

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

A Sense of Time, A Sense of Place:

Examining Anishinaabe Identity Development within and between Generations

by

Stan G. Bird

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DIVISION OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY


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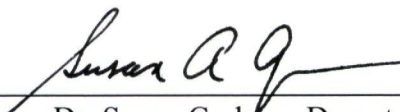
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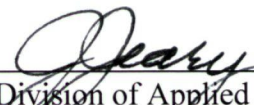
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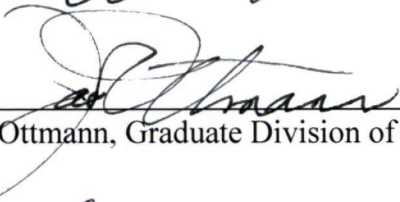
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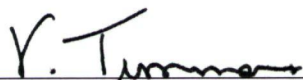
  
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## Appendix E

### Certificate of Institutional Ethics Review



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**Re: Certification of Institutional Ethics Review: A Sense of Time, a Sense of Place: A Narrative Approach to Examining Anishinaabe Identity within and between Generations**

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In closing let me take this opportunity to wish you the best of luck in your research endeavor.

Sincerely,

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For:

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## **Abstract**

The history of the Anishinaabe, an indigenous group interspersed throughout the Great Lakes region, is characterized by a sudden and violent shift in culture. The goal of the present study was to examine Anishinaabe identity development in light of historical events. Participants included four groups: two groups of Elders, with and without traditional tribal knowledge and two groups of young adults, with and without traditional tribal knowledge. Participants were presented with two tasks including a life story probe and a questionnaire that consisted of a self-identification measure and an identity measure designed to assess the degree of exploration and commitment. The prediction was that, if cultural mechanisms and processes shape perception, thought, and understanding, there should be differences among the four groups across all measures. Results revealed several significant differences in the way participants' self-identified, the degree to which they explore and make commitment to their group, and the meaning they attribute to significant life experiences. In essence, the results from the present study showed that different patterns of self-identification existed across traditional and non traditional groups with the traditional groups favoring a more local Anishinaabe identity whereas the non-traditional groups favored a more global identity. The second important finding was that the young non-traditional group demonstrated less exploration and commitment than the other three groups. Finally, whereas the life stories of all participants demonstrated a positive world view, those of the Elder traditional group stood out as the strongest and most meaningful exemplars.

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## Literature Review

### *Introduction*

There is the belief amongst the Anishinaabe, a cultural group interspersed throughout the Great Lakes region, Ontario, and Western Canada, that the essence of spirituality is to understand one's relationship with the natural environment. The fundamental story forms of song, dance, and ceremony cultivate and convey this understanding. As mechanisms of an interconnected and inter-related knowledge system, the story forms introduce members to culture and, in the process, introduce members to an understanding of how the world works. As Geertz (1973) argued, culture contains patterns of meaning embedded in symbolism that allow the individual to make sense of and relate to the world in particular ways. Within the last 150 years, there has been a sudden and violent alteration to a way of life for the indigenous peoples of North America (Neihardt & Black Elk, 2000). In Canada, various government policies designed to assimilate First Nations' have undermined the mechanisms and processes of culture considered vital to relating to the world (Barnes, Josefowitz, & Cole, 2006; Miller, 2005; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). The history of one Anishinaabe community in south-central Manitoba, Canada is characterized by such an alteration. With extended family ties to a neighboring community, the Anishinaabe of this territory now consist of both Ojibway and Cree descendents. Because of a history characterized by a forced removal from traditional territories and the forced removal of children from their homes and communities, many members of the community do not speak the tribal languages.

The purpose of the current study is to examine Anishinaabe identity development in the context of a forced loss of culture. The forced removal of the culture, through the imposition of dominant ideology, customs, and practices, suggests a radical change to the cultural mechanisms and process essential to constructing, organizing and interpreting meaning (Salzman, 2005; Smith, 1999). To better understand and appreciate the relationship between forced removal of culture and meaning-making, I will first examine the patterns of human development contained within traditional knowledge and how this influences the ways in which individuals create meaning. The indigenous concept of story is utilized to illustrate the patterns of life and development. The symbolism contained in the cultural stories is also examined to elucidate the relationship between culture and identity development. This is followed by a discussion of two approaches to identity development. The intent of this discussion is to identify central aspects of identity that may lend an understanding to indigenous identity development.

*The influence of culture on meaning-making*

Geertz (1973) defined culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men (sic) communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (p. 89). Symbols, or symbolism, are tangible representations of notions, ideas, and abstractions that come from experience and are embodied in the ideas, values, and beliefs of a culture (Geertz, 1973). Essentially, culture is an interrelated web of meanings that provide individuals a context in which to live out their lives. The patterns of meaning, expressed through symbolism, constitute the person first and foremost as *homo symbolicus*, or meaning-maker, where meaning allows individuals to

not only relate to the world, but create an understanding of self in the world (Geertz, 1973). Based on this view, possible worlds exist where meaning resides in the mind of the individual, meanings that are inseparable from the culture in which they are created (Bruner, 1990).

The semiotic act of meaning-making is found in the symbolism contained in stories. Story, as a primary tool to create and convey meaning in oral societies, introduced the individual to culture and served to transmit knowledge and culture (Little Bear, 2000). Little Bear argued that the patterns in life could only be understood by looking at the whole and the relationships that existed at this level. Similarly, to understand the patterns of life is to understand that which shapes the patterns of human development. As the voice of culture (Nelson, 2003), stories influence how the self is constructed and construed (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For example, Markus and Kitayama (1991) maintained that the way in which the self is construed is dependent on the developmental pathway favored by culture, a view shared by others (Greenfield et al., 2003). Within Western societies, the developmental goal of independence is viewed as meaningful through the interpretation of individual thoughts, feelings, and actions. In contrast, interdependence, as a cultural goal for many non-western societies, influences behavior when thoughts, feelings, and actions are interpreted and aligned with the collective. The stories of culture serve to reinforce an independent or interdependent sense of self by conveying a sense of connectedness or separation of self from others. Indigenous stories, as the voice of culture, convey a particular understanding of the patterns of life and the symbolism that shapes human perception and social behavior toward the collective (Geertz, 1973).

### *Indigenous thought & understanding*

The holistic and circular nature of thought and understanding that is characteristic of indigenous peoples, one that is based on natural cycles of creation, regeneration, degeneration, and transformation, is found in their stories (Cajete, 1994). Cyclical themes of growth, renewal, and transformation were derived through a participatory process and observation of the natural cycles that occurred in the seasons, animal migrations, life cycles of the human, plant, and animal worlds, and lunar cycles. Indigenous peoples came to understand that a natural democracy existed and that human beings are just one strand in the web of life (Neihardt & Black Elk, 2000). The interdependent nature of understanding is conveyed by the following: “If the waters stop flowing, there will be no life; if the plants die, there will be no life; if all the animals die, there will be no life; if, however, humanity ceased, life will flourish” (Misko-Ginew, personal communication, August 15, 2006).

An understanding of a natural democracy is also conveyed through symbolic expressions. The symbolic expression, “all my relations,” is an expression that serves to guide human development, behavior, and understanding (Cajete, 1994; Rheault, 1999). With its roots in indigenous stories of creation, it refers to the delicate balance of all life and the extended kinship with the plants, animals, fish, waters, landforms, and all that which is seen and not seen (King, 1990; Benton-Banai, 1988). The meaning tied to this expression is multilayered. It references the relationship between the past, present, and future (i.e., my relatives who are here, those who have gone on, and those yet to come); it speaks of the relationships we have with others (i.e., as a son, daughter, father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother) and the responsibilities that come with these roles; and

most importantly, it acknowledges the interdependency and interconnectedness of all life and the relationship human beings have with the natural world.

According to Cajete (1994), every culture in the world has a story to tell, a story that ties the indigenous group to a place physically, socially, environmentally, and spiritually. A story explains “the universe, its origin, characteristic, and essential nature” (Cajete, 2000, p. 58). It integrates the physical with the metaphysical/spiritual, and provides an understanding of a cultural group’s way of thinking, doing, and being. The guiding story is the foundation of all knowledge, reflecting the values, beliefs, customs, practices, attitudes, and assumptions of human development and behavior. As a reflection of culture, the story influences perception, how experience is constructed, organized, and interpreted, and how the story of experience is told.

Indigenous story structure further conveys the intimate relationship indigenous peoples had with the land and their natural surroundings. The story elements of time, place, and characters reflect an understanding of reality and, in effect, a way of relating to the world. To illustrate, indigenous understanding of time was structured according to the natural changes that occurred in the physical environment. Expressions, such as “at a time when the leaves on the trees were the size of a beaver’s ear” (W. Fox, personal communication, March 2004) or “Moon of the popping trees” and “...when the grasses were beginning to show their tender faces” (Neihardt & Black Elk, 1979) reflect a sense of time in relation to natural change, whereas expressions, such as “at a time when dogs could talk” (Momaday, 2007), contextualize certain events as occurring long ago, events that are very much tied the story of origin. Thus, the symbolism conveyed patterns of life that shaped perception, thought, and understanding of the world.

The time in which a story is told is also as important as the time in which the story takes place. That is, stories are often interpreted in light of events within the story teller's and listeners' current time frame. To elucidate, King (2003), an eloquent storyteller, recounts a story of Coyote, a trickster found in the stories of the Shuswap and other coastal and plains tribes. Within this particular recounting, Coyote tricks ducks to part with their feathers under the pretense that they are in danger. He returns time and time again until the ducks are left with very little feathers. The themes drawn out from this particular account are greed, deception, and arrogance, attributes contrary to the good of the collective. King (2003) utilizes this particular story to illustrate the treatment of North American indigenous peoples by the US and Canadian government; that is, coyote (government) will return time and time again until the ducks (indigenous peoples) have absolutely no feathers (culture). In essence, the interpretation of the events within the story is subordinated to the interpretation of current events, which are symbolized by the story events.

The concept of place also reflects a relationship to the natural environment and serves as a point of reference in terms of one's origins and relatives (Fixico, 2003). Expressions such as land of the Dene (i.e., Navajo) or land of the Anishinaabe (i.e., Ojibway) highlight a relationship where the land told stories of the people and people's stories were very much tied to the land. This is illustrated through stories where the human body served as a metaphor for landscape. In other words, sacred sites and landmarks were often understood by referencing to the human body. More importantly, the sacred sites and landmarks were a part of the story of creation between father sky and mother Earth (Cajete, 2000) thereby providing a spiritual reference point. In essence, an

indigenous understanding of self is very much tied to the land – without land, there is no culture, and without culture, there is no identity.

Finally, the characters in cultural stories often included human, animal, metaphysical beings, or stories directly related to spirit or Creator/God. Characters that transform between human and animal or human and spirit represent the transformative process of life and is very much tied to the guiding story of the culture, or the story that explains the origins of the people (Cajete, 1994). Other stories utilize tricksters, or teachers, and are designed to teach lessons for the future and reinforce the attitudes, expectations and behaviors of the group. Trickster stories, as socialization mechanisms, provide a cognitive context for members to reflect upon, evaluate, and interpret behavior in light of why and how events within a story occur. The emphasis for learning in indigenous societies is about regaining a sense of balance and harmony, which is in contrast to the Judeo-Christian concern of good versus evil or order versus disorder (King, 1990). In essence, the description and representation of characters, along with the lesson or teaching of the story, allows members to interpret and create meaning of their experiences thereby introducing the individual to culture and providing the means to relate to the world and create an understanding of self in the world.

Through this discussion, it becomes increasingly clear that culture and thought can not be separated. Thought develops in the context of culture and, as a result, is highly conventionalized, local, and variable (Geertz, 1973). Thus, it can be argued that meaning operates according to the conventions of culture and is influenced by the customs, practices, values, and beliefs of the culture. Within the context of the current discussion, one would not expect all First Nations individuals to have similar knowledge of



traditional modes of meaning making as a result of a forced loss of culture and its impact on the socio-cognitive processes of meaning making. That is, it can reasonably be argued that those who identify with traditional tribal culture would be more likely to use traditional forms of meaning making than those who do not identify with traditional tribal culture. Self-identification takes into account the changes to socialization patterns as a result of historical, social, and environmental influences and its impact on adaptability (Heath, 1989) and how one thinks about the self in relation to their group (Berry, 1987; 1999; Phinney, 1992). Given the similar yet distinct customs, practices, values, and beliefs that exist across indigenous cultural groups in Canada, the more global term of “Aboriginal,” which includes First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples (Berry, 1999; RCAP, 1996), has been supplemented with other linguistic and local terms to draw the distinction between global (e.g., Aboriginal, Ojibway, Cree, and Other) versus local or with-in group self-identification (i.e., Anishinaabe). Individuals with traditional tribal knowledge are those who had knowledge of Anishinaabe culture and identified with its traditions whereas individuals without traditional tribal knowledge do not consider themselves to be a part of a traditional tribal society (Fixico, 2003).

#### *Western-based research paradigms*

Within the western mainstream paradigm, meaning-making and self-understanding have been examined through a variety of approaches. In an attempt to understand central aspects of identity, several approaches have been utilized (Berry, 1999; Cross, 1971; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Phinney, 1989; McAdams, 1985). The variety of approaches speaks to the complexities associated with identity research and the multifaceted nature of the construct (Trimble, 2007; Quintana, 2007). Despite such

challenges, researchers agree that identity development includes temporal-spatial continuity, the sine qua non of identity development, whereby individuals have a perceived sense of a self that is continuous and consistent (Markstrom & Iborra, 2003; Van Hoof, 1999). They also agree that there must be some degree of cognitive dissonance that creates the need to construct a sense of self that is unified, meaningful, and has purpose (McAdams, 2006; Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts, & Romero, 1999; Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001). Finally, there is agreement that the notion of identity development, or self-understanding across time and context, is essential to psychological well-being (McAdams, Hoffman, Mansfield, & Day, 2001; Phinney, 1992; Roberts et al., 2001). In effect, despite the complexities and uncertainties associated with identity research, there is a general understanding and agreement with respect to certain aspects of identity development. The intent of the following discussion is to further elaborate upon the general lines of agreement to explicate Anishinaabe identity development through an Anishinaabe interpretive lens.

### *Identity Research*

As an extension of Marcia's identity status model (1980) and Cross's nigrescence model (1971), Phinney (1989; 1992) argued for two theoretically-based components of ethnic identity. The first component, commitment to group membership, consists of sense of belonging and group affirmation. This notion is critical to the current study in that the meaning of indigenous group membership is often examined within an educational system that often does not present First Nations' history, customs, and practices in a favorable or accurate light. The second component deals with the developmental process of exploration and the extent to which one explores one's ethnic background. Like

Marcia, Phinney (1989) and colleagues (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001) emphasized the underlying processes of exploration and commitment and demonstrated that exploration and commitment are two complementary yet, relatively distinct processes that make separate contributions to the underlying structure of ethnic identity. Put succinctly, “exploration refers to the seeking of information and experience that is relevant to one’s ethnicity, whereas commitment refers to a sense of belonging to a group, the attachment one feels to their group, and the personal investment one has in a group” (Phinney & Ong, 2007, p. 272). Both are considered crucial to self-concept, psychological well-being, and an achieved identity. Roberts et al. (1999) and Phinney et al. (2001) argued that self-esteem is enhanced when one’s own group is evaluated and differentiated more favorably than another group. A more favorable view is more likely to lead to higher self esteem than a less favorable one, thereby affecting how actively one explores and make commitments to their group. Developmental theory suggests that individuals with an achieved identity will have a variety of psychological strengths (Marcia, 1980, Phinney, 1989). The challenge facing indigenous peoples of Canada is similar to that of many ethnic groups in that exploration involving history, customs, traditions, and so on are often within a context of prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination (Phinney et al., 2001).

Several studies have shown that the relationship between exploration and commitment is bi-directional. That is, exploration is only possible with a certain level of commitment and, as exploration increases, so does the level of commitment. Similarly, commitment to one’s ethnic group is more likely to promote exploration to the group (Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Roberts et al., 1999). Engaging in the processes

of exploration and commitment can result in identity *diffusion*, where there is no exploration or commitment, or to *foreclosure*, where there is commitment, but no exploration. Individual identity is considered to be in a period of *moratorium* when there is exploration, but no commitment. Through on-going exploration and understanding, a firm commitment may be made leading to an *achieved* identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

To measure ethnic identity, Phinney (Phinney, 1989; 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Roberts et al., 1999) developed and revised the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). The MEIM currently consists of 6-items that load on two factors, exploration and commitment. An associated strength of the MEIM lies in its conceptual design and the correlation to psychological well-being. For example, in a meta-analysis of 13 studies, Meeus et al. (1999) found that when there was strong commitment, there were high levels of psychological well-being in the participants. In contrast, strong levels of exploration and low levels of commitment were not conducive to well-being. Psychological well-being is a construct of interest in the present study as it establishes the nature of the relationship between the removal of a meaning making system (i.e., forced loss of culture) and one's ability to explore and commit.

Thus, although ethnic identity studies are premised on contrasting values in the culture of origin and the culture of settlement (Phinney, 2000), they highlight the importance of a sense of belonging to something larger than the self and the exploration and commitment that is required. Group membership is based on a sense of belonging and group affirmation through common customs, practices, values, and beliefs. The effects of forced loss of culture on cultural behaviors and practices are important in that

the extent of knowledge surrounding customs and practices reflect a collective state of knowing and understanding, and the underlying values and beliefs of the group.

### *Narrative meaning-making*

The narrative approach offers promise to indigenous identity research given the emphasis on story as a vehicle for meaning-making (Bruner, 1991; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 2001). Bruner (1986; 1987) has made significant advances in the area of narrative psychology and continues to weave a story that speaks to a most basic need shared by all humanity—to find meaning and purpose. Bruner (1986) argued that narrative is one of two modes of thought in which experience is ordered and understood, the other, being the paradigmatic mode of thought, which is suited more to the scientific realm wherein thought organizes information hierarchically in categories and concepts. In contrast, the narrative mode of thought is based upon a temporal ordering of events that occur on two planes—a landscape of action and a landscape of consciousness (Bruner, 1986). Bruner (1986) argued that understanding human behavior involves an understanding of how experience and actions are shaped by the underlying intentional states of the individual, or the beliefs, desires, and commitments of the individual. Moreover, culture provides a context to interpret human intention thereby lending meaning to human actions.

Bruner (1990) also argued that narrative allows one to understand behavior that is sometimes contrary to cultural expectations. He asserted that it was culture's tools that allowed for the interpretation of human action and intention, thereby bringing organization and structure to everyday experiences. Operating according to the conventions and standards of culture, narratives not only represent reality, but also constitute reality (Bruner, 1987). As an instrument of the mind, narratives constitute

reality by, among other things, providing a structure to construct, represent, and sequence the diachronic order of human events (i.e., narrative diachronicity), by providing a suggestiveness through culture's influence on what good stories are and how they are told (i.e. particularity), by focusing on purposive action or underlying intentions (i.e., intentional state entailment), by providing a means to reference the meaning of the whole to its constituent parts so the story makes sense (i.e., hermeneutic composability), and by having some semblance of truth (i.e., verisimilitude; Bruner, 1991). As an instrument of the mind, narrative allows us to continuously revise and recreate meaning and in the process, revise and recreate the self.

The foundations of narrative development and understanding begin in infancy through exposure to such narrative forms as daily dialogue and reminiscing. Through interaction with parents and adults, and exposure to the various narrative forms (e.g., personal and literary narratives), a narrative structure emerges that allow children to construct, organize and interpret the meaning of experience (De Marrais, Nelson & Baker, 1992; Miller & Mangelsdorf, 2005; Nelson, 1996). The development of inner speech and language sophistication, and an awareness of thought processes, lead to an increasing ability to organize and structure past events on a more meaningful level (Bohanek, Marin, Fivush, & Duke, 2006; De Marrais et al., 1992; Nelson & Fivush, 2004). Through participation in a sociocultural community of minds (Fivush & Nelson, 2004; Nelson, 1996; Nelson, Skwerer, Goldman, Henseler, Presler, & Walkenfeld, 2003), children come to understand the significance of their past.

By late adolescence, the individual is able to evaluate memories of past events from multiple perspectives thereby revising and redefining the self in light of new

experience (Bohanek et al., 2006; Fivush & Nelson, 2004; Nelson, 2003). Such self-defining memories, or autobiographical memories (McAdams et al., 1996), are vivid, emotionally intense, and situate the self in a particular experience. Autobiographical memories are essential to a developing sense of unity, purpose, and meaning across time and context. Several explanations are offered for the role of autobiographical memories in the development of an identity (Bluck & Habermas, 2001; McAdams, 2001; Tomkins, 1987). Chief among them is the life story where autobiographical memories, as psychosocial expressions of reality, serve as the tool for identity-making (McAdams, 2001, 2006; McAdams et al., 1996, 1997, 2001, 2006)

### *Life Story and Identity Formation*

Autobiographical memories, when woven together and shared with others, convey a particular understanding and meaning of one's life. Although not veridical recordings of experience, autobiographical memories are products of fact and imagination in that they contain aspects of what really happened during a significant event and aspects of how the individual remember things in particular ways (McAdams et al., 2001). The manner in which autobiographical memories are constructed, arranged, and interpreted is influenced by the individual's long-term goals and motivations. Identity then can be viewed as an evolving and internalized story of one's life (McAdams et al., 1997), where integrated narrative expressions of autobiographical memories give life unity and purpose (McAdams et al., 2006).

McAdams et al. (1996) and Tomkins (1987) asserted that the human life story is fashioned much like a drama. A very basic component of the life story is *scenes*, or specific memories of experiences that contain emotion and an object, situation, or

circumstance tied to the emotion. Beginning in late adolescence and young adulthood, individuals typically begin to organize life scenes according to *scripts*, which are essentially rules for interpreting, enhancing, and defending new experiences. They contain information about past experiences, which when organized according to goals, motivations, needs, and desires, act as causal linkages that tie experiences together. Any given life story consists of multiple and varied significant life scenes with beginnings, middles and endings that are complete with settings, characters, plots, and themes. When *themes* of life are derived from significant and meaningful memories, a story of life begins to unfold, "...a story of the self told by a living person whose actions affect others" (McAdams, 2006, p. 12). This process serves as a way for people to not only make sense of experience, but to also achieve self-understanding and move toward the construction of an identity (McAdams et al., 1996).

Life stories are bound by the conventions and standards of culture, reflecting "dominant or subversive cultural narratives within which the individual life is completely situated" (McAdams, 2006, p. 11). In other words, the structural form and content of stories are influenced by cultural expectations about time, intention, causality and goals, thereby reflecting a particular understanding about how the world works (McAdams, 2001). Viewed in this manner, life stories reflect the patterns of culture. A guiding principle of story, according to McAdams (2006), is that they exist to be told; culture determines the kind of stories that are told and whether they are coherent and logical. In short, culture determines "whether a life is worth living and whether a life story is worth telling" (p. 123).



As meaning-making mechanisms, life stories also reflect psychological well-being. Life stories, argued McAdams et al. (1997) are an internalized and evolving account of experience that reflects how one chooses to remember the experience. In a study that compared the life stories of highly generative (i.e., the concern for the well-being of younger generations) and less generative individuals, McAdams et al. (1997) found no difference in terms of optimism in narrative tone or the number of positive or negative experiences. However, there was a difference in terms of how the affective events were sequenced. The results suggested that highly generative adults tend to find some good in bad life scenes whereas less generative adults may tell a story where the good precedes the bad. In other words, highly generative adults told stories that contained redemptive story sequences where there was a transformation from a bad or negatively affective life scene to a good or positively affective scene. In contrast, low generative adults reverse the order of events in that their stories moved from a good or affectively positive scene to a bad or affectively negative scene (i.e., contaminated story sequences). Another study showed that redemptive and contaminated life story sequences were meaningfully associated with self-reports of well-being; specifically, redemptive life story sequences were significantly associated with satisfaction with life and contaminated life story sequences were negatively associated with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and sense of coherence (McAdams et al., 2001).

To elucidate on psychosocial adaptation demonstrated within redemptive stories, McAdams et al. (2001) examined three themes that appeared, namely, enhanced agency, enhanced communion, and ultimate concerns. *Enhanced agency* involves a well-developed understanding of self-efficacy, strength, or confidence that results from the

change in negative to positive affect. *Enhanced communion* results from a well-developed understanding of interpersonal ties, such as love, family, friends, or feelings of community. Finally, *ultimate concern* results in newfound spiritual growth as a result of movement from negative to positive affect. The results from the study suggested that regardless of gender or race, highly generative individuals are more likely to construct life-narrative scenes that are redemptive, and contain themes of enhanced agency, enhanced communion, and ultimate concern than individuals who are less generative.

Finally, McAdams et al. (2006) argued that in order for narrative identity to be considered a central aspect of personality, it must meet the sine qua non of identity—stability and continuity over time. Despite the fact that life stories are shaped by cultural demands and environmental influences, which potentially makes certain aspects less stable, life stories reflect how people make sense of their lives over time and should therefore show some continuity. Analyzing the narrative accounts of college freshmen and seniors over a three-year period, McAdams et al. found impressive levels of longitudinal continuity on four of the five measures used (i.e., emotional tone, or stories that contained happy endings and positive affect; narrative complexity, or the extent to which multiple and conflicting thoughts, motivations and/or presentations of the self are included in the life story account; agency, or motivation to control, assert, or expand the self in the key life story account; and, personal growth, or positive development of the self). These results suggest that the characteristic ways people make sense of their lives remain relatively stable and consistent across time.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, story conveys a particular way of relating to and understanding the world. Central to the goals of the current study is how story can be utilized as a vehicle to understand meaning-making within a specific cultural context. As a culturally-appropriate and relevant tool that serves to transmit knowledge, story transmits patterns of life and in doing so, transmits a way of knowing and understanding. The Anishinaabe utilize story as a way of relating to the world, which allows its members to construct a sense of self in the world. An understanding of life events and experiences are found in the life stories people construct of their lives. Moreover, they reflect psychosocial adaptation to negative life events and experiences. Of interest within the current study is the way meaning is constructed as a result of a forced loss of culture and the nature of identity development that ensues.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The general purpose of the current study was to examine the identity development of Anishinaabe and the way in which they make meaning within their life stories. The study was based on the following postulates: (a) Ethnic identity development demands exploration of and commitment toward one's group, (b) Narrative is a cultural tool used to construct psychosocial meaning, (c) The forced loss of culture experienced by First Nations peoples robbed them of their culture and language.

The specific goals of the study were to examine how participants self-identified; their level of exploration and commitment to their cultural group; and their level of psychosocial adaptation as reflected through the stories they tell.

The questions guiding the current study were as follows.

- 1) Does cultural knowledge impact the way in which participants self identify (i.e., globally or locally)?
- 2) Does cultural knowledge and community status impact the degree of exploration of participants' tribal group?
- 3) Does cultural knowledge and community status impact the degree of commitment to participants' tribal group?
- 4) What is the relationship between exploration and commitment?
- 5) Does the inclusion of redemptive and contaminated life story event sequences vary due to cultural knowledge and community status?
- 6) Does the inclusion of themes of Enhanced Agency, Enhanced Communion, and Ultimate Concerns vary due to cultural knowledge and community status?

## Methods

### *Participants*

The participants were 42 Anishinaabe from two First Nation communities in south-central Manitoba. Due to audio difficulties associated with transcription, data from four participants were excluded from the final analysis. Thus, the final sample consisted of 38 participants who belonged to one of four groups: Elders with traditional tribal knowledge (ET), young adults with traditional tribal knowledge (YT), Elders without traditional tribal knowledge (ENT), and young adults without traditional tribal knowledge (YNT). Traditional tribal knowledge is based on an intimate understanding and knowledge of traditional tribal customs, practices, beliefs, and values that introduce members to a social ontology and a specific epistemology (Fixico, 2003; Geertz, 1973). The category of elder was not restricted by age as this title is accorded to an individual by

community members as a result of their perceived wisdom, insight, knowledge and understanding, rather than on the basis of age. See Table 1 for number of participants and mean ages and age ranges across the four groups.

### *Design*

This study used a quasi-experimental design. Participants in the following four groups were presented with two measures (as described in the following section): Elders with traditional tribal knowledge (ET), young adults with traditional tribal knowledge (YT), Elders without traditional tribal knowledge (ENT), and young adults without traditional tribal knowledge (YNT).

### *Measures*

There were two measures used in this study: An identity questionnaire and a life story task.

*Identity Questionnaire.* The questionnaire included two parts. The first segment involved a self-identity measure and the second segment involved an adapted version of the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure. To contextualize and orient the participants to the self-identity and to the cultural identity measure, the following script was read to each participant:

“There are many people from different cultures and there are a lot of different terms to describe the different cultural backgrounds that people come from. In Canada, some examples include Irish, Scottish, Aboriginal, French and East Indian. Every person is born into a group, sometimes two groups. People differ in terms of how important their own group is to them, how they feel about it, and how much their behavior is affected by it. These questions are about your group, how you feel about it or react to

Table 1.

*Mean Ages and Age Ranges Across the Four Groups*

Category	( <i>n</i> )	Age range (years)	Mean (SD)
Elder non-traditional	10	58 - 92	75.20 (10.89)
Young non-traditional	10	18 - 21	19.40 (1.07)
Elder traditional	10	42 - 82	60.60 (9.16)
Young traditional	8	18 - 21	19.37 (1.68)

it.”

The self-identity segment of the questionnaire consisted of three items that assessed global versus local or within-group self-identification. Participants were asked to self-identity by selecting one of the following categories: (a) Anishinaabe, (b) Cree, (c) Ojibway, (d) Aboriginal, (e) Canadian First Nation, and (f) Other. In scoring, the categories of Cree, Ojibway, Aboriginal, Canadian First Nation and Other were viewed as reflecting a more global understanding that is based on legal terms and language group differences (Berry, 1999; RCAP, 1996). The category of Anishinaabe is consistent with the notion of reflecting a more intimate understanding and knowledge of traditional tribal customs and practices (Fixico, 2003).

The second segment of the questionnaire was an adaptation of the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007). This questionnaire consists of 6 items that relate to information and experience about one’s cultural group, sense of belonging, meaning associated with group membership, attachment, and personal investment in their group. Within the measure there are two scales that measure the developmental processes of exploration and commitment (Phinney & Ong, 2007). In the version used in this study, the terms “culture” and “cultural” replaced the terms “ethnic” and “ethnicity” that are used in the revised version of the MEIM. To score the cultural identity measure, the categories selected were totaled for each of the two components, exploration and commitment (Phinney & Ong, 2007) and means were calculated for each participant for each of the two components.

*Life Story Task.* The life story task is based on the guided autobiographical approach developed by McAdams et al. (1996; 2006), which is aimed at developing a

better understanding of how one configures the self through the structure, content, and organization of life story event sequences. This task followed McAdams and colleagues' method for eliciting significant life story event sequences, wherein participants were asked to identify and describe a significant event in the story of their life (McAdams et al, 2004; 2006). Specifically, participants were told that although many significant events may have occurred during their lifetime, they were to select one to talk about. They were read the following script, as specified by McAdams et al (2001):

“Thinking back on your life and your experiences, is there a particular event or experience that stands out in your mind? Describe what happened in the event, when the event happened, who was involved in the event, and what you were feeling and thinking as the event unfolded.”

Immediately after participants shared a significant life story event sequence, participants were asked:

“Why do you think this is an important event in your life story? What does this event say about who you are, who you were, and who you might be, or how you have developed over time?”

Following McAdams et al., (2001), stories were first scored for redemptive and contaminated life story event sequences (see Appendix A for criteria and scoring scheme for redemptive and life story event sequences). Redemption sequences involved story plots that moved from a negative to a positive valence and contaminated sequences involved story plots that moved from a positive to a negative valence or from barely acceptable to unacceptable. If a contaminated plot was identified, analysis ceased. If the story plot was redemptive, stories were then scored for the motivational themes of



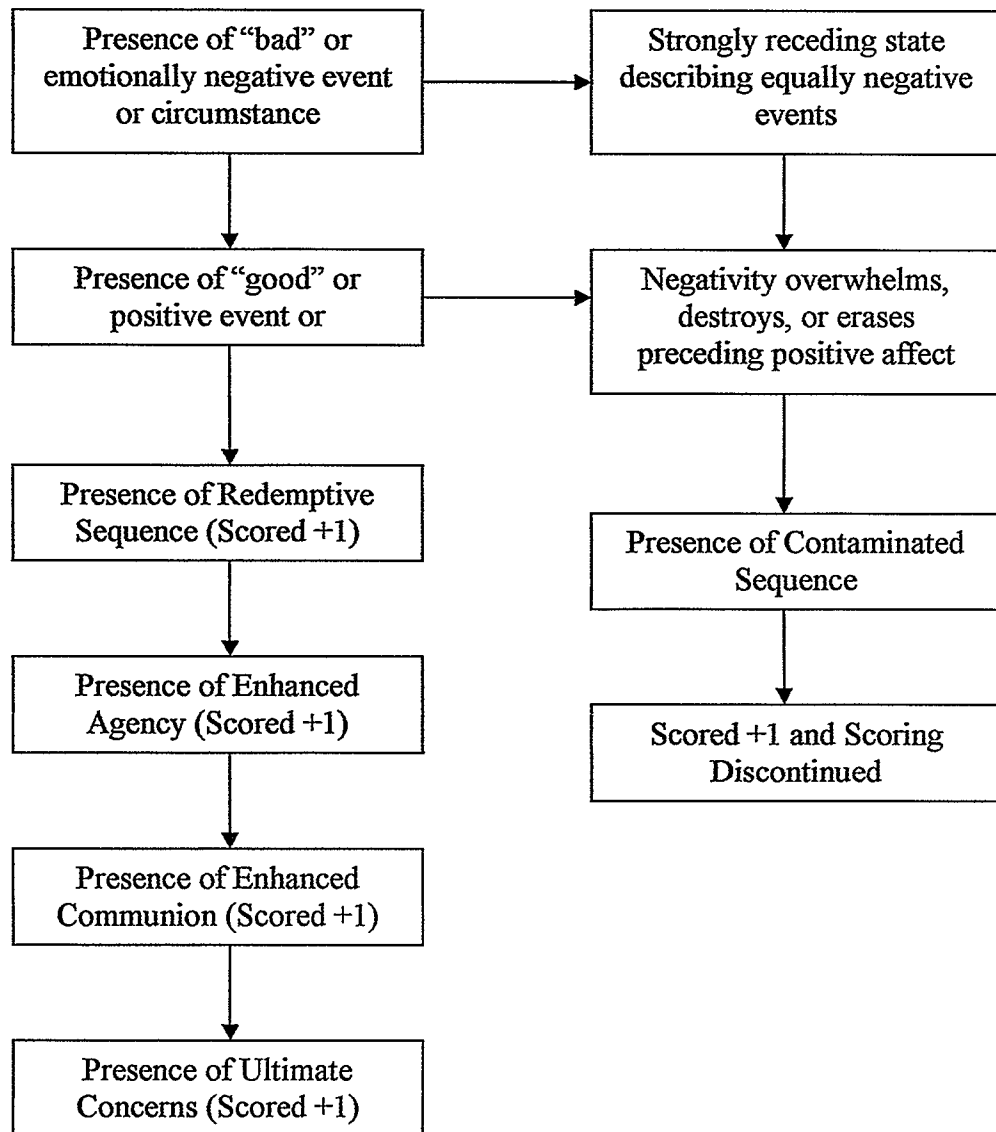
*enhanced agency* (self-confidence, efficacy, personal resolve, or insight into personal identity), *enhanced communion* (enhancement of personal relationships of, for example, love, friendship, and family ties) and *ultimate concern* (significant involvement with existential issues and religious or spiritual dimensions of life). Through an iterative process, the scoring of each significant life story event sequence was reviewed on three separate occasions with scoring adjustments made as necessary (see Appendix B for criteria and scoring scheme for motivational themes of enhanced agency, enhanced communion, and ultimate concern). A representation of the scoring scheme is presented in Figure 1.

#### *Procedure*

*Participant Recruitment.* Prior to data gathering, the researcher discussed the study with members of communities from which samples were drawn. As a member of one of the communities from birth, and as someone with extended family ties within the second community, the researcher was ideally positioned to seek permission to conduct the study. Thus, the researcher has had both direct and indirect relationships with participants over the course of his lifetime and leading up to, during and following the study, further underscoring the importance of relationships in indigenous contexts (Bishop, 1996; Jahnke & Taiapa, 1999; Te Momo, Raukawa, Konohi, Porou, & Kahungunu, 2002) and avoiding the risk of research conflict (i.e., imposing foreign thought and understanding to understand a construct from within a culture; Moen, 2006). Membership within the tribal structure allowed the researcher to ask for community participation.

Through discussions between the researcher and the Three Fires Society, which is a community group that aspires to support traditional customs and practices of the

Figure 1. Representation of Life Story Event Scoring Scheme



Anishinaabe, individuals with traditional tribal knowledge were identified. A list of volunteers was compiled and, from the list, 20 participants (i.e., 10 elders and 10 youth) were randomly selected. Of these identified individuals, all agreed to participate except for two of the young males. Participants without traditional tribal knowledge initiated contact upon hearing of the study and self-identified as non-traditional. Given the geographical proximity of community members, information about the study was spread through word of mouth.

Individuals who were interested in participating inquired through friends, family, and other community members who had knowledge of the study. A list of interested volunteers was compiled and 20 were randomly selected to participate. The researcher first established rapport with each potential participant. Next, the researcher read the information letter (see Appendix C) to each participant and provided clarification upon request. If the individual indicated that he/she was indeed interested in participating, the letter of informed consent (see Appendix D) was reviewed and informed consent obtained. The information letter and consent form explained that all interviews would be held in strict confidence. In addition, the consent form informed the participants that their participation was completely voluntary and withdrawal from the study could occur at any time, either at the instigation of the participant or researcher. Participants were also informed that all data would be destroyed by June 15, 2015.

*Data Gathering.* Prior to task administration, demographic information (e.g., age, gender, grade level, language, and current customs and practices) was collected.

Each session involved two tasks administered in random order: (a) the story task and (b) the questionnaire. A time limit was not imposed for the tasks to allow participants

to share their story fully and complete the questionnaire in a relaxed and thoughtful manner. To respect local customs, the researcher spent considerable time maintaining rapport and setting the foundation for the interview.

Before telling their story, participants were informed that the researcher would not interrupt or engage during the telling of the event or experience to avoid influencing the story. Participants were videotaped while telling their story. Additionally, due to unknown literacy levels of the participants, the researcher read the statements in the questionnaires to each participant and recorded the responses selected by the participant. This was to ensure consistency in terms of method and understanding. Clarification was provided on items that were unclear to the participants.

*Data Handling.* A participant code number was used in all interactions and analyses to protect confidentiality and ensure that the data could not be linked to a specific individual. All records were kept under the code number in a portable locked filing case. Stories were transcribed verbatim from a digital video recorder. The transcribed materials and digital video discs were assigned an identification number, based on participant's identification, and stored in a portable locked filing case and transported to a locked filing cabinet at the University of Calgary. Each questionnaire was similarly assigned an identification number and stored separately from other data in a portable locked filing cabinet and transported to a locked filing cabinet at the University of Calgary.

*Inter-rater reliability.* Data were initially scored by the researcher. To establish inter-rater reliability for the life-story task, a second independent coder, who was blind to all demographic information and group categories, was engaged. To train the second

coder, the researcher met with her on two occasions. The first session involved a thorough discussion of the scoring scheme and the joint scoring of four narrative accounts of significant life story event sequences for redemptive and contaminated life story sequences, and themes of enhanced agency, enhanced communion and ultimate concern. Through an iterative process, consensus was reached on all four stories. Next, the second coder scored an additional 10 interviews independently. Due to the coder lacking cultural interpretive knowledge around customs, practices, and symbolisms, agreement was reached on only 30 percent of the coding. To address issues associated with cultural sensitivity and the interpretation of data (Mohatt & Thomas, 2006), a second face-to-face training session was conducted using an additional five interviews. Through discussion and explanation, agreement was reached on these five stories in the training session. The final step of the inter-rater process involved the independent coder randomly selecting 10 of the remaining 19 interviews to score independently. Satisfactory agreement was reached on these ten stories. Overall, there was 85% agreement on all stories in terms of the location of positive and negative event sequences within the life stories, redemptive and contaminated life story sequences, and themes of enhanced agency, enhanced communion and ultimate concerns.

## Results

Several analyses were conducted to gain a better understanding of the relationship between self-identification (i.e., local versus global), cultural identity (i.e., exploration versus commitment), and the types of life story event sequences (i.e., redemptive versus contaminated, and themes of Enhanced Agency, Enhanced Communion, and Ultimate Concern) and the extent to which these varied according to group (i.e., Elder non-

traditional, Young non-traditional, Elder traditional, and Young traditional). Results from the analysis of the identity questionnaire are presented first, followed by the results of the life story event sequences.

### *Analyses of the Identity Questionnaire*

Recall that this questionnaire consisted of two sections: one aimed at assessing participant self-identification and a second, which was an adapted version of the MEIM. To gain a more detailed understanding of participant self-identification, a chi-square analysis was conducted to examine whether local identification versus global identification varied by group (i.e., Elder non-traditional, Young non-traditional, Elder traditional, and Young traditional). Recall that local self-identification was in reference to Anishinaabe and global self-identification was referenced according to being Aboriginal, First Nations, Ojibway, Cree or Other. See Table 2 for the number of participants as a function of group and identity type.

An overall chi-square test indicated that self-identification varied significantly according to group,  $\chi^2(6) = 19.49, p < .01, n = 38$ . Participants without traditional tribal knowledge ( $n = 20$ ) consistently self-identified globally. Results for participants with traditional tribal knowledge ( $n = 18$ ) were mixed. Seventy-eight percent of Elders with traditional knowledge identified locally whereas 50% of Young adults with traditional knowledge identified locally.

Next, I examined whether participants' scores on the Exploration subscale of the MEIM varied by group membership. See Table 3 for mean exploration subscale scores as a function of group. Recall that the Exploration subscale measures the extent to which one seeks information and experiences relevant to his/her cultural group and to the

Table 2.

*Self-identification by Group*

Collapsed across gender	Self-identification			Total ( <i>n</i> )
	Anishinaabe	Cree/Ojibway	Canadian first nation/Aboriginal	
Elder non-traditional	0	70%	30%	10
Young non-traditional	0	80%	20%	10
Elder traditional	70%	20%	10%	10
Young traditional	50%	50%	0%	8
Total	11	21	6	38

Table 3.

*Mean Exploration Subscale Scores*

Collapsed across gender	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Elder non-traditional	4.1333	.94542	10
Young non-traditional	3.0333	.96161	10
Elder traditional	4.9000	.31623	10
Young traditional	4.7083	.27817	8
Total	4.1667	1.01860	38



process of identity formation (Phinney & Ong, 2007). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) yielded a significant main effect of group on the exploration subscale,  $F(3, 34) = 13.09$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .54$ ,  $p < .001$ . Posthoc tests with a Bonferroni correction indicate that Young non-traditional individuals scored significantly lower on the exploration subscale ( $M = 3.03$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) than individuals in the Elder non-traditional, Elder traditional, and Young traditional categories,  $p_s < .01$ . To assess whether scores on the commitment subscale varied by group, I conducted a one-way ANOVA. See Table 4 for mean commitment subscale scores as a function of group. Recall that the commitment subscale measures the strength of attachment and investment one places in his/her cultural group (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Consistent with the analyses of the exploration subscale, the ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of group on the commitment subscale,  $F(3, 34) = 12.07$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ . Posthoc tests with a Bonferroni correction indicate that Young non-traditional individuals scored significantly lower on the commitment subscale ( $M = 2.86$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) than individuals in the Elder non-traditional, Elder traditional, and Young traditional categories  $p_s < .01$ .

Finally, I used a Pearson correlation to assess the relation between scores on the exploration and commitment subscale. This analysis indicated a high correlation between the exploration and commitment subscales,  $r(38) = .83$ ,  $p < .001$ . This suggests that exploration of one's cultural group is only possible with a certain level of commitment and as exploration increases, so does the level of commitment.

Similarly, commitment to one's cultural group is likely to promote exploration to the group, which is consistent with the results of Phinney (1992) and colleagues (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts, & Romero, 1999).

Table 4.

*Mean Commitment Subscales Scores*

Collapsed across gender	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Elder non-traditional	4.4000	1.13093	10
Young non-traditional	2.8667	1.04468	10
Elder traditional	4.9000	.31623	10
Young traditional	4.6250	.33034	8
Total	4.1754	1.13301	38

### *Life story analyses*

To gain a more detailed understanding of the type of life story event sequences, a chi-square analysis was conducted to examine whether redemptive and contaminated life story sequences varied by group (i.e., Elder non-traditional, Young non-traditional, Elder traditional, and Young traditional). See Table 5 for redemptive and contaminated life story sequences according to group. An overall chi-square test indicated that the inclusion of redemptive and contaminated life story sequences did not vary significantly according to group  $\chi^2(3) = 59.11, p = .116, n = 38$ . In a further analysis, a chi-square was conducted to examine whether the inclusion of Enhanced Agency, Enhanced Communion, and Ultimate Concern varied by group. Recall that enhanced agency, enhanced communion, and ultimate concerns reflect growth that results from bad events, circumstance or experience (McAdams et. al., 2007). Enhanced agency reflects growth to changes in self, enhanced communion reflects growth to changes in relationships, and ultimate concern reflects changes to one's philosophy of life or spiritual/existential belief system. An overall-chi square indicated that the inclusion of Enhanced Agency varied significantly according to group,  $\chi^2(3) = 83.88, p = .039, n = 38$ . As can be seen in Table 6, the presence of Enhanced Agency was found in the majority of traditional participants' life story sequences whereas it was absent in the majority of life story event sequences of participants without traditional tribal knowledge.

In contrast, an overall chi-square indicated that the inclusion of Enhanced Communion did not vary significantly according to group,  $\chi^2(3) = 60.02, p = .11, n = 38$ . As can be seen in Table 7, 50% of Elder Non-traditional, 40% of Young Non-traditional, and 50% of Young traditional life story sequences contained themes of Enhanced

Table 5.

*Redemptive and Contaminated Life Story Sequences by Group*

Collapsed across gender	Redemptive story sequences	Contaminated story sequences	N
Elder non-traditional	8	2	10
Young non-traditional	10	0	10
Elder traditional	10	0	10
Young traditional	8	0	8
Total	36	2	38

Table 6.

*Theme of Enhanced Agency*

Collapsed across gender	Enhanced agency		Total ( <i>n</i> )
	Absent	Present	
Elder non-traditional	50%	50%	10
Young non-traditional	70%	30%	10
Elder traditional	20%	80%	10
Young traditional	12.5%	87.5%	8
Total ( <i>n</i> )	15	23	38

Table 7.

*Theme of Enhanced Communion*

Collapsed across gender	Enhanced communion		Total ( <i>n</i> )
	Absent	Present	
Elder non-traditional	50%	50%	10
Young non-traditional	60%	40%	10
Elder traditional	10%	90%	10
Young traditional	50%	50%	8
Total ( <i>n</i> )	28	10	38

Communion whereas 90% of Elder traditional life story event sequences contained themes of Enhanced Communion.

Finally, an overall chi-square indicated that the inclusion of Ultimate Concern varied significantly according to group,  $\chi^2(3) = 28.85, p < .001, n = 38$ . The theme of Ultimate Concern was present in the majority of life story event sequences of Elder traditional participants and absent from the majority of life story event sequences of the remaining groups. As can be seen in Table 8, 90% of life story event sequences from Elder traditional participants contained the theme of Ultimate Concern, which suggests a significant relationship between being Elder, possessing traditional knowledge, and significant involvement in fundamental existential issues or ultimate concerns.

As a final analysis, to gain a better understanding of the difference between young and elder traditional life story event sequences, a chi-square was conducted to determine Enhanced Agency, Enhanced Communion, and Ultimate Concern varied according to Elder traditional and Young traditional. Table 9 presents the absence and presence of the three themes noted in Elder traditional and Young traditional life story event sequences.

An overall chi square indicated that Enhanced Agency did not vary significantly according to group,  $\chi^2(1, N = 18) = .18, p = .58$ . An overall chi-square indicated that Enhanced Communion approached significance according to group,  $\chi^2(1, N = 18) = 3.55, p = .088$ . In contrast, an overall chi-square indicated that Ultimate Concern varied significantly according to group,  $\chi^2(1, N = 18) = 10.81, p < .002$ .

This suggests that redemptive accounts that include ultimate concern have a more powerful and meaningful quality to them and that this develops as a result of age and traditional knowledge.

Table 8.

*Theme of Ultimate Concern*

Collapsed across gender	Ultimate concern		Total ( <i>n</i> )
	Absent	Present	
Elder non-traditional	100%	0%	10
Young non-traditional	100%	0%	10
Elder traditional	10%	90%	10
Young traditional	87.5%	12.5%	8
Total ( <i>n</i> )	28	10	38



Table 9.

*Theme according to Elder Traditional and Young Traditional Groups*

Group	Enhanced agency		Enhanced communion		Ultimate concern	
	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present
Elder traditional	2	8	1	9	1	9
Young traditional	1	7	4	4	7	1

## Discussion

The results of the current study shed light on the understanding of Anishinaabe participants' identity development; specifically, as reflected through self-identification, the level of exploration and commitment, and the manner in which life-stories are constructed. Examined in light of culture's influence on meaning-making, it offers insight into the impacts of forced loss of culture on identity development within and across generations.

### *Identity*

Recall that self-identification is very much related to the developmental pathway favored by culture and the manner in which an individual references the self to a group reflects the sense of connectedness or belonging to the group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In addition, self-identification within a group, in this case the Anishinaabe, can be affected by changes in socialization patterns as a result of historical, social, and environmental influences (Heath, 1989). Given the interdependent nature of traditional tribal knowledge, one would expect participants from the traditional tribal groups to self-identify in a local fashion (i.e., Anishinaabe) and participants from the non-traditional group to identify in more global terms (i.e., Aboriginal, First Nations, Ojibway, or Cree). Results from the current study indicate that participants without traditional tribal knowledge did consistently identify in global terms. However, the results for the traditional group were mixed, with 50% of the young traditional participants and 20% of Elder traditional participants identified in a global way. As a whole, the results suggest that traditional and non-traditional participants think about themselves differently in relation to the group (Berry, 1994). This reflects the level of psychological acculturation,

or the change to attitudes, perceptions, values, beliefs, and behaviors as a result of intercultural contact. This finding elucidates the relationship between the acculturative processes (i.e., historically and culturally) and the culturally variable views of the self that are cultivated within the community (Miller, 2005). A change in knowledge, motivation, and emotion creates changes to how information and experience is organized and interpreted thereby affecting how one constructs an understanding of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Culture or the context in which development occurs, and the processes unique to culture shape perceptions of the self, perceptions of other, and theories about how the world works. The uncertainty around the degree and extent of exposure or immersion to traditional tribal meaning-making systems may account for the mixed results found in the traditional groups. If involvement in traditional tribal activities is relatively recent, whether young adult or Elder, self-identification may still be influenced by the social relationships one is exposed to and cultural context of these relationships (Health, 1989; Miller & Mangelsdorf, 2005).

Interestingly, the young non-traditional adults, all of whom self-identified in global terms, also scored significantly lower on the exploration and commitment subscales than all the other groups. This result indicates that they are less likely to explore the meaning of their cultural group and, as a result, less likely to make a commitment to their group (Phinney & Ong, 2007). In other words, the young non-traditional group is less likely than the other three groups to seek out information and experience that is relevant or meaningful to their cultural group and, as a result, are less likely to feel a sense of belonging, attachment, and personal investment in their tribal group. These findings further support the bi-directional relationship of exploration and

commitment proposed by Phinney and Ong (2007), whereby exploration is only possible with a certain level of commitment and, as exploration increases, so does the level of commitment, which, in turn, leads to further exploration. These results also suggest that young non-traditional participants may be in a state of identity diffusion (Phinney & Ong, 2007), in that there was little or no exploration or commitment made to certain aspects of the identity domain. Coupled with the findings on self-identification, the results suggest that the young non-traditional participants in the present study may ascribe to a different value and belief system than the other participant groups.

### *Life Stories*

To analyze life stories, redemptive and contaminated sequences were identified. An example of a redemptive life story sequence, which involves a transformation from a negative affect-event sequence to a positive affect-event sequence, is illustrated by the following:

...my grandfather was dying...[he] wanted to see me....He told me 'when you grow up...I want you to be a good girl.' I told him I would be...[and] smaller kids were being picked on, I always tried to take up for them...I always tried to tell that person that was picking on them not to pick on them, because they were so much smaller than we were...I used to think ...what if I get in trouble... 'no I promised my grandfather I was going to be good, I was going to be a good girl when I grow up.' So that always kind of stuck with me, even – even if somebody was in trouble, or if they came to me for help, I always figured, 'how would I want to be treated if I was to go to this person for help (Participant 1, interview, July 2008).

The example illustrates movement from something negative (i.e., grandfather dying) to something positive (i.e. subject has greater empathy for others). McAdams et al. (2007) argued that negative life events can challenge an individual's subjective understanding of how the world works. Utilizing the narrative strategy of perceiving bad events as

eventually giving way to good outcomes allows one to reconstitute the self. As psychosocial constructions of past events, the narrative strategy utilized by individuals reflects the way they choose to remember past events, which, in essence, reflects their perceived sense of quality of life (McAdams, 1997). Perceiving bad events as giving way to good outcomes allows the individual to achieve self-understanding and move toward creating an identity (McAdams et al., 1996). In contrast, two Elders with non-traditional knowledge perceived a negative quality of life as a result of past experience. The following excerpt is taken from a life story that describes a decision involving the participant and his family (i.e., career and benefits to family), and the ramifications the decision had on his family (i.e., loss of family). From this life story, the transformation from a positive to negative affect/event is clear.

The event...is so significant because....it started to destroy my family....Before that point, I was at an all time high....because my family was together and I felt that we were very happy....I think back over time, it was a false happiness....[My family]...were happy...Dad was going to get a career, but they had no idea how things were going to unfold. Of course if we knew that, we wouldn't do it (Participant 40, interview, October 2008).

Although two stories contained contaminated imagery, the analysis suggested that participants as a whole, from the Anishinaabe community tended to utilize a redemptive narrative strategy in making sense of their experiences, despite the loss of language and culture. That is, there were no significant differences between the groups in the inclusion of redemptive and contaminated life story sequences. Although one can argue that returning to the cultural traditions served as a protective factor for the traditional group, the same argument does not hold for the non-traditional group. A plausible explanation is that despite a forced loss of culture and language, culturally preferred narrative patterns

are still being transmitted. Isolated from Canadian society, the stories being told and the manner in which they are told may have preserved the particular “script” or way of telling stories where the culture still embodies the values that influence how we interact with children and the way in which developmental priorities are nurtured (Wang & Leichtman, 2000). Greenfield et al. (2003) for example, argued that ethnotheories or the system of beliefs and ideas about the ideal child and the socialization processes necessary to cultivate the ideals, change as a result of changing physical and economic conditions. Ethnotheories in slow-changing subsistence economies are transmitted vertically, from generation to generation, whereas ethnotheories in fast-changing societies are transmitted horizontally, where the beliefs and ideas about the child may be quite different from one generation to the next. Despite the sudden and drastic change to culture, aspects of culture appear to have been transmitted vertically through historical time. His suggests that the way in which events and experience are structured, organized, and conveyed have been transmitted through the generations where culture continues to exert its influence on what a good story is and how a good story is told (Gutierrez-Clellen and Quinn, 1993).

When the themes within the redemptive stories were analyzed, however, group differences emerged. Data analysis showed that there was a significant difference across groups in terms of themes of enhanced agency. Specifically, 50% of Elder non-traditional and 30% of young non-traditional life stories did not contain themes of enhanced agency, whereas 80% of Elder traditional and 87.5% of young traditional life stories contained themes of enhanced agency. An excerpt from a participant interview describes the fear associated with newfound independence and the responsibility that is very much a part of

independence, and illustrates a redemptive story sequence with a move toward to enhanced self-efficacy (i.e., enhanced agency).

My mom said it wasn't healthy sitting at the house for two years not doing [anything]....I moved to Edmonton....and I got a job....I was scared....I though it was going to be like school....[but]...I was really scared going on the first day....But it was really nice and I got used of it. The people were really nice....It was good having a job. It taught me that I can do anything that I put my mind to....[to be] organized....more responsible...I can understand more about my mom about....how much work my mom puts in and how much effort she puts in so she can support us (Participant 24, interview, July 2008).

The differences found with regard to the inclusion of the theme of enhanced agency may lie in differences in coherence of life stories. Late adolescence and early adulthood is a time when individuals develop the capacity to integrate conflicting roles and relationships diachronically, and engage in the process of constructing a life story that is culturally coherent and meaningful (McAdams, 2001). The understandings we have of experiences reflect a particular flavouring of self-understanding that results from arranging, revising, and reconfiguring ourselves in the face of contrasting, and perhaps contradictory experiences. During adolescence and young adulthood, at a time when roles, responsibilities, and obligations change, the capacity to integrate experience synchronically and diachronically becomes critical to a stable and consistent sense of self (McAdams, 2001). The ability to draw out certain themes from various experiences is important in that the themes reflect the motivation behind behaviors between past and present goals. It is possible that the life stories of non-traditional participants lack thematic coherence as a result of changing roles, responsibilities, and expectations. In other words, the motivation underling future goals may not be meaningfully associated with motivation of past goals. It is also possible that traditional participants interpret

experience differently as a result of the context that is created for learning. According to Cajete (1994) the traditional learning context provides opportunities for intense reflection and self-examination at a time when understanding the self as a whole can be very appealing to a self-reflective individual (McAdams, 2001). Recall that learning occurs through listening in silence, which creates a context for one to actively self-reflect on the meaning of experience (Fixico, 2003).

There was also a significant difference across groups in the inclusion of ultimate concern themes in participants' life stories. Specifically, none of the life stories generated by the non-traditional groups included the theme of ultimate concern, whereas the life stories of 90% of Elder traditional and 12.5% of young traditional included themes of ultimate concern. This result clearly indicate that there is a significant relationship between being an Elder, possessing traditional knowledge, and significant involvement with existential concerns. The following excerpt is illustrative of themes of ultimate concern:

...what I believe that says...as I near the Western doorway,...that I hope that I am able to share, you know, all that I've been able to put into my bundle, all those years, you know, the teachings, the medicines, that they are not mine, and I just carry them...that I can share that bundle with a whole bunch of people...young ones, old ones. To me, in all these years I've learned that when you're sitting close to the Western Doorway, that...[you] share that knowledge of all that you've picked up...so that the young ones that are just entering at the other end will have it (Participant 25, interview, August 2008).

The Western Doorway referred to in this life story event sequence is death. The philosophy reflected in this life story event clearly reveals a responsibility to all people and the obligation the participant feels toward sharing all that she has learned in her lifetime. This is contrast to the following:



...when my mother was passing away....I promised my mom, I'd keep [my brothers and sisters]. I would look after them...we had a big responsibility....It's very painful when I think back. My little brothers never even knew their mom...they used to call me mom. I used to tell them, 'That's your mom lying there.' 'No, that's not my mom, you're my mom.' I guess that is what made me the woman I am today...Yes, it taught me independence...I tried to bring up my own kids the way I brought up my brothers...I wanted them to understand you don't get things for nothing. You have to work for it (Participant 2, interview, July 2008).

From this narrative account, the redemptive imagery is clear in that, despite the loss of her mother, the participant keeps a promise and the family stays together. There are also elements of enhanced agency (i.e., that's what made the woman I am today...Yes it taught me independence) and enhanced communion (i.e., I tried to bring up my own kids that way I brought up my brothers). However, the transformation from negative to positive does not show confrontation with or significant involvement with existential issues or ultimate concerns that brings the participant face-to-face with death, God/Creator and or some other religious or spiritual dimension of life. According to Manitowabi (personal communication, August 2007), the traditional life stage<sup>1</sup> of Elderhood is characterized by intense reflection on a life lived and the legacy of life to be left behind. It reflects a state of being that results from an understanding of what it means to be a human being. Despite the attack on First Nations culture, the life stories are rich with symbolism that conveys a particular way of relating to the world and constructing an understanding of self in the world. This despite being told,

...that hell was a hole in the ground....I used to be scared to come across a hole in the ground...And so they terrified me about the land....And then, you know, going back to the land, and understanding completely opposite of what they were teaching...The earth provides for us...It will look after

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<sup>1</sup> The seven traditional life stages include the good life, the fast life, wandering and wondering, the truth life, planning and planting, doing, and Elderhood.

you. It will give you your food, your clothing, your water, ...the air that you breathe...And then coming to the lodge and hearing the Creation stories of where our Spirit comes from and where our Spirit goes...They helped me to understand, to celebrate life, as well as celebrate...entering this earth doorway and leaving this earth doorway (Participant 25, interview, August, 2008).

Finally, the analysis showed that the presence of themes of enhanced communion in redemptive stories was not affected by whether participants had traditional tribal knowledge or not. Themes of enhanced communion were reflected in 40% of young non-traditional, 50% of Elder non-traditional, 50% of young traditional life stories, and 90% of Elder traditional. Although the Elder traditional group outperformed the other groups, the difference did not reach significance at the .05 level. Given the interdependent nature of indigenous knowledge, one might expect the life stories of individuals with traditional knowledge to differ significantly with respect to the inclusion of enhanced communion. Recall that the theme of enhanced communion is illustrated by movement from negative to positive affect, leading to an enhanced appreciation of family, friends and feelings of community. It is plausible that patterns of human development have prevailed despite the attack on culture. The interrelated nature of Anishinaabe knowledge and understanding underscores the importance of relationships—relationships with family, friends and community (Benton-Banai, 1988; Cajete, 1994; 2000; Fixico, 2003). It is plausible that certain aspects of Anishinaabe culture that convey the cultural imperative of interdependence continue to influence how one construes the self in relation to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, given the aforementioned differences found for enhanced agency and ultimate concern, this explanation might be inadequate. Further research is needed to explore this anomalous finding.

### *Summary*

Through the preceding discussion, knowledge, values, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about how the world works remain central to an understanding of self in culture. Moreover, the influence of forced loss of culture appears to impact how participants self-identified with their group (Berry, 1999; Heath, 1989; Miller, 2005), whether seeking out information and experiences relevant to their group and their sense of belonging (Phinney & Ong, 2007) or the meaning generated through life stories. Life stories as psychosocial constructions of lived life reveal the most basic human need – the need to create meaning—meaning that is shaped and conveyed within a particular social and historical context (Bruner, 1990).

Overall, the current study lends further support for psychological sequence of cultural identity offered by Berry (1999); that is, the stronger the belief that one is Anishinaabe or Ojibway or Cree influences the sense of attachment or belonging one feels toward the group, the feelings (i.e., positive versus negative) associated with being a part of the group, and whether maintaining, hiding, or changing one's identity is a motivation. In a similar fashion, the result also supports the bi-directional relationship of exploration and commitment proposed by Phinney (1992) and colleagues (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Roberts et al., 1999); that is, exploration is only possible with a certain level of commitment and, as exploration increases, so does the level of commitment. Further exploration is promoted as commitment to one's group is made (Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Roberts et al., 1999). Participants within the current study who self-identified as Anishinaabe were more likely to feel a sense of attachment and belonging,

were more likely to seek out information and experiences relevant to the group, and were more likely to make commitments based on this understanding.

This finding is echoed in some of the life stories provided by Elders with traditional knowledge, where the bi-directional relationship of exploration and commitment is evident, as is a search that clearly influences the way in which individuals self-identify. For example, one Elder with traditional knowledge spoke of her struggles to find meaning of her life as occurring over a 48 year period.

...That struggle...to try and make sense of life...[began] in my early twenties...I was grieving for my mother. I was grieving for other things...It took me many years...to find, you know, that sense of belonging...I got involved with the community in Toronto...we started a dance troupe with buckskins and feathers...You could say that I was searching. I was really, really searching...I was looking for something that was missing in my life – a sense of emptiness that I felt for a long time – and always looking for something that would fill that void (Participant 14, interview, July 2008).

Another Elder with traditional knowledge related:

I went to residential school....and I tried hard to be a good Catholic...But the messages I was getting from the people who were responsible for us didn't balance...The things they wanted us to learn and the way they wanted us to live...was not what they were showing us... They continued to force us to do these things...Where I was seeing less and less that I was able to connect with... By the time I left residential school....I declared myself an atheist... That summer when I was home and being on the land again, I was experiencing creation, experiencing the water, the storms, the rain, seeing things grow... And even standing on the rocks and feeling that wind...blowing over me... I came to realize that there is spirit. There is spirit out there and that something has to be responsible for this beautiful, beautiful life... I guess that was my changing moment where I came to accept that, that there is more to life... I tried to find what this was that I was feeling... these connections I was having even to the... star world at night, and the northern lights, all those things. (Participant, 25, interview, August 2008).

As a result of inconsistencies in the Elder's life as a child and the conflict and disconnection she experienced, new experiences with the natural world caused her

question who or what was responsible for “this beautiful, beautiful life” and, as a result, motivated her to seek meaning.

The methods utilized in the current study provide an enriched understanding of identity development in the Anishinaabe community. It reaffirms the importance of understanding from within culture, the symbolism and stories that convey the values, attitudes, beliefs and assumptions that are critical to constructing meaning of self and the social world. By considering indigenous identity development from both a western and indigenous standpoint, and drawing upon the relevant literature related to identity development and an indigenous worldview, we move closer to an understanding of the central aspects of Anishinaabe identity. Specifically, that identity development involves the search to understand the meaning of spirit (i.e., self-understanding that is gleaned from an understanding of one’s relationship to the natural world), a search that involves a journey to find true knowledge, to understand the essence of

...life knowing that this is not possible. In doing so, every breath I take, every movement I make, and every moment of my being is guided by that which I am taught... That I am but one part of creation, no greater, no less, and everything I do, I do to myself. For this reason, I walk through life guided by the sacred laws of the lodge of life (Misko-Ginew, personal communication, May 4, 2007).

Identity is very much tied to the story of creation for it is the story of creation that conveys the understanding of the patterns of life. It provides an interpretive framework for members of culture to understand self through historical time and provides the tools necessary for understanding self through developmental time.

The identity of Native people is bound through their stories of creation, how we came to this place, and the relationship we have with our natural environment. It’s in how we greet grandfather sun, grandmother moon, how we walk on our mother Earth, realizing that we are one small part in

the whole of creation (E. Manitowabi, personal communication, August 10, 2007).

As tools that chronicle the history and origins of the people, the fundamental story forms of ceremony, song, dance, and the symbolism embedded therein, provide a way for people to practice and sustain beliefs (Chamberlain, 2003). The narrative forms convey an understanding of how the world works, an understanding that shapes and influences one's life as told through story. The way we choose to remember and tell of stories of our life reflects how we perceive the self and how we want others to perceive us. They reflect our understanding of self through time and place and the general feelings we have of life, a life lived, and life's possibilities. In effect, stories shape and reflect one's identity.

### *Limitations*

As with any empirical investigation, the current study is not without limitations. First, the extent of involvement with traditional ceremonies was not considered within the final analysis. Comparing the age at which Elders and young adult became involved with traditional practices may have enriched an understanding of when individuals perceive the need to construct an understanding of self that is unified, meaningful, and has purpose (McAdams, 2006; Roberts et al., 1999; Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001). Although this information was not utilized in the final statistical analysis, closer examination show that the average age in which Elder traditional participant became involved was 36.4 years of age, compared to 11.3 years of age for the young adults. This suggests that a rebirth or a reclaiming of the traditional knowledge forms are occurring within the community.

Second, the relationship between language and identity was not examined. If language conveys culture, and culture penetrates the social and cognitive processes that

shape perceptions and meaning of experience, it remains unclear whether the results would be any different across the tasks for participants fluent in the Anishinaabe language from birth. This may help clarify the finding within the current study that identity development does not appear to become an issue for Elder participants with traditional knowledge until much later on in their life (i.e., 28 – 49 years of age). The role that language plays in participants' responses to changing cultural demands (i.e., roles and responsibilities; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1997) needs to be more closely examined.

### *Future Directions*

The current study raises some interesting considerations for future research in the area of indigenous identity development. Identity is a multifaceted construct that becomes more complex with the introduction of culture. As a result, considerations for future research on indigenous identity development might include the following.

First, identity researchers must try to understand how values, beliefs, and practices are intertwined in the formation of an identity (Thorne, 2004). Values and beliefs, which convey rules and norms that order behavior, are made visible through customs and practices. They influence the perception of reality and is reflected in the types of stories we tell, features considered essential to identity development (Berry, 1999; McAdams, 2001; Phinney & Ong, 2007). It is the customs and practices that reflect the way members of culture believe, and it is the songs, stories, dance, and ceremony that provide ways to practice and sustain beliefs (Chamberlain, 2003). Parents introduce the child to culture through the narrative forms available through culture and serve to guide the individual as he/she relates to and tries to make sense of the world (De Marrais et al.,

1992; Gutierrez-Clellen & Quinn, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Miller & Mangelsdorf, 2005; Minami, 2001; Nelson, 2003).

A secondary consideration is that indigenous identity research must be conceptually grounded within the psychological, cultural, and historical realities of indigenous peoples (Markstrom & Iborra, 2003). Reality, argued Bruner (1991), can only be understood through the consideration of culture's tool kit and how it is differentially integrated within different cultures. Understanding how culture's tool kit is transformed as a result of historical influences provides insight into what constituted identity and self-understanding prior to and following forced loss of culture. Possessing an understanding of the deeper meanings associated with symbolism, how it has changed, and the relationship to development and meaning making within an indigenous context may further elucidate why individuals develop certain perceptions, beliefs, and attachments toward their group, what triggers the exploration of information and experiences relevant to their group for some and not for others, and the meaning they extract from experiences as told through life stories. Simply imposing a foreign lens to examine identity development risks losing the meaning of the symbolism used to describe, interpret, and understand what identity may be for indigenous groups (Markstrom & Iborra, 2003). For example, the Navajo Kinaalda' ceremony, considered a rite of passage to womanhood, involves different protocols and symbolic activities that are tied to a guiding story. Unless there is an understanding of the symbolism associated with the ceremony, or the broader context of the ceremony, the meaning and relevance to identity development is lost. The following illustrates this point.



I guess if I go all the way back to...when I was taken from my home...and go back to the whole...residential school experience and what happened, the most traumatic thing for me there was when they cut your hair....that really traumatized me...that sense of something being severed. Something was literally cut off... The act of cutting my hair was the act of severing ties, connections, relationships, and ...the bond that I had with my mom and dad... that bond I had with my loved ones... my language... your spirit (Participant 14, interview, July 2008).

An understanding of the symbolism is central to understanding indigenous identity development and sheds light on why individual's self-identity the way they do, the nature of exploration and commitment, and a deeper level of the meaning associated with the stories they construct of their lives.

Finally, the influence of culture on identity development can not be understated. Embedded within culture are the values and beliefs that guide the interpretation of reality. As rules, instruction or norms that govern behavior (Geertz, 1973), the narrative forms of song, dance, and ceremony provide a way to practice and transmit beliefs (Chamberlain, 2003). They allow members of indigenous tribal societies to “remember to remember” (Cajete)—through participation, one remembers the stories of culture and, in the process, ‘remembers’ who they are across developmental and historical time. Through an evolving culture, one which is transformed in a vertical fashion, the self is situated within a particular social, psychological, and historical context that lend to stability and consistency over time and place. The same can not be said in cases where culture is forcibly removed. Under these circumstances, identity of group members will continue to develop, but one that is consistent with the dominant ideology that pervades social and community life. In the current study, there appears to be an Ojibway identity, one that is consistent with the stories told by outside influence; the other is an Anishinaabe identity,

one that is parallel to the stories told by culture. If the sole criterion of Anishinaabe identity achievement is to understand what it means to be a human being, one must understand their relationship with the natural environment to effectively meet the cultural demands placed on the individual (i.e., changing roles and responsibilities). In the search to understand this relationship, the values and beliefs conveyed through story may provide group members with a perceived sense of self that is continuous and consistent (Markstrom & Iborra, 2003; Van Hoof, 2003), has meaning and purpose (Roberts et. al., 1999; McAdams, 2006; Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001), and, supports a sense of psychological well-being (McAdams et. al., 2001; Phinney, 1992).

For the Anishinaabe, it is not a question of maintaining as much as it is a question of regaining that which was lost. As important as it may be for identity researchers to value the role of indigenous knowledge, it is equally important for indigenous peoples “... *to go back and pick up those things we left along the trail*” (Misko-Ginew, personal communication, September 2007). As part of an Anishinaabe prophecy, this statement implies a search for knowledge, knowledge that conveys a way of relating to the world and developing an understanding of self in the world. Picking up those things that were forcibly removed will allow the Anishinaabe to regain a sense of time and sense of place.

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## Appendix A

### Criteria & Scoring Scheme for Redemptive and Contaminated

#### Life Story Event Sequences

The scoring scheme for redemptive and contaminated life story sequences is based on the work of McAdams and colleagues (1997; 2001) and the work of Tedeschi & Calhoun (1995; as cited in McAdams et al., 2001) that focused on personal growth following an adverse or post-traumatic experience.

Stories with a redemptive story sequence are ones in which decidedly bad events in the narrative are subsequently redeemed or made better, resulting in a positive or good outcome (McAdams et. al., 1997). In essence, there is a transformation in a scene that moves from a bad, affectively negative state, scene, or situation to an affectively positive state, scene, or situation (McAdams et. al., 2001).

There must be an explicit transformation from a decidedly negative-affect state to a decidedly positive-affect state. Evidence for negative-affect state must be clear and explicit. The participant must describe a situation or an event in life in which he/she has suffered in some way and experienced pain, loss, sadness, fear or anguish and changes into (a) a decidedly positive situation or (b) produces a change in the outcome, which has led to a new understanding of the self and relationships.

The *primary scoring criteria* of redemption sequences involves a transformation from a decidedly negative-affect state to a decidedly positive-affect state. Life story sequences that provide evidence of this will be scored 1-point. Redemption sequences will also be scored for new self-understanding (1-point), new understanding of relationships (1-point), and clear integration and understanding of self in relation to others (1-point). Total scoring for redemptive life story sequence is 4-points.

Stories with a contaminated story sequence are ones where there is explicit evidence within the narrative that illustrates a direct move from a positive affect state, scene or situation to a negative affect state, scene, or situation (McAdams et al., 1997). The story sequence may also go from a barely acceptable state, scene, or situation to a worse state, scene or situation.

There must be an explicit account from a clearly positive-affect state to a decidedly negative-affect state. The account must explicitly state that the beginning of the episode in question was affectively positive and this positive state was followed by a clearly negative outcome.

The *primary scoring criteria* of contamination sequences involves a transformation from a decidedly positive-affect state to a decidedly negative-affect state. Life story sequences

that provide evidence of this will be scored 1-points. All scoring will cease if story is scored for contaminated life story event sequence.

## Appendix B

### Criteria and Scoring Scheme for Motivational Themes of

#### Enhanced Agency, Enhanced Communion, and Ultimate Concern

Life story event sequences with the presence of enhanced agency show a transformation from negative to positive in the story leads to enhancement of protagonist's personal power or agency, or builds self-confidence, efficacy or personal resolve, or provides protagonist with insight into personal identity. Enhanced agency as a result of the redemption sequence must be explicitly stated.

Life story event sequences with the presence of enhanced agency are scored +1 if the transformation from negative to positive in the story leads to enhancement of protagonist's personal power or agency, or builds self-confidence, efficacy or personal resolve, or provides protagonist with insight into personal identity (McAdams et al., 1996). Enhanced agency as a result of the redemption sequence must be explicitly stated.

Life story event sequences with the presence of enhanced communion show a transformation from negative to positive in the story leads to enhancement of the protagonist's personal relationships of love, friendships, family ties, etc. Enhanced communion as a result of the redemption sequence must be explicitly stated.

Life story event sequences with the presence of enhanced communion are scored +1 if the transformation from negative to positive in the story leads to enhancement of the protagonist's personal relationships of love, friendships, and family ties (McAdams et al., 1996). Enhanced communion as a result of the redemption sequence must be explicitly stated.

Life story event sequences with the presence of ultimate concern show a transformation from negative to positive in the story involves confrontation with or significant involvement in fundamental existential issues or ultimate concerns where the protagonist comes face-to-face with death, God/Creator, and/or religious/spiritual dimensions of life.

Life story event sequences with the presence of ultimate concern are scored +1 if the transformation from negative to positive in the story involves confrontation with or significant involvement in fundamental existential issues or ultimate concerns where the protagonist comes face-to-face with death, God/Creator, and/or religious/spiritual dimensions of life (McAdams et al., 1996).

## Appendix C

### Information Sheet

I am inviting you to participate in a research study, entitled *A Sense of Time, A Sense of Place: A Narrative Approach to Examining Anishinaabe Identity Within and Between Generations*, being conducted by Stan Bird of the University of Calgary.

The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of forced loss of culture on identity development and is carried out as a requirement in partial fulfillment of a doctorate degree.

Your participation will be very helpful in several ways. First and foremost, this research will help us understand the relationship between the forced loss of culture and identity development. Second, your participation may also help develop a model of identity development for other indigenous people in Canada and the United States. Finally, your participation may also help us better understand the relationship between cultural stories and learning. This will affect what First Nations children are taught and the social and educational policies that affect First Nation people.

The study will involve Elders and young adults with and without the cultural knowledge of Anishinaabe customs, practices, and traditions. Participation in the study will involve two tasks administered at two different times. In the first meeting, you will be asked to share an event that stands out in your mind, one that has led to new insight or a new understanding of yourself. This task will take approximately one hour and will be video-taped. In the second meeting, you will be asked to complete a list of questions about your attitudes and understanding of your cultural group. I will read the questions to you. This task should take approximately 20 minutes.

The type of event you share might be positive or negative, and has the potential of making you upset or causing you some form of distress. If you choose to participate in the study knowing this risk and you experience distress as a result, you may access local community counseling services through the Peguis Health Services.

You are under no obligation to participate in this research. Your participation in the study will remain anonymous through the replacement of personal names by ID numbers. The ID number will be used to identify transcribed videotape interviews and questionnaires and cannot be linked to your participation without the master ID list. The master ID list will be stored separately from the data and stored separately in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office at the University of Calgary. You may withdraw from the study at any time. Should you wish to withdraw from the research, all personal data collected will be destroyed.

You will not be given the opportunity to review the videotaped interview or the questionnaires. Raw research will be available only to the researchers, his supervisors Dr. Anne McKeough and Dr. Susan Graham, and research assistants.

For further information, please contact Stan Bird, PhD (candidate), Faculty of Education, University of Calgary at (403) 220 – 3779.

## Appendix D

### The University of Calgary Ethics Consent Form

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**Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:**

Stan G. Bird  
 Division of Applied Psychology  
 Graduate Studies  
 University of Calgary

***Supervisor:***

Dr. Anne McKeough,  
 Applied Psychology, University of Calgary

**Title of Project:**

A sense of time, a sense of place: A narrative approach to examining Anishinaabe identity within and between generations.

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This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

***Purpose of the Study:***

The purpose of this study is to examine identity development within and between generations as a result of forced loss of culture; specifically, to examine the relationship between cultural knowledge and identity development. The principal investigator (Stan Bird) will study the relationship between Anishinaabe cultural knowledge and identity development. Your participation will add a valuable perspective to this research project based on your life experience.

***What Will I Be Asked To Do?***

The study involves several tasks to be administered over two sessions. During the first session, participants will be asked partake in an interview that will explore an oral account of a significant life event that has led to new insight and self-understanding. This interview would involve a time commitment of approximately one hour. Due to the nature of the research, the investigator may include parts of your story in his final thesis document. Your story will be videotaped and transcribed verbatim.

The second task involves a questionnaire related to your attitude and understanding of your cultural group. The questionnaire will involve a time commitment of approximately 20 minutes.



Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. There is also no consequence if you choose not to participate. You also have the right to not answer any question(s).

*What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?*

All participants in the study will remain anonymous through the replacement of personal names by ID numbers. All data will be assigned identification numbers and cannot be linked to the participants without the master ID list. Quantitative data will be reported anonymously in aggregate in presentations, publications, and reports. Qualitative data will be reported anonymously in academic presentations, publications and reports. When samples are presented, all identifying material will be removed. Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide your gender, age, cultural background, occupation, and whether you reside in an urban or rural area.

*Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?*

Exploring significant and life-turning events provides insight into the type of stories people use to make sense of their life. The type of story people use to make sense of their lives may reflect past experiences and their ability to adapt and cope with negative life experiences. Moreover, story reflects how people organize their life experiences and the relationship it may have to identity formation and general life satisfaction. People who find the good in the bad circumstances often develop positive changes in one of three life areas: the self, relationships with others, or changes in their philosophy of life. Life stories will be analyzed to determine whether they change from bad, affectively negative scene to a good, affectively, positive scene (i.e., redemptive life sequence), or from a from a good or positive affective life scene, to a bad or negative affective life scene (i.e., contaminated life sequence). Life stories will also be analyzed to determine whether the overall theme is more individual or community oriented.

The type of significant life story event you share can be very positive or very negative, and as such, has the potential of making you upset or causing you some form of distress. If you choose to participate in the study knowing this risk and you experience distress as a result, you may access local community counselling services through Peguis Health Services.

*What Happens to the Information I Provide?*

Participation is completely voluntary, and is anonymous and confidential if you so choose. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study and any information provided up to that point will be destroyed and discarded. No one except the researcher, his supervisors, and research assistants will be allowed to see or hear any of the stories on the video tape or any of the answers to the questionnaire. All transcripts, which will be stored on computer disk and in hard copy, will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office at the University of Calgary and will be destroyed by June 2015. For those willing to be interviewed, only the researcher will have access to names and contact information. These interviews will be conducted by the researcher only, and will be video-taped. The video-tape will be transcribed and assigned an

identification number to ensure anonymity, in which case your name will not appear in any transcript or report of the results. The video-tapes will be destroyed after the transcripts have been assessed to be accurate. The signed consent forms will be kept for five years (the reason for which is that it provides legal permission for future publication where excerpts from stories or interviews may be used). The hard copy of the transcripts, the computer disks, and the videotapes from interviews will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office.

You will not be given the opportunity to review the videotaped interview or the questionnaires. Raw research will be available only to the researchers, his supervisors Dr. Anne McKeough and Dr. Susan Graham, and research assistants.

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Signatures (written consent)

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Questions/Concerns*

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Mr. Stan G. Bird  
 Department of Applied Psychology,  
 Faculty of Graduate Studies  
 (403) 259-3445; email: [bineshii@shaw.ca](mailto:bineshii@shaw.ca)  
*And*

Dr. Anne McKeough,  
 Department of Applied Psychology,  
 Faculty of Graduate Studies  
 University of Calgary



(403) 220-5723; email: [mckeough@ucalgary.ca](mailto:mckeough@ucalgary.ca)

Or

Dr. Susan Graham  
Department of Psychology  
University of Calgary

(403) 220-7188; email: [susan.graham@ucalgary.ca](mailto:susan.graham@ucalgary.ca)

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact Bonnie Scherrer, Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-3782; email [bonnie.scherrer@ucalgary.ca](mailto:bonnie.scherrer@ucalgary.ca).

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.