CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of Political Science

Bachelor's Thesis

2023 **MacKenzie DeBruhl**

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An Indigenous Conceptualization of Land: Case Study of Eastern North Carolina Tribes

Bachelor's Thesis

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Study programme: Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE)

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Year of the defence: 2023

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 31 July 2023 MacKenzie DeBruhl

References

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to explore the Indigenous conceptualizations and experiences of land among regional eastern North Carolina Indigenous tribes, specifically the Tuscarora and the Chowanoac (Chowanoke). Qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis with elements of grounded theory, were utilized to support the study. By comparing Indigenous epistemological perspectives on land with Western (Anglo-European) theories and briefly delving into the historical context of early colonialism in the United States, the research sheds light on the initial encounters and misunderstandings between Native Americans and early settlers. Through interviews with five participants, the central theme that emerged was that land serves as the foundational source upon which all aspects of life rest. For Indigenous individuals, land represents sustenance, healing, pedagogy, and identity. Additionally, a corollary theme surfaced, depicting land as a living organism deserving of respect, responsibility, and reciprocal exchange. The participants' connections and experiences with the land were deeply embodied, devoid of abstraction. This thesis argues that adopting an Indigenous perspective in contemplating and engaging with land challenges the singular conception prevalent in dominant Anglo-European discursive practices. Such reimagining and reorientation of land not only offers a path towards reconciling colonial legacies but also fosters essential environmental stewardship.

Keywords

Indigenous Knowledge, Land/Nature, Indigenous philosophy, epistemology, decolonize, Native American, Eurocentric, semi-structured interviews.

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Chief Cecil Hunt

Gerry Light Panther Golden Eagle Lang

Duvonya Chavis

Runęhkwáʔčhę (Medicine Lays with Him) Duane Brayboy

Rahahę:tih (He Makes the Path) David Webb

Your stories and words of wisdom have undoubtedly influenced my own praxis and how I interact and contemplate this beautiful Land. I hope that your knowledge and sentiments will also resonate with others and inspire them to reflect deeply on our relationality with the more-than-human world.

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Table 1: Research Partners/Participants

1. Introduction

This thesis aims to explore the Indigenous conceptualization of land within a regional context of eastern North Carolina. By briefly recounting the structural transformation of colonialism in the present-day United States, it is possible to uncover the fundamental differences between Indigenous and Eurocentric ontological and epistemological claims surrounding land. Since time immemorial, land has played a central part of the human story. It forms the very foundation upon which our existence and all human activities rely upon. From a philosophical standpoint, land holds significance in various ways, intertwining with our identity, sustenance, and practical relationality with nature. The significance of land is multidimensional, varying immensely across cultures. The value of such ranges from economic development, cultural and social worth, to political sovereignty, and ecological sustainability, to name a few. While significance can carry qualitative and quantitative worth in each domain, cultures credit value differently. Stark contrasts with regards to this can be drawn between Indigenous cultures and the dominant discursive practices of European traditions (Ahenakew, 2016; Battiste, 2005; Dei et al., 2005; Karanja, 2019; Keller, 2014; Kidwell, 1985; Richter, 2001). It is important to highlight that although accuracy can be located in these statements, that it does not serve as a justification to generalize all Indigenous persons or all persons of European background to these philosophical orientations. Moreover, the attempt to capture a philosophical orientation of a particular cultural group in opposition to their counterparts may render an 'illusory static dichotomy', as mentioned by Castleden et al. (2017, p. 14). Binaries are often used when referring to people with different historical life experiences, but as post-modernity has allowed for cross-cultural interactions, identities, beliefs, and practices are becoming less static and more fluid and nuanced. As such, Indigenous peoples not only remain steadfast in their cultural values and beliefs, but embody the fluidity of their intimate engagement with the Land as it pertains to the current socio-

economic climate. This research sheds light on their loyalty to their land-based values while also occupying space in the constantly changing landscape.

1.1 Brief History of Colonialism in Early United States

The value placed on land for economic gain, political sovereignty, and the potential for proselytism has compelled nations to set off to explore new territories. Early modernity has witnessed such historical transformation as a result of these intentions when voyages to the 'New World' were made dating back to 16th and 17th centuries by European colonists. In the following centuries after the pivotal year of 1492, dominant European powers, namely England, France, Spain, and the Netherlands sent proxy explorers to unknown vast territory of the 'New World' which spurred the historical transformation of colonization in the west. What soon followed in the centuries to come was not a singular and static event, but rather a structural transformation to a land already inhabited by highly developed and cultured societies, namely the Indigenous persons that we now call Native Americans, or American Indians (Richter, 2001). It is paramount to note that although these early explorers thought they had arrived, or even the often-used ignominious word, 'discovered' a 'New World', the Americas were already home to a host of established communities and developed societies (Southeast Native American Groups, n.d.).

The great hegemonic powers at the time were in an international competition over a colonial empire. While their shared aspirations for wealth and power united them, their motivations for colonization varied, leading to diverse outcomes and achievements in their respective colonies (Motivations for Colonization, n.d.). With competition at the fore during the process of settling and possessing the 'New World,' the dominant colonial powers were motivated by different incentives, and thereby each implemented different methods of doing so (Seed, 1995). In Patricia Seed's 1995 book titled *Ceremonies of Possession*, she examines

the different means of asserting territorial authority by European powers, and the respective actions taken to claim possession of the land. A central theme which runs throughout her writing is that each colonial power had their own individualized cultural behaviors to lay possessive claim to the territory of the 'New World.' Although, the hegemonic imperialist actors had different actions to exemplify their attempt at possession, one dominant parallel seemed to unite these empires. Their common conceptualization of land from their shared ontological existence, stood in opposition to those who inhabited the very land which they were seeking to obtain (Seed, 1995). In grasping the early confusion and novelty bound up with first contact among the Indigenous persons of North America and European colonists, Bruce G. Trigger (1991) acknowledges that these fundamental differences are the product of centuries long development of cultural traditions. He further delineates by stating that anthropologists contribute to the field of cultural analysis by "acknowledge(ing) that cultural traditions are 'sense-making systems,' systems that shape people's perceptions and values and hence influence their reaction to new experiences in important ways (Trigger, 1991, p. 1197). For the reason that this thesis is focused on the regional Indigenous conceptualization of land within the eastern North Carolina context, I will mention here the intent behind territorial acquisition and the implored means among the early British settlers that largely dominated the landscape. Alongside the desire to procure 'unclaimed land,' the colonization process involved territorial expropriation and a concerted effort to convert Native Americans to Christianity while encouraging the adoption of European cultures and traditions, often employing persuasive or coercive methods. Colonization efforts achieved greater success in the Southeast region compared to other parts of North America, with Native American communities alongside the Eastern seaboard bearing the brunt of these endeavors (Southeast Native American Groups, n.d.).

According to the historical accounts of North Carolina Indians, author Ruth Wetmore (1975) states that at the behest of the English crown's orders, Sir Walter Raleigh was commissioned to explore the coastline and waterways of Virginia and North Carolina during the summer of 1584. The intent behind this early expedition was to discover and colonize lands "not actually possessed of any Christian prince, nor inhabited by Christian people" (Wetmore, 1975, p. 23). Part of the intimate relationship with the spread of Christianity and the territorial expropriation derives from the Latin phrase and doctrine of *Terra nullius* (Impact of the 'Doctrine of Discovery' on indigenous peoples, 2012; Miller, 2008; Seed, 1995).

1.2 Terra Nullius and Ontological Differences

The principle of *Terra nullius* played a pivotal role in the colonization of North America. Derived from the Latin phrase meaning "land or earth that is null or void," *Terra nullius* encompassed the notion that lands not possessed or utilized by any individual or nation, including those occupied by Indigenous peoples, were deemed empty, waste, or vacant (Miller, 2008). Consequently, British settlers considered these territories as available for appropriation and exploitation, a belief system justified by their perception of implementing more advanced and productive land use practices compared to Indigenous inhabitants.

This ideological construct finds its place within the broader international law Doctrine of Discovery framework (Miller, 2008). The British colonizers extensively applied this definition to Indigenous lands, adopting a rather expansive interpretation. Notably, they labeled lands owned, occupied, and actively used by native populations as *Terra nullius* if they did not conform to British legal systems or cultural norms of land utilization, with a particular emphasis on agricultural cultivation. For instance, Seed (1995) claims that the Native American's practices 'were described by an accumulation of negatives' (p. 39). She

highlights this notion by quoting John Winthrop, an English Puritan lawyer in the early 1600s. Winthrop addresses the Indigenous engagement with the land by asserting: "…they inclose noe land neither have any settled habitation nor any tame cattle to improve their land…" (Seed, 1995, p. 39). She further delineates from Winthrop that "…[these natives] have noe other but a natural right to those countries," until the opportunity for an improvement to the land via the English symbolic acts of possession (erections of houses and boundary markers, and gardens and plantations) came along (Seed, 1995, p. 39). This set the stage for English colonizers to exert physical manifestations of rightful possession via fences, walls, gardens, and houses (Seed, 1995). This is further echoed by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker as cited in Greer (2012): "when the English took possession of lands overseas, they did so by building fences and hedges, the markers of enclosure and private property" (p. 365). It was thought that these 'clear acts' served sufficiently in their contextual meaning as the outward behaviors of colonial rule, despite the fact that these behaviors were merely cultural constructs which the Indigenous population were not predisposed to (Seed, 1995).

This subjective classification served as a basis for the British to stake claims on Native American territories, leading to the dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples. The hunting and gathering grounds of various North American tribes illustrate prime examples of lands dismissed by the British as being unclaimed or underutilized by Indigenous communities. The British perceived the absence of conventional European-style farming practices on these lands as evidence of their vacant status, thereby deeming them available for British appropriation (Seed, 1995). Consequently, the concept of *Terra nullius* not only provided the British with a legal pretext for encroaching upon and colonizing Native American lands but also justified their assertion of dominion and control over vast territories. Its application perpetuated the subjugation and marginalization of Indigenous peoples,

effectively serving as a means to legitimize the dispossession and disposability of their ancestral lands (Miller, 2008; UN, 2012).

1.3 England's Territorial Expropriation and Scriptural Authority

The scriptural authority of 15th century Christian principals has routinely come under scrutiny as being the "shameful" source of 'all the discrimination and marginalization Indigenous persons faced today', as noted by the UN on the 11th Permanent Forum of Indigenous issues (2012). As Seed (1995) asserts, the English settlers found their rationale for their territorial acquisition from the natives by adhering to the religious authority of Genesis: "go forth and multiply" (p. 33). Seed (1995) also affirms that the leading English philosopher at the time, John Locke, based his ideas of property with Christian doctrines (p. 33). Thus, the 'scriptural rational' for the dispossession of Indigenous persons from the land was inherent and implicated in his writings. An example of this can be found in Chapter Five, 'Of Property' in his *Second Treatise of Government* (1690):

> Though the earth, and all inferior creatures, be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person: this no body has any right to but himself. The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being by him removed from the common state nature hath placed it in, it hath by this labour something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other men: for this labour being the unquestionable property of the labourer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once joined to, at least where there is enough, and as good, left in common for others.

According to Locke's philosophy, the Indigenous populations in the 'New World' were seen as living in a state of nature, where land and resources were considered common property. Put another way, Locke's reasoning stemmed from a rudimentary ontological division between "civilized societies and their antithesis, natural humanity: on one side were civilized communities where land could be owned individually or communally, on the other

uncivilized communities where land was open to all. In erasing the distinction, where American natives were concerned, between particular commons and open access resources, Locke effectively disqualified them as proprietors" (Greer, 2012, p. 368). Thus, European colonizers argued that the Indigenous people did not meet the criteria for legitimate appropriation because they had not mixed their labor with the vast tracts of land nor were they making efficient use of the abundance of resources (Seed, 1995). It can be assumed that by settling and cultivating the land, they believed they were making it more productive and fulfilling the condition of leaving "enough and as good" for others. This rationale was used to justify displacing Indigenous communities and claiming their lands as their own (Impact of the 'Doctrine of Discovery' on Indigenous peoples, 2012; Miller, 2008). Furthermore, the labor-mixing requirement provided a moral and philosophical justification for European expropriation. According to their localized belief, through their agricultural practices, technological advancements, and economic systems, the productivity and value of the land would greatly improve. They argued that by clearing forests, cultivating crops, and building settlements, they were adding their labor to the previously untamed wilderness, transforming it into civilized and productive territories (Seed, 1995). This labor-mixing principle helped to legitimize their claims of ownership and establish a basis for private property rights.

For instance, Locke (1690) asserts "as much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property. He by his labour does, as it were, inclose it from the common" (section 32). Locke's philosophical insertion of his labor theory of property ultimately excluded the different worldviews of the inhabitants of the land which was intended to be obtained. As such, the absence of private property among Native Americans rendered a biased and negative perception among those who adhered to different philosophical principles. Greer (2012) provides a detailed analysis of Locke's writings, focusing on the interconnectedness of associated concepts framed consistently in a negative

manner. These concepts include “commons,” “waste,” “commoner,” “Indian,” “America,” and “poverty” (p. 367). He goes on further to state that “improvement is equally at odds” with the “uncleared forests in America” (Greer, 2012, p. 367). Accordingly, the concepts of improvement, replenishing, and planting are the colonial legacies found in the era of plantations (Seed, 1995). Seed (1995) further reveals the expansive significance of planting by recounting the 17th-century Englishmen’s declarations. For instance, in 1612, William Strachey described planting as “actual possession,” while in 1630, John Cotton proclaimed that it was a principal of natural law: “in a vacant soyle, see that taketh possession of it, and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his Right it is” (Seed, 1995, p.30). Furthermore, the land enclosure practices were also an institutionalized act which signified the claims and possession of private property. Seed (1995) states that acts such as building fences, growing hedges or any other land enclosure act was the customary means of establishing private property among the early English colonists (p. 20). The symbolism behind these colonial acts were often dictated by royal powers such as the King Charles’ decree to the governor of Virginia, when he ordered “be compelled for every 200 acres Granted unto him to inclose and sufficiently Fence . . . a Quarter of an Acre of Ground” (Seed, 1995, p. 23). Therefore, the symbolic acts not only served the purposes of practicality, such as in the protection of crops and livestock, but that they were also imbued with political meaning (Seed, 1995, p. 23). The colonial policies of land enclosure exemplify another systematic acquisition and division of Indigenous lands for the establishment of the British colonies.

Consequently, Locke's theory of appropriation played a monumental role in the colonization of the ‘New World’ by European powers. The principles of “enough and as good” and the requirement of mixing labor with resources provided a theoretical framework that justified the acquisition of land and resources from Indigenous populations. With Locke’s philosophy prevailing during the time, it can be interpreted that European colonizers,

particularly the British, used his theory to legitimize their claims to the lands they encountered in the Americas. It is incredibly important to recognize the inherent flaws and ethical implications of applying Locke's theory to the colonization process. The theory assumes a level playing field and equal opportunities for all individuals to appropriate resources, but more importantly, it highlights the settler's ignorance of the already existing sophisticated agricultural practices employed by Indigenous peoples. Indeed, it is evident that the colonization of the 'New World' involved drastically different worldviews and a significant power imbalance, as European colonizers possessed superior military technology and resources compared to the Indigenous populations (Trigger, 1991, p. 1214). The application of Locke's theory in the context of colonization led to the dispossession, exploitation, and marginalization of Indigenous communities. Moreover, the colonizers' interpretations of "enough and as good" and labor-mixing conveniently ignored the rich cultural and spiritual connections, and experiential knowledge that Indigenous peoples had with their lands and their agricultural practices. The colonizers' actions resulted in the displacement, loss of sovereignty, and destruction of Indigenous societies, as their lands and resources were forcefully taken away. Understanding the historical context and complexities surrounding the application of Locke's theory in the colonization of the New World is crucial. It sheds light on the profound impact of this ideology and its consequences on Indigenous communities, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive analysis of the ethical implications and the enduring legacy of colonization.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Practical Concerns for Indigenous Philosophy

Before reviewing various key aspects of Indigenous philosophy, it is important to understand some of its related concerns. While within the postmodern context, there seems to be an increasing interest and demand for the espousal of Indigenous philosophy (Battiste, 2005), at the time same there seems to be what Hall (2018, p. 291) refers to as an 'Indigenous absence.' He describes 'Indigenous absence' as a concept where Native American tribes including their philosophies are marginalized, oppressed, and disregarded (Hall, 2018, p. 291). Just as the Indigenous tribes of North America have been mistreated, silenced, and denied their rights, the thoughts and ideas of Indigenous philosophy has also been disregarded and suppressed within the cannon of the dominant paradigm of Western philosophy (Hall, 2018, p. 291). This proposed concept highlights the shared grave experience of both Indigenous peoples and their respective philosophies in being subjugated by the hegemonic and imperial policies and the Eurocentric discursive practices. This contextualization is further echoed by Vine Deloria, Jr., a Native American historian and author, who totally couples Anglo-European (Western) philosophy with its history of territorial expropriation, conquest, and extermination of Indigenous peoples (Hall, 2018, p. 283). As with most imposed institutions on Indigeneity, founded within the Eurocentric colonial context, it can be considered a politics of exclusion and disappearance. Noted by several scholars such as Dei et al. (2022), Hall (2018), Ahenakew (2016), Battiste (2005) and Kidwell (1985), the rich cultural traditions and philosophies of Native Americans has been disparaged, subjugated, and even forced to fracture with the intent of becoming obsolete. Castleden et al. (2017) make a similar point by stating, "there are always particular politics at work in the act of knowledge production" (p. 12). Likewise, Kidwell (1985) delicately articulates this colonial manifestation: "contact has led to the loss of native knowledge rather

than its advance" (p. 211). The undeniability of this colonial legacy is what compelled Erica-Irene A. Daes (1994), the UN Special Rapporteur on Protection of the Heritage of the Indigenous People, to promote the protection and transmission of the cultural and intellectual property of Indigenous peoples. She does so by stating "that the heritage of an Indigenous people is not merely a collection of objects, stories and ceremonies, but a complete knowledge system with its own concepts of epistemology, philosophy, and scientific and logical validity" (UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 1994, p. 3). She further stresses the "vital role" that Indigenous peoples have in attaining ecological sustainability through their "knowledge and traditional practices" (UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 1994, p. 2). The Indigenous role in offering unique perspectives and insights into sustainable practices with the environment is becoming increasingly relevant in the face of global ecological challenges (UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 1994).

In mainstream discourse, Indigenous thought and philosophies have been excluded due to the hegemonic position of Western philosophical conventions. Scholar of Indigenous studies, Rauna Kuokkanen (2006) proclaims that this is partly due to the perception of Indigenous peoples as 'primitive, barbaric, or noble savages [indicated] by philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Bacon, and Rousseau' (p. 251). She also claims this is an inherent product of the hierarchical dualistic assumptions projected by the Platonic tradition (Kuokkanen, 2006, p. 251). As a result of this partial absence in academia, Kuokkanen (2006) claims that Indigenous forms of knowledge are limited within the scope of anthropology, ethnography, and folklore (p. 252). This point is further echoed by Battiste (2005), who states that Indigenous knowledge has been understood and forcefully positioned in "binary opposition to 'scientific,' 'western,' 'Eurocentric,' or 'modern' knowledge" (p. 2). Clara Sue Kidwell (1985) also points to the rigid dichotomy by drawing a parallel between the division of the

primitive and the modern, as articulated by turn of the century philosophers Emile Durkheim and Lucien Levy-Bruhl (p. 212). The marginalization of Indigenous philosophies by way of Eurocentricity is further articulated by Dei et al. (2022). They state that:

> The colonial lens denies the validity of other knowledges and worldviews. This colonial lens is characterized by what has been referred to as instrumentalism – linear and hierarchical learning in a framework where knowledges are categorized horizontally with Eurocentric knowledge at the apex. Western knowledge becomes the norm that all other knowledges and ways of knowing should subscribe to (Dei et al., 2022, p. 64).

Indeed, some ontological turns have been made in minor subfields, giving space for Indigenous thought to arise simultaneously with the emerging philosophies of Western thought. However, the latter still holds a hegemonic position which renders the Indigenous discourse to shape at the margins. Yet as indicated earlier, this shaping is gaining traction alongside theories such as post-colonialism and poststructuralism, which seek to challenge the universal value of Eurocentric knowledge and place high regard for alternative knowledge (Battiste, 2005). Further emphasized by Ahenakew (2016), the current challenging of the dominant Western epistemological framework within academic contexts has led to the recognition and acknowledgment of Western biases and prejudices towards Indigenous knowledge (p. 327). As a result, there is a positive shift towards the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge systems in educational settings. It is also worth nothing here, that due to the oral traditions of Indigenous peoples, there is a paucity of historical sources (Richter, 2001, p. 9). This is further complicated by the marginalization, subjugation, and erasure experienced over a prolonged period of time as a result of colonization. However, one need not assume that this justifies the glossing over what patterns of behavior or oral sentiment can observed or inquired from Indigenous persons.

2.2 Indigenous Knowledge Systems

In order to better understand the Indigenous conceptualization of land, one must look towards the broader philosophical orientations bound up with Indigenous peoples. The knowledge systems and philosophies of Indigenous peoples is regarded as a holistic paradigm which ultimately stands in contrast to the reductionist taxonomic categories proposed by Eurocentric scholars (Battiste, 2005, p. 6). Indigenous Knowledge (IK) defies a concise definition, as highlighted by Indigenous scholars Marie Battiste and James Henderson in McGregor's (2004, p. 390) article. They criticize the imposition of Eurocentric definitions on IK, emphasizing that definitions are often enforced upon Indigenous peoples without their consent. According to McGregor (2004), Battiste and Henderson identify three key problems with conventional constructs of IK. Firstly, the requirement to define or impose definitions is problematic. Secondly, defining IK as a uniform concept across all Indigenous peoples erases the nuances and diversity experienced among Indigenous persons. Lastly, IK is inseparable from the people themselves and cannot be arranged into a singular definition. Although Battiste and Henderson refrain from providing a strict definition of IK, they offer a conceptualization that highlights the holistic nature and interconnectedness between people, ecosystems, living beings, and spirits that inhabit their lands (McGregor, 2004, p. 390). They stress that all aspects of knowledge are rooted in the traditional territories of the respective Indigenous communities and that Indigenous ways of knowing acknowledge the flux and paradoxes of the world, aiming to reconcile opposing forces and reunify the world (McGregor, 2004, p. 390). This changing experience as a result of embodiment and relationality with the mutable environment, thus reduces the possibility of a static Indigenous philosophy. Undeniably so, there are variations and nuances embedded in the place-making of IK and Indigenous philosophy, however, there are acknowledged parallels across

geographical spaces, and that is the mostly shared opposition to dominant Western discursive practices (Datta, 2022; Dei et al., 2022).

While it is likely impossible to provide a singular definition of Indigenous knowledge, there are other fundamental characteristics that can be noted. To begin, Dei (2022) and Deloria (1999), ascertain that Indigenous knowledge is an observable and experiential, living transmission based on intimate engagement and attention given to the larger environment, constituting one's every day realities and informing cultural traditions that have been passed down generationally. This is further echoed by Battiste (2005) who states that the "Indigenous knowledge comprises all knowledge pertaining to a particular people and its territory, the nature or use of which has been transmitted from generation to generation" (p. 6) and that "it is systemic, covering both what can be observed and what can be thought" (p. 4). The experiential aspect of Indigenous knowledge is a large part in their principles of epistemological methods. For instance, Deloria (1999, p. 44) remarks that:

> In formulating their understanding of the world, Indians did not discard any experience. Everything had to be included in the spectrum of knowledge and related to what was already known. As the general propositions that informed the people about the world were the product of generations of tradition and experience, people accepted on faith what they had not experienced, with the hope that during their lifetime they would come to understand.

Deloria (1999) also highlights the holistic nature of Indigenous philosophy in his articulation of the Plain Indians' epistemological positioning. He states that the Indigenous Plains Indians structured their knowledge in a circular manner, devoid of ultimate terms or fixed components of their universe (Deloria, 1999, p. 48). Instead, they focused on understanding phenomena through sets of relationships. Unlike Western Science, where concepts like time, space, and matter are treated as independent entities, in Plains Indian knowledge, no concept exists in isolation (Deloria, 1999, p. 48). Each concept not only holds its own meaning but more importantly, is also composed of interconnected elements from other ideas. This

interconnectedness allows for a comprehensive examination of a concept by exploring its relationships with other concepts. By engaging in this integrated approach, one can return to the starting point with a deeper understanding of the idea and how it manifests in tangible physical experiences (Deloria, 1999, p. 48). The circular structure of Plains Indian knowledge emphasizes the importance of interrelatedness and highlights the dynamic nature of knowledge, rejecting the notion of linearity, and static isolated concepts (Deloria, 1999, p. 48). The confounding of categories and concepts within Indigenous knowledge is also mentioned in Battiste (2005), Keller (2014), Kidwell (1985), and McGregor (2004). For instance, Battiste (2005) mentions that Eurocentric scholars have failed to fully grasp and acknowledge 'the holistic nature of Indigenous knowledge, which defies categorization' (p. 6). In a similar vein, Keller (2014) states that the "confounding of dualistic distinctions" is a "theoretical underpinning" inherent to Indigenous philosophy (p. 99). Kidwell (1985) also points to the holistic arrangement embedded in Native American cultures by claiming 'metaphysical concepts and physical reality' were organized into 'cultural wholes' (p. 227). The category violation and holistic conceptualization found within Indigenous knowledge points to the deviation away from hegemonic Western discursive practices whereby non-linear thinking is often disregarded in favor of the fragmentary objectified logic.

Additionally, the theme of relationality reoccurs throughout the literature (Ahenakew, 2016; Battiste, 2005; Datta, 2022; Dei et al., 2022; Deloria, 1999; Hall, 2018; Hatala et al., 2019; Kidwell, 1985). The key principle of interrelatedness with the environment and other beings, beyond the human sphere, is a foundational aspect to one's positionality and ways of knowing. This is articulated by Ahenakew (2016) when they state that "knowing literally comes from the ground, above and beyond, from the wisdoms of continuous metaphysical engagements and familiarity 'with all our relations'" (p. 328). The honored Indigenous ceremonial invocation of "All My Relatives" is also mentioned by Deloria (1999). He states

that the incitement is for the acknowledgement of one's place, a reminder of being interstitially woven into the fabric of existence (Deloria, 1999, p. 52). The acknowledged web of relationships is what constitutes the Indigenous worldview. Another philosophical rendition of this notion is captured by Marilyn Notah Verney as cited in Hall (2018). Drawing a parallel to Indigenous philosophy, Verney defines Indigenous metaphysics as "the metaphysics of respect (interdependency)" which sustains "our fundamental relations with Mother Earth," adding that these are "relations of equality" (Hall, 2018, p. 283). Inherent in the Indigenous acknowledgement of interrelatedness and interdependence within the broad context of life itself, births a politics of ethics. This is exemplified in Hall's (2018) statement that "for Indigenous philosophy, the entire universe has the kind of being which makes it a fitting recipient of our *respect*, and an equal partner in our mutual interdependency" (p. 284). Other Indigenous scholars have captured this notion while conducting interviews with Elders. For example, Datta (2022, p. 3) reports the following statement while conducting an interview with a Laitu Kong Indigenous Elder from Bangladesh:

> Moreover, it is not just that we talk about our people; we think about collective ways of living. We do not refer to the collective as only for humans. Our collaborative way is everything, including humans, animals, plants, birds, water, everything around us, the way for all living things. We believe the tree has a life and has the power to provide us food and protect us; we have a responsibility to protect it.

In essence, the 'coming to know' (McGregor, 2004, p. 392) amongst Indigenous persons is intricately bound up with one's interrelatedness and interdependency within the micro and macrocosm. Through intimate observation and engagement with relationships and one's positionality, not only is knowledge generated, but a sense of responsibility is also engendered. The reciprocal relationship between one's existence and the world at large holds immense significance and enhances the importance of other conceptualizations within Indigenous discourse.

2.3 Indigenous Conceptualizations of Land

> Their conduct reveals the stern teaching of the school of the forest — that, beset as they were with many common dangers, their proper course was in mutual helpfulness. (Rights, 1947, p. 253)

It is important to note that there are hundreds of distinct Indigenous cultures, each with its own unique beliefs and practices, therefore it is challenging to make sweeping generalizations. However, there are some common themes and concepts that can be identified in the Indigenous conceptualization of land. Dei et al. (2022) posit that for many Indigenous peoples, "Land' includes water, rivers, seas, sky; it is also inclusive of plants, animals, rocks" (p. 113). Encompassing other-than-human bodies, land also include "both living others, as well as animate and inanimate souls that have life" (Dei et al., 2022, p. 113). This is such because humans are not bodies living in isolation, separate from one's environment. The environment is also populated by other-than-human bodies, providing sustenance for all life. Moreover, extending beyond mere rigid categories with physical attributes, as so often found in the Eurocentric/Western conceptualization of land, the Indigenous conceptualization connects Land to 'selfhood, identity, the psyche and memory of the people" (Dei et al., 2022, p. 113). Dei et al. (2022) further articulates that Land and Indigeneity are inextricably bound with one another, "so much so that to use the term 'Indigenous' is to refer to the relationship between Land and place, being with and on the Land, and is the claiming of territorial space and a sense of belonging to the Land (Dei et al., 2022, p. 113). In both African and North American Indigenous communities, there are shared beliefs that without land, life would not exist (Dei et al., 2022, p. 114). While this may seem like a subtle fact of existence, this articulation within these cultures speaks of its importance in their holistic philosophies. This belief not only underscores the very practicality of the offerings of Land, but also points to the great honor imbued to Land/Earth as a living thing (Dei et al., 2022) (Karanja, 2019).

Moreover, with Land being understood as a sentient and conscious being, which all knowledge comes from, Styres (2019), as mentioned in Dei et al. (2022), "refers to Land with a capital 'L'" (p. 118).[1]

Many Indigenous cultures have a deep spiritual and holistic connection to the Land (Ahenakew, 2016; Battiste, 2005; Datta, 2022; Dei et al., 2022; Karanja, 2019; Keller, 2014; Kidwell, 1985). In Keller's (2014) article *Indigenous Studies and "the Sacred",* she recounts a depiction of this by speaking of the perception of Heart Mountain given by an Indigenous elder of the Crowe Tribe. Although the Elder, Mr. Bulltail, is on a reservation in Montana, when he speaks of Heart Mountain in Cody, Wyoming he feels a sense of deep empowerment, acknowledging that it is a 'sacred space' and the center of his homeland, despite being geographically removed from it (Keller, 2014). By drawing upon the notion of divinity or sacredness of the mountain, he refuses to gaze upon its materiality senselessly, something that Keller (2014) describes as "voicing an alternative theory of matter itself (whereas the reductionists in the world of forever negative differences are left with empty signifiers in the desacralized world of modernity with its commodified, demystified property)" (p. 96). Mr. Bulltail, embodying his ancestral ties and the respective philosophical orientation, acknowledges that the Land is something beyond the use of objectification and commodification. Keller (2014) further delineates the contrast exposed in the Indigenous conceptualization of Land to those of Eurocentric ideas by claiming that discursive space in the former is one that centers "the meaning of matter in a precommodified worldview" (p. 100).

In a similar vein, Kidwell (1985) articulates that forces of nature have been ascribed as having 'personal attributes of spiritual beings' among the Indigenous persons of North

[1] Throughout the thesis, the capitalization of the letter 'L' to represent "Land" is frequently utilized, emphasizing its paramount importance within the context of Indigenous philosophy.

America, rather than the European perceptions of being ‘purely mechanical’ (p. 209). He states that Native Americans ‘sought’ interaction with the forces of nature, whereby an inclusive tuneful relationship between man and the natural world was established (Kidwell, 1985, p. 210). The inclination to establish harmonious relationships with the natural world is also posited by Dei et al. (2022). With Land believed to the great source and provider of nourishment, healing, and knowledge, Indigenous persons regard themselves as being in an exchange of reciprocity with it (Dei et al., 2022, p. 114). The reciprocal relationship entails that Land provides sustenance and in turn, Indigenous peoples help protect it (Dei et al., 2022, p. 114). As Dei et al. (2022) articulate, the sense of belonging and of relationship is not one of ownership but rather of stewardship (p. 114). This relationship, one embedded with responsibility is echoed by an Elder interviewed by Datta (2022). They state: “We believe the tree has a life and has the power to provide us food and protect us; we have a responsibility to protect it” (Datta, 2022, p. 4). This quotation highlights the informed praxis of Indigenous persons. The belief that their existence is shared among other beings and across species informs their cultural responsibility and ecological custodianship (Karanja, 2019). The above formulations highlight that this conceptual shift away from human-centric frameworks challenges the notion of Land as a commodity and purely instrumental, so commonly found within non-Indigenous contexts, to a philosophy that places morality and practicality at the center of Indigenous epistemes.

Moreover, Land has been touted as the great source of Indigenous knowledges (Dei et al., 2022) (Karanja, 2019). Howes (1996), as cited in Dei et al. (2022), states that Indigenous knowledge is not static or fixed but rather dynamic as a result of Indigenous peoples’ intimate engagement with the Land and surrounding environment, whereby interpretations, meanings and representations are engendered (p. 116). Observations and continual practices with the Land over generations influence the knowledges of Indigenous peoples. Dei et al. (2022)

expound on these different knowledges as inter-generational knowledge, empirical knowledge, and holistic knowledge (p. 116). As inter-generational knowledge, it is localized within a particular culture and geographical area, therefore it is subjective and unique. As empirical knowledge, it is based on the 'careful observation of the ecosystem and natural phenomena' over a long duration of time (Dei et al., 2022, p. 116). As holistic knowledge, it grounds Indigenous spirituality and relationality with all living and non-living things by way of oral transmission, through 'metaphor, ceremonies, stories, and narratives' (Dei et al., 2022, p. 116). Effectively, through observation and participation, and the sharing of oral traditions, Land serves as the bedrock of Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices, and identity. By acknowledging the dynamic nature of Indigenous knowledge, we can appreciate its resilience, adaptability, and ongoing relevance to Indigenous communities. It invites us to engage in a reciprocal process of learning and understanding, recognizing the contributions and wisdom that Indigenous peoples have gained through their deep connections with the natural world.

Other scholars have recounted the various ways that Land is intimately tied with knowledge production. Karanja (2018, 2019) as cited in Dei et al. (2022), states that "the primacy of Land as a source of Indigenous knowledge production and medicine shows that if knowledge is a product of how people make sense of their environment, it is plausible to claim that Indigenous peoples' situatedness in and on the Land is germane to their sense making and therefore, to their knowledge production and healing" (p. 116). For instance, Battiste (2005) states that particular landmark features such as "landscapes, landforms, and biomes where ceremonies are properly held, stories properly recited, medicines properly gathered, and transfers of knowledge [are] properly authenticated" (p. 8). Moreover, this knowledge includes all kinds including the proper use of flora and fauna, adding to their

medicine wheel (Battiste, 2005, p. 4) This recognition that Land is also medicine is asserted elsewhere (Battiste, 2005; Dei et al., 2022; Hatala et al., 2019; Karanja, 2019).

The interconnection of Land and healing is adduced by Karanja (2019). Firstly, Land is regarded as a source of medicine and sustenance. Among many Indigenous peoples, the world over, plant-based medicines are employed to connect them with greater forces of life. These include land and territory, food as medicine, and various herbs (Karanja, 2019, p. 51). Despite the variations among the plant-based medicines used in different Indigenous contexts, they are vital sources of healing for each group. Secondly, Indigenous persons have a deep spiritual bond with the Land. Maintaining a harmonious and symbiotic relationship with one's environment is crucial to the practice of Indigenous healing (Karanja, 2019, p. 51). Attuning to one's place in the wider cosmology, such as the environment and universe, self, and relationships is what constitutes well-being (Karanja, 2019, p. 52). Thirdly, Land is considered to be a physical site of healing (Karanja, 2019, p. 52). For instance, the memory and act held within a physical place, be it ceremonies, rituals, burial grounds, etc., serve as moments in time to spiritually connect with ancestors and the sacredness of life (Karanja, 2019, p. 52). And lastly, Land serves as a reminder to fully engage in reciprocal and respectful relationships with all of life. This includes living beings and non-living such as elemental forces and spirits (Karanja, 2019, p. 53). As demonstrated, Indigenous peoples view Land as the provider of essential elements necessary for healing, including medicinal plants, sacred sites, and equitable relationality that contribute to physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Karanja, 2019). To put it another way, Indigenous persons regard Land as being a determining factor in one's well-being, whereby considerations of respect and reciprocity are endowed in the greater web of meaning.

It is further stressed that in the Indigenous worldview, Land and territories are not seen as mere commodities, but as an entity that holds deep spiritual connections and serves as

a source of healing, cultural identity, and belonging (Karanja, 2019). Therefore, the conceptualization of Land from an Indigenous perspective entails differing notions about possession. In a 'visual reorientation' of first contact among the Indigenous peoples of North America, Richter (2001) highlights the distinction of land conceptualization and ownership among the two cultural groups, that of Native Americans and settlers. He states that "individuals who engaged in openly acquisitive behavior encountered social disapproval rooted in almost universal Native attitudes toward property rights, which emphasized need and use rather than possession and accumulation" (Richter, 2001, p. 51). The quote highlights the contrasting economic patterns and property rights between Natives in eastern America and western European capitalism during the early to mid-seventeenth century. He states that property, including food, clothing, tools, houses, and land, belonged to individuals and families only as long as they actively utilized them. Accumulation or hoarding of excess goods was seen as highly antisocial, and status and authority were bestowed upon those who were generous and willing to give to others (Richter, 2001). This implies a communal perspective on property rights and an emphasis on sharing and meeting the needs of the community rather than pursuing individual profit (Richter, 2001, p. 52). Building on the idea of ownership and land rights, Richter (2001) further exposes the divergence in views. He claims that "not ownership itself, but the meaning of ownership was what set eastern Indians and western Europeans apart. Native communities treat land as a 'resource,' which could not in itself be owned any more than could the air or the sea" (Richter, 2001, p. 54). In contrast, the Eurocentric conceptualization of land was one of objectification and commodification. This fundamental fracture in perspectives led to historical conflicts between Native Americans and colonists, particularly regarding land use and mobility (Richter, 2001).

It is important to recognize and respect the diversity of Native American Land concepts and practices. The colonization process disrupted and often violently imposed

European notions of land ownership, leading to the removal, dispossession, and subjugation of Indigenous peoples (Karanja, 2019). Understanding and appreciating the richness and complexity of Indigenous Land concepts is paramount for acknowledging the historical and ongoing struggles for land rights and sovereignty faced by Native American communities**.**

3. Present Study

3.1 Background of Tribes Under Study: the Tuscarora and the Chowanoac

The Tuscarora tribe of North Carolina, Uhnawiyúʔkye Skarù·rę̨ʔ Utakrę̨́·te, has a rich history that spans centuries. Their tribal name, meaning “hemp-gatherers” (Wetmore, 1975, p. 68) alludes to their deep cultural connection to the land and their historical engagement in activities related to it. Originally occupying a significant portion of the colonial North Carolina Inner Coastal Plains of the Roanoke, Tar, Pamlico, and Neuse Rivers, they were known as the most powerful and advanced tribe in the region during the time of the Roanoke Island colonies in the 1580s (Wetmore, 1975, p. 68). The tribe's strength and historical development were acknowledged, and they were believed to possess valuable mineral mines (Parramore et al., 2006). However, conflicts arose between the Tuscarora and white settlers in the mid-1600s. The encroachment of a group of Virginia Quakers on tribal lands led to sporadic fighting and tensions. Recognizing the importance of preserving their territory, the Tuscarora maintained the west side of Chowan River as their country until the early 1700s. However, the intensification of conflicts continued to arise as a result of encroachments on their land and the enslavement of native individuals, which ultimately culminated in the eruption of the Tuscarora War in 1711 (Wetmore, 1975, p. 68). Following further disputes with settlers, a portion of the Tuscarora tribe migrated to Niagara County, New York, to join the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, which later became the Six Nations (Parramore et al., 2006). Meanwhile, some Tuscaroras remained in the South, dispersing to different areas of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Over time, their descendants reassembled and formed four distinct communities in and around Robeson County in North Carolina. Despite their strong presence and cultural heritage, the Tuscarora communities in North Carolina continue to lack official state recognition (Parramore et al., 2006). However, they have persevered in the face of adversity and economic challenges, embodying the

traditional values of kindness, charity, and communal support that have defined their society since ancient times. These altruistic and gracious qualities were even echoed by John Lawson, the first Surveyor General assigned to North Carolina by the English Queen. In 1709, Lawson wrote "They are very kind, and charitable to one another, but more especially to those of their own Nation' and when one loses a household or important goods, the rest pitch in to help. They say, 'It is our duty thus to do; we must give him our help, otherwise our society will fall" (Tuscarora Nation of NC, n.d.).

The Chowanoac, an Algonquian tribe in northeastern North Carolina, flourished in the region during the 16th and 17th centuries. Their historical recognition acknowledges their regional primacy as an Algonquian tribe during the exploration of the 'New World' (Wetmore, 1975, p. 57). They resided along the Chowan River, with their territory encompassing present-day Bertie, Chowan, Gates, and Hertford Counties (Evans, 2006). The name "Chowanoac" translates to "people at the south" in Algonquian (Wetmore, 1975, p. 57). They inhabited areas near swamps, rivers, and tributaries, engaging primarily in fishing and hunting. Communal "hunting quarters" near the present North Carolina-Virginia border were vital to their way of life and were shared among neighboring tribes such as the Meherrin, Weapemeoc, and Tuscarora. (Chowanoke Indian Nation, n.d.). During the period of European settlement in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Chowanoac occupied both sides of the Chowan River. Their tribal lands extended across Gates, Hertford, Bertie, and Chowan Counties. English encroachment on Chowanoac lands led to conflicts in 1666, resulting in losses for the settlers. Eventually, peace was established, but the Chowanoac relinquished their western lands to rapid English settlement, settling among the English along the coast (Evans, 2006). The Chowanoac showed openness to Christian missionaries, particularly the Quaker George Fox (Evans, 2006). Although Christianity was widely adopted among the Chowanoac, their tribal culture and beliefs still remains steadfast. This is illustrated in the

following quote by Big Thunder (Bedagi) Algonquinddha: "The Great Spirit is in all things; he is in the air we breathe. The Great Spirit is our Father, but the earth is our Mother. She nourishes us, that which we put into the ground, she returns to us" (Chowanoke Indian Nation, n.d.).

The purpose of the current study was to answer the following research question: **What are the experiences and conceptualizations of land among Indigenous individuals in the regional context of eastern North Carolina?**

4. Method

4.1 Research Partners

Due to the scope of the research, specifically focusing on a regional Indigenous perspective, participants sought for this study were recruited to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and experiences related to the research topic. With the help of the Wanda Lassiter, the curator of the *Guardians of the Land* exhibit, at the Museum of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, I was connected with several members of regional tribes. However, due to a lack of access to larger populations of Indigenous peoples, a convenience sample was chosen. This led to the recruitment of five Indigenous peoples from the following two tribes, the Tuscarora and the Chowanoke (Chowanoac). Moreover, I attended the Tuscarora powwow in Spring of 2023 where subsequent connections were made. The inclusion criteria were that participants must be adults, and have affiliation and/or membership with a regional eastern North Carolina Native American tribe. Although, I had intended for the participant pool to include a diverse age range, between 18 and over 75, each participant was over the age of 45, with most participants being over the age of 60. Moreover, while most participants have relocated away from their tribal homelands, or grew up outside of the community, they still categorically identify with their respective tribe and are frequently involved with their community. It is imperative to note that these two tribes have been undeniably impacted by colonization, and land dispossession in particular.

Table 1
Research Partners/Participants

Name	Age	Tribe	Occupation	Current Residency
Chief Cecil Hunt	80	Turtle Clan of Tuscarora	Retired Chief of Tuscarora Nation	Robeson County, NC
Gerry Snow Turtle; Light Panther Golden Eagle Lang	79	Chowanoac	Artist	Chicago, IL
Duvonya Chavis	65	Chowanoac	Healthcare Professional; Pharmacist	Gates County, NC
Runęhkwáʔčhę (Medicine Lays with Him) Duane Brayboy	53	Bear Clan of Tuscarora	Tuscarora Language Instructor; Family care taker; Tribal web site manager	Hickory, NC
Rahahę:tih (He Makes the Path) David Webb	45	Wolf Clan of Tuscarora	Executive Director of Educational Nonprofit; Scientist	Raleigh, NC

4.2 Data Collection Procedure

As previously stated, a convenience sample was selected for conducting the participant interviews. Often used as a default approach in small-scale pieces of research, it is said that "one of the strongest rationales for this method is when the group or phenomenon under study is generally difficult to access but the researcher is able to establish a sufficient degree of contact or trust with particular participants to conduct a viable project" (Verma et al., 2017, p. 300). Furthermore, the convenient sampling method is employed when time, funding, and other resources are limited, as is the case in this study. Moreover, it relies on the convenience and practicality of the sample. It is important to note that convenience sampling has limitations, particularly in terms of its potential for selection bias and the limited generalizability of findings to the broader population (Verma et al., 2017). As noted in the supporting literature, researchers should acknowledge these limitations and interpret the results accordingly, recognizing that the sample may not be representative of the target population (Babbie, 2016).

As Galletta (2013) mentions, the utilization of various research methodologies enhances the depth and breadth of analysis, facilitates the interpretation of results, and supports the development of theories that emerge from the outcomes of exploration (p. 24). Therefore, a mixed method approach was chosen, including semi-structured interviews and the use of archival material. The participant's statements about their conceptualizations and experiences were privileged throughout. Researching the topic from an archival standpoint involved academic journal articles, related books, state.gov websites pertaining to Indigenous and colonial history, the tribes under study websites, and primary sources of early European settlers' experiences. It is important to note that due to the oral traditions of Indigenous peoples and the systemic subjugation experienced for centuries, Indigenous archival materials

were limited. Nonetheless, the advantage that is accorded to using existing archival data is that it can engender thematic codes, similar to ones that emerge from interviews with research partners.

Semi-structured interviews (SSI) were conducted to gather qualitative data for this study, as they are a commonly employed methodology in qualitative research. This interview design enables researchers to gain insight into participants' perspectives and lived experiences, while also allowing for the emergence of unforeseen directions during the course of the interview (Galletta, 2013). The flexible, yet focused approach allows a more nuanced yet substantive analysis of the regional Indigenous conceptualization of land as it pertained to this research focus. The arrangement of questions in SSI’s has the ability to yield “considerable and often multidimensional streams of data” (Galletta, 2013, p. 24). Moreover, the supporting literature not only provided a foundational knowledge but also served as a guidepost while analyzing statements from participants. According to Galletta (2013), the relational design of SSIs prove helpful when eliciting participant narratives and their lived experiences, while revealing “substantive clues about the codes and thematic clusters, or categories, emerging from the data” (p. 117). Furthermore, adhering to the nuances that emerge from participant’s statements requires an attentiveness, continuous reflexivity, and an iterative analytical approach of the researcher. The semi-structured interview format, which combines both empirical and theoretical questions, creates opportunities for the researcher to delve deeper into the data, explore common discourse, and uncover different dimensions of participants' experiences (Galletta, 2013). These moments of engagement within the interview require reciprocal interactions between the researcher and participant, as well as subsequent reflection by the researcher (Galletta, 2013, p.118). The act of reflexivity serves as a tool to navigate the complex and dynamic nature of qualitative research, ensuring accountability, and identifying any potential biases to actively mitigate their influence

(Galletta, 2013, p. 12). Likewise, recognizing my positionality is critical in the research process, so that I may be more conscious of any potential ethical and methodological dilemmas that may arise.

While the interview process was largely done by SSI means, naturally, the conversational method emerged between myself and each participant. As noted by Kovach (2019), this method is in sync with Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies that respect the oral transmission of knowledge and upholds the relational (p. 127). Kovach (2009) and Thompson (2008) (as cited in Kovach, 2019) further notes that "story is a relational process that is accompanied by a particular protocol consistent with tribal knowledge identified as guiding the research" (p. 127). As such, several stories were shared throughout as research partners recounted memories with the land and also of their tribal legends.

The interviews were recorded using audiotape, with concurrent note-taking to aid in the review process. Subsequently, the audiotapes were transcribed into written text utilizing Microsoft 365 tools. The transcriptions were meticulously reviewed, taking into consideration the hand-written notes and simultaneous audio playback. This approach aimed to minimize the potential for translation inaccuracies.

4.3 Interview Guide

An interview guide (see Appendix A) was developed to provide a framework for the SSIs. The guide consisted of a set of open-ended questions and prompts designed to explore the research topic. The questions were informed by the existing literature and research objectives. I used the guide flexibly, and the participants shared beyond it. The interview guide was organized into three sections. To begin, the first set of questions allowed the participants to formally introduce themselves and to share personal information regarding their educational and life experiences as an Indigenous person. The second section focused on questions

regarding their memories and experiences of land which assisted in their narration of how land was conceived and their embodiment towards it. Lastly, each interview concluded with a poem from an Indigenous person (Ahenakew, 2016, p. 334). Not only, did this serve as a prompt and create a comfortable space for the participants to add further comments on the topic at hand, but also and creatively, establishes a shared accord between one another.

4.4 Interview Process

Prior to conducting interviews, communication was initiated by email whereby I introduced myself and the scope of the research. A Google Form was also created to establish a time that suited the participant's schedule. In addition, the Google Form served as a means to gather information regarding any potential physical or cognitive impairments, should accommodations be required.

The SSI's were conducted in a private and comfortable setting to promote open and honest responses from participants. The interviews lasted anywhere from 60 minutes to 2 and a half hours, over Zoom and phone calls. With participant consent, the interviews were recorded using an audio-tape recorder. Before the scheduled interviews, rapport was established with the participants, explaining the study's purpose and ensuring confidentiality if desired. However, no single participant requested anonymity. Participants were encouraged to freely express thoughts and share their experiences related to the research topic.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

While this study did not obtain any ethical approval from a particular institution or review board, IRB protocols were closely followed. Informed consent (see Appendix B) was obtained from all participants before the interviews (Clemson University, 2018). Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

4.6 Data Analysis

In order to organize and analyze the data, I employed a modified Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM). By using GTM, researchers can immerse themselves in the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, allowing for the exploration and development of theories that are grounded in the specific context of Indigenous knowledges. The open, axial, and selective coding techniques in GTM align well with the holistic and interconnected nature of Indigenous knowledges, in part due to the 'dynamic function' and 'nonlinearity' of the progressive coding process, which "enables essential themes to be identified, codified, and interpreted in the service of a research study's focus and contributes to the associated literature" (Williams & Moser, 2019, p. 47).

These coding processes enable researchers to identify and analyze the complex relationships, concepts, and categories within Indigenous knowledges, capturing the nuanced and interwoven aspects of their cultural knowledge, beliefs, and experiences. As Williams & Moser (2019) affirm, the data collection process of (GTM) "requires the researcher to be present and be aware of the dynamic nature of the data, its thematic connectivity, intersectionality, and emergence toward theory creation" (p. 47). During the first round of open coding, each transcript was thoroughly reviewed, where the data was examined line by line to identify open concepts and categories. In the subsequent step, the second type of axial coding was employed to explore relationships between categories and subcategories. Finally, selective coding was applied to identify core categories and develop a theoretical framework (Williams & Moser, 2019). These coding techniques allowed for the process of systematically analyzing data, identifying patterns, and generating a theory that was rooted in the data itself.

5. Findings

Through engaging in a dialogue with the small sample of research partners from both the Tuscarora and the Chowanoac Indian Nation, valuable insights were revealed into their unique conceptualizations and deep connections and embodiments to the land. By analyzing their statements and practices, I do not intend to generalize their sentiments to all Indigenous peoples the world over, or to all descendants of the Tuscarora and the Chowanoac. However, several interviewees explicitly extended the relevance of their perspectives to their local communities, even considering the socio-cultural changes resulting from colonization. Likewise, it has been cited elsewhere (Battiste 2005; Datta, 2022; Dei et al., 2022; Hall, 2018; Kuokkanen 2006) that fundamental parallels can be located in the worldviews of many different Indigenous peoples. However, by using an inductive approach to analyze the data, it acknowledges the diversity within Indigenous communities and the importance of respecting their distinct knowledge systems and experiences with the land.

The analysis resulted in three encompassing themes:

- Land is holistically conceived, or in other words, it *all* comes from the Earth.
- The relationships to the land are embodied, rather than merely abstracted (through relationality, offerings, ceremonies, prayer, and the like.)
- The worldviews of participants and understandings of land are in contrast with the Eurocentric dominant discourse.

5.1 It *All* Comes From the Earth: Expansive and Integrated Understandings of Land

Early in the interview process, it became evident that the research partners' conceptualizations of land exceeded the dominant ideas found in the Western context. Rather

than being abstracted or conceived as material geography, participants expressed their land beliefs encompassing notions of animacy. This notion can be found in statements such as:

> I see the Land as this living thing; the earth is very much a living organism. It's very much alive.
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

Other participants also expounded on this by acknowledging the Earth as Mother:

> There's this lifeway that all native people have … so, our world is our Mother Earth. She is our Mother. We are part of our Mother, just as the trees. Just as what we call the animal. So, there's no separation.
> (G. Lang, personal communication, June 7, 2023)

The depiction of Land/Earth as Mother forms the foundation of Indigenous knowledge, providing a framework for comprehending various aspects of social, cultural, economic, material, political, and metaphysical realms (Dei et al., 2022, p. 119). This conceptualization of indivisibility from Mother Earth is echoed further by another member of the Chowanoac Nation:

> … but it starts with the Earth it really does…Because we came out of the earth and we consider Mother, our earth… And I do want to add this, there is nothing mystical with our connection to the land, I mean I think a lot of times people tend to look at us as being mystical creatures, which we're not. We're human beings. We have may have a different thought process, different culture, but because we were created to be a little differently than say even those who have their strengths in capitalism, or even those who have their strengths as being warriors or whatever. So as Indigenous people, our strength is our spiritual side and the way we look at nature.
> (D. Chavis, personal communication, June 6, 2023)

As Kidwell (1985) states, "the difference between the Europeans and the native peoples they encounter lies in their differing assumptions about the nature of the physical world" (p. 209). He goes on to further say that "Europeans increasingly regarded these forces as purely mechanical, while native people in the New World continued to view them as personal attributes of spiritual beings" (Kidwell, 1985, p. 210). Or as Eduardo Kohn (2013) states: 'the dualistic metaphysics inherited from the Enlightenment' which "steers us toward seeing cause in terms either of mechanistic pushes and pulls or of the meanings, purposes,

and desires that we have generally come to relegate to the realm of the human" (p. 20). Although this formulation can be interpreted as selectively dichotomous between the two cultures, I believe it signals towards the Indigenous philosophy as something deeper and increasingly practical. For instance, the profound yet empirical observation of human inseparability from Earth is expressed:

> You know, Land is something that is inseparable from us. So, for instance, if you move to a new area, it's only a matter of weeks before the molecules in your body are linked with that place. You're drinking the water; you know that comes from the ground under that place. If you're eating local foods, you know you're taking in the minerals that came from the land you know of that place and you know our bodies are really inseparable from the land, from a traditional cultural perspective, you know. The Land sustains us, but also literally, we are made-up of the land. Land is something that is inseparable from us as Indigenous people.
> (D. Webb, personal communication, July 12, 2023)

A similar sentiment can be found in the recounting of the participant's grandfather's preference for cremation:

> I grew up really close with my grandparents. And I lived with my grandmother quite a bit growing up. Their concept of land, and sort of nature, was one where we like belong to it. Like we didn't have dominion over the land the way the Christian religion would say so. For instance, my great grandfather, when he passed away, he was a fisherman, his whole life. So, when he passed away, he actually wanted to be cremated and fed to the fish. And I remember really distinctly him saying 'I ate these fish all my life. So now it's their turn to eat me. I want to be cremated and put in the Bay. So that's what we did.
> (D. Webb, personal communication, July 12, 2023)

The biological, yet cultural understanding mentioned by the participant, and his grandfather's desire to be returned to the Earth points to what Dei et al. (2022) claim as "common-sense ideas and cultural knowledges…concerning their everyday lived realities in the epistemic saliency of their cultural traditions, values, belief systems, and worldviews (p. 115). Another example of practical awareness of the deeply connected ties to nature is given:

> But also looking at conceptualizations of nature. Everything around us comes from Earth. I'm sitting in a car right now, and even though there are synthetic materials in this car, all of this came from Earth. You know that my dashboard is made of some sort of polymer plastic that came from decomposed ancient organisms. So, everything here is of this Earth. And for us to have this idea that we can somehow make something that isn't separate from nature is really, that's what I mean when I say that's

> really naive. You know, even though we're poisoning nature by putting things, changing substances, and making them into what they shouldn't be, it's still part of this planet. You know, we're not creating something out of thin air from somewhere else and bringing it to this planet.
> (D. Webb, personal communication, July 12, 2023)

Here, we can see the Indigenous conceptualization of Land is in line with what others have called holistic knowledge. Dei et al. (2022) assert that as such, "it encompasses the mental, intellectual, spiritual and physical development of the individual at the interface of self, society, and the Earth" (Dei et al., 2022, p. 115). Echoing Dei et al. (2022), the above formulations can be considered empirical knowledge (p. 116). The sensible understanding that everything comes from the Land/ Mother Earth/Nature is also mentioned by another participant:

> You know the Earth provides or in a sense, gives birth to so much life that we couldn't exist without. And likewise, the women are the life givers. So, in our worldview, it just makes sense. You know, Mother Earth provides this life that we all have in order to continue living. And so, the women, they also give birth to life that we all need to continue living, for our society to continue on. And so, it just makes perfect sense that women are so closely aligned to the earth this way.
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

Similarly, other scholars have noted the declaration among Indigenous peoples that without Land, life would not exist (Dei et al., 2022, p. 114). Here, Land is practically conceived as sustenance, providing the basic means of living. Moreover, the provisioning of Land also extends to the domain of healing and medicine. This is exemplified by the story shared of the participant's neighbor gifting him flowers for his planter boxes after his wife's death.

> He's given me a job, you know. I have to go out and water those begonias. You know every other day. And I can't miss a day because, you know they're going to die. So that's helping me through this depression.
> (G. Lang, personal communication, June 7, 2023)

While discussing the current socio-ecological-economic climate in the U.S., he remarks further:

> It's a very, very painful, painful period of time. Very, very painful period of time. You know, as Emily Dickinson said 'Hope is the thing with feathers.' Well, you know, beyond all appearances, I'm still filled with hope. That we can learn to get along. So, this idea of the land. It's a very spiritual concept. And you know, while I don't own any land today, I can cultivate my bonsai trees and I can grow my flowers.
> (G. Lang, personal communication, June 7, 2023)

The maintenance of attending to the plants, a raw materiality of the Earth, sustains the wellbeing of the participant. This point is reiterated and affirmed by Karanja (2019), who states: "to Indigenous peoples, land, healing and spirituality are interconnected, and the maintenance and renewal of the relationships with their lands are critical to the practice and maintenance of Indigenous knowledges and healing" (p. 46). Although, the participant is unable to employ the traditional techniques of agriculture like his grandparents, due to living in the city, he is able to maintain his fluid connection with the Earth. Conversely, the separation of oneself from Land/Nature and its associated ills is mentioned:

> So, I really think the reason a lot of people need antidepressants and anxiety medicine and everything else you know, related to a lot of the mental illnesses, is just due to the way we live. Like we live completely disconnected from the way we're intended to live, the way we evolve to live. And as we become more and more distanced from nature and the environment, you know, this even goes back to, you know, my career. Really, my whole career is based around connecting people to nature which you know has direct health benefits and there's a lot of research that shows that. But it should really be the converse. It shouldn't be that, you know, we have to go out into nature, to reconnect and have these health benefits. I mean, the reason we're having these problems in the first place is the root of the problem, of not being connected to nature rather than a symptom. If that makes sense, it's a larger illness that we as a society are experiencing.
> (D. Webb, personal communication, July 12, 2023)

The interconnection of Land and healing can be located in the above statements. Intimacies shared with Land/nature is deemed important as it serves as an Indigenous means of attaining equilibrium and homeostasis, fostering health and recovery, and reinstating the inherent harmony between individuals, their surroundings, and their spiritual essence (Karanja, 2019, p. 47).

Apart from serving as a source of sustenance and healing for Indigenous individuals, Land also functions as a source of pedagogy in an instrumental and cultural manner. Dei et al.

(2022) assert that “in Indigenous epistemology, the self, the Land, and the natural world are inter-connected and inseparable from each other in an epistemological link that sees Land as the source of Indigenous knowledge, understanding, and knowledge production (p. 116). Consequently, research partners alluded to the role Land has in the process of knowledge production. For instance, one participant recounts a memory:

> Well, I can say, when I used to work in the garden or even in the flower beds, it was almost like I was in touch with even God. So, when I would plant certain things, it would just be things that would come to my mind. Time and harvest and taking care of the land so you can get the maximum amount of harvest or the best harvest that you want, which mirrors not only the land but what happens in our individual lives as well. Those seeds that you plant. And I think that's where I learned or begin to understand, planting seeds not only in the earth but in your life as well, because I certainly bring that in my children. You know, I used to tell them all the time. If you're gonna plant an apple tree, do not expect orange trees or oranges from the fruit, you're gonna get apples. So, I think those are some of the correlations that you can make between Earth, and in your life. You know, that goes back to making that connection because there are all kinds of examples that you find in Earth that apply to even our own personal lives.
> (D. Chavis, personal communication, June 6, 2023)

By attuning to the speech of the Earth, the research participant was able to glean insights that she could carry over into her personal life as well. Kohn (2013) endorses this notion by stating: “To engage with the forest on its terms, to enter its relational logic, to think with its thoughts, one must become attuned to these” (p. 20). Dei et al. (2022) also affirm this act of listening closely by stating the Indigenous belief that “the Land constantly speaks. It is constantly communicating (p. 117). The concept of "reading" the Land to decipher its teachings and messages enables us to perceive Land as a form of pedagogy and the primary wellspring of Indigenous knowledge (Dei et al., 2022). The participant expounds further by stating:

> And there's so many other things that we resemble the Earth in our make-up and people have not thought about that... I believe we should extract, maybe we could extract some resources from the earth and it not have such a devastating effect, but again, if this is worldwide and you're doing on a massive level and on a level that we've never done in the past. If you extract human fat from our bodies, you can do it to a little small degree and not cause too many problems but you can't do it for so long and so much before you kill the body The same thing goes for Earth. Earth needs its

> oil for various things, and Earth makes its oil. It’s there for protective reason. It's in the rocks. And plus, what comes from deep within is the reason for it being there. And yes, we can take a little bit of it out and probably not have too much of an adverse effect, but you start taking too much out and it will have an adverse reaction in the earth; but people don't think about that sort of things because they're not looking at the Earth relative to the human body to see, OK, what consequences are there if I do this to Earth? If I do the same thing to my body, what consequence would it have on Earth or on us for the same thing? What consequence would it have on the human?
> (D. Chavis, personal communication, June 6, 2023)

This suggests a discourse of relationality between humans and the Earth. Not only do the raised questions seem devoid among society at large, but it also necessitates thinking about our intrinsic bonds and the potential for great change.

With knowledge production stemming from the Land, a sense of meaning and strong fellowship is also imbued. During one conversation with a retired chief, we were discussing the symbolism of gifted feathers. Shortly after speaking of red-tailed hawk feathers, one started to fly above me. He then proceeded to remark:

> Well, that's a good sign. We don't call it omen. We don't believe in that because we don't deal with the feather from the owl because that's a bad omen from the birds of prey like that. But it's the hawk feather and the turkey feather and the eagle feather that we deal with because it means a good gesture among you. And if you're seeing these things now, that means that they're in relationship with your spirit. We call it your spirit. Other words, your attitude and your thinking on the lines that are spiritual matters. That's why we say that and you know when you can be like that, the birds know it. They do know it.
> (C. Hunt, personal communication, June 28, 2023)

In this context, the ‘meaning-making principle of action’ is exemplified. Burkhart, as cited in (Hall, 2018), claims this principle of poetic Indigenous epistemology, is about how we understand and give meaning to the world around us, and is just as important as any objective truth or fact (p. 286). This principle emphasizes that meanings and truths are not fixed or permanent; instead, they are constantly changing and influenced by our culture and traditions, in contrast with the American pragmatism tradition, and it’s associated praxis (Hall, 2018, p. 286). As demonstrated, by attuning to the sensibilities of Land as teacher, individuals can gain valuable insights and meaningful connections with nature, which also contribute to their

cultural heritage and traditions. Through comprehending the intricate connection and relationality between Indigenous peoples and Land, the notion of Land as pedagogy emerges. The Land, being the origin of all knowledge, serves as the paramount teacher. Learning to interpret its teachings and comprehending its messages lies within Indigenous pedagogy (Dei et al., 2022, p. 118).

5.2 Ceremonies and Offerings: Honoring Reciprocal Connections

Paramount and central to Indigenous cosmologies, is the notion of reverence, reciprocity, and responsibility for the Land and in relationship with others (Dei et al., 2022, p. 115). Through prayer, ceremonies, small offerings, and communion with family and community, Indigenous peoples actively embody their moral principles and ethical values. Consequently, among all research partners, this theme was clearly articulated.

By acknowledging one's intimacy with the Land, themes of stewardship emerged. For instance, one research participant explicitly stated:

> My experience with the connections that I have to the Land is actually innate and I think there are certain things that are in groups of people that will never leave them. I guess what you would say it's in their epigenes or it's in their DNA. Where it's ingrained in them and then it's passed down from generation to generation … I think, Indigenous people overall have connection to the land, this is something that was given to us as a group of people, to be stewards of the land.
> (D. Chavis, personal communication, June 6, 2023)

While recognizing the presence of an animate Earth, notions of responsibility and stewardship also appeared. For instance, one research participant expressed:

> We see the Land as a living thing and if you see the Land as a living thing, how could you willfully harm it? How could somebody deliberately poison the rivers? Or hack forests into decline? I've often felt that legislators who enact policies that poison the Earth are safe in their cushy homes, and they've never actually had their feet in a river or swam in the lake. Or never had to make a living farming the land. There's so much to say about that and that is how we see the Earth. Mother Earth is this living thing and that's very much part of our worldview. You know, different native cultures might call it something different. We call it Orenda. Orenda is what we call it. Orenda means it has its own essence. In a sense, it has its own energy or its own soul. You know, from the animal people in the forest to a rock in the river. You know, maybe you've

> heard Manitou with the Algonquian speaking people. I know that's their word for it. They call it Manitou. We call it Orenda.
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

As Hall (2018) proclaims, "for Indigenous philosophy, the entire universe has the kind of being which makes it a fitting recipient of our respect, and an equal partner in our mutual interdependency. In this view, reality is a multiplicity, the parts of which relate to each other as ethical beings, treating each other with respect, depending on each other, and relating to each other as equals" (p. 284). It is clear that the ethics of Indigenous peoples is simply devoid of abstraction, and can be considered innate and embodied. Another example of this can be shown in the following remark:

> For example, I don't litter. I just do not and litter bugs, I think, are just the worst people to me. And that is about really respect. You know, if people don't respect the land so much that they think that it's OK to either litter or just outright pollute with chemicals and such, the land, you know, it says so much about a person …. it's just shocking to me to see that willful disregard for the land. You know, for immediately the land there at that place, the animal people, the insects that might be there, that might be poisoned. So, my views on the land, it encourages me on a daily basis throughout my entire life where it's not even something that I have to consciously think about, like ohh, I'm going to choose to not litter today. No, it's just part of who I am. I wouldn't even consider it, you know. So, we're pretty well connected, tight knit community, the Tuscaroras. And I can say that I don't know any Tuscaroras who I have ever witnessed or have known to disrespect the land, to litter or to pollute ... It's just, I feel confident in saying that's very much an internalized core value of who we are as a people.
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

As observed here, one's respectful view on and of Land influences their deep-seated behaviors. The reverential considerations are extended further. For instance, one participant remarks on the notion of responsibility into multiple spheres of the socio-cultural setting.

> So, everything we as Indigenous people do is in responsibility to, you know, our community and to the world around us. We're not born in this individualistic society that you know most from the dominant American culture are born in. So, you know, a lot of people, they don't understand. My friends and others come around my family, for instance, they don't understand that we are as a family, we have a lifelong responsibility to our families and to our communities. And so, it's almost like an obligation to keep doing ceremonies throughout the year because that's your

> responsibility to give thanks and to express your gratitude or really, everything that sustains us. So, there's like the bigger, broader responsibility to the world around us to be stewards and caretakers of the world, but also, you know, to think of future generations and to give thanks for every gift that we have. Being, you know, living life in gratitude, that's really our responsibility.
> (D. Webb, personal communication, July 12, 2023)

Ceremonies then serves as a place of communion whereby acts of responsibility and reciprocity are endowed. Commonly held in Native American traditions, powwows meaning "let's get together", is also an opportunity for Native Americans to express gratitude for the generosity of the Land. An example of this is interpreted by the following statement:

> We integrate God for everything. And you know at some of the powwows, we will pray first of all, we'll pray to the east and then we'll pray to the north, to the West and South. And we do this prayer in a circle. And, it's done in a circle because God has created everything in the circle … that we pray and give thanks for the moon, the stars, and the wind blowing. Helping us to be mindful of everything and there's nothing to waste and everything is a gift to us, for our survival. And this is one of my ways of teaching my children of not to be wasteful in anything and don't be stingy with what you got. Yes, my grandfather told me to plant a garden just like your neighbors don't have a garden.
> (C. Hunt, personal communication, June 28, 2023)

Another example of gratitude being expressed ceremonially can be found in the Strawberry festival.

> The whole ideal of the strawberry festival is for us to be thankful for the creation of the strawberry … Helps us to be aware of everything that is good for our health and our well-being. And so, we honor that and we're trying to get all the young children to not be wasteful, to not be polluting the land and teach them, and our people about everything that is here for a purpose and can be used.
> (C. Hunt, personal communication, June 28, 2023)

The Strawberry festival also serves as a transmission of land-based knowledge, passed on inter-generationally and horizontally, and is also what Battiste (2005) calls as the "maintaining [of] the integrity of the land itself" (p. 8). Moreover, it can be considered the site of what Dei et al. (2022) assert as inter-generational knowledge (p. 116). Additionally, as other scholars have noted the ceremonial invocation "All my relatives" (Ahenakew, 2016, p. 328) (Deloria, 1999, p. 52), to respectfully acknowledge the interstitial webs of connection, a

similar invocation is cited among the Tuscarora, namely the Thanksgiving Address (see Appendix C).

> The Thanksgiving address, we say that it’s a prayer for all these sacred things that we have here on Earth; that are so often taken for granted. And it's a prayer to these sacred things that seem so simple. Where would we be without them?
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

The Tuscarora's Thanksgiving Address, Haˀ Kanęherathęhčreh, serves as a significant occasion for individuals to engage not only with one another but also with their broader cosmological understanding. The act of expressing greetings and prayers to every sacred being and element, both animate and inanimate, exemplifies their profound recognition of their interdependence and co-existence among all life forms. Moreover, being in an embodied and reciprocal relationship with the Land also manifests by way of offerings. For instance, one participant stated:

> If I go out and say a prayer, I will put tobacco down and that's just like everything. You don't just go and take from the environment; you give something back. And that goes back to, you know that concept of land and how the resources aren't just ours to take. There has to be some sort of gratitude expressed and you know if that involves an offering then that's what you have to do.
> (D. Webb, personal communication, July 12, 2023)

In this context, the act of giving tobacco embodies a principle of ethics, expressing appreciation and respect for the Land. Similarly, this is what Verney as cited in (Hall, 2018), claims as Indigenous metaphysics. In this worldview, the pillars of respect, interdependency, and equality are inscribed (p. 283). While each element is distinctively stated, they are inherently related and cannot be isolated.

Additionally, the reciprocal exchange between Indigenous participants and the Land is also stated here:

> We have always ascribed to this thought that you take care of Mother Earth. And when you take care of Mother Earth, Earth will in turn take care of us as Indigenous people.
> (D. Chavis, personal communication, June 6, 2023)

In the context of this Indigenous epistemology, fostering a harmonious and balanced relationship between individuals and the Earth is contingent upon the deliberate and conscientious practice of acknowledging and embodying direct, respectful engagement with the natural world. Moreover, by acknowledging the interdependent reciprocity, she further remarks:

> Well, putting the chemicals on the land, you're going to have a negative effect. I guess that should be like what you sow, you reap. So, what you put there, whatever you sow you reap. I mean, if you put all those chemicals on the land and you kill all the organisms, then you're gonna reap the consequences of having done that. And then it's not only just physical things. You sow kindness, you're gonna reap kindness. So, you're going to reap the consequences of having done that. We see in a physical sense and then also in a spiritual sense, the same things happen. So, it's not, you know, just what we see physically, but also spiritually.
> (D. Chavis, personal communication, June 6, 2023)

The mutual give-and-take or interdependent reciprocity is not only bound within the materiality of existing alongside Land but is also extended into nonmaterial, or spiritual elements of one's inter-relationships, as demonstrated by the above statement.

Moreover, almost all participants expressed ways of sustaining a close relationship with the land, despite some geographical locations such as urbanscapes. The practice of continuing the bond with cultural heritage and nature is manifested by way of planting gardens or flowers. For instance, one participant maintains one long-standing agricultural practice, of planting the three sisters (corn, beans, and squash) along with Indigenous tobacco and other vegetables. Another participant reflects on his move to the city of Chicago and how he's adapted.

> My mother and my father taught me how to plant gardens and how to harvest my own food. And I did that for many years until I moved to this place in Chicago, where I don't have land that I can dig into and plant. But what I have done is that I bought very, very large planters and I grow flowers and bonsai trees.
> (G. Lang, personal communication, June 7, 2023)

The adaptation is further articulated by acknowledging "any tradition that does not evolve or grow, dies."

> So, while you know, I'm not out there in the fields, like my father was and my grandfather was planting peanuts and tobacco. I'm communing with Mother Earth by digging in the ground and planting and talking to trees.
> (G. Lang, personal communication, June 7, 2023)

The contemporary efforts in changing praxis, exposes "the fluidity, multiplicity, and relationality" among Indigenous participants in their communion with the Land (Hatala et al., 2019, p. 127).

This profound connection is deeply rooted in Indigenous philosophies and metaphysics, where the Earth is not merely seen as an inanimate object or resource but as a living, sentient entity deserving of reverence and reciprocity. By actively engaging with the Earth through prayer, ceremonies, offerings, and communal interactions, Indigenous peoples establish and nurture a profound sense of interdependence, recognizing themselves as inseparable parts of the ecological tapestry. This reciprocal relationship between humans and the Earth serves as a guiding principle for ethical behavior, instilling a profound sense of responsibility, caretaking, and mutual respect for the natural environment and all living beings it sustains. In essence, this embodied approach to engagement echoes Indigenous epistemologies that view the Earth as teacher and healer, imparting knowledge, wisdom, and insights for maintaining ecological balance and the well-being of both the human and other-than-human world.

5.3 Different Worldviews: Challenging Eurocentric Discourse

Often throughout each interview, participants reflected on their different cosmologies in contrast with the hegemonic narrative found in the West. For instance, the remark that "God created everything in a circle" would surprise most Western followers of Christianity. This is further expanded by another participant:

> You know, we've been on these lands since time immemorial, so you know we saw time differently than Europeans did. We saw time as sort of cyclical and sustained, whereas Europeans saw it as linear and that you're supposed to be making progress,

> you know, through time, and that included progress on the land. And then through our worldview, our traditional worldview, because we were of the land, we didn't have the right to make a lot of changes to the land and it’s really kind of narcissistic to think that one person who only lives through such a short time, you know, when we're thinking not only of past generations, but future generations, we're just kind of a little speck. And for one person to think that they can own the land and shut others out, not only through space, but through time; it's really kind of delusional.
> (D. Webb, personal communication, July 12, 2023)

As Deloria (1999) and Kidwell (1985) have stated, the Indigenous ontological and epistemological foundations are centered on non-linearity, or ‘cultural wholes.’ These worldviews not only impact the coalescence of categories but also shape their perception of time, aligning with a cyclical nature that extends to the continuity of life. The Indigenous understanding of time and the interconnectedness of all aspects of existence illustrate their holistic perspective. Moreover, the reference to the Western/Eurocentric approach of ‘improving upon the land’ underscores the significant conceptual departure from the Indigenous reciprocal relationship with the Land and past/future generations. This mentioning also brings to light the historical ramifications of the Christian doctrine rooted in the notion of *Terra nullius* and its significant impact on the ideas articulated in John Locke's writings. The participant elaborates further on the topic:

> It all comes from this Earth. So, you know, there's this, really in my mind, really stupid idea that somehow people are separate from nature and that goes back to the Judeo-Christian tradition that Earth was created separately from humans and only for the utilitarian purpose, or for those people to use, exploit and dominate. And so, you know it's just a very, very different perspective. And I don't think it's any coincidence that the culture that believed that and made it who they were: dominance, conquering, you know, seeing nature and the other is something outside, they lacked respect and they were the ones who colonized the entire world.
> (D. Webb, personal communication, July 12, 2023)

In this context, the profound impact of worldviews on the tangible fabric of existence becomes apparent. Another noteworthy conceptual shift that arose pertains to the historical role of Indigenous women in land management and agriculture. One participant contemplates the early conflicts encountered during first contact.

> This is one of the ways that we and the Europeans clashed because we accepted that the women control the land. But in European culture, the men own everything. And the men control everything. And the men are the farmers. And you know all this. So, this was a very different, opposite worldview of ours. That was one of the ways that they broke us and our culture early on was by forcing the women to not be farmers and force the men to be farmers.
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

An additional member of the Tuscarora Nation speaks to this notion:

> Well, at the very core it goes down to gender issues. Traditionally, women held the, you know by the Western word, like women held the title to the land. So, women were the Land and that's something that Europeans didn't understand when they came here … Women were responsible for the Land to the sense that they were considered the land. A woman's body is kind of inseparable from the Land and from Mother Earth. And so, they were responsible for it … So, you know separating the Land from the women was the first step in colonizing our minds, right? That's the easiest way to kind of dispossess people of their territory and of their land. And that concept of individual land ownership was really foreign.
> (D. Webb, personal communication, July 12, 2023)

The recognition of women's designated agricultural responsibilities in Indigenous communities has been documented by historians such as Wetmore (1975) and Richter (2001). In addition to the articulated conceptual framework of women being of the Earth and tending to it, the abnormality of individual land ownership is a further point of departure from the heteronormative Eurocentric customs. Several research participants expressed their views.

> Yeah, this is a very different worldview. You know, we never looked at land and, for the most part you know the traditionalists anyhow, still don't look at the land in the same way that the Americans do. It's not something that we can own. It's like, can you own the air? Can you own the clouds? You know you can't own the land any more than you can own those things.
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

A similar sentiment was shared by another participant while commenting on spiritual teachings:

> They're all saying the same thing: that we're living here on this amazing planet. The land doesn't belong to us, we belong to the land. So, none of our people owned any land. That just didn't exist in our way of being. Own the land? You can't own the sky. You can't own the plants and the clouds. You can't own the water.
> (G. Lang, personal communication, June 7, 2023)

It is noted elsewhere (Richter, 2001) that “native communities treated land as a ‘resource,’ which could not in itself be owned any more than could the air or the sea” (p. 54). The relationships with the Land that are expressed here, are beyond notions of possession and dominion. While integrating the clouds, air, and water, Land is conceived as a resource to be used, negating the possibility of ownership. However, the idea of having rights to a territory was not foreign to Native Americans. One participant reflects on the early experiences of his ancestors:

> You know, people have asked me before: ‘Well, didn't y'all lease your lands on the Indian Woods reservation? You know, didn't you sell your lands there?’ And so, what I always say is that, yes, we did. It was a necessity at one point. But then even whenever we did, it really wasn't selling the land itself. It's like selling the rights to, say farm a piece of land or something. You know, that's the traditional Tuscarora way of looking at this. You can't literally own this land. This Land is sacred. It belongs to the Earth and everything on the Earth. But this little postage stamp of land, you know, we will sell to you so you know you can farm it or build a house on it or whatever. You would be using the land, the rights to use this land.
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

Also, articulated by other Indigenous persons, individual ownership of the land or a quantitative assessment of a natural resource is a conceptual framework that doesn’t fall under Indigenous ways of life. Rather, it is the shared resources that allow persons to live sustainably within an environment to which they belong (Datta, 2022, p. 3). The contrast between Indigenous and Eurocentric conceptualizations of land is further exposed by Richter (2001). He states, “Europeans, by contrast, treated land as a “commodity” that was itself inherently and irrevocably owned, along with all its resources. Use had nothing to do with it; a vacant lot was still the exclusive property of its owner, a fixed feature of the landscape. When European “fixity sought to replace Indian mobility,” an irreconcilable “conflict in the ways Indians and colonists interacted with their environments” came to the fore” (p. 55).

Naturally, the last theme of the contrasting ontological foundations between Indigenous participants and that of their colonizers extended into discourse regarding the ill effects of colonial legacies. For instance, the retired chief recalls seeing “very little Native

American History in the curriculum", while another participant recounts his early educational experiences during History class, "feeling erased."

> I remember sitting there thinking, what? What about us? You know, we were here, you know, and I remember just feeling like we didn't matter. That our story, our history, wasn't even being taken into consideration, and the history of this land and being denied our rightful place in the history of this land that we have stayed on. You know, Tuscaroras, we have been here for approximately 2400 years in what is now North Carolina.
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

The participant goes on further to reflect on the "reality" of his homeland, Robeson County:

> The crime epidemic among Native Americans, the violence, the drugs., you know we have it all there. I believe, my thoughts on that are, that it's intimately intertwined with loss of culture, loss of identity, assimilation. All of these things are factoring into that. You know, being born and raised into this political situation. It was a bit overwhelming always. Always like this pressure, you know? And always like a dark cloud over Robeson County. And so, there are people like me who have always tried to correct that. I feel like if we reindigenized ourselves, you know, I call it reclaiming the sacred. If we reclaim all these things that we lost in the fire of colonization, I feel like these things will correct themselves because I believe that these things are the root.
> (D. Brayboy, personal communication, May 31, 2023)

The geostrategic location of the ancestral lands of both the Tuscarora and the Chowanoac was also mentioned as having a significant impact on the subjugation and assimilation efforts.

> I think capitalism has certainly had a profound effect on Native Americans…. So, the things that happened on the East Coast because we were on the forefront of colonization, and because we bore the brunt of the politics of colonization … the assimilation efforts have certainly had an effect.
> (D. Chavis, personal communication, June 6, 2023)

During the interviews, research participants articulated deep concerns about the pervasive pollution and global ecological degradation. These issues extend beyond the local context and are seen as significant global challenges. Moreover, participants expressed distress about the negative impact on mental and emotional well-being resulting from the disconnection from the Land and Nature on a large scale. To address these challenges, participants have proposed initiatives such as the "reclaiming the Sacred", "decolonized minds movement" and "reindigenization" as potential remedies for healing and restoration.

By doing such, they are challenging colonial practices and reclaiming their cultural identity and celebrating their cultural pride (Datta, 2022). These proposed efforts aim to foster a return to Indigenous knowledge systems and practices to mitigate the associated ills caused by the disconnection from the natural world (Karanja, 2019).

6. Discussion

During each interview and discussion, participants elaborated on their perceptions and encounters with land, going beyond the prevailing Western interpretations. While organizing and analyzing the data, it was clear that the themes were in a consistent engagement with one another. At times, they would overlap across multiple concepts and also extend into further themes, only to circle back to the original classification. The non-linearity and the confounding of categories points to the holistic orientation of Indigenous knowledge and the role of Land serving as the axis which all other domains of life rest upon (Battiste, 2005; Dei et al., 2022).

Rather than viewing Land as strictly tangible materiality, participants expressed beliefs grounded in animacy and the understanding of Earth as a living organism. This notion of Land as Mother emerged as a foundational aspect of Indigenous knowledge, permeating various dimensions of social, cultural, material, and metaphysical realms. The Indigenous philosophy of interdependency, respect, responsibility and reciprocity with the Earth was evident in their practical and spiritual engagements with the environment. Participants articulated a deep sense of connection and inseparability from the land, recognizing that everything they consume and interact with is fundamentally derived from the Earth. This Indigenous perspective challenged the Western idea of dominion over nature and underscored the need for a more holistic understanding of human-environment relationships. The participants' narratives also emphasized the significance of Land as a source of sustenance, healing, spiritual nourishment, and knowledge.

Engaging in sustained communion with the Land, whether through urban gardening with begonias and bonsai trees, cultivating the traditional three sisters, or venerating trees, has undeniably served as a means of maintaining a profound connection with the Earth, attaining a sense of equilibrium, harmony, mental and emotional well-being. As previously

articulated, Indigenous individuals, who nurture and uphold close intimacy with the Land, recognize that knowledge is fundamentally rooted in the Earth. By actively working and attentively listening to the Land, they gain insights that can be translated into their personal lives. For example, one participant realized the metaphorical significance of planting seeds in the garden and its application to their own life. Moreover, the reciprocity evident in such statements, like “what you sow you reap,” exemplifies how knowledge is transmitted through observation and engagement with the Land. Additionally, the recognition that humans are factually biologically inseparable from the Land illustrates the empirical knowledge of Indigenous persons stemming from nature. As demonstrated, Indigenous knowledge is holistic as it encompasses the intellectual, spiritual, and physical growth of the individual (Dei et al., 2022, p.115). The connection to the Land was viewed as vital to Indigenous knowledge production, further highlighting the role of Land as a pedagogical tool in their cultural practices. Likewise, the role of Land in the healing processes of Indigenous persons, especially during the distress of the current socio-ecological environment, was articulated several times.

Additionally, the participants conveyed their profound connection and interaction with the Land as an active embodiment, devoid of abstraction. Unlike the dominant Western tradition of pragmatism and its associated praxis, Indigenous individuals engaged in an intimate relationship with the Land that was centered around values of respect, responsibility, and reciprocal exchange. Their inherent understanding that polluting the Earth signifies disrespect originates from their recognition of the Earth as a living organism. Likewise, their interdependence with the Earth alongside bodies of flora and fauna informs their obligation to be environmental stewards of the Land. Additionally, communal gatherings like powwows, ceremonies, and festivals offer opportunities for expressing gratitude for the Earth's generosity and perpetuating the inter-generational knowledge among Indigenous peoples.

Invocations and prayers, such as the Tuscarora Thanksgiving Address and prayers to the Four Winds (representing cardinal directions), emphasize their cosmology and belief in the interconnectedness of all things, as well as the continuity of life. These rituals, and gifts such as tobacco, not only involve a give-and-take in the form of reciprocal offerings but also underscore their commitment to honoring past and future generations, and their testimonies of gratitude. Ultimately, at the core of this worldview is the profound and embodied relationship with the Land, recognized as the fundamental provider of life. Indigenous individuals' practices and beliefs emphasize the vital significance of respecting and caring for the Earth.

Furthermore, the emergence of divergent worldviews in contrast to the dominant Eurocentric society was evident throughout the discussions. A significant aspect of this contrast was the participants' perspectives on land ownership, which sharply contrasted with the prevailing capitalist ideology. While acknowledging the societal construct of ownership, the participants held an intrinsic belief in their belonging to the Land, rather than the Land belonging to them. This fundamental perspective stems from their recognition of the Earth as Mother. Moreover, their conceptualization of the Land as a resource further reinforces this perspective. They articulated sentiments such as “you can't own the clouds, air, or water,” highlighting their view of the Land as a renewable natural resource akin to other elements of nature. Central to their identity as Indigenous people, this perspective aligns with the historical Hiawatha Wampum Belt (Dish with One Spoon), a pre-contact treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe in the Great Lakes Region of eastern North America, which includes the ancestors of the Tuscarora Nation. This distinctive treaty symbolizes the acknowledgment of shared hunting grounds (one bowl) among multiple tribes, emphasizing the principle of taking only what is essential and leaving enough resources for others (one spoon) (4.1 Treaties and Why They Are Important, n.d.). An additional conceptual departure

became apparent, concerning the notion of dominion. The Indigenous perspective, which views Land as the primary resource with a vital essence, is not only an explanatory factor but also emphasizes the Land's rightful position as a recipient of respect and stewardship, thereby negating the possibility of possession and dominion.

In conclusion, the responses that surfaced from the exploration of the research question are as follows: Indigenous participants conceptualize and experience Land as a living organism, recognizing their deep interdependency, respect, and responsibility towards it. They view the Land as a source of physical and spiritual nourishment, pedagogy, and ultimately their existence. Undoubtedly, this challenges the Western idea of dominion over nature, and the associated commodification, extraction, and objectification. Instead of viewing land as a form of spiritless territory, they perceive it not only as resource but also a vital component of their cultural identity, belonging to the Land rather than owning it. This Indigenous perspective emphasizes the need for stewardship and respect for the Earth.

The research question aimed to initiate a dialogue that encourages the reimagining of the Land by moving beyond its abstracted tangible materiality and exploring Indigenous knowledge that predates colonial imaginations, Western science, and modernity, with a focus on addressing environmental depredation and degradation. This endeavor goes beyond mere philosophical inquiry, seeking alternative and crucial ways to conceptualize Land. By challenging the singularity of dominant discursive practices and considering alternative approaches, moral and ethical dimensions emerge, inviting questions about how to establish a responsible and respectful relationship with the Land. This research conducted among the individuals of Tuscarora and Chowanoac Nations reveal that delving deeper into the land's essence fosters a more profound understanding of the world, highlighting the importance of moving beyond Eurocentric objectification for environmental sustainability and protection. As I write this on the unceded territory of the Tuscarora Nation, the surrounding Croatan

National Forest has recently experienced uncontrollable wildfires. Additionally, our Northern neighbors in Canada have experienced a magnitude of unprecedented wildfires, generating a blanket of smog across skies in parts of the United States. The need for such reimagining and reorientation becomes increasingly urgent.

Overall, this research underscores the importance of acknowledging Indigenous conceptualizations of land and their implications for ecological, social, and spiritual well-being. Through understanding and embracing Indigenous philosophies, we can bridge the gap between Western and Indigenous worldviews, fostering a more sustainable and inclusive approach to environmental stewardship and human flourishing.

6.1 Limitations

This research endeavor, while valuable in its exploration of regional Indigenous conceptualizations and experiences of land, faced certain limitations that warrant consideration. One notable limitation stems from the relatively small sample size of interview participants who were engaged in this study. While the insights and perspectives shared by the five participants provided meaningful and rich data, a larger and more diverse pool of participants might have offered additional nuances and perspectives on the topic. Although the sample size was limited, I am confident that the depth and authenticity of the responses obtained from the participants ensured a thorough understanding of their regional Indigenous perspective of how land is experienced and conceptualized. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that a broader range of voices and experiences could have further enriched the research. Secondly, a possible limitation may be the unwittingly self-imposed cultural biases as a non-Indigenous person, that could influence the analysis of results or the means which they were obtained.

Furthermore, I had originally interviewed a total of six participants including one member, chief of the Meherrin Tribe, situated in Ahoskie, North Carolina. In the later phase of my research, two concerns emerged among the Tuscarora and the Chowanoac about being included with the Meherrin in this project. Due to my responsibility as a researcher, and respect for these communities, I decided to omit the participation and information given by the Meherrin member. As Datta (2022) highlights the research process while valuing the cultural identity of Indigenous peoples, the 5 Rs are paramount to the scope of ethical considerations. He states that the 5Rs are connected to the following questions: Relationship: What relationships are formed during my research?; Relevance: What do Indigenous communities need or want?; Respect: Do I respect, acknowledge, and honor community knowledge and practice?; Responsibility: What must I do to achieve community-center success?; Relearn: Do I consider myself a learner from the community?" (Datta, 2022, pp. 5-6). The communities that have participated in this research project have been invaluable to the unfolding of this thesis. As an ethical researcher, it is my responsibility to adhere to their reservations, and allow them to determine how their cultural knowledge and practices are being represented and utilized.

7. Conclusion

In summation, the exploration of Indigenous understandings and experiences of land reveals a rich tapestry of perspectives that defies reduction to a singular conceptualization. By transcending the marginalization of Indigenous knowledge, philosophy, and experiences, we witness a convergence of truths that contributes to a more comprehensive and nuanced discourse. This research has elucidated the historical divergences experienced during early contact in the present-day United States, offering valuable insights into the complex relationship between Indigenous communities and their lands.

Central to the Indigenous perspective is the recognition that Land serves as a profound source of knowledge and sustenance. The participants in this study consistently expressed a deep sense of connection and inseparability from the Land. For them, the Earth is not merely an inanimate object to be exploited but rather a living organism deserving of respect and reciprocity. This Indigenous philosophy of interdependency and responsibility towards the Land challenges the prevailing Western notions of land as an object to be owned, extracted, and commodified. Instead, it emphasizes the profound relationship between humans and the environment, acknowledging the fundamental role of Land as the provider of physical and spiritual nourishment, pedagogy, and cultural identity.

In reimagining and reorienting ourselves towards a deeper understanding of Land, we encounter moral and ethical dimensions that demand thoughtful consideration. Embracing Indigenous perspectives reminds us of the importance of moving beyond the confining hegemonic Western discursive practices that perpetuate an abstracted and commodified view of the environment. As we navigate the complexities of the contemporary environmental challenges, understanding and incorporating Indigenous perspectives on Land can play a pivotal role in shaping more equitable and sustainable practices. By acknowledging the Land as a source of knowledge, sustenance, and empowerment, we can develop a deeper

appreciation for the interdependence between humans and nature. Furthermore, recognizing the Earth as a deserving recipient of respect and reciprocity, we can strive to mitigate the adverse impacts of exploitative practices and work towards a more conscientious coexistence with the environment. Through this transformative lens, not only do we discern a more tangible and appropriate response to the current ecological crisis, but it also enlightens us about our shared mutualism with the other beings of life that coexist on our planet, Earth.

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Appendix A
Interview Guide

(1) **Who are you?**

Tell me a little bit of who you are (follow up may be necessary: how old are you?), where you're from and what you do for work?

Tell me about your educational experiences. Starting as child, where did you go to school? And what was it like being a Native American in going through school?

Tell me a bit about your living situation. Where are you living now? Do you own land? Do you live alone or with relatives?

(2) **How do you view land?**

In your culture, from a Native American perspective, how have you been taught to view land/nature? And how did your educational experiences influence that?

How has living in a capitalist system played a role in your ideas of land?

Do you consider yourself a bi-cultural person (such as Native American and American in the contemporary sense?)

Do you find any conflicts between the indigenous ways or views on land and that of those outside of the tribe within your community? [If so, what are some conflicts?] [Can you give me an example?]

What role does land play in your daily life? Are there any practices that you do that integrate the land around you?

Is there a particular memory that you have with the land that is important to you as a member of your tribe?

I witnessed the gift of an eagle feather at the Tuscarora in early May. Can you talk about the significance of this?

How do you personally define land as a Native American?

- Shared beliefs? Contemporary/traditionalists?
- Is this conceptualization and definition shared amongst the community despite changing norms found within our current capitalist system?

(3) Closing

What do you think about…Theory/Prompts

Poem by an Indigenous person from New Zealand, Hemi Hireme of the Tahoe, mentioned in Ahenakew (2016), *Grafting Indigenous Ways of Knowing onto Non-Indigenous Ways of Being*:

Birds inviting you in
Rivers whispering connections
Mountains outsmarting you
Bushes talking to each other
The land speaking in colours
Your body remembering how
To hear with your eyes
To see with your ears
Your flesh merging with the tree
Greeting older and younger relations
Bowing to life renewing itself
Your stomach acknowledging
The wholeness of family
The only true universal
Resisting separability

- Any additional thoughts or comments?
- Thanking, expressing gratitude for taking the time to share and contribute to this research project.
- Also, if at any time over the next weeks, you wish to add more to your contribution, please feel free to get in contact with me.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Verbal Script

To formally introduce myself, my name is MacKenzie DeBruhl, a North Carolina native and current resident and student with Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. I am conducting research about the Indigenous conceptualization of land from a regional perspective and I am interested in your thoughts and experiences on this topic as an American Indigenous person. The purpose of this research is to gather those perspectives. Your participation will involve one informal interview that will last between thirty to ninety minutes, with the possibility of a subsequent informal interview. If at any time, you may need to end our interview or leave for any particular reason, please feel free to do so. This research has no known risks and will ultimately benefit the academic community because it adds to the educational and cultural discourse pertaining to land, with special regard to Indigenous philosophy.

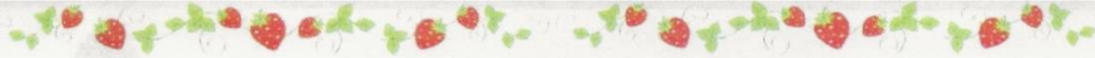
By agreeing to this, you are allowing me to only use the information you provide during this interview. I will not be using any communication outside of this without your expressed consent. If you choose to remain anonymous, please let me know now.
Do I have your permission to use your name and identifying tribe in this study?

Would it be all right if I audiotaped our interview? Saying no to audio recording will have no effect on the content.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Appendix C

Tuscarora's Thanksgiving Address



Haʔ Kanęherathę́hčreh

Ù:nę waʔkáheʔf. Kakuríhwayę: ękíhrę:ʔ kyení:kę: uríhweh. Ù:nę hésnę: nà:weʔ thwe:ʔ yękwawę́:tawęh teʔ naʔ ì:nę akakwè:niʔ. Ęθwaʔtikęhrakwá:θenek kyení:kę: tikawętá:kye:.
Now the time has come. The responsibility has been given to me. From me will issue all of our words, however far it may be possible. Have patience with me in this matter.

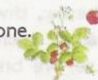
Ù:nę kyè:wę, yękwaʔteyarúhčrę tíhsnęʔ neʔnwaʔnęnęherá:thęhs tíhsnęʔ thwe:ʔ haʔ ękwehkę́haʔnęʔ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)*
Now today, we gather ourselves together and give greetings and thanks to each other and the rest of the People. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst tíhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs Yękwáʔę Úʔfneh. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to Our Mother Earth. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst tíhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs thwe:ʔ haʔ Awęʔkę́haʔnęʔ aʔfnáʔkye. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to all the waters on the earth. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

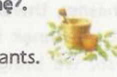
Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst tíhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs thwe:ʔ haʔ Kęčęhkę́haʔnęʔ uʔá:wakę. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to all the fish in the water. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst tíhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs thwe:ʔ haʔ Uhyehkę́haʔnęʔ. Waʔkayęʔnará:kuʔ haʔ wí:sę:t akatáhčiʔ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to all the fruits. The strawberry was chosen to be the leader. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.



Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst tíhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs thwe:ʔ haʔ Uhtwęhehkę́haʔnęʔ. Waʔkayęʔnará:kuʔ haʔ kawęthę́:tih akatáhčiʔ haʔ kanęhakę̀:rat, uhčíhrę? uθahéʔreh tíhsnęʔ kačhéʔwaθ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to all the food plants. Our sustenance was chosen to be the leader: the corn, bear beans and squash. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst tíhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs thwé:ʔ haʔ Unę́hkwaʔtkę́haʔnęʔ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to the medicine plants. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.



Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst tíhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs thwe:ʔ haʔ Karyuʔkę́haʔnęʔ. Waʔkayęʔnará:kuʔ haʔ á:kweh akatáhčiʔ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to the animals. The deer was chosen to be the leader. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst íhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs thwe:ʔ haʔ Urę́ʔehkę́haʔnęʔ. Waʔkayęʔnará:kuʔ haʔ učikhéʔtaʔ akatáhčiʔ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh) Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to the many kinds of Trees. The Maple was chosen to be the leader. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst íhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs thwe:ʔ haʔ Čiʔnęʔkę́haʔnęʔ. Waʔkayęʔnará:kuʔ haʔ stakwíʔah akatáhčiʔ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh) Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to the many kinds of Birds. The Eagle was chosen to be the leader. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

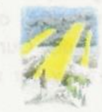
Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst íhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs Hę́ʔtahk Tikawrá:kye:. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to the Four Winds. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst íhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs Yękwahryahsutkę́haʔnęʔ Hiʔnęʔkyehá:ka:ʔ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to Our Grandfathers, the Thunderers. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst íhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs Yękwahryáhčiʔ Híhteʔ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to Our Elder Brother Sun. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst íhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs Yękwáhsu:t Ahθęʔnyéha:ʔ. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to Our Grandmother Moon. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst íhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs thwé:ʔ haʔ Yuʔnihsęrarà:węʔ uręhyá:kę. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to the Stars in the sky. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.



Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst íhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs Hę́ʔtahk Tikakwehstá:kye:. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to the Four Beings. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę hésnę:, thwe:ʔ θkaʔtikę́hra:t ę́ʔnwahst íhsnęʔ neyękhinęherá:thęhs haʔ Rawetyáhnę, Tharęhyawáʔkę. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk haʔ tiyękwaʔtikęhrúʔnę:. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t. (čeh)
Now so, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to the Creator, the One who holds the sky. That's the way our minds should be. Now our minds are one.

Ù:nę yękwaʔtihúʔę hę:we yękwawętaθnéshuʔ. Ù:nę haʔ thwe:ʔ tawę́:te yękwaʔnéhahk kwęhs aryękwerίhek aryękwęʔtikęhręnéhek taʔawę́:te. À:rę hà:neʔ thwaʔkà:yeʔs, θwę̀:ruh ęθwę́hrę:ʔ haʔ kanęherathę́hčreh. Hà:neʔ nęyúhnęk yękwaʔtikę́hrakę. Ù:nę čakwaʔtikę́hra:t.
We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way. And now our minds are one.

* čeh – Tuscarora word of acknowledgement Revised 7/2016

(D. Brayboy, personal communication, 2023)