informed by the versatility of birch bark. Birch bark is resistant to water and doesn’t break down over time very easily. To this point, the Ojibwe have come to know birch bark intimately as it has been reimagined as winnowing trays, cups, caches, baskets, canoes, and exterior sheeting for wigwams; all are vital aspects of everyday living within localized ecologies intimately tied to preparing and storing foods, modes of transportation, and shelter. Ojibwe ingenuity and visionary imaginings of birch bark generates a value construct with respect to the versatility and potential endless gift of birch bark trees. Therefore as the trees continue to regrow a new skin, they actualize a presence similarly signified by the *post* preceding the simulation name *indian*.

Even though Losh stated “basket makers” harvested the bark and cut too deep into the inner bark, it is unclear whether or not they are Ojibwe. If they were Ojibwe his statement punctures the notion that Ojibwe and American Indians in general as having been perpetuated through manifest manners as keepers of the environment. This is an *indian* simulation according to Vizenor to the point that, “simulations of the other, the *indian* as absence, are what seems to satisfy [...] audiences, not the presence of natives with all their diversity and contradictions” (1999, p. 158). Vizenor’s counter notion of an *indian* simulation, or postindian calls for a more complex, varied and contradictory conceptions of Native peoples which contest massifying and over-generalized understandings. According to birch bark artist, Pat Kruse, birch bark basket makers flooded the market in northern Minnesota and their products are often cheaply and hastily made, and undervalued by sellers. Such hasty construction may be an indicator of hasty

harvesting as Bill May, Red Lake band of Ojibwe “cultural director, [states] many [Ojibwe] are poor that they make work fast to sell fast. ‘They don’t have enough money for a table’” (cited in Rendon & Markusen, 2009, p. 48). These cultural and socioeconomical factors complicate any traditional expectations of harvesting bark for tourist baskets since birch bark caches are no longer created for personal use and storage of food, rather they are produced for tourists, collectors, or given to community members as gifts. The commodification of birch bark objects oversimplify the complex ecological and cultural relationships the Ojibwe have cultivated through everyday living and amplify the baskets’ thingness. Ojibwe artists’ adaptation within Western economic environments, therefore, complicate authenticity discourses of cultural production and generate multiple political discourses of their processes. The hastily made products that convey a loose and perhaps low level of skill could be interpreted as a mode of resistance to exchange cultural knowledge for monies, rather than as an artisan who lacks the cultural knowledge to produce tight, strong, and thoroughly stitched basket work. This political resistance model of cultural production for market resale is an example of Vizenor’s postindian Ojibwe.

Furthermore, theorizing hastily produced birch bark baskets as heterotopian emplacements expands the political discourses imbued by the works. Since heterotopias “contradict or contest ordinary experience and the discourse in which we frame it” they also complicate any perceived reciprocal relationship (Defert, 1997, p. 275). Therefore, hastily produced baskets become a counter-space “interpenetrated by all the other spaces they contest;” the sundry cultural objects accumulated within the commercial space only recognized for their “Indianness,” which is a perceived value construct that drives market desire. Sociologist Daniel Defert elaborates on Foucault’s heterotopian emplacements, “They reflect neither the social

system nor an ideology: instead they are ruptures in ordinary life” (1997, p. 275). The hastily produced baskets rupture authenticity discourses while operating to convey them simultaneously within the commercialized space; ultimately they produce a difference in repetition similar to Vizenor’s notion of the postindian.

...

The sun was high and bright as we walked deeper into the woods. “Do you mind if I take some pictures?” I asked.

“No.” Losh replied. We came across a tree with long vertical cut already made in the bark. “See they tried to cut this bark too early and it didn’t come off, it wasn’t ready. I’m going to check and see if it will now.”



Figure 17. Losh harvesting birch bark from a tree previously cut by another bark artist. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

...

Figure 18. Experimental writing. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Severed and Mended: Losh Navigates Community Relations

Survivance is an active resistance and repudiation of dominance, obtrusive themes of tragedy, nihilism, and victimry. (Vizenor, 2008, p. 11)

Losh's relationship to community is explored in the following narrative with respect to a personal injury that has impacted his art production. Additionally I explore Losh's relationship to patronage and other financial networks that sustain his art production processes as well as his arts relationship to Leech Lake reservation community members.

"I was at BSU [Bemidji State University] for three years and then I had my accident...so I didn't finish." Losh explained his early years of college experience and recalled what had happened as we sat across from each other in his home. "I was helping to move large barrels and we were on different levels. Up above me one came [loose] and fell down on the back of my neck."

"Whoa." I said softly.

He continued, "I was lying on the floor and everyone crowded around me. I didn't know really what happened, I must've bit my tongue 'cause it was bleeding all over the place and my head hurt really bad so they [co-workers] sent me home. So I had to walk..."

"Wait, they sent you home alone without a ride or anything?" I asked in disbelief that no help was offered.

Losh said, "No! They didn't give me a ride. I walked home...and the whole way home I had to hold my head up with both of my hands." Losh demonstrated the position of his hands on

either side of his head as if he as covering his ears from a loud noise. “I had to do this ‘cause my head kept falling forward.”

“Oh my...” I said.

He continued, “I was getting sick as I walked home along the road and there was snow on the ground. I walked as far as I could, not far through the city, till I fell down on the side of the road in front of a [store or diner]...they [the customers], they thought I was drunk since I’m Indian. I told them that I needed help and finally they took me the hospital. They told me that I broke my neck.”

“Oh my...Mel.” I said.

“Hold on,” Losh stated as he stood up from his plush reclining chair and walked into his bedroom. He returned with an open book in his hands as he leafed through to the page he was looking for. He pulled out an x-ray image that he tucked in-between the pages of the book and handed to me. It was an image of his spine. As I looked closer, I noticed through the image, that pins were placed horizontally along the length of his spine (Figure 19).

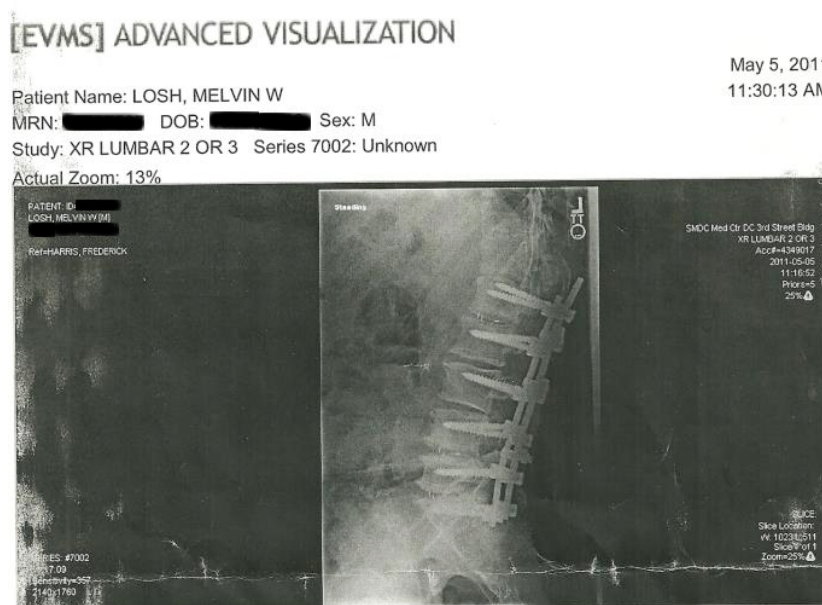


Figure 19. Losh's x-ray depicting the metal pins and rods supporting his spine. Courtesy Melvin Losh.

“I lost everything those three years after the accident, recovering. I did beadwork and made a bandolier bag, since then I’ve made twelve. But beading and then quillwork got me through my recovery,” Losh explained.

Over the years Losh has cultivated ways and means to survive on artwork. At first he held an office job associated with the tribal council for seventeen years and prior to that a business job for eighteen months, but ultimately artwork became his fulltime passion. Losh stated that “it was very hard to live off of art; you have to know who to sell to.” His work has been purchased and collected by several institutions and private collectors over the years, which has enabled him to continue to pursue artistic processes as a means of sustainability. This is not to say that Losh has accrued large sums of money over the years. In fact, Losh stated that he was receiving government-supplied commodities until a year and half ago. At the time I visited Losh, he stopped receiving government aid because he earned sixty dollars beyond the income limit that would qualify him for the support.

Losh entered locally run art expos and would often win in several categories for his quillwork and beadwork. He also wrote for grants offered through the local arts council that supplied him with a computer, scanner, digital camera and printer that further enabled his outreach and exposure as he now communicates through Facebook™, where Internet orders for his work have continued. Over the years Losh has also attended powwows as a means to sell artwork often helping his brother and sister-in-law with their tent display of various cultural objects including buckskin bags, painted wallets, beaded jewelry, screen-printed t-shirts, among other items. Interestingly at times Losh has sold his quilled boxes to Bemidji area pawnshops, or they have contacted him for work to be included in their available stock. Usually, this scenario has a slower turnover rate and he usually receives less in this transaction, but can serve Losh’s

immediate needs if he so desires. But, ultimately Losh's successes have been marked by museum and art gallery purchases or exhibitions and have been further enabled through private collections.

Losh has one particular relationship with a local patron, which quite unique, complex, and perhaps involves the largest payments for his work. Losh had mentioned the businessman Ed quite early during one of our visitations and explained that he owned a yellow Hummer, private jet, multiple homes, and made frequent trips to Mexico. Losh then told a story describing a complex and interwoven history among land acquisition, a government payment of six cents, and Ed's vacation home in Minnesota (Figure 20). I followed up with Losh through online Facebook™ messaging when I returned to State College, PA for the fall.

To: Mel Losh

From: Kevin Slivka

Hi Mel,

Your pork roast sounded good!...That's funny you mention Ed in your last message - I began writing about some of the dynamics between Ojibwe/nonOjibwe and land acquisition and was wondering about writing some information about the payment your family received back in the 50's or 60's? from [sic] the government-was it a 1cent check or 6cents check for the land your family used to live on out at Squaw point - and isn't that where Ed lives now? Do you think you could scan and send me a copy of that document if you don't mind me including a bit about that relationship? I am amazed that he can afford such a generous donation to the tribal college - that's fantastic! as [sic] far as artwork for me - I've only had a little time to throw some clay pots on the potters wheel - I

enjoy it and it is relaxing(.) Well I hope your day is going well - take care, Kevin.
(personal communication, November 28, 2012, 14:58).

To: Kevin Slivka

From: Mel Losh

Kev, Hi, The check was in the amount of 6 cents, for the land that was purchased and was in the area where Ed has his home, no one really knows for sure, [sic] The area is called Sucker Bay, a bay right off of the northern part of Leech Lake and Ed's home is in the area called Ottetail Point and all my Mom remembered was the land belonged to her Mom and was somewhere on Ottetail Point, that was probably 90 to 100 years ago. I don't know if I told you this, but when I first met Ed and Donna when they told me their cabin was on Ottetail Point, I thought of the check and I told them about my Mom's, mother and that she had owned Land on Ottetail Point and I showed them the check, they were stunned and Ed, started apologizing to me, I said no, no. Ed, that's the way life was and it's just a past memory, but I know they felt very bad. you'll [sic] notice my Mom signed the check in pencil, I asked her to sign it, just in case I might try to cash it someday, pretty cool huh? I haven't the slightest idea why I asked my Mom and Dad if I could keep the check and they gave it to me, while we were eating supper, all of my Brother's and Sister's were amazed at the check and it's tiny amount, let me know right away if it all comes through to you. Regards, Mel. (personal communication, November 28, 2012, 21:48).

To: Mel Losh

From: Kevin Slivka

Mel,

Thanks for sharing this with me. The images are very clear. I'm amazed of the story and your connections with Ed and Ottertail point. What a connection! I'm amazed at the insensitivity of the gov't too. do [sic] you remember the program that it was called- why they were paying your mom?...Boy what a memory.

Thanks again for sharing Mel, Kevin. (personal communication, November 29, 2012, 08:07).

To: Kevin Slivka

From: Mel Losh

Kev:

...I don't know what this program was called, they surely must have named it something but I don't know. The reason they were paying my Mom was, her name appeared on some sort of minutes or records that were kept at the time concerning Land Allotments that included her Mom's name and a list of all the relatives, either living or deceased and believe me there was hundred's listed, Kev, I better stop, this is making me MAD, Ha!!, hope [sic] you enjoy this, will keep in touch, take care.

Regards,

Mel. (personal communication, November 29, 2012, 12:08).

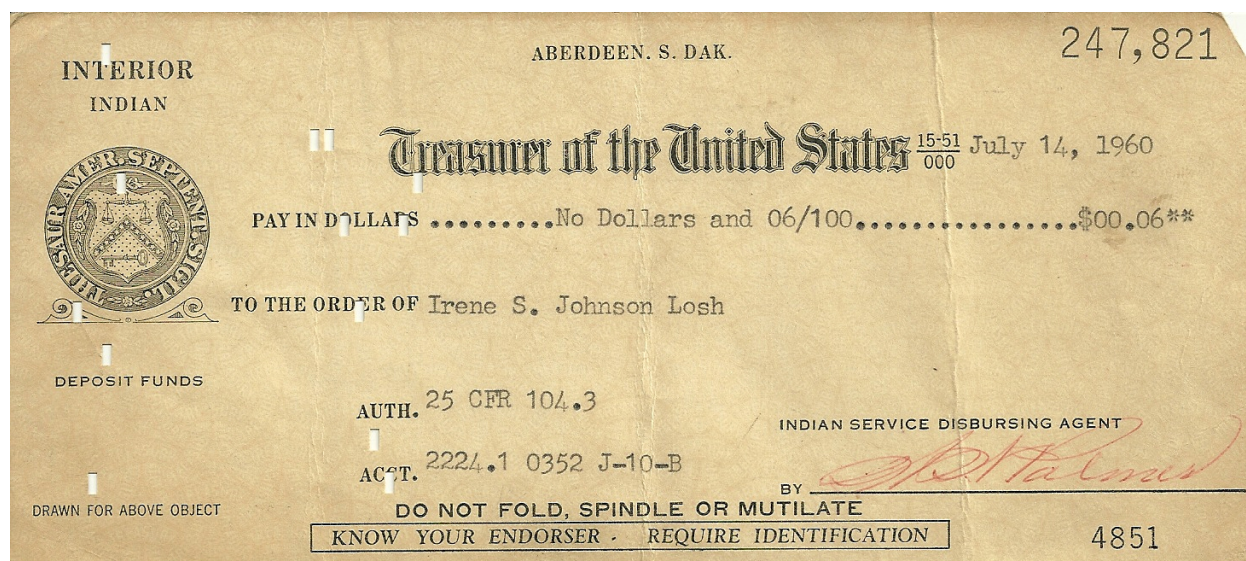


Figure 20. A U.S. government check issued to Losh's grandmother for their loss of land during the 19th century. Courtesy
Melvin Losh.

Ed owns a pumpkin seed business, which has expanded to include hybrid corn. I had met Ed on two occasions the first was at Losh's house and the second visit was arranged by Losh for us to meet with Ed at his vacation home. Ed a silver haired, self-satisfied man in his late eighties commands the conversation, "So you're from Penn State. [pause] That Sandusky is something else...and Paterno, he's crooked too. He's fixed many games and refs. He's evil. I don't like him."

I replied, "I don't know anything about the games being fixed. The university has been upended and there are many student-centered movements that have focused on those hurt by Sandusky. The media likes to focus on the riot-like events and tends to be one-sided when it comes to all else that's happening. There's much more good happening at the university than football."

Ed followed my statement, "Well we know he's not one of them. That's good."

Interestingly, Losh told the story of their relationship involving his grandmother's land on Ottertail Point and Ed's ownership of it now, which redirected our conversation. Ed replied,

“It made me sad to know that I bought the land the Mel’s family used to live on...I wanted to develop the land around my home and they found bones, so I can’t. I tried to resell the land to the tribe, but there’s no interest in it. [Pause] You know I remember when I was a kid, digging for Indian artifacts before it was illegal and found a bone scraper.”

Losh’s relationship with the seed businessman is complicated and at times contradictory. Ed patrons Losh for works such as a “warrior’s shirt,” as Losh called it, several quill boxes, and a flat pictorial quilled birch bark sheet that depicts an “eagle catcher,” commissioned to match the same theme carved from a large-single-section of a tree that weighs several tons. I met Losh early morning to drive over to Ed’s vacation home, about twenty minutes from Losh’s home, so that I could meet the artist who carved the large “eagle catcher” and see Ed’s personal collection of American Indian art. Ed’s vacation home is a sprawling, several story log cabin. The interior reminded me of a cross between Cabela’s, or Bass Pro Shops, where stuffed animal heads are hung on the walls and a museum. Ed’s home prominently displayed a buffalo and a white wolf among others and Losh’s work, including the “warrior’s shirt” (Figure 21).



Figure 21. Losh's warrior shirt displayed in Ed's vacation home on Ottertail point, MN. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.

The “warrior’s shirt” is comprised of large areas of glass seed beads stitched to buckskin in geometric patterns, horse hair bundles individually counted to one-hundred strands, and porcupine quilled panels on the front and back of the garment (Figure 22). It is reminiscent of a Lakota war shirt with geometric patterns and the overall stylization of the garment. Losh’s work is a hybrid art piece insofar as Losh incorporates Lakota influence and the quillwork is an augmentation made to the garment created on birch bark, rather than applied directly on the buckskin, which indicates Losh’s knowledge transfer between the quill box form and the garment.



Figure 22. Detail of Losh's warrior shirt. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.

Losh's relationship with the businessman is also very productive as Losh gains financial support through his art production and the businessman gains unique and finely crafted American Indian works while paternalistically supporting a local Ojibwe artist. Both Losh and the businessman are friendly and relaxed in each others company, a sign of their long-term friendship. Ed's monetary successes with pumpkin seeds and corn, both indigenous food staples of many American Indians, and his desire to accumulate American Indian cultural works, both historical and contemporary signifies the ongoing appropriation and commodification of Indigenous cultures. Yet, Losh continues to engage with him knowing full well of Ed's deeply rooted capitalistic connections to American Indian cultures as well as his direct implication of living part-time on or near where his family had lived. Even though Losh has expressed to Ed that "no, no. Ed, that's the way life was and it's just a past memory," he is still bothered and upset over the inequity and mistreatment he and his family has endured by the U.S. government

indicated during our communication and signified by Losh keeping the six cent check.

Ultimately, Losh's maneuvers to nurture this relationship enables his ability to navigate a hybrid and doubled cultural existence, both non-Native and Native. Losh's museum quality pieces, like the warrior shirt, are intentionally created for a specific audience, either individual wealthy non-Natives, or American Indian museums such as the Mille Lacs Indian Museum in Onamia, MN, which has purchased a bandolier bag from Losh. His large-scale projects tend to occupy a long-term commitment, which impacts the number of works he can create. Therefore, Losh typically will produce one or two large-scale pieces while concurrently working on multiple smaller works like porcupine quill boxes.

For example Losh has produced thirteen bandolier bags, all having been purchased either by museums or private collectors (Figure 23). The bandolier bag has been an Ojibwe cultural object that notably conveys a sense of status and wealth since the late 18th and early 19th century as glass seed beaded bags correlated with the fur trade, "the better a man was at trapping, the more glass beads and trade cloth he was able to acquire, and with more material wealth came more sophisticated designs and larger bags" (Cotherman, 2010, p. 30). Although pouches and bags used for carrying tools, sacred items, or medicinal herbs or ointments have been made long before the arrival of Europeans, they were most commonly made of "buckskin and decorated with furs, quills, and moose hair embroidery" (Cotherman, 2010, p. 28). Usually, the surfaces of the over-the-shoulder stylized bags are fully decorated with glass-seed beads, tightly sewn over cloth, most often black velvet or "trade cloth" material. Prior to black fabric, "tanned animal skins were dyed black as a background for the porcupine quillwork that was common until decoration with beadwork began" (Anderson & Hussey-Arntson, 1982, p. 155).



Figure 23. Partial view of a finished bandolier bag (right) and a pipe bag (left) made by Losh. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Interestingly the bandolier bag, augmented through intercultural exchange during the 17th century fur trade, signified an intricate yet delicate ecology of intertwined social relations among the Ojibwe, French, British, and the animals since the beaver were harvested “to extinction in large areas” (Treuer, 2010, p. 13). Further, the “fur trade encouraged greater proximity and relationships between the Ojibwe and European traders, Ojibwe women in fur trade communities formed influential and intimate associations with European traders” as intercultural exchanges progressed to intercultural marriages (Child, 2012, p. 32). The multiple influences of bead and fabric materials, floral pattern aesthetics, which can be traced to early Christian mission schools, and the elongated-shoulder-styled form, which may have been inspired by British military ammunition pouches are embedded within the history of the bandolier bag (Cotherman, 2010). Yet, these influences do not imply that contemporary Ojibwe bandolier bags are trapped within

historic and static forms of representation; rather contemporary processes and cultural artworks are flexible and indicate a thriving and vibrant Ojibwe culture. These historical tracings merely indicate the ripples of intercultural exchanges and relationships, which have blurred any conception of authenticity within both cultures. Therefore, Ojibwe bandolier bags continue to activate a vibrant presence and flexibility of lived cultural experiences.



Figure 24. Losh spot stitching glass seed beads to a bandolier bag. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Similarly, Losh's beaded and quilled bandolier bags generate his own interwoven and intercultural web of social and economic relations, since bandolier bags are valued as "an essential part of ceremonial dress" seen at powwows and other ceremonial settings (Cotherman, 2010, p. 30). Not all powwow dancers wear bandolier bags, as there are many different styles of dress and dance. Most commonly male Ojibwe traditional dancers will adorn a bandolier bag. Although Ojibwe dancers will wear bandolier bags during powwows, Losh's bandolier bags are

often valued by collectors and museums intended for display. Museum-institutional settings become places for Losh's work to activate a continued presence of Ojibwe in Minnesota and the Great Lakes region. Losh's beadwork is tightly applied, or "spot-stitched" so that his work does not pucker or become loose (Anderson & Hussey-Arntson, 1982, p. 155). In order to achieve such tight work, Losh sews with two needles: one collects and threads the glass beads and the other is used to stitch every two beads down upon the fabric (Figures 24 & 25). This labor and time intensive process engrosses him for over six months and each bag differs from the other, even though each conveys intertwining floras, insects, and sometimes hummingbirds. Losh's symbolic subject matter of stylized natural life forms expresses a "natural democracy." Cajete explains a natural democracy is based upon "perceptions of the cycles of nature, behavior of animals, growth of plants, and interdependence of all things in nature determined [Indigenous] culture...ethics, morals, religious expression, politics and economics" (2000, p. 52). Losh's beaded bandolier bags celebrate and convey interdependence of the seemingly insignificant, small, and often overlooked aspects of nature-based ecologies. These aspects expressed through Losh's gift of time, skill, and visionary imaginings are much more than cultural objects, they are Indigenous knowledge frameworks and as such they are also political expressions and resistance narratives to Western orientations that behold the "world in purely material terms" that lead to "the objectification, secularization, and scientification of the world" (Cajete, 2000, p. 53). Furthermore, Cajete explains that Western orientations consider the "non-human world (many time including tribal Indigenous peoples)" as spiritless material "eligible to be used or exploited" (2000, p. 53). Cajete's point is exemplified by The Department of the Interior (DOI) which "uses sound science to manage and sustain America's lands, water, wildlife, and energy resources, honors our nation's responsibilities to tribal nations" (What We Do section, para. 1, n.d.). The

DOI statement conflates land and resource management with honoring American Indians since the primary objective of the DOI is to continue to be “keepers [of] our nation’s legacy, we manage the resources in our care to benefit Americans” (What We Do section, para. 2, n.d.). Losh’s symbolic cultural compositions celebrate an interspecies dependence, which challenges Western conceptions of nature as some-thing to dominate.



Figure 25. Losh picking up beads with a needle intended to be spot stitched to a bandolier bag in progress. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

I posit through a relational materialism perspective that Losh, the beads, quills, and birch bark co-generate the bandolier bags, and resonate with Cajete’s mythic, visionary, and artistic Indigenous knowledge foundations as an emplacement which

function in relation to all the space that remains... Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space... Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours [Western spaces] is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled.

(Foucault, 1986, p. 27)

As an emplacement Losh's meticulous visionary imaginings of ecological interrelationships generate a different space that extends a political discourse. This understanding is a corrective lens, or is a heterotopia "of compensation," and resistance narrative to a Western perspective of nature as a commodity rather than interpret Losh's intention to arrange nature perfectly or meticulously based upon his practical skill (Foucault, 1986, p. 27). Rather than view Losh's cultural works as a romantic arrangement of nature-based relationships, Indigenous worldviews need to be accredited, which "envision[s] the spirit of the natural world alive with disorder becoming order and all the mystery of mirrored relationships" (Cajete, 2000, p. 16). Cajete expresses that Indigenous knowledge and worldviews are in continuous relationship with the natural world, its chaos and differentiated forms and understanding is developed through careful observation and reciprocal relationships. Therefore Indigenous knowledge expressed through Losh's cultural works expands relational materialist arts ontology with animism and a belief of interdependent being.

As expressed earlier, Native peoples live complex and contradictory lives and engage in unbalanced extraction and use practices of natural resources exemplified in the hasty harvesting of birch bark and aiding in the near extinction of beaver during the Fur Trade era (Treuer, 2012). Since the bandolier bag developed from intercultural relationships, one driven by the harvesting of furs to the near extinction of the beaver and generated a crisis point of rupture, an

unsustainable interspecies relationality, then Losh's contemporary bandolier bags are visionary survivance stories that convey the complex and intertwining of the mythic, visionary and artistic Indigenous knowledge foundations. Vizenor explains, "Native survivance is a sense of presence, but the true self is *visionary*. The true self is an ironic consciousness, the cut of the native trickster. Stories of truistic selves tease the originary" (1998, p. 20, emphasis added). Losh's symbolic arrangements then are not romantic notions of nature; rather they are also resistance narratives to victimry and tragedy expressed by the visionary process of Vizenor's neologism, "transmotion" (1998, p. 15). Vizenor (1998) explains, "The connotations of transmotion are creation stories, totemic visions, reincarnation, and sovenance...that is a sense of presence in remembrance...Native transmotion is survivance, a reciprocal use of nature, not a monotheistic, territorial sovereignty" (p. 15). Transmotion is nonlinear and multidirectional. It encompasses traditional Indigenous knowledge expressed through Losh's creative practice, which honors by remembering his teachers and the past. It is also an active presence of Losh's expended energy and perseverance in contemporary cultures, which contests authenticity discourses exemplified in his adaptations to social media and digital technologies. It is also both a resistance to cultural dominance and an affirmation of Ojibwe ontology and Indigenous worldviews of interdependency and ethical practice of reciprocity. Losh's bandolier bags convey his own lived-intertwined, interspecies arts ontology resistant to historical stasis. Each newly created object involves his processes and relationships and suggests a sustainable futurity by resisting stasis through the continuous self-creative moments of transmotion.

Beyond networking through various art institutions and art collectors, Losh has ties to his local Ojibwe community and has been approached by more than twenty families to make beaded-buckskin-burial moccasins. These cultural productions are not intended for monetary

support but generate community interconnectivity in observance of cultural traditions as transmotion. Losh described the exchange, “They often ask me how much I charge. And I say that what ever you feel you can give. I don’t want to tell you what to give.” Often, the family may give food or cigarettes when he smoked or a small amount of money. Further, Losh is often brought dead porcupines that have been killed by cars or shot by homeowners who have incurred damage to their woodwork since many know Losh’s work and processes. Additionally, his harvesting process of birch bark is often done with a brother or another family member and he is sometimes notified by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) prior to an area of trees being cut as they know Losh and his use for the birch bark.



Figure 26. Top view of Losh's quill box with found beadwork. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

These connections and maneuvers through communal and structural networks generate practical knowledges that further enable and support Losh’s artistic pursuits. His work and primary occupation of cultural art production is therefore sustained through his interconnected and intertwined arts ontology as a community practice. Losh’s community-based arts ontology is viable due to his continued persistence of artistic processes, interested parties, and mastery and flexibility among diverse artistic forms. For example Losh has mastery level skill in producing

quill boxes and beaded bandolier bags, which are his primary modes of production, but he also has mastery level skill in producing buckskin pipe bags, beaded fans, quill-paneled antique chairs, deer-hoof-baskets, and other beaded and quill-based regalia. His flexibility in material application in the case of using porcupine quill-panels to embellish antique chairs and by combining quill-worked birch bark panels within a traditionally fabric-based bandolier bags and found loomed-beadwork on quill-based boxes are explorations of tradition, form, and artistic expression (Figures 26, 27 & 28). Losh's flexibility and expansive practical knowledge in creating artworks are demonstrated by incorporating found art, using natural materials, adapting new forms and representations in his work. Additionally his tool set also demonstrates his flexibility and creativity by shortening the length and sharpening the metal tip to transform common throwing darts into awls among other forms such as bullet casing punctured with a nail and using his father's ceramic tile cutter as a tool for harvesting bark.



Figure 27. Fully quilled seat and seatback by Losh. Courtesy Melvin Losh, artist.

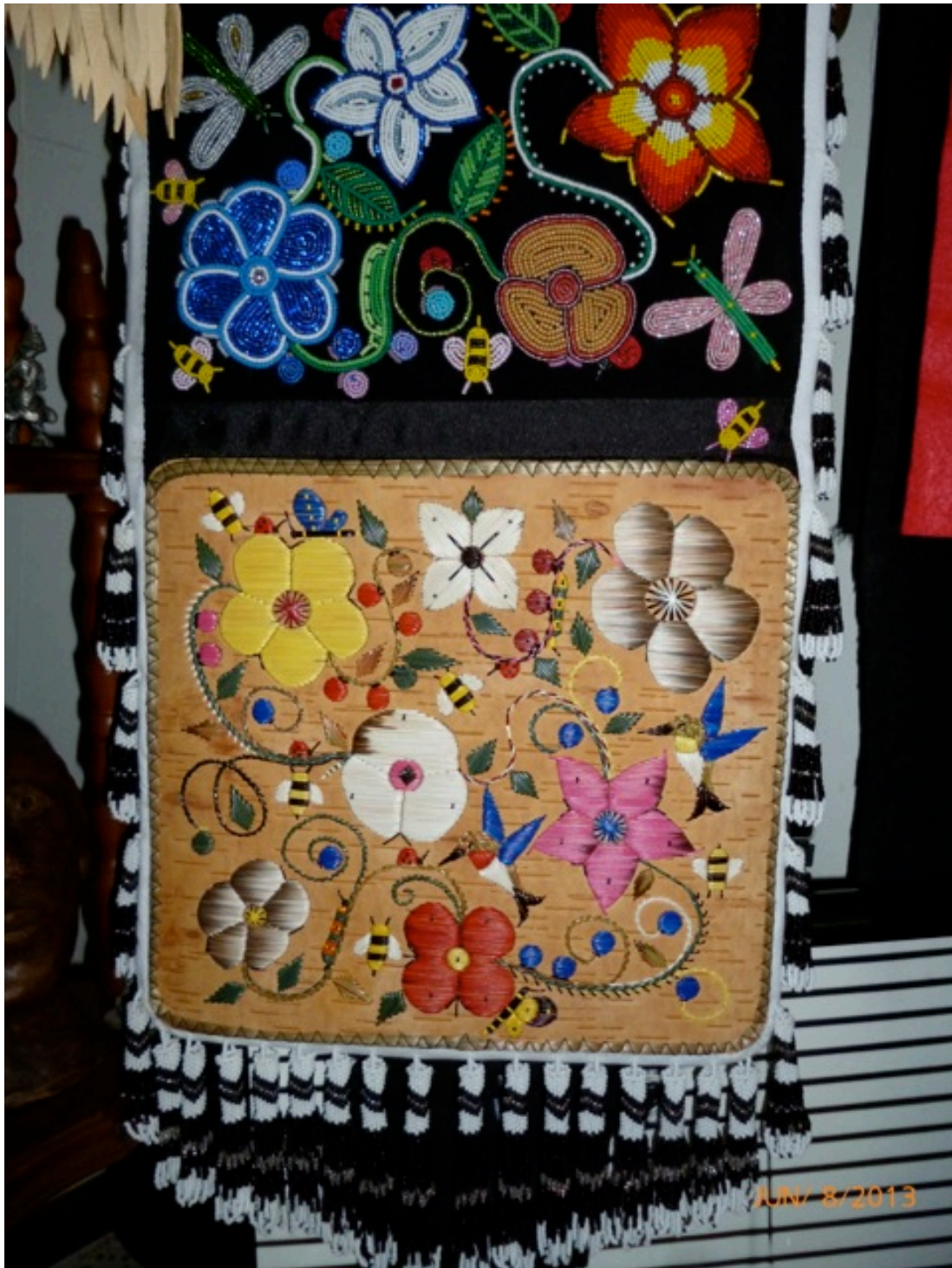


Figure 28. Detail of the bottom two panels of a finished bandolier bag by Losh; one is beaded the other is quilted.

Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Losh's mastery and variability, demonstrated through his artworks in addition to his flexible repurposing of tools, materials, and found objects, is indicative of negotiating a wide field of relations among collectors, institutions, art appreciators, and community members.

Thinking through Porcupine Quills, Birch Bark, and Sweet Grass with Melvin Losh

I sat on a soft, microfiber, brown sofa, while sunbeams poured through the front windows still covered with plastic insulation left over from the winter months. It was early afternoon. "Let's go outside," Losh said, "I've got something to show you." Losh, a thin man with dark hair and silver sideburns, stood up from his workspace, which doubled as a visiting space: a plush, reclining chair flanked by two intensely bright floor lamps with flexible positioning. I joined him with my compact, black journal and digital camera that swayed back and forth in my cargo pants pocket near my knee. We passed a flat-screen television, large floor speakers, record player, and stacks of records on our way through the humble, comfortable, and neatly arranged singlewide trailer. The front storm door was agape and the sunlight illuminated the reddish-brown, wood flooring as we passed through the front screen door.

The sun beat upon us as we traversed the threshold, down two wooden steps into Losh's grass yard. Losh walked over to the small table with the overturned box and swarming flies. A calm wave of his arm and hand at the swarm dispersed the flies temporarily. He lifted the box and discarded it into the grass, exposing a dead porcupine sprawled on its belly (Figure 28). "You have to be able to do this if you want to be a quill artist." Losh began to pull out quills from the back of the porcupine's neck and dropped them into a metal colander bowl. "It doesn't bother me, but other people who wanted to learn didn't want to get their own quills."

Because I had never witnessed this event before, I asked, "Do you mind if I take a picture."



Figure 28. Losh brushing harvested quills into a metal bowl. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

“Sure.” Losh stated and continued, “See these?” He gestured toward the middle of the porcupine’s back and tail. He explained, “They’re too big, I can’t use them.”

“So you only use certain sizes?” I asked.

“Some people use the larger ones for earrings, other people use the leader hair for roaches.” I wrote down the word *roaches*? in my journal and I would later find out from him that roaches were regalia made from porcupine hair worn as a headpiece. Losh continued to pull out quills from around the bottom section before the front legs. “See this?” [He gestured and stepped back a bit].

I peered in and asked, “What is that?”

“Those are ticks. You know it walks close to the ground so it picks up all kinds of bugs.” Losh shivered a bit, and then paused. “Okay, that’s good.” He swept his hand across the table

pushing stray quills into the metal colander and placed the box over the carcass, denying the swarming flies access.

I had come across two different porcupines as I traversed Ojibwe country during the summer of 2012. The first porcupine I came upon was quite large; later Losh and I both traveled out together to take a closer look to see if there were any viable quills to be harvested. “That doesn’t bother me,” Losh stated when we came upon the broken and burst porcupine. He proceeded to collect some quills and recalled a story.

Losh began, “There was this porcupine that wouldn’t die. It was hit by car and it moped around the side of the road for at least two days. It was in the bank of the road, you know in the high grassy area. It kept moving around and moaning. Hhhhuuuuuuuuuah [Losh gutturally uttered the sounds of the suffering porcupine.] It was a strong animal. I couldn’t come to putting the poor animal out of its misery. So I asked my nephew, who offered tobacco and said ‘Sorry, this will ease your pain’ and then shot it. It was the old way, the Indian way. Some say it’s backwards, but it is just a different way. You know, Indians don’t like to be up front in the spotlight, we like to be back in the background, left alone.” He collected a bundle of quills in a brown paper grocery bag and then moved the porcupine off the road and into the high grasses.

Losh’s harvesting event opened up dialogue concerning inter-species relationships, artistic need, and respect. He risked multiple punctures as he picked through the quills; many quills hung from his hand and arm as he selected them. Also, he conveyed a kinship to the porcupine, a relationship of interdependence and reverence for life, as he couldn’t take the porcupine’s life even when in misery; his connection was too close. Furthermore, Losh’s statement concerning Indians preferring the background attested to an ontological consideration that acknowledges an anti-hierarchical and interconnected worldview. His statement, perhaps,

indicates a personal stance rather than any massifying quality that describes Ojibwe peoples and American Indians in general. Although, many Ojibwe both participants and informants expressed notions of wanting to be “left alone” and desire autonomy from outsiders who instruct them how to live their lives.

The second porcupine I found was much smaller, although I did not know it was a baby porcupine until Losh told me (Figure 29). He stated that, “The quills are becoming valuable. People are now trying to sell them. I can’t buy them, there is no way I can afford to do that. I use so many quills that I wouldn’t be able to make a living [if I had to buy them].” Losh proceeded to show me his collection of quills kept in brown paper bags so that they can breath. He continued, “I have kept these over the years, ‘cause if I run out I can sometimes go back through these bags and resort them to find usable quills.” Losh’s collections were impressive accumulations of porcupine quills, bags upon bags stored in a garage outside his home. He didn’t use many of the baby porcupine’s quills, but harvested the guard hair for a friend who made roaches.



Figure 29. A baby porcupine found lying on the road. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

I clumsily fumbled with the quills as I began working on the birch bark. I tried to hold the awl and tweezers as Losh has done, but my hand skills were like puppies' wobbly legs trying to walk for the first time. I had to put down each tool every time I needed to switch them out, rather than hold the awl in my little finger and he said, "I can't watch you work, it bothers me that you put down the tools every time." Similarly, it took time before I felt comfortable holding the quills in between my lips as Losh did. Rather I would pick them up one at a time from the cup of water to work with them, sometimes dropping them on the floor, he commented, "You should hold them in your mouth." And as I began to thread the quill into the perforated birch bark and attempted to pull it through with the tweezers, I would slip off the quill. Each time I slipped my actions generated a *snapping* sound, and Losh would respond, "What are you doing?" I was slow and methodical, yet I managed to stomp through the woods, snapping every fallen branch as I progressed.



Figure 30. Screen capture from the YouTube video "Quilling: 5_29_12." Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author and artist.

Accessed from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0AItIGNY5c>

Over time I adopted Losh's process of holding the quills in my mouth, getting over my own mental impediments of intimacy with dead porcupine quills on my tongue. After a while I

became accustomed to the process and learned that it was indeed a quicker method while keeping the quills supple for use. I found that hours would pass during the work, inserting, tightening the quills and puncturing the bark. The process demanded attention as each perforation impacted how each quill would lie within the bark and each quill, if properly sorted would lie neatly next to each other. Thick quills proved difficult to thread through the bark and often puffed out beyond the flat-lying-thinner quills, although if the quill was too thin it wouldn't stay put and became loose within the bark. Therefore, sorting was a necessary step prior to quilling any surface; it also removed any hair in the process, which I occasionally found in my mouth, on my tongue and covered with saliva, which "mark[ed] the body as unstable and uncertain, formed through proximal relations of touch" (Springgay, 2008, p. 46).



Figure 31. Bottom and top views of my quilled box. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author and artist.

I videotaped my quilling process and showed it to Losh, who said, "I never witnessed anything like that before. You looked so different. It must look like how I use the quills. And I noticed that you held the quills in your mouth and the awl in your little finger" (Figure 30). The

next meeting with Losh, he told me that he had uploaded my video to his Facebook™ account for others to see. I felt as though Losh trusted me by sharing his teaching, since Losh told me “No one has ever seen this before; not even family.” I thought by watching closely, listening intently and attempting to adopt his recommendations concerning his creative practice I was reciprocating respect by valuing his teachings and cultural heritage through my creative process in producing a porcupine quill box (Figure 31).

...

tight sharp defenses

walk slowly, moan and gnaw wood

become intertwined

...

Figure 32. Haiku inspired by the porcupine, its quills and Losh’s creative process. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Chapter V: Dewey Goodwin's Survivance Stories

Goodwin's Arts Ontology: Engaging Ecological Relationships & Art Education

The presence of animals, birds, and other creatures in native literature is a trace of natural reason, by right, irony, precise syntax, literary figuration, and the heartfelt practice of survivance. (Vizenor, 2008, p. 12)

In this chapter, I examine sculptor and educator, Dewey Goodwin's art education pedagogy and arts production processes as they generate relationships to multiple communities, materials, and his arts ontology. Goodwin's understanding of the stone materials are similar to Losh's, both behold the material object as living, yet Goodwin specifically attributes this active presence as belonging to the spiritual foundation. Therefore, I explore theoretical relationships among Cajete's (2000) explanations of Indigenous knowledge foundations, Vizenor's (2008) central concept of practice and active presence as survivance, and the correspondences with Foucault's (1986) concept of emplacements as composed of ensembles of relations.

...

I slowly drove through the winding dirt driveway. Metal fencing gave way to wood, dense trees opened to a field where horses flicked their long-haired tails on my right and across from a barn-like building on my left. I noticed a white extended-cab pick-up truck parked across the open grassy space, enclosed by trees. Plumes of white powder filled the air accompanied by the loud, aggressive *brrrring* noise of a power-tool. This was my first encounter with Goodwin, who stood dressed in coveralls, a full-face mask, ball cap, and was entirely dusted head to toe in white-stone-powder. He circled around the large stone eagle sculpture and again applied the power-tool against the stone, shooting white clouds of powder into the air (Figure 33). After he saw me, Goodwin stopped sanding the nearly two-ton dolomite eagle sculpture, commissioned

for the *Ojibwemowin*-focused Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. He set down his tool and removed his face protection.



Figure 33. Goodwin circling his dolomite eagle sculpture. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

I greeted, “Hi Dewey? How are you? Thanks for meeting with me.” We approached each other and I offered a folded, dried leaf of tobacco in a small plastic bag and Goodwin accepted it.

“*Miigwetch.*” He stated with emphasis as he walked toward the converted-barn-studio to store the tobacco in a white-mini-fridge.

We stood around the eagle sculpture and talked about his process of removing stone with a handsaw, hammer and chisel, grinders, and the strengths of diamond-tipped-blades. He explained that eagles have thirteen tail feathers and declared the toughness of pointed-nosed bottom-feeder suckerfish, considering that eagles would drop them against the rocky shores. I

shared photographs of my artwork and Bambi, Goodwin's wife, rode up on a bicycle to the workshop-barn, joined our conversation and invited me to "come up to the house."

The Goodwins' home interior emanates perceived warmth from the exposed wood logs and large stone fireplace centrally located for actual warmth during the winter months. Woven reed-baskets hang from one of the wooden beams, pictures of family and a *dikinnagen* (cradleboard) hang on the walls, and living plants are placed throughout their home interior. Watercolor and acrylic paintings of their children and themselves also hang on the walls and show blueberry picking, maple trees being tapped for syrup, and harvesting wood for the winter in addition to sundry stone sculptures of horses, buffalo, Native-figurations, and eagles carved by Goodwin prominently displayed throughout their three-story log home. The Goodwins' active presence depicted in the harvesting scenes of berry picking, wood chopping, and tapping maple trees activate stories, memories, and embrace an interconnected and interdependent ontology, which is explained by Cajete's mythic and visionary Indigenous knowledge foundations converging through art as modalities of understanding. He explains:

communal interaction with nature reflect a basic idea of natural community, of human beings who are active participants along with all other entities within an environment. Traditional art forms reflect the attempt to understand the human place within the natural community. (Cajete, 2000, p. 113)

Therefore, natural environments serve as pedagogical sites where "work, play, ritual, food gathering, hunting, and fishing" intertwine learning, reflecting, and creating (Cajete, 2000, p. 101). The Goodwins' artworks are both traditional and adaptive with respect to a continuance of cultural practices such as sustainably harvesting food from the woodlands, prefaced with an offering of tobacco, prayer and utilizing all parts of the animal, while putting out the remains for

other animals, birds, and insects for sustenance described by Goodwin as “an Indian bird feeder” (Figure 34). Symbolic animal presences embedded in the plastic arts and large stone sculptures further extends the traditional and adaptive art forms with their Indigenous knowledge. The Goodwins also sew glass seed beads to buckskin forms and garments that typify the traditional Ojibwe woodland aesthetic. Ultimately, Cajete (2000) explains “[t]raditional art forms provide a context for remembering the important lessons of wise use and appropriate sources of materials, and for developing skills of listening, close observation, patience, and memory” (p. 103). Cajete’s important point concerning art as a pedagogical site for the mythic through listening, close observation, patience, and memory also inform the visionary foundation of the artist’s understanding expressed through the processes and media. These intertwining foundations can be interpreted from the Goodwins’ arts ontology, which is grounded with in their natural environments.



Figure 34. The remnants of an "Indian bird feeder" on Goodwins' fence post. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

...

“...I taught high school art for ten years and established the [art] program there.”

Goodwin stated, “But after leaving, it fell apart there. Since then I’ve been working at the Leech Lake Tribal College for seventeen years.”

“That's a long time teaching.” I stated.

“Twenty-seven years.” He replied.

...

Goodwin describes his teaching pedagogy as trial and error in order to meet students where they were at the time, which he further described them as being “at risk” or “troubled.” He empowers his young learners by cultivating core values of Anishinaabe culture, which are humility, truth, courage, honesty, respect, love, and wisdom by engaging students in traditional arts processes and with traditional materials such as elk hide, buckskin, rawhide, sinew, and glass seed beads. Traditional art, as Cajete (2000) explains, gets “to the heart, the spirit, of an event or entity,” (p. 46) rather than perpetuate assimilationist intentions often embedded within fabric of educational institutions, originating from the 19th century boarding school era (Adams, 1995; Fear-Segal, 2008; Slivka, 2011). Goodwin also teaches pottery, drawing, painting, and sculpture curricula as well as a mode of training his students to work through the ceremony of art that maintains an Anishinaabe worldview.

Of all the age groups, Goodwin prefers the “little kids the best” as they were more open to express what they felt. He explains, “The older kids are barked-in. It can be hard to tap into their creativity. Younger students have a thinner bark and it’s easier for it [creativity]... it easily pours out. You can tell by reading the child through the color and imagery, [whether] they are expressing a light or dark mood.” Goodwin’s pedagogical approach to activate and access his students’ potential through artistic exploration is a metaphoric intervention of a blade used to score the birch bark and expose the inner qualities of the tree, or in this case his students’

potential to generate art. Goodwin works to explore his students' potential through art production and often encouraged it as a mode of cultural and self-sustainability by connecting students to their cultural life ways. Goodwin's active pedagogical presence within the learning community has been integral for the renewal of Ojibwe cultural production through each student cohort that engages in his arts curricula. Additionally, Goodwin generates a code of ethics through his personal cultural arts practice, which extends to the surrounding community where several sculptures have been installed as well by extending his Ojibwe worldview imbued through his pedagogy and curricula beyond the local Leech Lake community.

Goodwin continues, "I've applied and got an artist-in-residence at the Eiteljorg Museum [of American Indians and Western art] in Indianapolis. It was my third attempt and I finally got it. I'll be down there for twenty days teaching." Goodwin, a White Earth band member, resides near Leech Lake Reservation where he teaches at the Tribal College. He studied art at Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico under Apache artist Allan Houser where he learned to draw, mold in clay, and carve in stone. Even though his attendance wasn't regular at first, Goodwin learned to carve a living out of stone at the art school. Houser served as a mentor to Goodwin and his artistic influence is evident in Goodwin's sculptural forms. Houser pushed beyond his training and the expected artistic style of Native artists which was "painting flat, outlined figures of Native people at traditional ceremonies and on buffalo hunts on a white background" (Montiel, 2005, p. 483). Houser (1982) described his personal belief concerning his creative visions, "I believe I am past the stage where I have to be confined to what people call 'Indian art'" (cited in Lowe, 2004, p. 19). Houser's work "transcends much of the traditional art while paying homage to it" (Momaday, 2004, p. 70). Characterized by Tremblay (2004) as dancing "on the edge between figuration and abstraction," Houser's aesthetics resist a static

conception of American Indian art. Interestingly Houser and Goodwin who followed him, continuously explore a Native subject matter through their work, imagining heterogeneous figurations of American Indians and contesting historical representational stereotypes (Figure 35).



Figure 35. Goodwin's alabaster sculpture inspired by one of his horses. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Goodwin continues, “I used to carve in the basement [of my house] but dust got everywhere. I had to move out to the barn, now I only do outdoor work.” [Pause]. “I began that eagle sculpture in September and worked as long as I could, then picked it up again in March and I’ve been working on it since. I have to get it done by May 24th for the ceremony.” Goodwin’s eagle sculpture was installed permanently at the local *Ojibwemowin*-immersion school named after Ojibwe chief Bugonaygeshig who inspired an armed resistance, the last armed-war between the U.S. military and Native peoples now named Battle at Sugar Point of 1898. Vizenor elaborates, “Bugonaygeshig, or *bagone giizhig*, ‘hole in the day’ ... was a Native *midewiwin* healer...born on Bear Island in 1836. He lived in a cabin at Sugar Point” (2006, p. 7). After being arrested for not testifying against the “felonious sale of alcoholic beverages on the

reservation” he called for help and approximately twenty Ojibwe rescued him and fled the scene (Vizenor, 2006, p. 7). This event soon escalated and a militarized response of seventy-seven United States army men invaded Leech Lake Reservation. Ultimately, a battle ensued at the site of Bugonaygeshig’s home, which was occupied by U.S. army men who were surrounded by only nineteen Ojibwe. Ultimately, the Ojibwe “warriors, outnumbered more than three to one, routed the soldiers of the Third Infantry in a single day... The army casualties were six dead and eleven wounded, a certain defeat seldom mentioned in military histories” (Vizenor, 2006, p. 10). Similar to Bugonaygeshig’s resistance to cultural dominance, Goodwin’s devotion to community involvement and education generate Ojibwe artworks as survivance stories that refute cultural dominance through the figural declaration of a continued Ojibwe presence and worldview.

Dewey followed up, “You should come out to a drum making workshop Bambi and I are doing at the college. There will be a ceremony before we start to smudge the materials and a small feast [lunch] afterwards. We’ll soak the hides on Thursday so they’ll be ready by Saturday.”

“Sure that sounds great.” I replied.

...

In a flurry I opened the door to the B-wing building of Leech Lake Tribal College, while carrying two plastic-grocery-bags filled with a bag of tortilla chips, a jar of salsa, and a large jug of pink-lemonade. The smell of burning sage wafted out as I crossed the threshold and burrowed deeper into the sage-filled-building. I continued down the dimly lit hallway and followed the smell of sage, which I thought signaled my destination, the art room. Two college-aged Ojibwe stood outside of the art room threshold, “Hi,” I greeted, nodded my head and passed them while entering the art room. I placed my food and drink at the end of a table nearby a small crock-pot that simmered with *manoomin* peppered with juicy morsels of venison sausage. I noticed ham, lettuce and cheese sandwiches packed neatly within the original plastic bread-loaf bag, adjacent

to puffy wheat biscuits and bright red raspberry and rhubarb sauce. These were some of the Goodwin's signature dishes, as I would find out later. Both Goodwins had already begun the process of aiding the hand-drum workshop participants in stretching water-logged-elk-hide over an 18-inch-ash-ring that was nearly 3-inches deep. I quietly placed two plastic Ziplock bags that contained a folded whole leaf of tobacco on a small centrally located table. Since I arrived after the workshop began I wasn't aware if anyone else gave tobacco to the Goodwins for their teachings, ceremony, and feast. Sage smoldered on this table, signaling a ceremony giving thanks for the elk hide and prayers for a successful workshop. I sat in a chair at a distance from the participants, but near enough that I could witness the activity.

As two college students entered the room, Dewey informed, "I have two more rounds [for stretching elk hide], there's enough [materials]."

"Who's that?" A woman's voice from across the room was directed to Bambi. Her gaze found me and she turned away, back to the source to report her finding.

Bambi simply stated, "A friend."

...

Throughout the intensive three hour drum workshop, I helped cut the soaked elk hide into thin strips for lacing used to tie the stretched elk hide in place. Community members, both Ojibwe and non-Ojibwe, wrestled with the hide, which resulted in red and chaffed hands. Later on, Bambi Goodwin asked Dewey, while holding up the plastic bag of whole leaf tobacco, "What is this?" Dewey Goodwin replied, "Tobacco. Kevin gave me one earlier." Bambi Goodwin replied, "Oh. I haven't seen it like that before." Another workshop attendee was introduced to me as a close friend to the Goodwins asked if he could have one to use during ceremony and Dewey Goodwin gifted him one of the packages stating, "You can have mine, I already have one."

All eleven attendees finished by the end of the three-hour workshop, which concluded with a modest feast during which I circulated among some of the participants and discussed their successes and eventually my interests in Ojibwe cultural art (Figure 36). My conversation with one participant opened up information pertaining to a video documentary series titled, *Mni Sota: Reflections of Time and Place*, which highlighted numerous American Indian artists from various backgrounds that were partaking in a traveling art exhibition. The YouTube™ videos highlighted both Melvin Losh and Pat Kruse who would become an additional participant-informant.



Figure 36. Participants and Goodwin (far right) at the close of the hand drum workshop. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

My gift of tobacco was the only occurrence that I am aware of that took place during the workshop. I intended my gift of tobacco to both Goodwins as a sign of respect and appreciation for inviting me to their workshop and for sharing their cultural pedagogy and knowledge with me. My request to learn, observe, contribute food, drink and help was intertwined with my intentions of respect and appreciation embedded in the ceremonial gift of tobacco. The tobacco also seemed to generate curiosity, interest and excitement as the one workshop-participant who “couldn’t wait

to try breaking up some of it” in order to use it in ceremony. Similarly, the Goodwins’ ceremonial smudging of burning sage also conveyed a thankful appreciation, respect and gift of the elk hide. Ceremonial smudging marks threshold moments of transition of becoming *different*. Smudging the elk-hide intended for the creation of hand-drums, venerated the animal’s life and gift, while acknowledging the intimacy of interconnectedness among beings. Ceremonial smudging marked becoming *different*, a visionary process of creation from living animal-beings to living-*hand-drums*, venerated for ongoing use through the beat of the drum-as-heart; the drum *lives* similar to Losh’s porcupine quill boxes and resonates with Cajete’s “aliveness” expressed through Indigenous art. Indigenous visionary processes are imbued with qualities that resist static modes of representation. Vizenor (2008) posits in the opening epigraph of this chapter that literary presences of animals are the “heartfelt practice of survivance” and figuration, which I believe are imbued active presences that exemplify the Goodwins’ ceremonial, pedagogical, and creative processes during the hand-drum workshop (p. 12).

...

visionary objects

float and flutter erratically

incarnate again

...

Figure 37. Haiku inspired of the lived qualities conveyed in visionary creative processes. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Resisting Tragedy: “Rebirth for me as an artist”

Dewey Goodwin explained that his artwork process had been affected by two major injuries. The first injury occurred as an accident from a rice-processing machine, one that threshes and winnows the husks from the rice. His right arm was ensnared in the machine, which

had broken his forearm bone, severed the major nerve, and burned major portions of his skin. Although he rehabilitated his dexterity, otherwise it would be “like a claw,” he has no feeling in his right hand. Not only did he have to retrain his right hand in order to use it, he had to train his left hand to become dominant. “It took a long time to learn when I had something in my right hand,” Goodwin recalled, “I had to think about it [consciously rather than respond to the nerve receptors’ activity in the hand]. It was similar to a rebirth for me as an artist; I had to retrain... That was back in the ’80’s.” Goodwin’s rebirth from the traumatic accident is a visionary process similar to an arts-based visionary process having to think about every action and object in his hand in order to transcend the incurred numbness. Goodwin’s constant activation of the visionary process on a daily basis is supported and aided through actual art processes; a demonstration of Vizenor’s “truistic selves” that tease, or deflate, the “originary” through the visionary (1998, p. 20). I hadn’t noticed any marked difference of an impaired hand. When I met Goodwin he was using a power sander on the large dolomite limestone eagle sculpture, we shook hands, and he received my tobacco as a gift with his right hand; grasping, clutching, holding in positions as if there was no history of a traumatic injury, a tease of the originary through the visionary. It was only when he pushed away his shirt in particular areas of his arm that revealed a deep scar and indication that a traumatic event had occurred.

Goodwin also had lost his left eye upon removing a nail. “That injury was very traumatic. I had a rough time with that. I was laid up on the couch for three months. I didn’t want to do anything” Goodwin recalled, “It was a freak accident; as I pulled a nail out from a board, I slipped and the nail flew up and pierced my eye.”

I interjected, “Wooww the odds of that nail hitting your eye is craazy.”

“Mmmhn,” Goodwin continued, “The fluid in my eye was lost. They [the doctors] had to sew it shut, so they fixed the eye in place...it was extremely painful.”

“I can’t believe that happened Dewey,” I said with exasperation.

“I had to relearn my field of depth...I still have trouble with that...Now I wear eye protection or a full face mask when I work.”

“I couldn’t imagine what it would be like to lose an eye.” I replied as I felt a rush of unease that flooded my body. This feeling continued and caused my skin to “crawl” and my own eye to hurt.

“The doctors didn’t even want or know how to treat me. They shuffled me around and...anyways they didn’t treat me right,” Goodwin explained, “It took a long time to get back to work. It was bad.”

Goodwin’s persistence through arts practices is a visionary process that fostered relearning his field of depth and sustained his active presence. In the manner that Goodwin’s creative processes reveals the inner spirits of the stone, where the stone reciprocally modifies him as he carves, so too has his sustained retraining process revealed qualities of strength, positivity, and grace in his own muscles, mind and spirituality. Goodwin’s perseverance through art, trial and error, community involvement through teaching, and surrounding himself with people are metonyms of survivance defined by Vizenor as “more than endurance or mere response; the stories of survivance are an active presence” (1998, p. 15). Goodwin’s transcendence of traumatic events resists succumbing to the closed-notion of victimry or living continually through tragedy as “native stories of survivance are successive and natural estates; survivance is an active repudiation of dominance, tragedy, and victimry” (Vizenor, 1998, p. 15). Even though Vizenor’s notion of survivance pertains to cultural hegemony, I extend survivance

to life altering events that generate visionary processes of rebirth. Goodwin continues to learn, to risk mistakes through learning through every carving and imagining of indigenous subjectivity, to actively pursue connections among his students and his materials, his passions for horses, dogs, fishing, berry picking, and hunting, which are all active presences that inform, re-form, and affirm an Indigneous worldview so that he may resist becoming barked-in as he described some of his older students.

Resisting Becoming “Barked-in”: Goodwin’s Art-Community Interconnections

Goodwin was nominated and subsequently honored by the First Peoples Fund's 2012 Community Spirit Award whose mission “honors and celebrates exceptional American Indian artists who embody the collective spirit – that which manifests self-awareness and a sense of responsibility to sustain the cultural fabric of a community” (2013, Community Spirit Awards section, para. 1). His interviewer-guests, a white female photographer from New York City and male Lakota writer, asked if he had owned any shirts or clothes that would make him appear “at his best.” Shortly before they had arrived, Goodwin and I were rebuilding the fence line from a recent and extremely damaging storm. Goodwin wore work boots and a sleeveless shirt, tucked into his work pants and responded to the query, “Of course! I’ve got shirts. I’ve got many shirts.” Both the photographer and interviewer suggested that their job was to make Goodwin look the best he could. Bambi Goodwin led both the photographer and the interviewer into their home, while Dewey and I followed behind. We traversed the staircase that led to the upper deck and main entrance to their house and Dewey Goodwin quietly uttered to me the drawn out syllables of the word assimilation, “Asss—sim—ill—late...Asss—sim—ill—llaaa—shun.” Goodwin’s utterance seemed to indicate a critique of both the photographer and interviewer’s request concerning the state of his attire and perhaps redressed the specific expectations of the new

visitors. Goodwin's response also delineated a difference between my status as an outsider and the new visitors' relationship to Goodwin. Both Dewey Goodwin and I broke out in laughter and I felt accepted as an ally and friend to Goodwin.

The interview and photographic documentation had very specific aims and only a few hours to achieve them. Both visitors were quite polite, kind, and courteous throughout the documentation that I had witnessed; after the initial meeting, greeting, and discussion of each other's interests and commonalities I decided to depart from the event as I felt it disrespectful to continue my presence during their documentation. My arts research intentions compared to the Community Spirit Award documentation seemed at the surface level to be working to achieve similar aims, yet both models of documentation and research are quite different. There was no ceremony or gift, with the exception of the Goodwins' generosity of sharing their artwork, stories, family, and home with the visitors even though Dewey's participation is contingent upon the formal recognition of the Community Spirit Award, which entails a \$5,000 fellowship. Perhaps, Goodwin's utterance, "assimilation," not only addressed identity politics encapsulated by outward appearances, but also served as a visionary statement that predicted the imminent documentation event intended to extract and archive a snapshot of Goodwin's life.

Goodwin's nomination and subsequent honor by the First Peoples Fund's 2012 Community Spirit Award, also signifies a commitment to his local community through teaching and through his artworks which invoke remembrance, cultural presence and resistance to culture hegemony. The First Peoples Fund website explains,

The same spirit that guides artists' work also drives artists to do service in their communities. Artists convey the sacred meanings behind the materials they use... When artists show the meaning of the beautiful things they make, it helps

heal the Peoples spirits and shows how others can also give back. The process of bringing spirit back to community is an important responsibility for artists - it is part of a sacred honor system. (2013, Community Spirit Awards section, para. 3-4)

Similar to Melvin Losh who activates multiple fields or networks in order to sustain art processes and production, so too has Dewey Goodwin. Alternatively, Goodwin occupies and generates artistic production via educational-institutional networks. His pursuits of teaching have led to an opening of fields of relation that extend beyond his immediate Ojibwe culture, although this remains to be the focus of his activities. He has touched upon a wider field of relations by writing for grants, teaching, and being recognized for his continued active presence among and beyond Ojibwe communities.

For example Goodwin partook in an International Carving Symposium held at St. Paul College called “Minnesota Rocks.” Goodwin’s wife, Bambi, inspired the figural facial features of the sculpture, titled *Sacred Dish* (Figure 38). Yet it was Native women’s endured sorrow in general, that inspired the figurative representation of strength within the Native family and is conveyed by the sculpture. In an interview with a local newspaper columnist, Goodwin explains that he

had a dream just before he was finishing his work...[and] saw a tear coming from the statue. He decided to imbed a pipestone tear below the woman’s face. It represents the sorrow that has been experienced by Native American and other women. (Trimble, 2006, para. 7)

Goodwin’s statement resonates with Cajete’s (2005) description of three Indigenous knowledge foundations: the mythic, visionary, and artistic. His personal dream-based vision interpreted and

actualized through his artistic process and particular media are founded upon the mythic foundation, which conveys a story of sorrow, pain, ceremony, renewal, and futurity. Particularly, Goodwin's choice of pipestone is significant for several reasons and incorporates the spiritual Indigenous knowledge foundation.



Figure 38. Dewey Goodwin working on the facial representation of Sacred Dish. Courtesy Ronnie Farley.

Pipestone, found in Pipestone National Monument in southwest Minnesota, is a brownish-red stone, also known as catlinite renamed for the painter George Catlin whose westward travels in 1836 inspired iconic and embellished paintings of many American Indians and of the pipestone quarry. Pipestone has been carved by many American Indians of various tribal affiliations “for the last 3000 years” into elongated Γ-form or T-form pipes fitted over hollowed out wooden stems that serve as the mouthpieces and are used during numerous and various ceremonies (National Park Service, 2013, Quarries section, para. 1). Goodwin's

inclusion of a sacred material imbued with sacred spiritual energies extends the mythic, visionary, and artistic foundations with the spiritual foundations and furthermore expresses the inner spirit of the stone by removing the least amount of stone as possible. He explains, “As I carve, I seek to glean not only the hidden spirit of the stone itself, but also the essence and wisdom of Native America. I chisel spirits from stone, evoking animals, birds and faces that emerge to speak of the harmony and dependence we share” (cited in Trimble, 2006, para. 8). Goodwin’s reference to harmony resonates with Ojibwe writers Peacock and Wisuri who claim that Ojibwe worldviews are based upon being “keepers of harmony and balance, the collective spirit of places, and of ancestors” (2008, p. 42). Goodwin’s expressed intention is a visionary process, one in which is informed by the stone’s spirit and carver’s knowledge. This notion is also supported by the First Peoples Fund (2013) website which states,

Artists are absolutely central to producing the tangible, visible forms of creation that help the people know who they are. They manifest the tools that support the spiritual practices of the people: the beadwork and clothing that prepare the dancers for the dance; the pipes for ceremony; the drums and rattles for the songs and prayers. Visioning is an important part of all native cultures, and producing art gives presence to the visions of the people. (Community Spirit Awards section, para. 2)

Goodwin’s visionary creation, *Sacred Dish*, is a complex interwoven expression of endured sorrow, active presence of spiritual energy, and potential harmony. Goodwin’s sculptural artistic processes entail careful removal of stone material, a compilation of numbered gestures, and manipulate the original stone material in order to gain entrance to the inner qualities of the stone. Rather than generate a visionary creation from the viewpoint of what was once not present,

Goodwin acknowledges presences as spirits within the stone, or perhaps more poignantly put, the spirit presences *are* the stone opened up through his gestural process. Goodwin's arts ontology ritualizes the process and imbibes an Ojibwe epistemology signified by the inclusion of the embedded-tear-form pipestone. Goodwin states, "the sculptures will communicate to the observer the same need for reverence and respect that our Elders wisely granted to us" (cited in Trimble, 2006, para. 9). Interestingly, Goodwin's sculpture activates several layers of relationships: first as symbolic sorrow, yet active presence of American Indians and particularly of the importance of American Indian women; second as reverence of activating spiritual presence tied to the materiality of the stone, again an active presence; third as a threshold emplacement as the sculpture is situated upon a park bluff in close proximity to American Indian mounds located within the park enabling the activation of remembrance through a continued presence (Figure 39).



Figure 39. Goodwin's sculpture, *Sacred Dish*, created during the International Carving Symposium located at Indian Mounds Park, St. Paul, MN. Courtesy Ronnie Farley.

Goodwin opened up a ceremonial bowl within the stone not only as figural relationships of American Indian epistemology to lived experiences, but also a practical design element that included proper drainage so that the bowl never fills with stagnant rainwater. Goodwin requested that his sculpture was installed in close proximity to the Indian burial mounds and intended the bowl to be utilized as a ceremonial smudge bowl for burning sage. The sculpture can be accessed through ritual and ceremony for cleansing and reverence for American Indians that have passed, while offering prayer for continuance. Goodwin's sculpture then seems to function as a heterotopian emplacement, one in which, "always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable...one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures" (Foucault, 1986, p. 26). Considering Goodwin's visionary creation as an emplacement requires consideration from an outsider's encounter. Without particular knowledge, language, and ceremonial burning of sage and other offerings, in other words an active relationship with the sculpture, Goodwin's visionary creation may be oversimplified by only acknowledging the representational qualities, therefore isolating the embedded spiritual foundation. Furthermore, Goodwin's sculpture as an emplacement, signified by the ceremonial bowl, also signifies continued American Indian presence expressed as by a figural-Ojibwe-woman. Each ceremonial burning of sage, or smudging, within the *Sacred Dish* of the figural Ojibwe-woman signifies the possibilities of future unborn generations of the American Indian birthright. Here then smudging as a ceremony evokes perhaps the most intimate consumption, loss, and gift beyond the fire-lit sage, that being the union and interconnection between a future-presence of American Indians.

This future suggests Ojibwe teachings of the "Seventh Fire." The Ojibwe prophecies delineate a bifurcated road: one to technology or "light skinned people" or another road to

spirituality, that being the Anishinaabeg way (LaDuke, 2008, p. 11). There is a constant resistance to assimilation embedded in the Ojibwe ontology and epistemology as further explained by Ojibwe *Midewewe* teacher Eddie Benton Benai:

The road to technology represents a continuation of headlong rush technological development. This is the road...that has led to a modern society, to a damaged and seared earth. The other road represents a slower path that Traditional Native people have traveled and are now seeking again. The earth is not scorched on this trail. The grass is still growing there. (cited in LaDuke, 2008, p. 11)

Therefore, Goodwin's carved spiritual figuration, *Sacred Dish*, envisions a veneration and rejuvenation of the past, through an active ceremonial presence, in order to sustain a hopeful future of harmony and interdependence. His active presence complicates any authoritative stance pertaining to a "traditional" modality, rather, Goodwin, like Losh employs the use of technological advances. Particularly, Goodwin uses diamond tipped grinders among other powered tools to sully any "authentic" American Indian art conception based upon historical modes of production.

Visionary Becomings of a Bear Sculpture with Goodwin

The bear as figuration, symbolic signification, familial bonds, and ephemeral presence became a reoccurring influence throughout my time spent among the Ojibwe artist-participants. Interestingly, representation of the bear has also been a reoccurring presence prior to this research, as I recall wearing screen-printed bears on short-sleeved-shirts, purchasing a beaded necklace at the annual State College powwow of a bear paw, but also as a metaphoric presence when my wife Julie and I negotiated prickly berry-brambles like bear's-lips, as we often discussed, while picking black raspberries near our home in State College, Pennsylvania. The

first appearance in Minnesota was during a conversation with Bambi Goodwin as she showed me a pair of buckskin moccasins that were beaded with the family symbol, which appeared to be three flowers connected to two conjoined circles. Each one represented their children, now in their thirties. She explained that they are members of the Bear clan. Vizenor discusses the salience of bears to American Indian culture, “The bear is a native totem, the trace of creation, sovenance, and stories; a creative expression, not the mere representations of the real...Stories of bears are heroic ventures” (1998, p. 7). The Ojibwe bear clan are the protectors, guardians, and warriors of the tribe.

Goodwin followed up with excitement, “Here...look at these.” He carried out two pairs of winter boots made of buckskin and bear fur with beaded floral patterns and bear claw designs. “These ’ill keep you warm in the winter months” (Figure 40).



Figure 40. Goodwins' bear fur moccasins with woodland style beadwork. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Goodwin invited me to join him and two other participants in a sculpture workshop held at his outdoor studio. Over the course of five days working three to four hours each day I completed an arts-event with Goodwin. Prior to beginning the project he explained that “the design should not be over-complicated with details, rather it should capture the essence of what you are choosing to create,” a figuration rather than a representation. I observed the qualities in Goodwin’s artwork, Allan Houser’s work, and Inuit carvings of bears in preparation for the workshop. I selected the bear as a subject since I thought the round form of the bear would be easier to express through the stone. On the first day we began by selecting a Brazilian soapstone block, then Goodwin asked to see our sketches or ideas that we wanted to pursue. He encouraged me to work from some source material that he had in his studio, so I choose a black-and-white image of a grizzly bear to help me negotiate between my drawing and the soapstone block. I translated my drawing to the lateral side of the soapstone block as a side view and then carried up lines from prominent features such as the ear and snout to the top and front sides of the block, in order to visualize the figuration from all sides.

After drawing the lines of the bear figuration, Goodwin recommended roughing it out with a handsaw. I worked the blade back and forth along the drawn line. I grew tired as small geometric forms dropped away. Slowly the angular bear figuration emerged and I began to visualize beyond the rough form. Goodwin guided me to remove more material with the handsaw so work with the rasp and electric-motored grinder would be easier (Figure 41). So I cut more strategic forms from the already angular bear until it seemed too difficult to remove any more substantial material with the handsaw.



Figure 41. Bear sculpture in progress with source material and rasp. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author and artist.

The following day of the workshop the Goodwin's told me of a bear that they had encountered near dusk the previous day. "It was bold. It came out of the woods and just stared at us as it stood there in the middle of the road," Goodwin said. "It was something," Bambi Goodwin added, "We don't often see bears around here so close to the house."

I asked, "How close was it?"

She explained, "We were just down the street, turning onto another one and it was just past the intersection... You know, animals appear to us as messengers. They show themselves to us for a reason."

Bambi Goodwin's explanation resonated with me as I have held the belief that some of the encounters I have had with animals while in the woods contiguous to my parents' backyard and elsewhere signified something more than being within each other's gaze. Particularly when a chill emanated from head and down my spine, which I sustained by breathing slowly and deeply. I am at a loss in deciphering any perceived communication, but maintain that those experiences

were unusual and challenged the moments in my life that I took for granted my relationships among the ecology of lived experiences that surround me.

I completed my bear sculpture one evening and left it outside on a worktable with the tools Goodwin lent me (Figure 42). When I awoke the next morning the Goodwin's were already up and active as they usually are around 6 am. Goodwin greeted me and stated, "Come on up to my studio I want to show you something."



Figure 42. Brazilian stone bear sculpture created during Goodwin's workshop. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author and artist.

"Okay," I replied. I filled a cup with coffee and we walked up to his studio-barn where the workshop was held. Goodwin showed me some of the images I was using and stated, "I moved them in this morning, they were all wet from the dew. And the tools were damp too. You got to put these back when you're done."

Embarrassed I apologized and Goodwin replied, “Ahhh, beginner’s mistake.” He then gestured to the window ledge in his studio and I saw my bear sculpture perched atop a few blocks of wood situated so that it seemed to peer out the window. Seeing my bear sculpture included in his studio and carefully situated felt as though he respected my artwork and I hope it resonated with him on deeper level beyond the representational aesthetics of the bear perhaps signifying “the heartfelt practice of survivance” (Vizenor, 2008, p. 12).



Figure 43. My bear sculpture perched atop an arrangement of stone inside Goodwin's studio. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.

...

berry-picking bear lips
gently selecting juicy tart delicacies
bramble to bramble, shrub to shrub
leaving behind a meal for another

day

...

Figure 44. Poem inspired of berry-picking bears. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

The Story of Uno and the Storm Baskets

The following narrative explores correspondences among loss, storm energy expenditure and labor, flexibility in the face of tragedy and creative acts as healing. The narrative covers several days of intensities and moments of crisis, relationships between emplaced bodies and artworks as emplacements.

Uno, Goodwin's large, gentle German Shepherd, kept watch from his perch atop the iron-cast stairs that led to the large wooden deck in front of their home. Whenever someone approached either on foot or in a car Uno would run out to determine if the intruder was friend or foe (Figure 45). At his side was Blackjack, a small Schipperke, who always outran Uno. Blackjack and Uno were always together when I was at the Goodwin's house. The two dogs would play, chase the small, chatty red squirrels up trees, or any other scurrying animal they caught wind of. Blackjack would roll over and play beta to Uno. They were close friends to each other and to the Goodwins. Every time either of the Goodwins walked from the house to the horse stables, gardens, or the barn-studio Uno and Blackjack followed. Both dogs were friendly to me although every time I left and returned to the Goodwin's home Blackjack would run, barking to my car as I approached as if he had never met me. I became quite close to both Blackjack and Uno when I housesat for the Goodwins' vacation trip to Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park in North Dakota. I am not sure of Uno's age, but the Goodwin's had him since he was a puppy. He was very large with thick layers of hair, much larger than other Shepherds I have seen as he reminded me of a wolf.



Figure 45. Uno standing alert on Goodwin's stone patio. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Unfortunately, Uno, marked a devastating loss, while I was in Minnesota. He wasn't moving around as well as he had been, his back legs appeared to be out of order. Shepherds are known to have hip problems and it appeared Uno began to exhibit this problem. Within a week upon the Goodwin's return from North Dakota, Uno stopped eating and wouldn't get up and walk with Blackjack. He began to smell badly and upon inspection, Goodwin found worms on his hindquarters. He bathed and shaved his back legs and decided to sleep with him out in his front yard that night. When I woke early the next morning, Goodwin seemed very upset as he talked through tears while on the phone, "I had to put him down. I couldn't let him be like that. He couldn't make it. I had to put him down. I didn't want to do it."

Goodwin wanted to bury him as soon as possible, "before the flies get to him," but before loading Uno into a wagon attached to the back of a four-wheeler, Goodwin and I rolled out two clay slabs in Bambi's studio. We took the clay slabs outside, where Uno was lying, covered by

Goodwin's camouflaged hunting jacket and made impressions of Uno's paws. Goodwin then wrapped him in a handmade quilt and we loaded two shovels into the wagon as well. He went into the house to gather his pipe-bag, tobacco, a tobacco tie, a bit of cooked deer meat and a container of water.

We drove Uno's body deep into the backfield where the Goodwins had previously buried dogs and horses that passed away during their lifetime. Goodwin discerned a spot near another burial and we began to dig. Goodwin's grandson was with us and played in the sandy dirt pile as it was made higher. Prior to lowering Uno's body, Goodwin covered the bottom of the grave with cedar branches. We lowered Uno's body into the ground on top of the green cedar branches and he said, "It must seem weird that we go to all this trouble for a dog."

"No." I replied. "It's obvious how much he meant to you and your family."

Once Uno's body wrapped in the quilt was placed into the earth, Goodwin placed his hunting shirt over Uno and then lit some sage and cedar and smudged Uno's body and the burial; we also smudged. He filled his hollowed-out pipestone bowl with tobacco and other herbs and began to pray in *Ojibwemowin*. Goodwin cycled through the prayer three times, while puffing on the pipe and the third time he offered me the pipe. I smoked the pipe and returned it to him as he concluded the prayer. We each had a bite of meat and the remaining portion was buried with Uno at his head along with the water. Uno's body was then covered with the sandy dirt. At the close of the ceremony, Goodwin tied a small cloth-filled pouch with tobacco, known as a tobacco tie, on a tree limb directly above Uno's grave. We covered the top of Uno's grave with some large stones that were once used as a fire pit along with some more green cedar branches (Figure 46).

The entire event of Uno's passing, Dewey's emotional phone call, the somber burial, and venerating ceremony was thick with respect and love for Uno. Goodwin's care worked to ensure

that Uno's spirit was fed and well directed on his journey in a "good way." The tobacco tie marked Uno's burial and contained Goodwin's prayers. Ceremonies are "ways of coming to know, of understanding" and Goodwin's ceremony highlights the importance of his relationship with Uno and perhaps a mode of coping to understand (Cajete, 2000, p. 81).



Figure 46. Uno's burial covered with stones, birch bark and spruce branches including Blackjack, the Schipperke.

Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Later that day Goodwin and his grandson invited me to go fishing so that we would redirect our minds. By the time the boat was loaded and our gear packed it was late afternoon, transitioning to dusk and I felt ill. Sickness washed over me and settled in my stomach as we rode out from Goodwin's home. I worked to quell my feelings of sickness so as to not dampen our outing, which seemed to be a much needed diversion and effort to not succumb to tragedy. The lake was beautiful, calm, and minimally populated with other boats and fishermen (Figure 47). We paddled out to a thick patch of tall reeds and Goodwin pointed out where the fish congregate

just along the visible threshold of reeds, in-between the striated space of the reeds and smooth space of the lake water. I seemed to have all the luck of attraction that evening as one after another small-mouthed bass found my lure; I commented, “I never had such luck and success fishing like this before Dewey!” Nor did I realize that six small-mouthed bass nearly thirteen inches each would feed us for the next several days. The lake provided sustenance that night and several nights to come.

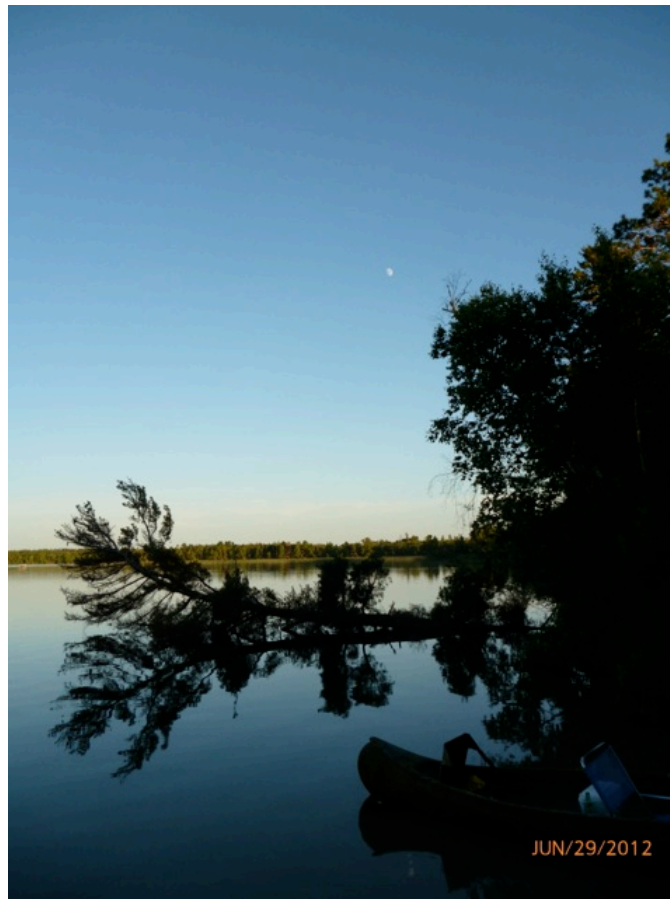


Figure 47. The serene lake with a silhouette of Goodwin's canoe after fishing. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Fishing on the lake that evening was an uncanny and surreal excursion. I felt that I should enjoy the serenity of the lake, yet I could not escape feeling ill. Although Goodwin did not mention Uno while on the lake, Uno's passing seemed to ever present. I thought that catching fish was a successful venture as they would feed and sustain us, yet they were harvested from the

lake. Ultimately the fishing event corresponded with Uno's burial beyond the temporal associations of one event happening after the other. Rather, I realized respect, veneration, and an interconnected worldview was the common thread, which occurred after cleaning and preparing a couple of fish for a meal. Goodwin led his grandson and I in prayer to the Anishinaabeg Great Spirit, *Gitchi-manidoo*. During Goodwin's prayer, he uttered *miigwetch*, or thank you, several times, which corresponded with the early morning prayer after a transfer of animal life energy. Cajete explains "Indigenous peoples understood that compacts must be made between sources of life, the land, their place, and with the natural entities there. The key relationships they established are reflected in ceremonies" (2000, p. 81). The Goodwins' engaged in ceremony regularly, when we came together to share a meal, work with natural materials harvested from the environment, or encounter a loss or gift of life. These ceremonies "choreograph situations to bring people [the Goodwins and those around them] in contact with those compacts, the entities involved in relationships" (Cajete, 2000, p. 81).

...

illness and sorrow

unshakable companions

blown away in days

...

Figure 48. Haiku inspired of the events that surround Uno's passing. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.

A high-energy storm blew across northern Minnesota from the west. It was July 1st, my seventh wedding anniversary with Julie, and two days after Uno's passing. Tornado-like winds bent the elastic treetops to the ground, the rain battered against the windows as Goodwin, his grandson, and I watched the unexpected storm rip through their front yard. Visibility was low as

the rain pelted the house in swirls and then in waves, only to give way for a moment and then continued. We ran to close the windows, the lights flickered, and then all power was gone. Lightning flashed and the sounds of thunder exploded like bombs above us; we were being invaded and it seemed as though we were losing. Trees snapped, cracked, and creaked all around the house and then a resounding *ka-lunk* was heard on the roof. For two hours the flexibility of trees continued to be tested. Out in front of the house there was a grouping of birch trees adjacent to where Goodwin and I had parked our cars. Later that evening, several tree limbs were twisted from their trunks and appeared to be lying over our vehicles. We turned in that night and Goodwin stated, “I haven’t seen a storm like that in the summer months for some time.”



Figure 49. A small area of storm damage on Goodwins' acreage. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

We awoke early that morning to assess the damage. The storm devastated the landscape throughout Goodwin's acreage (Figure 49). There was no way in or out of the driveway as birch, popple (aspen), and jack pine trees were strewn about. Tree limbs, sticks, and leaves covered the ground and parts of the house. Luckily, our cars were unscathed. That Monday morning I helped Goodwin clear fallen timber on his property through late afternoon until we couldn't bear the above ninety-degree heat. Our second day of clean up working in ninety-temperatures, we all went swimming in the Mississippi river to cool off. There was a small boat launch area located nearby, which doubled as the Goodwin's family swimming hole, only five or seven minutes drive from their home.

I plunged into the water headfirst and swam crawl-stroke through the cool and fast moving Mississippi headwaters. The moment reminded me of my competitive swimming events throughout middle and high school. I felt emboldened to swim further away from the Goodwin's and their family, to explore the open waters. I stooped low, under the water level to get a substantial thrust from the bottom of the sandy-soft-sediment. My dolphin-like interjection propelled me forward through the murky waters. I lifted my head to discern my location between breaths. I decided to stop near a toppled-over tree now partially submerged under the waters; it became a placeholder, a demarcated space within the murky waters for me to keep my bearings. From here I began to swim out to cross the waters to reach the other side. I did not take more than two strokes and I felt my wedding band slip off, quickly and easily from my left-hand, ring finger. Panic washed over me as I felt the loss, yet had a difficult time determining where within the water I had lost it. I stopped immediately in the rushing water, but I quickly realized that I wasn't in the exact spot in which the ring was lost. Frantically, I dove headfirst and searched

feebly through the loose sand, silt, and slimy seaweed, over and over and over again. Tired and defeated by the river, I had to come to terms that I had lost my wedding ring.

The devastation from the storm was greater than I had imagined as the eleven o'clock news footage displayed blown-over trees as flattened matchsticks all throughout northern Minnesota. Atmospheric pressure increased and spun-off excess energy as disastrous winds devastating large forested areas. Consequently, the intense and hot temperatures in which we labored accumulated and swelled my flesh only to be released as I spun off excess energy swimming in the cold headwaters, which relinquished my ring. Perhaps my wedding band corrected an imbalance incurred for the fish I caught two days earlier or perhaps I just lost my ring. Regardless how I explain the meaning of the event, the high-intensity storm constituted change, expenditures of excess energy and loss to the natural environment, which seemed to correspond locally to my emplaced body. Yet, rather view the change in the landscape as a loss, Bambi Goodwin interpreted the uprooted trees as a "thinning out of the dense forest," or as a gift. Goodwin explained that too long the wooded areas were becoming too dense, which blotted out the sunlight. She added that the storm "took care of a lot of dead wood" that created impassible areas of the woods for their horses to meander.

The next day Goodwin and I continued to clear snapped trees from the land, organized them into piles and readied for transport into the back field for burning. Later I went back out to the headwaters and searched for my lost ring to no avail. After working all morning and into the next midday, Goodwin suggested that we take a break from our work to make birch bark baskets; he said, "...to mark the storm and remember. We have all the materials. Those birch near our cars are coming down, I can just rip a line right down the logs with my chainsaw. Over near the house there, where we fixed the fence are spruce trees. We can get some root from there. You

got roots with Jim [Jones Jr.] right?” Goodwin asked. Jones is known for his activities in making birch bark canoes, which requires the harvesting of spruce roots for lacing, birch bark for the hull of the boat, and cedar logs split for the inner ribs of the boat. Spruce roots are also used for lashing baskets together.

“Yeah, we won’t need a lot of roots since we’re just making baskets. It might be harder though, since we [Jones and I] got the roots from a swamp area and that is some compacted soil over there [along side Goodwin’s home]. But, they’ll work just fine.” I replied.

Goodwin stated, “Mmmhmmnn.”

I continued, “We’ll need to soak them, so that they don’t dry out. Do you have something we can soak them in?”

Goodwin replied, “Yeah, we can use that turtle pool under the deck.”

“Excellent, we’ll have to boil them, so that the outer skin can be peeled off so that we can split,” I explained. Goodwin concurred and allowed me to share my harvesting and preparation experiences with Jones. Goodwin’s generosity and patience with my explanation seem as though he was testing me to see if I had learned the practical knowledge from Jones. Goodwin also seemed to gauge the information Jones had shared with me, to determine if it was accurate, informative, or whether Jones was concealing any information rather than receive my explanation as new information.

We continued to gather all the materials, soaked the roots, and flattened the harvested bark under some large stones and drenched them with water. The following day we continued with our cleanup efforts and took breaks to further prepare in making birch bark baskets. Goodwin selected some thinly cut black ash wood and soaked them in their bathtub to be used as rims for our baskets. We also set up a propane gas tank and burner to boil water, steam the roots

and the black ash wood. Over the next several days both Goodwin and I worked through multiple stages, splitting the root, cutting the birch bark to size, using awls to hold the basket forms in place, and puncturing openings to thread the roots. It was an arduous process that spanned several days and many hours. The basket was a continuous struggle, while coercing the materials in place and throughout the process we shared ideas and approaches to material usage even though I followed Goodwin's suggestions. He suggested using copper wire to hold and thread the black ash rims in place, as "copper is a sacred material. We used to be able to find it quite close to the surface all throughout the ground...why don't you make your basket a gift for Julie, an Indian basket for her? We can fill it [with] homemade jam, some wild rice, and other items," Goodwin excitedly stated. Goodwin's suggestion attends to the imbalance of losing my wedding band and assumes the distress of symbolic loss to be assuaged by giving a basket filled with the newly formed relationships with him and his family. He gifted his basket to Bambi so that she could use it in the garden to harvest vegetables, a place she said that she enjoyed being. The birch bask is also composite of the ensemble of relations and events that inform both Goodwin's and my own emplacement. Particularly the ensemble is constitutive of the temporal, mythic, visionary, affective, environmental influences and contexts in which we generated our presences each unique and individual yet they correspond as "[b]eing in a community in natural places" (Cajete, 2000, p. 99). A community of nature, Cajete explains, generates "[t]he concept of biophilia – the idea that human beings have an instinctual understanding and need for affiliation with other living things" (2000, p. 99). Therefore, the birch bark baskets are the nexus to ensembles of relations among living entities expressed as an offering and a gift in response to losses of differing proportions (Figure 50).

The spun-off excesses of the storm enabled our birch bark storm baskets, which provided the materials and inspiration for their creation. Even though the baskets seemed to be empty and hollow, they were filled with relational experiences of loss, sorrow, illness, nourishment, labor, and expended energies. The baskets are shared experiences and relationships of bodies, minds, places, and spirits with Goodwin in particular ecologies.



Figure 50. Birch bark basket with spruce roots, black ash rims, and copper wire. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author and artist.

...

catches uprooted

behold the invisible

stand nowhere but here

...

Figure 51. Haiku inspired by the birch bark basket event. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Chapter VI: Jim Jones Jr.'s Survivance Stories

Harvesting Spruce Roots, Birch Bark, and Cedar with Jim Jones Jr.

In this chapter, I discuss Cultural Resource Director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), Jim Jones Jr. and his creative activities of harvesting spruce tree roots, birch bark, and cedar logs for the creation of birch bark canoes, as well as his work using local clay for reconstruction pottery based upon archeological excavations. I oscillate among descriptive narrative writing that illuminate Jones' processes, my presences with Jones, and historical research pertaining to archeological excavations, cultural rights to land and how Jones' processes are active presences that perpetuate Indigenous knowledge relationships. Particularly, I explore and extend Cajete's (2000) claim "(t)hrough the seeking, making and celebrating of these natural relationships, they [Indigenous people] came to perceive themselves as living in a sea of relationships...[and] accumulated ecological knowledge" by way of Jones' relationships (p. 178).

...

..."Bastards!" Jones smacked his neck and continued, "Keep your window down so that they fly through [the cab of the truck]...Here, take your hat and smack them, give them what they deserve." Obliging, I grabbed my hat by the brim and swung upward against the biting deer flies that clung to the ceiling of the truck cab. They fell to the floor.

I thought to myself in amusement, "What do they live on when they can't get hobbit?" (Tolkien, 1994, p. 206)

The ground now became damp, and in places boggy and here and there they came upon pools, and wide stretches of reeds and rushes filled with the warbling of little hidden birds. They had to pick their way carefully to keep both dry-footed and on their proper course...The flies began to torment them, and the air was full

of clouds of tiny midges that crept up their sleeves and breeches and into their hair. 'I am being eaten alive!' (Tolkien, 1994, p. 206)

...

We entered a bog, a swampy area covered with moss and hidden pools of water, with a group of undergraduate students from Hamline College. Hamline College has collaborated with Jones before in partial fulfillment of an archeological field experience. We trudged through the wetlands and my socks slowly became saturated. I walked with Jones and handed him a sealed plastic bag with a large dried tobacco leaf. Jones accepted the tobacco with mild surprise. I had not seen any of the Hamline students or the archeology professor from Hamline College offer tobacco. Upon reaching our location for harvesting spruce roots, intended for the production of a birch bark canoe, we stopped and Jones removed the tobacco from his back pants pocket.

Jones explained, "*Asemaa*, or tobacco, is sacred to me. Kevin here gave this to me earlier and I offer it up...before we harvest."

Jones seemed to appreciate my offering enough to use the gift as an opportunity to teach the Hamline group about the importance of tobacco as a sign of respect, request for council or information, and as a spiritual element used during prayer. Jones continued in *Ojibwemowin* and sprinkled the crushed leaf of tobacco as he held a fist full up and let it drop to into the moss-covered bog. Jones then got down on one knee, being careful of putting pressure on his recent ankle surgery, took a three-pronged gardening tool and began to pull back the thick layer of moss that hid the roots of a spruce tree (Figure 52).

Jones continued to discuss the thickness required for the lacing intended for the birch bark canoe, "You want to look for the roots that are about the thickness of your index finger. The reason is that once you peel the covering off of the root, you end up with a much thinner piece of root."



Figure 52. Jones harvesting spruce roots amidst a moss-covered bog. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

The thinner the root, the less viable and the higher propensity of breaking once split in half. It was a very hot day, nearly ninety-degrees Fahrenheit, and I wore long sleeves and long pants to lessen the effect of biting deer flies and mosquitoes, in addition to gloves, since the root-skin can cause rashes. Sweat dripped from my brow as I struggled against the unrelenting grip of the spruce roots within the ground. Finding a viable root for harvesting often led to another, and then another as I pulled back the mossy covering and followed the root lines through the marsh, pulling and digging through the mud as I searched. I spent most of my time uncovering the deeply buried roots before I could even harvest them. Then, once exposed and bared-to-the-open air, I began to pull on a selected root, which at times broke and caused me to stumble backwards. Then I would repeat the method. Each snap of the root caused my accumulated energy, bound-up in the constant negotiation and coercion of the root from the marsh, to be released and spun off, ultimately exhausting my reserves. Surprisingly the mosquitoes and deer flies did not seem to

bite until I uttered a statement to Jones concerning their absence. Soon thereafter the mosquitos became more bothersome to which Jones sarcastically chided me for inciting their torment. Over the next three and half hours our group harvested nearly three hundred feet of spruce roots, which were coiled and carried out of the bog (Figure 53).



Figure 53. A spruce root bundle harvested from the bog. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author and laborer.

The unrelenting deer flies bit at any exposed skin and through my long pants and long-sleeved-flannel shirt layered over a short-sleeve cotton shirt. Jones and I trawled slowly down the tree-lined state forest dirt and gravel road in a dark red extended-cab pickup truck. The crisscrossing deer flies and mosquitoes passed through an open window, bounced and landed on the windshield and dashboard only to exit the other window; some continued to cling to the ceiling and others gnawed our flesh.

“Oh.” Jones paused, then stopped and reversed our direction. “See there?” Jones gestured out the window through the hardwood trees.

“Ah yeah, those birch look pretty nice from this side... and smooth.”

Jones laughed deeply. “Yep, let’s go check them out.”

We slid out of the truck, the mid-ninety degree heat smacked us in the face, and I unraveled the long sleeves and buttoned up my flannel shirt.

Jones has particular requirements for the birch bark and he will not harvest it if it does not meet the needs for a canoe. We spent days driving along forest service roads and walking through the forest without ever harvesting any bark; only to have fed the mosquitoes and deer flies. Tree girth is one requirement necessary for harvesting bark; it should be wide enough to serve as the hull without too many seams upon lashing the individual sections of bark together. Fewer seams beget less pitch as a sealer and less pitch used lessens the chance of allowing in water.

Jones recalled, “The ‘old-style’ would use only one piece of birch bark [for the entire canoe].”

Jones’ statement enfolded several discourses, beginning with the most explicit notion that birch trees were very mature; a wide girth was common and abundant. Abundance and maturity connote an absence discourse and implicate the extraction practices of the lumber industry over the past several hundred years. Lastly, the Ojibwe harvested large birch trees without devastating repercussions; they maintained reciprocal relationships with their ecology. Since mature birch trees are difficult to find, Jones must harvest several sections from multiple trees; they must be a minimum of five-feet in height and a seven-foot section or more is preferred. The bark should be smooth, since the rough bark contains many “eyes,” or small holes. If the birch tree has

significant girth, smooth texture, and an uninterrupted section over five feet in length, Jones will use a utility knife to cut a finger-length, wedge-shaped-section from the tree to determine the thickness. Lastly, if the bark has significant thickness, nearly a quarter-inch, which correlates with durability, then Jones will harvest the bark (Figure 54). The following narrative describes Jones' specialized bark-harvesting tool.



Figure 54. Jones harvesting birch bark. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

...

“Grab the green tape measurer from the truck and the [utility] blades,” Jones stated as he clutched a long two inch by one inch piece of wood wedged in-between a 2’x4’ wooden frame mounted to the back of the truck bed. The long slender and tapered piece of wood had a notch cut into one end and a small screw. The other end was sanded smooth to a taper. I hooked the

tape measurer to my right-pants-pocket and slid the blades into my rear pocket. “Give me one of those blades.” Jones paused and said, “Here, watch this.” Jones took the blade and held it in-between his lips as he twisted out the small-embedded screw, and dropped the screw into his shirt pocket then slid the blade into the notch, sharp edge down. The screw was then twisted through the front side of the wood, the blade, and then fixed into place as it passed through the back of the wood. Jones lifted the 7’ slender piece of wood into the air, above his head and gestured downward in a pulling movement. “See?” Jones queried.

“Ah, an extension rod to cut the bark.” I stated my realization.

[Jim laughed deeply].

“Nice.” I reinforced.

“Alright let’s go, watch out for the [poison] ivy.”

...

Surveying the forests for these materials were very time-intensive, slow, and arduous as we walked through them in mid-ninety degree heat in long sleeves and pants, while battling deer flies and mosquitoes. Further, walking into the forest was only half of the journey especially if we harvested bark deep into the forest, we would have to carry it out. A seven-foot-section of bark with an average girth of thirty inches, rolled up and tied off, was not heavy to lift and carry at first, but adding another section of bark on the other shoulder quickly tired my body while negotiating the landscape deep within the forest. We had spent thirty-five hours over five days surveying and collecting nearly enough material for a single fifteen-foot birch bark canoe. Harvesting spruce roots and birch bark accounts for only two-thirds of the necessary material; cedar is also an integral component to constructing a canoe.

There are particular requirements necessary in selecting a proper cedar tree. The tree should be straight, without any curves and limbs in the lower portion of the tree. Also the bark

must not “twist” either. Jones explained, “You can see it along the length of the tree, if the bark twists up and around the tree, then you keep looking.” The twists through the surface of the bark indicate an inner grain that impedes even-splitting, which is an inherent quality and use-value of cedar intended for parts of the canoe. The cedar is hand-split with an iron wedge and hammer, after which a drawknife is used to break the cedar log into thin strips for planking in lengthwise over the birch bark hull followed by the horizontal ribs bent into shape with boiling water (Figure 55). Jones also explained the difficulty in harvesting a cedar tree, “It is a light wood and difficult to drop, especially if it is surrounded by other trees. It can get hung-up easily.” We found one tree after some time scouting the forest with the Hamline College students. Once the tree was found then the chainsaw and fuel is carried back into the woods. Jones cut the tree and it proved difficult to drop as it became caught in between two other trees. Jones took time to study the problem before making any additional cuts, while instructing onlookers to move to a safe location. After cutting a smaller tree, which became leverage to pry the stuck cedar tree loose, Jones was able to cut the cedar into five-and-six-foot sections, which were also split in half. A second tree was also harvested without any extraneous effort.



Figure 55. Jones splitting cedar. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Jones' knowledge of the material limitations and affordances is exemplified by accessing the hidden qualities, the strength and durability of cedar split into thin sheets and of spruce roots that withstand boiling water and multiple splitting. Jones' manipulation of each natural material accesses a latent-functionality and highlights his knowledge of relationships, while respecting the living qualities within the local ecology. Cajete (2000) explains:

Native cultures have indeed amassed an enormous knowledge base related to the natural characteristics and processes of their lands through direct experience and participation...The difference between Native and non-Native use of the land and its resources is that Native cultures have traditionally aspired to live in accordance

with an ideal of reciprocity with the landscape, guided by cultural values, ethics, and spiritual practice. (p. 183)

Rather than dominate and order a commodity-centered ecology, Jones utilizes multi-situated, seemingly disparate elements that foster mobility, while generating an intimate, interconnected, and flexible repurposing that enable a continued presence within his local ecologies. Each material was combined with the other to form an ecological assemblage in which the Ojibwe canoe-makers utilize seemingly disparate elements to create anew and reinforces Cajete's claim that "all Native cultures have readily used their landscape in ways that benefited them and ensured their survival" (2000, p. 183). Additionally, both the birch and cedar materials are resistant to rot and/or insects, which imbue sustainability and use over time. Jones' process connotes cultural value and respect through careful and ceremonial selection of materials prefaced by prayer and offering of tobacco as well as his fidelity to the final product (Figure 56). His knowledge of material-locations is cultivated through a lived-intimacy of the local ecology and through close attention and interpretation of all the variances that constitute a particular landscape. Jones' active presence and continuance of cultural practices reinforce ecological relationships and worldviews, which is according to Cajete embodies "ethical participation with nature [and] is the ideal behind the practice of Native science and its orientation to place" (2000, p. 183).



Figure 56. Cedar ribs over cedar planks interior detail (left). Spruce root lacing detail (right) of Jones' birch bark canoe. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Fittingly, Jones surveys land intended for developing projects within northern Minnesota in order to determine if the potential site could be deemed a cultural heritage site, one that contains evidence of prior Ojibwe inhabitants signified by pottery fragments or other traces of lived Ojibwe culture. His survey and archeological work slows, delays, and could forever deny land-developing intentions. For example, a 1988 expansion project to a Pamida store, located in Bemidji, MN “unearthed the remains of 22 people [Dakota Sioux]” (Robertson, 2012, para. 3). Minnesota public radio reporter, Tom Robertson (2012) summarized Jones as stating, “Elders from Sioux communities in southern Minnesota decided the remains should be reburied in place” (para. 10). The store was finally closed February 2012, twenty-four years after the burial desecration. Jones, the cultural resource director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council has

advised and pushed for the removal of the building from the site. Jones stated, “In some cultures it’s acceptable to relocate or move burials, but in American Indian cultures, that’s not acceptable. And because of all the things that have happened there already, enough is enough. Leave it alone. Let them rest peacefully” (quoted in Robertson, 2012, para. 15). Since the property is privately owned, the fate of the building solely rests with the property owner.

Unearthing American Indian remains during land development projects have been an ongoing struggle for American Indian peoples. The first United States law wasn’t passed until 1976 in Iowa led by Maria Pearson’s activism. Pearson challenged the inequitable treatment between exhumed bodily remains of Euro-Americans who were reburied “per state law” and an American Indian burial “dubbed the Indian Princess [which was] removed to Iowa City for study” (Anderson, 2005, p. 35). The 1976 law was the “first of its kind in the country designed specifically to protect ancient burial sites” (Anderson & Tiffany, 2005, p. 31). Her successful work in Iowa set the precedent and “significantly anticipated the federal Native American Graves Protection Act (NAGPRA) of 1990” (Gradwohl, 2005, p. 18). Pearson’s continued presence and unwavering perseverance for human rights issues and intercultural respect were ripples of change that challenged the disinterment of burial sites, challenged the privileged archeologists’ and anthropologists’ unchecked practices, as well as public and institutional displays of American Indian peoples and cultural objects made spectacle; as such Pearson has been named the “the Rosa Parks of NAGPRA” (Gradwohl, 2005, p. 13).

Similarly, Jones continues to establish himself within the community as an ardent advocate for the continued presence of Ojibwe cultural heritage. Jones stated, “Our [Ojibwe] culture is happening now. It’s alive. It’s not a dead culture that happened in the past, it’s now. We’re still here.”

Reconstructing Relationships between Past and Present: Jones' Archeological Pottery

In addition to constructing birch bark canoes based upon mid-18th century Ojibwe techniques and specifications, while grounded in sustainable harvesting processes indicative of Ojibwe ontology, Jones also creates Ojibwe pottery based upon archeological findings excavated in local ecologies. Jones' pottery is created from locally harvested clay with hand-building techniques particular to the Ojibwe living within particular areas (Figure 57). Jones and I ended our first meeting at his home on Leech Lake reservation. Here he showed me a large plastic bucket filled with locally dug clay that he uses to create his works. It is a soft, wet clay that is easily manipulated. Jones built a make-shift fire to finalize a couple examples of pottery. After a few minutes of stoking the paper, leaves, cardboard and few tree limbs the pots were done. Jones explained, "They don't need a long time firing, they are low heat pot, but are highly functional or used in burials." Pottery forms are constitutive of the people, the place in which they were created, as well as time period. For example Blackduck pottery is a particular form generated in the north-central region of Minnesota including nearby areas of Wisconsin and Canada practiced between A.D. 600 and A.D. 1100. Lakeland public television, a local news broadcast, highlighted several cultural events that celebrate a historic trade route in Outing Minnesota and shows Jones constructing a replica clay pot based upon early woodland pottery. Jones began by rolling out clay coils intended to form the lip of the vessel and from which dictates the remaining body-form of the vessel. Blackduck pottery is noted to exhibit a flared lip, narrow neck and globular form. The lip is decorated with an imprint made by a chord-wrapped paddle, he explained that an elder from northern Manitoba stated, "that the oval pot is shaped like a woman carrying a child...the top of the decoration [pause] and the chord-wrapped paddle [pause] is that it represents, it looks like an umbilical chord" (Lakeland PTV, 2012, video).



Figure 57. Several examples of Jones' archeologically inspired Ojibwe pottery. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

Jones' reconstruction pottery demonstration was a pedagogical event that discussed the interwoven importance of birthing events to the use of local clay for processes and forms conveyed by the fired pottery. Jones' explanation opens up how ways of being a part of the ecology are communicated through functional pottery. The elder's story of Blackduck pottery as an intimate relationship between mother-child/clay-vessel may seem to be a reductive analogy aligning women as functional vessels. Yet, Jones' description of the elder's story reveals a more complex and intimate web of relationships. These vessels were used for food storage; food gathered and harvested within local ecologies that sustained a continued presence, which implicates intimate and interdependent ties to the complex ecology. Furthermore, the metaphor expressed through the decorative umbilical chord representation ruptures the overly reductive analogy of women as a vessel-object, rather it conveys an interwoven lived experience within the local ecology one which is sustained through reciprocal care. "The Native view of the landscape," Cajete explains, "is a metaphoric map of place that is humanistic, sacred, feminine, in motion, creative, nurturing, and the source of all their kinship" (2000, p. 186). Thus, the pottery elaborates upon Cajete's mythic, art and visionary foundations of Indigenous knowledge, which

tells a story of ecological reciprocity and of Ojibwe sustainability through creative processes. I draw a comparison between Jones' reconstruction Blackduck pottery and accompanied story to Cajete's explanation of Pueblo pottery processes who states:

For Pueblos, the making of pottery is a ceremonial act, an act of faith, an act of understanding the significance of relationship to the Earth through bringing forth clay, as well as of reaffirming the basic connection that every human has to the Earth. This sentiment, called "right relationship," also extends to the collection, preparation, and eating of food and foodstuffs from one's natural environment.

What goes into the Pueblo pot is reflective of the realization that the food we eat must be appreciated – it is sacred and symbolic of that which gives us life and is a metaphor for our ultimate relationship with, and dependence upon, the natural world (Cajete 1994: 100-01). (2000, pp.114-15)

Ultimately both Jones' and Cajete's explanations of pottery made by Indigenous peoples illuminate a complex understanding of being with and in natural environments, or biophilia, which is continuously venerated during the making and use of the pot.

Living Culture: Jim Jones Jr.'s Community Relationships

Jones proclaimed, "If you're going to do it and call it Ojibwe, then do it accurately," after discussing the problem of a non-Ojibwe archeologist who used inaccurate reconstruction pottery techniques. Jones' critique directly challenged her use of a rolling pattern tool rather than a wooden paddle to create the decorative work on the surface of the pottery. Additionally, Jones critiqued the fact that she wasn't Ojibwe even though she described her creation as "Ojibwe pottery." Both elements of Jones' critique attends to misrepresentation and authenticity.

Jones' critique resonates with the Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA) of 1990 passed as measure of protection against both misrepresentation and authenticity. Particularly the IACA problematizes reified language of "Indian" to label artwork as being a violation of the federal law. Rather, particular tribal affiliation must be identified as recognized outlined in federal legislation in accordance with appropriate blood quantum levels. The government discourse is intended to "protect" the artist, but as discussed earlier blood quantum is a complex issue related to identity, positionality, and has been critically analyzed as positioning the "Indian as a member of a biological group and Indian as an incompetent ward" (Spruhan, 2006, p. 49). Blood quantum has been unevenly utilized, defined, and implemented, yet the IACA relies upon blood quantum as the sole discourse to validate authenticity and protection services intended to be guaranteed by federal law from producing artifact-based works that frame native cultures and peoples as relegated to the past.

"We are still here, still living," Jones declares and then extends, "Everything is connected...overlapping processes and intentions. Everything ties in: art, culture, and history. The artistic quality is instilled in everyday items, like the archeological-functional pottery that I do." Jones further states, "reenactments [of the Historic Trade Route] through the cultural corridor...in the Outing community [of Minnesota], puts the first peoples culture and history [in the foreground]. These events are for survival, for our kids and our future...this outreach is key...communication is much more meaningful than art objects" Jones concludes.

Jones' reference to the second-annual reenactment of the French geographer, Joseph Nicollet's journey through the headwaters of the Mississippi river in 1836 to map the upper regions of the Louisiana Purchase, highlights a complex rippling relationship. An Ojibwe guide, Chagobe, and Ojibwe-French interpreter, Francious Brunia led Nicollet through a route that

American Indians have been using for centuries, which connected Leech Lake and Lake Itasca. At the surface these historical reenactments position Jones' birch bark canoes as a showcase of Ojibwe ingenuity and advanced construction techniques used to create the canoes. Ojibwe birch bark canoes are complex ensembles of intimate ecological relationships. For example, the Ojibwe canoe combined birch bark for the hull of the boat, incorporated roots from spruce trees that were boiled, stripped, and split for lashings, cedar planks split to an eighth of an inch and lain lengthwise, cedar ribs split and bent into position with boiling water installed across the width for structural integrity, and maple pitch reduced over heat for sealing the seams; all of the combined elements produced a light, swift, and maneuverable boat. Yet, beyond reducing the birch bark canoes to a series of Ojibwe advances in transportation technology, which were exemplar, the canoes enabled intimate knowledge of the waterways, a linkage between local ecologies and resources. As Jones stated, the art object, or the birch bark canoe, is not a mere artifact of the past, recreated to demonstrate an isolated process from everyday uses and cultural significance, rather the canoe and the reenactment as a performance communicate the centrality of a native presence (Figure 58). Additionally, the birch bark canoes share a lived presence with Jones.

"They need to be fed," he states and continues, "They aren't meant to be on display. They're intended to be used and need to be fed water. Those canoes you see in the museum [National Museum of the American Indian] there in Washington D.C., they're all dried up. You see they're alive and they need to be fed." Jones' expresses the use-intentionality embedded within the canoe, but also an epistemic value respectful of inter-species interconnectedness, one reminiscent of Losh's arts ontology and Goodwin's reciprocal process with the stone-spirit. Jones' active presence embedded in the harvested and prepared natural materials, in addition to

the co-created activities that produce the canoes, culminate as a public-performance-pedagogy of a living culture during the historical trade route reenactment. While the public performance rearticulates a historical event, the pedagogy is compounded with the narrative of futurity, as Jones states it is “survival, for our kids,” a continued presence within local ecologies.



Figure 58. Jones and his birch bark canoe atop his truck. Courtesy Kevin Slivka, author.

This performance conveys a political discourse as well. It serves as a reminder of intercultural relationships that demonstrate reciprocity and a sharing of knowledge from the Ojibwe while simultaneously holding the receiving European-Americans culpable for broken treaty rights. The reenactment conveys an access to waterways, which in turn impact access to natural resources that have been and continue to be aggressively extracted. Ojibwe usufructuary rights to hunt, fish and gather on ceded territory were to be guaranteed through federal treaties, which are now controlled and managed by the state’s Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulations. While the reenactment of Nicollet’s upper Mississippi river excursion with Ojibwe

guide Chagobe reverberates with the resistance discourse of usufructuary rights it doubles with an earlier demonstration that occurred on Lake Bemidji during May 2010.

A small group of Ojibwe on Lake Bemidji cast hand-made fishing nets from boats into the lake a day earlier than the DNR regulated fishing season. The usufructuary demonstration was disrupted by the DNR who pulled, collected, and cut the nets. The demonstrators were issued citations rather than being arrested. Their intention was to initiate judicial action pertaining to the ongoing inequity and failed treaty promises of usufructuary rights retained by the Ojibwe peoples. Even though this political demonstration failed to generate judicial action, it created ripples throughout the surrounding communities and opened up the discourse pertaining to treaty rights.

Similarly the birch bark canoes employed during the historical-cultural reenactments are both literal and metaphorical vehicles that generate ripples through fields of relation. Since the Ojibwe ontology is intimately intertwined with ecological relationships conveyed through the birch bark canoe, it also signifies an expected reciprocity and interdependency of intercultural relationships. These reverberations continue to generate ripples as the past doubles with the present, not as a repetition of sameness, but of difference, a difference imbued with a complex hybridity lived through Ojibwe presences, cultural knowledge, generosity, and intimacy implied through their relationships. Ultimately, Jones' active participation at all levels of the reenactment embodies his survivance story.

Chapter VII: Ripples & Reverberations

Ojibwe Arts Research Summary

I set out to determine meaning making processes of particular Ojibwe artists. Over the course of my study, I came to the conclusion that meaning making processes were embedded within relationships across multiple networks such as family, local environments of both flora and fauna, apprenticeships with experts, intercultural interactions both past and present, and materials. Together these relationships are constantly interacting within the production processes, generating tightly woven emplacements as works of art. Ojibwe artworks as emplacements generate openings and closures contingent upon one's epistemology, and time intensive engagement with relationships that constitute the local ecologies, the artists, and their works. Engaging Ojibwe artworks as ensembles of relations begins to broach the relationships between Ojibwe artist-participants' ontology and my worldview as an outsider. I am not proposing that all art works, forms, and gestures constitute emplacements, rather, theorized as emplacements, the complexity of Ojibwe participants' artwork and the importance of relationships *with/in* their local ecologies as a non-Native can be respected. Rather than ask Ojibwe artist-participants, "What does your artwork mean to you," or "What is the cultural significance of your artwork," as per an extraction-focused methodology, cultural art research becomes generative when attention is redirected away from symbolic signification to the formulation of relationships *with/in* local ecologies. At best, my cultural arts research, can only produce an approximation of participants' lived experiences and their creative intentions, even if approached from multi-sited ethnography that is written expressively, descriptively, critically, and informed with my arts-learning-experiences. Yet, my approach to cultural arts research *does begin* to attend to the lived

complexity and the interwoven interdependency exemplified in Ojibwe artist-participants' ontology *with/in* their local ecologies.

I approached research as an open-concept and deferred to participants choice of meeting times, the duration and location as well as direct the flow and choice of the topics they wanted to share. According to multi-sited ethnography methodology participants are considered para-ethnographers and as such co-construct the study. Therefore, decentering my desires privileged participants' contributions and in doing so, intensified my anxieties concerning the outcomes, the level of participant interest, and degree in which they choose to participate. These risks, my openness and interactions with each participant and informant formulated my research ethics and was expressed as reflexivity within multi-sited ethnography. My intentions were made transparent during first conversations and while requesting signatures for consent. On occasion I delayed asking for participants' signatures after describing my intent, relying upon their oral agreement to participate. When I felt that I had accumulated shared experiences with some of participants I provided the consent form for them to review and sign at their convenience, while other participants' consent was given during our first meeting (Appendix E).

Shared experiences accrued over time similar were to the "go-along" described by Kusenbach as an immersion model of "spending a particular yet comparable slice of ordinary time" with participants (2003, p. 463). The go-along opened up moments of shared experience that delved into the everyday experiences *with* participants, which became the foundational events for informal conversations, unfolding oral histories, and spontaneous moments of being *with/in* the Chippewa National Forest that connected to a particular story or event, or opened up invitations to attend or join with participants on informal events such as fishing, canoeing, sharing a meal, running errands, routine trips to hospital, grocery shopping, visiting with friends,

or picking berries. These accrued moments generated mutual trust, respect, and friendship, and each were integral to my cultural arts research methodology. I believe that an epistemic and ontological kinship with Dewey and Bambi Goodwin, Melvin Losh, Jim Jones Jr., and Pat Kruse enabled reciprocity, friendship, and ethical practices, which ultimately constituted my cultural arts research.

What does this have to do with art education?

I believe that multi-sited ethnographic narratives of Ojibwe participants' arts processes and practices can generate different spaces in art education theories and curricula. Bhabha posits that, to give precedence to minority "symbolic presence raises affective and ethical issues connected with cultural differences and social discrimination—the problems of inclusion and exclusion, dignity and humiliation, respect and repudiation" (Bhabha, 1994, p. xvii). A shift in focus from an arts production-process to an exploration of relationships within interwoven ecologies attends to the complexity of artists' lived experience. I posit that reframing American Indian and particularly Ojibwe artworks as emplacements foregrounds the artists' relationships that are integral, yet interdependent *with/in* the web of relational experience. From a broad stance, this theoretical framing shares commonality with Indigenous knowledge foundations explicated by Cajete (2000; 2005) constitutive of the mythic, artistic, visionary, affective, communal, environmental and spiritual contexts. I believe active pursuits of these intertwining modalities generates the potential to foster interspecies and relational materialist arts ontology as explored throughout this dissertation. Ontology comprised of the aforementioned epistemic considerations broach notions of sustainability, humility, and respect as exemplified through the Ojibwe artists' processes and cultural emplacements. Similarly, community-based art education theorist Doug Blandy (2011) writes, "sustainability, participatory culture, and performing democracy" are three

sites within a “systemic and extensive network within which children, youth, and adults make and learn about material culture” (p. 244). Blandy posits that these three discursive sites are places of inquiry that have the potential to infuse “community-based art education with a bioregional perspective...[that] emphasizes natural, cultural, and social environments towards a shared identity” (p. 245). I agree with Blandy, that community-based art education may “assist in addressing environmental degradation” and that cultural heritage is a key component “in promoting livable and sustainable communities” (2011, p. 245-246). I also extend his argument pertaining to cultural sustainability, which I posit becomes viable through stewardship, collaboration, reciprocity, giving, and compassion, all of which are lived qualities that have the potential to cultivate Bhabha’s (1994) conception of cultural difference whereby differences are complex, contradictory, creative, and autonomous. The inclusion of cultural difference as a key component to sustainability within a cultural heritage framework, contests Blandy’s “shared identity” by shifting the conceptual understanding to an identity that remains sovereign. A sovereign identity retains the choice to remain independent of assimilation or acculturation throughout the process of learning in, through, and with a particular community. Therefore, cultural differences refuse reductionism and coincide with Foucault’s (1986) theoretical consideration of differential spaces noted as emplacements. Observing cultural difference when discussing Ojibwe art as emplacements refuses artifact-denotation and acknowledges the ensembles of relations comprised of contradiction, complexity, and sovereignty. This approach to Ojibwe artworks ruptures racist discourses and epistemological frameworks that position Others as knowable sub/ob/jects. The limits of understanding an-Other’s lived experience and creative process in a totalizing manner resists “ethical relativism which suggests that in our cultural capacity to speak of and judge others we necessarily ‘place ourselves in their position’”

(Bhabha, 1994, p. 53). Rather than become Ojibwe, which is physically and theoretically impossible, I sought to critically observe and experience epistemological and ontological stances through an ethics of care (Noddings, 1988, 2002; Slote, 2007), which is constitutive of respect, empathy, and openness.

Feminist philosopher Nel Noddings posits that moral education can be approached through an ethics of care, which requires

true dialogue [that] is open; that is conclusions are not held by one or more of the parties at the outset. The search for enlightenment, or responsible choice, or perspective, or means to problem solution is mutual and marked by appropriate signs of reciprocity. This does not mean that participants in dialogue must give up any principles they hold and succumb to relativism. (1988, p. 223)

Although Noddings outlines relational conditions for moral education, I believe that the same considerations can be an approach to research that is contingent upon relational interactions with Others. Developing a “relational ethic” means that “the first member of the relational dyad (the carer or ‘one caring’) responds to the needs, wants, and initiations of the second” (Noddings, 1988, p. 219). Throughout my study I sought to develop reciprocity with participants through an ethic of care, although my process differed from Noddings, since Ojibwe participants were not necessarily in need. Contrary, I was highly dependent upon their participation in my study and so I decentered my intentions and relied upon Ojibwe participants’ desires and initiations to involve me in their daily experiences. Poignantly, Noddings suggests that the initiator of care “is characterized by *engrossment* (nonselective attention or total presence to the other for the duration of the caring interval) and *displacement of motivation* (her motive energy flows in the direction of the other’s needs and projects)” (1988, pp. 219-20, emphasis in original). Similarly,

as I discussed earlier, following the leads, intentions, and projects of the participants was central to and indicative of the flow and authority of our interactions, which I described as decentering my intentions, expectations, and initiations. Noddings discusses the sustainable force of reciprocity: “The second member (the one cared for) contributes to the relation by recognizing and responding to the caring” (1988, p. 220). I observed responses from each participant after events or moments in which my actions aided them in some way, which fostered a continued relationship. For example, I offered my aid to Dewey Goodwin, who was laying large slabs of dolomite for a retaining wall that was intended to serve as a portico; an experience that reminded me of helping my parents with similar house projects. Over the course of a week, I continued to aid Goodwin and together we installed the final piece, which was followed by a feast. The following months, we would reminisce over the endeavor and Bambi stated, “You helped Dewey fulfill his dream.” I cannot maintain that my sole role was the “carer” since throughout our interactions I was often the one cared for. Every participant shared food, drink, the comfort of their home, entertainment, and their artworks and processes with me; each are sustaining forces of differing intentions and outcomes. An ethics of care was expressed through their offerings, which were initiated from our first meetings as I offered the gift of tobacco; the cultural exchange of observing respect for individual and cultural sovereignty. I also initiated care through the gift of food, drink, labor, blankets, knit hats, and creative gestures expressed through sculpted jack pine tree limbs (Appendix F). I also maintained direct care of the Goodwins’ dogs, horses, and property. I aided Losh to and from the hospital, as he needed a driver, while he was undergoing diagnosis of an uncomfortable stomach issue. I embodied an ethic of care helping Jones change out of his shoes and into rubber boots prior to entering the bog for spruce roots and remove them when we were finished. I responded with care for Kruse when he needed aid, while

his car became un-drivable during a birch bark workshop. We are never done knowing and caring. Generating an active presence of cultural difference is the perpetual smudging of schemata held as firm constructs maintained to order a person's understanding. Rather than use an ethic of care as a cloak of homogenizing altruism, which was the discourse and rhetoric for cultural assimilation of American Indians during the nineteenth and twentieth century boarding school era (Slivka, 2011), empathy and ethics of caring, is the care of the other, through which the self is constantly risked through a process of disequilibrium or generative un-learning (Slivka, 2012).

Bhabha posits the importance of respecting cultural authority represented through the “process of language...[as it] is crucial to the production of meaning and ensures, at the same time, that meaning is never simply mimetic and transparent” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 53). Mimetic transparencies of languages (representations) are often justified as generalizable truth-statements by third-person objectivity. Bhabha continues that cultural diversity discourse represents an “epistemological object – culture as an object of empirical knowledge,” which is a form of positivist imperialism (1994, p. 49-50). Furthermore, cultural diversity discourse reinforces hierarchical forms of knowledge production through wholly describing others' culture languages as artifacts, riddled free of cultural difference. Bhabha elaborates:

[H]eld in a time-frame of relativism it [cultural diversity] gives rise to liberal notions of multiculturalism, cultural exchange or the culture of humanity [...] liv(ing) unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations, safe in the Utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity. (p. 50)

I was able to cultivate relational events of embodied critical proximity based upon the gift of myself through labor, preparing meals, collecting naturally occurring materials for cultural

artworks, which resulted in minor injury, heat exhaustion, and affliction (e.g. poison ivy) that fostered compassionate and sympathetic relationships. Sympathetic readings of cultural difference enabled me to draw together relationships between and among ways of knowing such as Cajete's Indigenous knowledge foundations, Ojibwe participants' self-described arts processes and Western theories of emplacement and relational materialism. My position in-between phenomena and critical interpretation was constantly blurred or smudged as I formulated relationships among the Ojibwe participants within their ecologies. I experienced a smudged positionality by risking my-*self* through labor and time in formulating relationships with Ojibwe participants as they risked themselves by engaging me. Critical proximity, a proximity that involved the blurring of my position among the participants and ecologies, would not have been possible if I had approached research as an extraction model and my relationships and the participants as knowable epistemological objects, or as Bhabha's "cultural diversity" (1994, p. 49).

Furthermore, I embrace Greene's (1995) position that sciences and the humanities should include arts inquiry as a means for "opening the children themselves to discoveries that lead to new perspectives on their and our common world" (p. 57). I believe that exploring epistemic and ontological differences emplaced by situated meaning making processes becomes impetus for new and endless possibilities. I posit that intertextuality, interculturality, and intercorporeality sully authenticity or utopian discourses. I concur with Greene (1995) that the importance of socio-cultural engagements through "speaking with others, working with others, playing with others, and making things with others, [is so that] the young may attain some reciprocity of perspectives as they try to create networks of relationships within and among themselves" (p. 58). Such interactions can generate interdependency and signify the potential for formulating

sustainable and elective communities *with/in* an interstitial space where community is actualized by “the sharing of not only of what cannot be shared, but the sharing of a suffering that is neither mine nor yours...but which gives us to one another” (Winfrey, 2009, p. 41). I believe this study may foster intercultural place-based art education for students to engage in socio-cultural work that increases awareness of underlying ideologies and the multiplicity of perceived events by expanding community practices and relationships beyond the institutional setting of the art classroom. I acknowledge the benefits of self-expressive artwork that includes the excavation of personal narrative, but I also posit that an interconnectedness fostered by arts-driven ontological inquiry might generate new ways of being in relation with others. Exploring relationships can engage learners in the ecological network of local communities, histories, and presences that are currently embodied and made manifest by local cultural artists. Such placed-based art education relies upon the local communities of practice as means to foster sustainable connections and awareness of those immediate communities (Bey, 2013; Ulbrecht, 2005), which may entail relationships that encourage arts-based ontology. Philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy’s “being-with” describes such ontology of interconnectedness

as singular plurality [which] can acknowledge similarity in difference, a likeness that (i) resolves neither to sameness nor to absolute alterity, and that (ii) therefore does not lead to unconditional hospitality and an ethics of reciprocity but rather a mutuality of being-in-common at a distance. (Watkin, 2007, p. 56)

Nancy’s notion theorized and interpreted as being-in-common by Watkin (2007) is a “resistance to fusion, not an unfettered dissemination” (p. 57) that presumes co-existence as shared experience. Therefore reciprocity, respect, empathy, care, and humility become ethical considerations for *sustaining* a shared co-existence contingent upon critical proximity. Similarly,

I pursued cultural arts research that explored both Nancy's being-in-common and Merleau-Ponty's concept of "'lived' decentering [that make possible] the gradual achievement of reciprocity" (quoted in Greene, 1995, p. 54). Purposeful connections have the potential to "overcome abstraction(s) in dealing with other people" (Greene, 1995, p. 95) and I posit smudging critical proximity and formulating relationships with participants, while resisting an obligated-lived fusion, generates the possibility to puncture such abstractions and homogenized ideological spaces. Particularly it was in generating relationships with participants through learning their arts processes, collaborative art production, labor, and through sharing the eating of food, the warmth of a fire, a canoe trip down the headwaters of the Mississippi River, or a walk through the woods that I experienced overcoming abstraction.

I posit that intercultural arts research, which entails learning, sharing, giving, and making among the Ojibwe artist-participants, has the potential to expand upon cultural heterogeneity discourses in current art education curricula, which often lack in contemporary, localized arts-based content pertaining to American Indian peoples. In doing so the potential recourse of this study may operate as a site and source for decentering cultural hegemony of the ingrained European aesthetic and ontology through arts-based inquiry.

Ultimately I am very grateful for the experiences resulting from Dr. Martin's course titled *Indigenous Ways of Knowing* and for participants' interest, generosity, and kindness; without them my study would not have come to fruition. I continue with a more clear understanding of my participants' ontology through relationships we created and aim to further cultivate my own and my future students' openness to cultural differences that comprise our complex life-world.

Throughout this research project I aimed to generate critical proximity through the formation of relationships with Dewey, Bambi, Mel, Jim and Pat, while attempting to honor

these relationships and experiences. As such I aimed to share the rich, diverse, and beautiful meanings that entail Ojibwe participants' ontology and epistemology. My goal was to approach writing through a narrative format that respectfully attended to differing arts ontology that may inspire generative considerations for embodiment, emplacement, ceremony, and interconnected ontology.

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Appendix A

Accessing Emplacements through Active Participation

A late afternoon hour was filled with guttural intonations and vocables pronounced by two white females in long dresses and glasses; one with salt and pepper hair and dark rimmed glasses, the other with dark chestnut hair. Their songs were filled by the pounding of a hand drum; sounds of the Lakota perhaps. The air was filled with the energy of their voices, their drum, and an impending storm; gusts of wind whipped through the tightly packed trees, ripping a few limbs from their home. Clouds thickened and the sunlight dimmed. Punctuated patches of light streamed through slate colored densities. I continued to shift from left to right in order to endure standing; there were only enough folding chairs and cut logs for the majority of the group of students, Ojibwe hosts, fire keepers, and *Medéwiwin* men who smoked hollowed-out red pipestone bowls filled with student-given tobacco. A naming ceremony preoccupied my attention as the singers paused and restarted their songs; a similar oscillation and perhaps agitation signified attempts to endure the seemingly long passing of time. The *Medéwiwin* men sat in wafted clouds punctuated by the toking of tobacco smoke, perhaps marking thought, meditation, and a communing *with* participants being named.

Then a name was given, uttered through the *Medéwiwin* men; it meant...[the student scribe wrote it down, probably misspelling the intended utterance as she looked wide-eyed while hesitating to record the epiphany]. The receiver was instructed to stand and handed a rattle-like object. “Announce your name and shake the [...]. Now turn...” The newly named student turned and faced the north, south, west, and east directions, uttered her *Ojibwemowin* (language) name each time in concurrence with the shake of the rattle.

Toward my right, a cloud of gnats swarmed chaotically above the heads of a few of the students, perhaps attracted to the rising heat escaping their heads, or attracted to their auras, or perhaps the fragrances emitted from earlier shampooing, or perhaps the lack thereof. Another song, vocables and the pounding of the drum filled the air, the newly noticed chaotic gnats jumped, what Duncker (1945) called “world-lines” becoming-organized in the air and swayed to the beat of the hand drum as if riding an invisible wave (cited in Michotte, 1963 p. 16); rising to the crescendo and falling to a (dis)position in-between the beats, only to rise and fall again until the drum was qui(e)t – swarming gnats...

I waited...

Vocables pounded in my eardrums, the drum beat in my chest and superimposed my heartbeat...

The vibrant and whirling wind buffeted up against me...

The heat from the immense fire poured out beyond the threshold of the dugout fire-pit and was nearly unbearable in mid-May, while standing six-feet in proximity to it. The heat ebbed and flowed, caused sweat to bleed through my shirt...

This was the second naming ceremony I have witnessed, and it felt different than my previous experience, mostly because this one occurred prior to the sweat lodge ceremony and in the daylight rather than afterward, late in the evening, in our host's home. The reason given was to enable the newly initiated to share their name while in the sweat lodge ceremony, which would enhance spiritual conveyance to each participant. It also seemed a pragmatic approach to streamline the ceremony and perhaps lessen the burden of our host who generously opened her home to the students, prepared a feast after the sweat ceremony, and had to clean up afterward.

When I witnessed the first naming ceremony our student-group loitered in our host's home well past two o'clock in the morning.

I did not participate in the first naming ceremony because I was extremely exhausted from enduring the four-hour sweat lodge ceremony; during which I lost significant body fluid. Also, I didn't feel a connection to the student-group and the "vibe" that was present while in the host's home during the first naming ceremony. The student-group was very large and perhaps I also felt a bit skeptical that a name be given to me via the *Medéwiwin* men whom I had just met. I chose not to participate because it did not *feel right* even though I had no forethought that I would return, return with a different group, to a different experience, to *difference*.

...As the other students continued to receive their name, I stood up against the heat of the fire. The trees creaked and moaned from the wind. I thought that this time *felt right*, that there was a vibrancy in the air, and yet, a calmness.

I waited to participate last...

"Who's next?" queried one of the *Medéwiwin* men. A bit of time lapsed as I moved from the back of the seated group. "We're all done then?" he asked again. I stood up to utter, "I haven't gone yet," I made an unseen gesture. I made my way up to him through the tightly arranged folding chairs and seated students. "Oh, we saved the best for last." He said with a chuckle, which caused me to think about his intent since as a student group we were told that Ojibwe humor is often synonymous with equalizing perceived hierarchies similar to philosophers Mitchell and Winfree's explanation of Georges Bataille's ethics of fusion "In laughter we do not identify with others, but we are suspended together without distinction" (2009, p. 8).

I sat down on the metal folding chair, reached into a plastic bag partially filled with pipe tobacco that was given to me by a friend who had some leftover from her previous excursion into

Ojibwe country. It smelled cloyingly sweet with smells of cherry and vanilla. I thought to myself, “he probably dislikes smoking this sweet tobacco.” This thought sparked another, “I wonder if he gets a good laugh about all the student-offered tobacco?” As my thoughts wandered, I tried to clear my mind, something I thought I should do as an intention to partake in the naming ceremony, an impossible objective. He lit the tobacco and puffed on the long wooden pipe stem a few times to stoke the tobacco.

“What’s your full name?” he asked.

I replied, “Kevin Robert Slivka.”

He retorted, “Slivka? Is that Czech?”

I replied, “Yeah, from that area, eastern European, western Ukraine, southern Austria into Czech and Bohemia. You know those shifted bordered lands there.”

He continued through laughter, “Yeah, our boys are crying getting beat by them Czech hockey players.” He placed his hands over his face, tucked his head into his chest, and shook it side to side. We laughed together even though the only aspect that I was able to infer was that the Canadian hockey team wasn’t doing so well.

I informed him, “It means plum; my name means ‘plum’ in Slovak.”

“Oh?” he replied with emphasis.

“Well then, this will be easy.” He finished our conversation and continued to take on his pipe. He then stated, “Your name will be short.”

My mind raced despite my intention to clear it. What did he mean by this would be easy? What (in)significance did my name seemingly convey? Why will it be short? Is it short because the word *plum* is short? Were his responses to me connected to the content of my conveyance or simply a response to placate my offering, as if he needed my aid in the first place? Even though I

my mind raced I (mis)perceived our conversation positively since I felt there was a bond created during the brief interaction through our shared laughter.

He toked his pipe, lifted his head up toward the treetops, only to return to the pipe. He turned to me and said, “Your name is *Ishkote*. It means sacred fire.” He paused and reiterated the name to the student scribe then turned back to me to explain the relational purpose of the name.

“You see all these people here?” he asked.

“Yeah.” I replied.

He spoke, “*Ishkote*, means that if you can get along with all of them, [he gestured with his arm outstretched motioning toward the Penn State undergraduates] then you have the ability to spark fires in them.” I was taken aback upon hearing his explanation since I thought perhaps it might be more generic. I interpreted his meaning metaphorically, and synthesized his conveyance into my professional pursuits of public school teaching, learning and art-making as passions in hopes of inspiring others.

Qualities of the cause reappear in the effect...nothing new comes into existence; rather there is simply the transfer of something already existing to a new bearer...This happens in such a way that, while there is discontinuity as regards the individuality of the two entities, the ‘world-lines’ of their respective qualities or states, as they transfer from one bearer to the other, remain continuous.

(Metzger, 1941, cited in Michotte, 1963, p. 17)

He finished by telling me my colors associated with the name, “Your colors are a very, very light, pale-blue almost white and a shiny purple. [Pause] Your name is given by our elders and is an honor.” Ultimately, the naming ceremony held particular significance to me; it marked my becoming-emplaced, as I felt *being* moved by the whirling wind, cooked by the roaring fire,

entranced by the drum's beat and vocables, swayed aligned with the gnats, and was recognized by *niiyawen'enh*, my namesake.

Wait...did the gnats jump world-lines or did I...

The naming ceremony was completed and preparations were made to begin the sweat ceremony. The student-group, several local Ojibwe, and I walked clockwise, or west to east around the dome-shaped lodge as we proceeded to offer a pinch of tobacco to the fire, which enveloped the ceremonial stones. As we continued from the fire another pinch of tobacco was offered to a shallow bowl placed near the entrance of the lodge. Recently harvested cedar tree branches were placed around the ground of the lodge both inside and outside. Prior to entering I smudged with burning sage. The women entered first and were separated from the men within the lodge. To enter I had to get down onto my knees and crawl into the darkness in the same clockwise direction; we were taught it was disrespectful to stand once within the lodge. We sat along the inner perimeter of the lodge around a shallowly dugout circular pit, intended to hold the intensely hot stones. Bodies became pressed up against each other as the lodge continued to be filled.

The lodge was comprised of lashed tree branches and together they formed a dome structure. Upon them were layers of thick, heavy cloth blankets. We were informed that this aspect was of particular importance as the cloth creates a breathable and permeable layer, although it was quite thick it *breathes* nonetheless when compared to plastic tarps, which when used can lead to death. These lodges, we were told, were enacted as a sham as they charged participants upon entry, and put participants at risk. Once situated the *Midewiwin* men began the ceremony in *Ojibwemowin* through prayer and the shovel-sized stones were brought into the lodge from outside, one at a time. Each stone glowed fire-red and emanated heat that was

immediately felt. Five stones were brought in for the first door, a series of prayers that marked a section or direction of the ceremony as there were four altogether. My eyes burned and wept as water was poured over the five glowing stones. I immediately closed them and kept them that way for the entire duration. Water caused steam and hissing sounds to erupt from the stones, the steamed-heat began to travel rather than emanate. I felt it pour down from up above as the heat reached the domed limit of the lodge. Heat showered down upon my head, neck, shoulders, and down my back. Sweat immediately populated my pores as tiny beads of salty water, then welled up and trickled as miniature streams that flowed down my face, arms, and my back as if I was the glowing stone weeping from an intervention from above. I felt the beat of the hand-drum through my entire body.

...thump...thump...thump...thump...thump...thump...thump...thump...

More fiery stones were brought in upon a shovel, the heat intensified and I draped a towel over my head to create a damper and pocket of air that I could work from. My entire body was perpetually soaked with sweat. My feet and ankles dug into the cold sandy ground and tiny granules of earth infiltrated my lower body. A circular shaped glowing-orange-red-ring became apparent as I stared into the backs of my eyelids. I noticed them as they emanated from a common point and generated concentric circles that washed over and beyond my perception through the surrounding darkness. Each ring began as a closed sphere and then slowly expanded, opening at the center, expanding as if to float toward me as firey smoke rings. Thoughts of not being able to bear the intense heat constantly occupied my mind.

...breathe...breathe...breathe...breathe...breathe...breathe...breathe...breathe...

What more would be borne? The heat enveloped me, poured over and down my back like a wave as a shower of heat. Water in a small handled pot was passed in between sessions (doors

as they are referred). I never drank water as I did then, feeling the need for it beyond any need felt before and formulated a new appreciation for water. Throughout the following three doors, I felt rooted, connected, literally grounded as I dug into the soft sand to adjust my uncomfortable cross-legged position; a feat that plagued me since I attempted yoga as an undergraduate student. More prayers were offered, individually this time around. In a clockwise motion people individually and verbally offered a prayer or hope. Each utterance hung in the air and further filled the impregnated lodge. Limits were breached and crying ensued among some of the participants as they dwelled on their offerings.

Foucault (1986) described various principles that determine heterotopian emplacements; specifically the third principle that heterotopias are capable “of juxtaposing in a single real place several sites that are in themselves incompatible,” can be utilized to explore the sweat lodge emplacement (p. 25). The sweat lodge has specific rules and ordered actions that constitute the emplacement, hence the denotation of ceremony. Beyond the set rules and ordered actions of offerings, prayers, the particular selection of stones, cedar, and other various plant materials used throughout the ceremony the sweat lodge was presented and utilized as a space for a particular type of communing and that seemed to be conveyed through words of thankful humility and for sorrowful healing. Foucault called similar places “crisis heterotopias, i.e., there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society...in a state of crisis” (p. 24). Although the sweat lodge was experienced as a range of emotional utterances, it was designated as a place in which participants inhabited outside of everyday social interactions; it was a marginal place with its own center.

The physical experience of enduring heat intensity over an extended period of time is one in which the body purges liquid through sweating and in doing so leeches the body of sodium

and potassium and low amounts of iron, magnesium and calcium. Yet, the experience is coupled with prayer, thoughtful expressions of bringing change to past traumas, or those of visionary hopes for a different future, of a positive change, or of a present-filled offering of gratitude and fulfillment. Therefore an experienced physical loss, a drain of liquid and salts combined with an offered utterance generates a crisis state, a state of disequilibrium, in order to address or redress ones' lived experience. Moreover, as a metaphoric emplacement of a womb, the sweat lodge is a place of new beginnings as one experiences physical and emotional change and becomings as one enters, "cooks," and leaves the interiority of the lodge having purged, therefore relieved of experiencing a crisis heterotopia.

The naming and sweat lodge ceremonies marked threshold moments of my becoming-emplaced within the general qualities of practical knowledge that constitute Ojibwe ontology. I claim general qualities due to the limitations of understanding *Ojibwemowin* as well as not consistently attending sweat lodge ceremonies over an extended period of time. Ojibwe historian William Warren Whipple clarified that, "An entrance into the [Me-da-we] lodge itself, while the ceremonies are being enacted, has sometimes been granted through courtesy; but this does not initiate a person into the mysteries of the creed, nor does it make him a member of the society" (1885, p. 66). Warren's clarification refers to sacred right or practice of the *Midewiwin*, but I posit that this includes all ceremonial practices from the epistemic purview of an outsider including ceremonial rituals that unfold within the sweat lodge. Perhaps, Ojibwe that regularly attend sweat lodge ceremonies would suggest that I was missing the cultural significance of continued practice as resistance to dominant emplacements of spirituality (e.g. churches). The idea of continued cultural practice as a form of resistance to acculturation and assimilation is not lost upon me, but specific cultural relevance in a nuanced and immersed way is. Nevertheless,

both experiences of active participation made indelible impressions upon my body and mind that produced a sense of feeling present. Therefore, active participation as an immersion within practical experiences, even though never fully inculcated, with participants set a precedence of ethical practices as mode of transparency, which would be constantly negotiated as I continued meeting, talking with, and spending time with informants and participants among heterotopian emplacements.

Appendix B

Sample Email Contact with Prospective Participant

From "KEVIN ROBERT SLIVKA" <krs170@psu.edu> ⊕
To ojibwexxxxx@gmail.com ⊕
Subject Local Ojibwe Artists
Date Sun, May 13, 2012 12:41 PM
Safe View On [Turn Off] What is "Safe View"?

Dear Mr. XXXXXX,

I am a Penn State researcher interested in contacting local Ojibwe artists working in various forms to inquire about their artistic processes, meaning making choices relating to community and cultural identity. Bruce Martin recommended you to me and I know him through a cultural immersion course he offers through Penn State. If you have any time to meet and are interested, I am very interested in having a conversation with you about your work. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Kevin

ph. 240.818.xxxx

Kevin Slivka

Doctoral Candidate Art Education

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Appendix C

Timetable of Research May 9 - July 23 2012

This document offers written summation of the time that I spent with my participants, in the field, travelling, and documenting multiple sites in northern Minnesota on and around Leech Lake, White Earth, and Mille Lacs Reservations including the city of Bemidji.

Date	Time: Hours	Brief Description
May 9, 2012	6:00am-10pm	Departure from State College, PA in route to Michigan; an overnight stay in a motel
5-10-12	6:00am-8pm	Departure from motel in Michigan in route to Bemidji, MN; arrival – BSU dormitories
5-11-12	1:00pm-5:00pm	Native Science seminar w/Steve Smith
5-12-12	8:30am-11:45am	Lang. & Culture Revitalization w/Anton Treuer seminar
	1:00pm-4:45pm	Justice & Abor. Rights (AIM) w/Dennis Banks seminar
	7:00pm-11:00pm	Sculptor and writer Kent Nerburn seminar
5-13-12	2:10pm-7:50pm	Met, visited Mel Losh in Bena, MN – porcupine quill boxes and beadwork
5-14-12	12 noon-5:15pm	Visited Mel Losh in Bena, MN – cleaned a porcupine & harvested birch bark
	6:00pm-10:00pm	Story Circle – oral tradition seminar w/Anne Dunn
5-15-12	5:00pm-7:00pm	Met, visited with White Earth informant

	(3 hour drive both directions)	(nonparticipant) – late tobacco exchange
5-16-12	All day	Made contacts (3), errands, field notes
5-17-12	12 noon-5:15pm	Visited Mel Losh in Bena, MN – working on 3 quill boxes – suggested I make something for Julie – began a yellow flower
5-18-12	1:30pm-7:00pm 7:00pm-12:00am	Sweat Lodge teachings, preparations, naming ceremony Purification ceremony – 4 doors
5-19-12	All day	Made contacts (4), errands, field notes
5-20-12	1:00pm-3:00pm 4:00pm-10:00pm	Met/helped prep. for black ash baskets Met informants from Red Lake (nonparticipants) @ cookout and drum circle Sweat Lodge w/White Earth informant cancelled
5-21-12	1:00pm-5:00pm	Met and visited Dewey Goodwin – working on stone sculpture
5-22-12	11:30am-12:30pm 2:00pm-8:40pm	Visited Mel Losh in Bena, MN – working on geometric quill box, viewed Mni Sota videos – dyed quills – made video Attended/participated in black ash basket seminar

5-23-12	All day	Talked w/Mel over phone about health, beadwork; errands, 1 contact, field notes
5-24-12	12:15pm-5:45pm	Visited Mel Losh in Bena, MN – cut down quill lid from oval to circle, leaves, and tacking
5-25-12	11:45am-3:45pm	Visited Mel Losh in Bena, MN – dyed quills, sorted quills, quilled $\frac{1}{4}$ top edge of lid in $\frac{1}{2}$ chevron
5-26-12	9:00am-1:10pm 1:15pm-4:00pm	Dewey and Bambi Goodwin – hand drum workshop (LLTC) – invited to attend sculpture workshop in June Leech Lake Memorial Day Powwow-visited with Mel and family, met another informant from hand drum workshop & host from sweat ceremony
5-27-12	All day	Field notes and errands
5-28-12	11:30am-5:30pm	Visited Mel Losh in Bena, MN – working between beaded bandolier bag and quill boxes – I finished 1 st row of $\frac{1}{2}$ chevron pattern – PSU group left in the morning
5-29-12	All day	Moved from Pine Hall to Linden Hall dorm room
5-30-12	All day	Made contacts, ran errands, visited local

		businesses, trading post, photos
5-31-12	12:45pm-6:00pm	Visited Mel Losh in Bena, MN –
6-1-12	All day	Made contacts, visited another trading post
6-2-12	12:45pm-5:15pm	Visited Dewey & Bambi – invited to help out on limestone patio project – invited to also participate in sculpture workshop – invited to house sit 2 nd week in June
6-3-12	Morning errands 4:40pm-10:00pm	Visited Dewey & Bambi – dinner and campfire
6-4-12	9:00am-12:00pm 12:00pm-5:00pm	Dewey – Sculpture workshop – sandwich lunch Worked on limestone patio
6-5-12	9:00am-12:00pm 12:00pm-9:00pm	Dewey – Sculpture workshop – fish fry lunch – pizza dinner Worked on limestone patio
6-6-12	9:00am-12:00pm 12:00pm-2:45pm 3:20pm-5:00pm 5:30pm-7:00pm	Dewey – Sculpture workshop Worked on limestone patio Mel – sort quills Visited informant from hand drum workshop
6-7-12	9:00am-12:00pm 12:00pm-3:00pm	Dewey – Sculpture workshop Worked on limestone patio

	3:30pm-7:00pm	Mel – worked on quill box
6-8-12	9:00am-12:00pm 12:00pm-12:00am	Dewey – Sculpture workshop Worked on limestone patio (laid last large stone), walleye & wild rice dinner, campfire visit
6-9-12	All day	Recuperate
6-10-12	11:45am 12:30pm-7:15pm	Made contact with Jim Jones – out of town till the 18 th – reconstruction pottery... Mel – I spotted a dead porcupine in route, later went out w/Mel to harvest, quilled all afternoon, Mel beaded bandolier bag, assembled inner lid w/sweet grass
6-11-12	1:30pm-6:00pm (3 hour drive both directions)	Met Pat Kruze in Mille Lacs Res. – birch bark artist, mirrors, picture-scapes, baskets
6-12-12	2:00pm-4:25pm 4:30pm-5:30pm 5:45pm-8:15pm	Drove to Duluth, MN – art opening w/Mel and Pat both participating Documented artworks, met Mel Drove back to Bemidji, MN – pulled over by police
6-13-12	12:30pm-11:00pm	Visit Dewey& Bambi – worked with horses, began packing for trip, dinner, campfire, Bambi studio visit

6-14-12	All day	Field notes and errands
6-15-12	1:00pm-4:00pm 4:30pm-overnight	Planned for visit w/Mel – no answer (Bena bar/notes) Visited Dewey/Bambi – stayed overnight – house sitting expectations
6-16-12	6:00am-all day	Helped pack up, breakfast, fed horses, dogs, Hard rain all day
6-17-12	All day	Fed horses, dogs, chores, campfire-dinner
6-18-12	Morning 3:30pm-6:30pm	Horses/dogs Visited Mel – constructed bottom of quill box
6-19-12	Morning 3:30pm-6:30pm	Horses/dogs Visited Mel – met friend Ed – seed business – lives on land formerly owned by Mel's family (irony)
6-20-12	8:30am 9:15am-12:00pm	Arrive @ Mel's Visit friends – Ed and Paul (nonnative)
6-21-12	3:30pm-6:15pm	Visit Mel – quilled half of bottom lid, shared photos
6-22-12	2:20pm-6:00pm	Met Jim Jones (LL casino-Palace), pottery types and firing
6-23-12	3 hour drive 10:55am-6:15pm	 Pat-birch bark basket workshop @ Mille

	6:15-8pm	Lacs Museum Drove nephew to Deer River
6-24-12	Morning-afternoon 5:00pm - overnight	Moved out of Linden Hall – closed account Moved to Dewey/Bambi's – dinner, fire, stories
6-25-12	All day	w/Dewey & Bambi
6-26-12	9:30am-11:30am 12:00pm-3:00pm 5:30pm-7:00pm 7:30pm-10:00pm	Jim Jones-canoe processes-split cedar, lecture Harvest spruce roots Feast & split spruce roots Scouted for birch bark-harvested 2 sections
6-27-12	8:45am-9:15am 10:00am-2:00pm 2:00pm-4:30pm	Jim Jones-split spruce roots Cut and harvested cedar trees Leech lake forest area-scout for bark
6-28-12	9:45am-4:00pm 5:00pm-6:30pm 7pm-8:10pm	Jim Jones-Star Island, in boat, scout for birch bark, harvested from 4 trees Visit non-Native friend of Jim Jones-builds canoes-dropped off bark Hackensack, MN Travelling
6-29-12	All day 5:00pm-9:00pm	Dewey's dog Uno, passed over night, burial ceremony, cancelled w/Jim Went fishing-(sick from overheat

	10:00pm	exhaustion w/Jim 90's weather) - 6 smallmouth bass – fed on for days Cleaned fish - lesson
6-30-12	All day	sick from overheat exhaustion w/Jim 90's weather – slept and recuperated
7-1-12	Morning/afternoon 7:00pm-late night	sick from overheat exhaustion w/Jim 90's weather – getting better, groceries strong storm blew in-zero visibility-tornado- like-snapped trees
7-2-12	6:00am-8:00pm	1 st day clean-up – disaster zone from storm
7-3-12	6:00am-6:00pm 6:30pm-7:30pm	2 nd day clean-up – disaster zone from storm Swam in Mississippi River, lost ring – looked for 30 min.
7-4-12	6:00am-6:00pm 6:30pm-7:30pm	3 rd day clean-up – disaster zone from storm looked in Mississippi River, lost ring
7-5-12	6:00am-1:00pm 1:30-afternoon	4 th day clean-up prepped materials for birch bark baskets – harvested own bark and spruce roots
7-6-12	11:30am-5:30pm 5:30pm-6:30pm	Jim Jones-scouting for birch bark, cleared roads from wind damage – no bark harvested Drove & visited Hackensack dropped off

		materials
7-7-12	11:30am-2:45pm	Jim Jones @ Dewey's – helped cut trees – widow makers, asked for birch tree logs (paddles)
	3:30pm-6:00pm	Jim Jones-birch bark scouting
7-8-12	9:00am-5:00pm	Cancelled on Jim-cared for bad case of poison ivy-3 days Prepped birch bark basket materials-boiled water, spruce roots, ash strips to bend
7-9-12	9:00am-1:00pm	Dewey/Bambi-canoed Mississippi river-lunch, cut finger harvesting birch bark (scar)
	2:00pm-4:00pm	Worked on birch basket
	4:00pm-8:00pm	Drove to Motley w/Dewey to drop off grandson
7-10-12	8:00am-10:00am	Cass Lake Clinic-steroid shot for poison ivy
	10:30am-5:30pm	Birch bark basket work, dinner,
	till 8:00pm	More basket
	8:00pm-8:45pm	Drove to Bemidji w/Dewey-meet 2 reporters-no show-meet tomorrow
7-11-12	10:00am-4:00pm	Reporters (N. Dakota and NY city) interviewed and documented Dewey & co. For National Indian community spirit award

		and Legacy grant/award
7-12-12	6:30am-9:30am early afternoon	w/Dewey-worked on NE fence line left for N. Shore, Duluth MN-house sitting
7-13-12	All Day	Venerated Uno's grave w/stones and birch bark, bathed blackjack (dog) – rolled in dead groundhog (killed earlier), horses/dogs/garden
7-14-12	All Day	Notes, painted, house sitting (horses/dogs/garden)
7-15-12	All Day	house sitting (horses/dogs/garden), began/finished 3 art pieces intended as gifts (participants)
7-16-12	All Day	house sitting (horses/dogs/garden), began/finished 2 art pieces intended as gifts (participants), finished quill box
7-17-12	All day	house sitting (horses/dogs/garden), cleaned lived-in areas, dishes, fire pit, fixed rail on fence from storm
7-18-12	8:00am-11:00am 1:30pm-6:30pm	w/Dewey walked east fence line, documented damage, picked raspberry bushes w/Mel finished box-inside bottom w/sweet grass-gave gifts (blanket, art piece, knit hat

		& birch bark rolls)
7-19-12	1:45pm-7:00pm 3 hour drive both directions	w/Pat made 2 birch bark baskets, documented work in progress, gave gifts
7-20-12	All day	Jim-out of town, w/Dewey & Bambi all day, last walk into back field, dinner, packed up
7-21-12	6:00am-11:20am 11:40am-12:00pm 12:30pm-3:00pm 3:30pm-6:00pm-8:00pm	w/Dewey & Bambi-packed up, exchanged gifts, visited last time on patio, recollected time spent together-closing scene from Dances w/wolves Jim Jones house-not home, left gift, he called while there-talked prior to leaving Drove to Wisconsin-other side of Duluth (stop) Gas stop-drove through to Madison- overnight
7-23-12	8:45am-12:15pm 4:00pm-11:00pm	Madison to east side of Chicago-Indiana state line Akron, OH to State College, PA

Appendix D

Outline of Methods

- Participants were solicited for their interest in participating in the research study via email, phone calls, and through Facebook™ messaging. (Appendix B)
- Participants were engaged in ongoing conversations concerning their art-making processes, intentions, outcomes, relationships with their communities, and any other topics that arose between the folding and unfolding conversational events.
- Participants were asked if their preexisting artwork could be recorded (e.g. photographed) as well as their processes of artistic creation, collecting and harvesting materials (e.g. field notes). (Appendix E)
- The principle investigator participated in the gathering of natural materials and engaged in creating artworks through an apprenticeship model offered by the participants.

Appendix E

Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Intercultural Arts Collaboration: Forming Elective Communities among the Ojibwe

Principal Investigator: Kevin Slivka, Doctoral Candidate, Art Education

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1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research study is to explore how meaning is constructed, implied, and conveyed in multiple and various Ojibwe arts through local Ojibwe artists' narratives. In doing so the study seeks to understand how relationships with the local contexts through various art practices and processes impact personal and cultural identities.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** Participants will be asked to engage in ongoing conversations about their artistic choices, meaning-making processes and symbolism, and how these choices may or may not impact identity formation. Participants may also be asked to be photographed, videoed, or sound recorded during their art practices.
3. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those

experienced in everyday life. Some of the questions are personal and might cause discomfort.

4. Benefits: You might form intercultural arts coalitions or establish a network for communicating local, arts-focused, meaning making practices.

This research might provide a better understanding of how relationships may be formulated between intercultural artists and researchers. This information could help plan local and traveling arts exhibitions. This information might assist local Ojibwe artists connecting to a broader audience.

5. Duration: The study will take place between 15 and 30 days, but may be extended if time constraints impinge on the level of completeness occurring in the collaborative projects. Each session, per day, is expected to last between 1 and 2 hours, projected to be 60 hours of interaction.

Or, 30 days at 3 hours amounting to 90 hours of interaction.

Or, 60 days at 2 hours amounting to 120 hours of study.

6. Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured at (107 Haffner Hall) in a (locked/password protected) computer. The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections, the Institutional Review Board and the Office for Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services may review records related to this research study. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared unless otherwise approved by the participant.

7. Right to Ask Questions: If you have any questions, concerns, and problems about your rights as a research participant or would like to offer input, please contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections (ORP) at (814) 865-1775. The ORP cannot answer questions about research procedures. Questions about research procedures can be answered by the research team.

8. Voluntary Participation: Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

_____ I **give** my permission to be **PHOTOGRAPHED** as I am in the process of producing/performing artwork and for these photographs to be released to the Kevin Slivka, the principal investigator of this study for the purpose of exploring artists' meaning-making processes.

_____ I **give** my permission for **ONLY HANDS AND WORK PRODUCED** to be **PHOTOGRAPHED**.

_____ I **DO NOT give** my permission to be **PHOTOGRAPHED**.

_____ I **give** my permission to be **VIDEOTAPED** as I am in the process of producing/performing artwork and for these photographs to be released to the Kevin Slivka, the principal investigator of this study for the purpose of exploring artists' meaning-making processes.

_____ I **give** my permission for **ONLY HANDS AND WORK PRODUCED** to be **VIDEOTAPED**.

_____ I **DO NOT give** my permission to be **VIDEOTAPED**.

_____ I **give** my permission to be **AUDIOTAPED** as I in the process of producing/performing artwork and for these photographs to be released to the Kevin Slivka, the principal investigator of this study for the purpose of exploring artists' meaning-making processes and surrounding conversations.

_____ I **DO NOT give** my permission to be **AUDIOTAPED**.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix F

Jack Pine Gifts



Figure 59. Manipulated jack pine limb with spruce roots given to Bambi Goodwin. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.



Figure 60. Manipulated jack pine limb given to Dewey Goodwin. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.



Figure 61. Manipulated jack pine limb with cedar, spruce root, and lichen given to Jim Jones Jr. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.



Figure 62. Manipulated jack pine limb with spruce root on red blanket given to Pat Kruse. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.



Figure 63. Manipulated jack pine limb with birch bark and lichen given to Mel Losh. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.



Figure 64. Birch bark rolls, a blanket with jack pine gift enfolded, and knit cap as final gift to Mel Losh. Courtesy Kevin Slivka.

VITA
Kevin R. Slivka
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Education

- 2013 Ph.D. Art Education, The Pennsylvania State University, PA
- Curriculum and Instruction Minor
- 2009 M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, Frostburg State University, MD
- 2002 B.S. in Art Education, The Pennsylvania State University, PA
- Art History Minor

Selected Professional Experience

- 2013 – Assistant Professor of Art Education, University of Northern Colorado, CO
- 2013 Instructor of Art Education, The Pennsylvania State University, PA
- 2010 – 2012 Graduate Teaching Instructor, The Pennsylvania State University, PA
- 2009 – 2010 Graduate Teaching Assistant, The Pennsylvania State University, PA
- 2005 – 2009 Visual Arts Teacher, Washington County Public Schools
E. Russell Hicks Middle School, Hagerstown, MD
- 2002 – 2005 Visual Arts Teacher, Prince George's County Public Schools
Frederick Douglass High School, Upper Marlboro, MD

Selected Conference Presentations

- 2013 Representation, Visual Culture, and Postmodern Theories of Art. The Colorado Art Education Association (CAEA). Breckenridge, CO.
- 2013 Ojibwe Arts Relationships: Traversing Cultural Emplacements. Seminar for Research in Arts Education (SRAE) Graduate Research Session: Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education. Fort Worth, TX.
- 2013 Conversations, Communities and Relationships: Exploring Ojibwe Art and Craft Forms. The National Art Education Association National Convention (NAEA). Ft. Worth, TX.
- 2013 Community Narratives: Exploring Collaboration in Qualitative Inquiry with Julie Slivka & Mary Elizabeth Meier. The National Art Education Association National Convention (NAEA). Ft. Worth, TX.
- 2012 Emerging Perspectives through Arts-Based Education and Research with Julie Slivka. The National Art Education Association National Convention (NAEA). New York, NY.
- 2011 Exploring Native and non-Native relationships through Emergent Arts-Based Research. The Pennsylvania Art Education Association Conference (PAEA). Gettysburg, PA.
- 2011 The Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Assimilation Processes of the Art and Craft Curriculum. The National Art Education Association National Convention (NAEA). Seattle, WA.
- 2010 D.I.Y. Beading and Digital Communities with Julie Slivka. DIY Citizenship: Critical Making and Social Media. Toronto, Canada.