

Navigating the Waters: Understanding Allied Relationships through a *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake*¹ Two Row Research Paradigm

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Abstract

This article is based on the establishment of a Haudenosaunee community-based research paradigm to provide Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers with guiding research principles based on the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake*, also known as the Two Row Wampum. An Indigenous and non-Indigenous researcher have joined in a canoe journey and a participatory, action-centered, collaborative auto-ethnography to explore the principles of *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* research partnerships. This article describes the learning that occurred for the researchers in their considerations of dialogical space, distinction that is both equitable and heterogenous, ceremony in research, knowledge as exchange in trusting relationships, and the significance of journey.

INTRODUCTION

This article is based on the establishment of a Haudenosaunee community-based research paradigm to provide Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers with guiding research principles based on the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake*, also known as the Two Row Wampum. The development of this research paradigm evolves from a group known as the Two Row Partnership Group that is formed between Six Nations Polytechnic *Deyohaha:ge*² Indigenous Knowledge Centre's staff, knowledge keepers and researchers and McMaster University's Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and graduate students (Freeman & Van Katwyk, 2019; Hill & Coleman,

¹ *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* refers to the Two Row Wampum Treaty in *Kanien'kéha* (Mohawk Language).

² *Deyohaha:ge* refers to the Two Roads or two parallel ways of thinking.

2019). During the monthly meetings the group listens to knowledge keepers sharing the teachings and understandings of the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake*, the *Tehontatenentsonterontahkhwa*³ and the *Kayanerenkó:wa*⁴ which provides the group with a format to discuss how the three interlinking concepts *Kariwiio* (good mind/equal justice), *Kasastensera* (strength in unity/respect), and *Skenn:ne* (peace) provide meaning and a basis in doing research in the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory (Freeman & Van Katwyk, 2019; Hill & Coleman, 2019).

During one of the Two Row Research Partnership meetings, a community researcher from *Deyohaha:ge* felt frustrated by the lengthy discussions and suggested that "we put these ideas into action." Bonnie Freeman, a member of Six Nations and Assistant Professor at McMaster University, shared an idea she had with the group to develop a community focused pilot project that would attempt to bring an understanding of these philosophical ideas by means of action. The 'Testing the Waters: Building Relationships through a Two Row Research Paradigm' pilot project came together to understand how alliances and relationship are formed and maintained between Haudenosaunee and allied non-Indigenous research scholars, exploring the concepts of the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* as discussed through the partnership group (Freeman & Van Katwyk, 2019). By locating the exploration in a canoe journey with a non-Indigenous colleague, Trish Van Katwyk, the river and the ancient agreement of the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* is being used as well as the traditional practice of journeying together to study a contemporary phenomenon: alliance.

JOURNEYING TOGETHER IN A CANOE

The beginning of community engaged research is based on building relationships and trust with the people in the community (Battiste, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Denzin, Lincoln & Giardina, 2006; Martinez, 2013; Smith, 1999). The same is true when working with Indigenous communities. Relationship-building is not only important while the research is in process, the continuance and the maintenance of this relationship with the community is also essential (Battiste, 2002). The pace of relationship-centered research is shaped according to the time and space given in nurturing the rich bonds with the people you are working together with in this research. It is also

³ *Tehontatenentsonterontahkhwa* refers to the Covenant Chain of Friendship Treaty in *Kanien'kéha*.

⁴ *Kayanerenkó:wa* refers to the Great Law of Peace in *Kanien'kéha*.

allowing the community to get to know you and becoming a part of that community. It is crucial to understand how the community may view you as researchers, and that there may be some hesitation by the community to become involved with the research. Therefore, it is important for researchers to be reflexive with their actions and approaches and to be considerate and engage meaningfully in a way that is respectful to the cultural standards and protocols of the community. An example of this is when Bonnie and Trish went to meet and talk with a Six Nations knowledge keeper⁵. On their way to the meeting, Bonnie and Trish stopped at a local restaurant and picked up soup, sandwiches and coffee to bring to the meeting. During the drive, Bonnie shared with Trish the importance of cultural protocol when meeting a knowledge keeper. Bonnie, knowing that this knowledge keeper was disabled, explained to Trish the importance of food and visiting when we enter homes in Indigenous communities. She explained that as visitors we don't determine how long visiting will take place; it is up to the person we are visiting. However, when the person is ready, the shift from visiting to our business (research) will happen quickly.

In understanding the development of the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* research paradigm, Bonnie invited Trish into this research project and into a canoe journey paddling the Grand River. The canoe is not only a metaphorical space, it is also a literal space in which both Bonnie and Trish have explored their research relationship, as well as engaged with the community they were working with. As researchers, Bonnie and Trish draw from Indigenous methods, action-centered research and collaborative auto-ethnography to explore the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship based on the Haudenosaunee perspective of allyship. To prepare themselves, they had an honest conversation regarding their unique experiences as they relate to the structures and experiences that shape their worldviews (Custer, 2014). In a critical auto-ethnographic approach, the researcher examines the web of relations that she is embedded in and begins to reconsider the realities and inequities that are woven into this web (Manovski, 2014; Whitinui, 2014). Absolon (2011) writes extensively about the impact on research and the extent of connectedness when a researcher begins her work by positioning herself within her research. Therefore, it is important for both Bonnie and Trish to explore the development of an allied research paradigm through a critical autoethnographic perspective. It was also very important that the auto-ethnographic work became collaborative as a way of creating a dialogical space for shared reflection and perspectives.

⁵ Also known in other Indigenous cultures as a respected Elder.

There is an intentionality that brings both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives together into the research (Freeman & Van Katwyk, 2019; Hill & Coleman, 2019).

As Bonnie and Trish step into the canoe and enter the waters of the Grand River, they enter a natural environmental space with elements of and surrounding the Grand River. In doing so, they expand their web of relations to include the natural elements (land, wind, water, sun, rain, rocks, eagles, turtles, blue heron) while embedding and reflecting on their selves and the people they are working with in this research project (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). This natural environment is also significant to the Haudenosaunee community, because the space embodies the treaty relationships of the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* and the Six Nations Haldimand Treaty of 1784⁶. When entering an Indigenous community or territory as an Indigenous or non-Indigenous researcher, as an acknowledgment of treaty relationships, it is important to understand the history and the culture of the people. Researchers must be humble and respectful, and must be careful not to generalize, romanticize, or act as experts. The experts are the people within their community.

While the two researchers have known each other through a doctoral program they completed together approximately fifteen years ago, neither had ever undertaken such an experience involving this type of research. For Bonnie, there was a sense of comfort in being back in her own Haudenosaunee community and culture. However, there was an underlying feeling of fear of judgement in trying to live up to the expectations not only of the academy but also of her own community. For Trish, being invited as an ally into this research venture was an intimidating honour. She questioned her unconscious privileges as a settler and wondered if her unfamiliarity with the Haudenosaunee culture and *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* teachings would leave her at a disadvantage and unable to gain the trust of Bonnie and community members.

TEKÉNI TEYOHÀ:KE KAHSWÉNHTAKE AS A BASIS FOR A RESEARCH PARADIGM

One of the earliest treaties between the Haudenosaunee and the early European settlers (first the Dutch, and later the French and English) was the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake*. The Haudenosaunee recognized and respected that there were differences in lifestyles, beliefs, and

⁶ Haldimand Treaty of 1784 was originally granted to the Mohawks and later to the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory for their alliance with the Queen of England during the American Wars of Independence. The Haudenosaunee of Six Nations were granted six miles on either side of the Grand River in Ontario Canada from the Source to the Mouth (to be held in trust by the Crown). Six Nations Land and Resources

values between themselves and early settlers. In order to maintain the tenets of friendship as defined through the cultural philosophy of the *Kayanerenkó:wa* (Great Law of Peace), the Haudenosaunee created the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* (Freeman & Van Katwyk, 2019; Hill & Coleman, 2019; Parmenter, 2013). This Wampum expresses an agreement and a responsibility between the Haudenosaunee and the new settlers to coexist in a way that was peaceful and respectful in their territory in the north east⁷ of North America and the surrounding lands of Lake Ontario.

The stories of *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* have been shared by the Haudenosaunee over many generations, explaining this relationship and agreement between the Onkwehonwe⁸ and early settlers (Hill & Coleman, 2019; Parmenter, 2013). The treaty is explained through the metaphor of two water vessels sailing parallel to each other in the river of life. One of the vessels represents a European ship and the culture, ideologies and lifestyle settlers have brought with them from their homelands. The other vessel represents the Haudenosaunee canoe and the cultural way of life that is balanced with and respectful of the natural environment. The responsibility of both groups is interwoven through this wampum agreement. The shell beads the wampum is made from describe the respect and harmony with which the Haudenosaunee and settlers are to exist living upon the lands of North American, parallel to each other without interfering with the other's culture or lifestyle (Hill, 1990; Hill & Coleman, 2019; Lyons, 1992). The Dutch, and later the French and English, agreed to adhere to the principles and the relationship of this wampum agreement.

On the physical *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* belt, the Onkwehonwe and settler cultures/lives are illustrated by two parallel rows of purple shell beads, with rows of white shell beads on either side and between the purple rows representing the River of Life (Parmenter, 2013). One purple row represents the life and culture of the Haudenosaunee and the other represents the life and culture of the settlers. The white rows on the outer sides of the purple rows represent the cultural philosophies and norms for that particular people (Hill & Coleman, 2019).

For the Haudenosaunee, this represents: *Kariwio* (good mind/equal justice/righteousness), *Kasastensera* (strength in unity/respect/power), and *Skenn:ne* (peace) (Freeman & Van Katwyk,

⁷ Haudenosaunee territory is now known as New York State and the Ohio valley, as well southern Ontario and Québec.

⁸ Onkwehonwe means the original Indigenous people of the territory.

2019; Hill & Coleman, 2019). These philosophical concepts represent the cultural knowledge and spirituality which is at the foundation of Haudenosaunee life and governance (Freeman, 2015). The concept of *Skenn:ne* (peace) as shared through the *Kayanerenkó:wa* (Great Law of Peace) defines how we are to conduct ourselves with harmony and admiration for everything around us. The notion of *Kasastensera* (power) stands for the strength and integrity of a *Kariwiiio* (good mind) towards equality and justice. The concept of *Kariwiiio* (good mind) symbolizes the virtue of incorporating and living the *Kayanerenkó:wa* (Great Law of Peace) into our daily activities (Freeman, 2015; Freeman & Van Katwyk, 2019; Hill & Coleman, 2019). John Mohawk refers to *Kariwiiio* (good mind) as:

the shared ideology of the people using their purest and most unselfish minds. It occurs when the people put their minds and emotions in harmony with the flow of the universe and the intentions of the Good Mind or the Great Creator. (cited in Barreiro, 2010, p. 241-242)

Mohawk also explains that by having thoughts of superiority, we as humans are not appreciating the gifts and benefits the Creator has bestowed upon this earth. By having the gift of reason, the human mind has the capability to “make righteous decisions about complicated issues” (cited in Barreiro, 2010, p. 242). Therefore, the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* works within the context of *Kayanaren'kó:wa* to which the Haudenosaunee extend this binding agreement to settler nations with the assurance of peaceful co-existence between nations and with the natural world.

The *Tehontatenentsonterontahkhwa* Covenant Chain of Friendship Wampum was created by the Haudenosaunee to complement the Two Row Wampum, articulating to settler nations the value of friendship and alliance. If settlers needed the assistance of the Haudenosaunee, they ‘shake’ the chain and this would indicate to the Haudenosaunee to come and assist that settler nation. If the Haudenosaunee needed assistance, they would ‘shake’ the chain and this would be felt on the end of the settlers to come and assist the Haudenosaunee (Hill & Coleman, 2019). The oral history of the *Tehontatenentsonterontahkhwa* (Covenant Chain of Friendship) explains it as a wampum of alliance. It describes how the chain was first depicted metaphorically as a rope between the Haudenosaunee and the settlers. However, it was recognized that a rope could weaken and break, so then the chain was described as an iron chain. However, it was then realized that iron rusts and corrodes. The Haudenosaunee decided that the chain would be best represented as a silver chain so when the relationship becomes tarnished and weakened by negligence of the relationship, it can be repaired. The polishing of the silver chain by both groups is a way to

remember the binding agreement of peace and friendship through their alliance as described in the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* (Hill & Coleman, 2019).

The Two Row Research partnership has been engaging in dialogue since 2015 about how positive research partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers can be guided by the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake*. Over the years, the group has developed five principles that can “decolonize Western presumptions and re-establish healthy and productive research partnerships” (Hill and Coleman, 2019, pg. 339). These principles align with an Indigenous research paradigm that is based in a spirituality that is connected to the land and natural environment (Absolon, 2011; Kovach 2009; Smith, 1999; Watts, 2013; Wilson 2008). The framework of Indigenous inquiry engages a wholistic paradigm that moves beyond an attachment to land by drawing “on the emotional, spiritual, physical and mental well-being of a people” (Martin-Hill, Darney & Lamouche, 2008, p. 60) that is built upon relationship with the spiritual and natural worlds. That relationship with the spiritual and natural worlds is reflected through interactions with the natural environment and expressed through the discourse of Indigenous languages and cultural practices (Freeman, 2015). Mohawk scholar Marlene Brant-Castellano states that Indigenous knowledge “derives from multiple sources, including traditional teachings, empirical observation, and revelation” (cited in Dei, Hall, & Rosenburg, 2000, p. 23) and that “Aboriginal knowledge is said to be personal, oral, experiential, holistic, and conveyed in narrative or metaphorical language” (cited in Dei, Hall, & Rosenburg, 2000, p. 25).

In their 2019 article, Hill and Coleman articulate the explorations that were made by the Two Row Research partnership group by describing the five principles that would guide partnered research. The principles of *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* research emerge from the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace. The Great Law of Peace calls upon a Good Mind to guide relationships that are peaceful, just, and respectful (Freeman, 2015).

The first principle of *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* paradigm is that research relationships are dialogical, based on dialogue rather than monologue. In order for meaningful dialogical relationships to occur, a space needs to be opened up for dialogue whose scope can accommodate a range of alternative perspectives so that critical reflection can occur (Black, 2010; Dutta & Elers, 2019). According to this principle, Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches to research are valued, and the philosophies embedded in Indigenous inquiry do not become assimilated into a Euro-Western ontology.

The second principle addresses the spiritual and land base of Indigenous inquiry, where ceremony is used to acknowledge the sacred and ethical space that is shared in research. For those researchers who have been educated in a Western institution, acquiring and returning to an Indigenous system of knowledge, particularly when it is honoured through ceremony, is challenging because it rejects everything we have been taught within colonial society (Freeman, 2015; Hart, 2010). The knowledge that we experience on the land and in the natural environment is significantly different from the knowledge we obtain from within the institutions of the Western academy (Absolon, 2011; Hart, 2010; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008), where science is pitted against spirituality, and academic ways of being are compelled by secularity (Hill & Coleman, 2019).

The third principle of *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* research paradigm is one of equity within distinctiveness. Hill and Coleman (2019) pay special attention to the ways in which equitable but distinct relationships are done, connected to distinct responsibilities rather than preordained hierarchy. The *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* was described as a treaty between brothers, with the Haudenosaunee taking the responsibilities of the older brother offering guidance due to their experience and knowledge. Likewise, in research partnerships, Indigenous researchers can provide the guidance of an older sibling about an ontology and epistemology that is unfamiliar to researchers informed by a Euro Western worldview. The responsibility of the younger sibling is to learn and listen with respect.

The fourth principle of Two Row research asserts that distinctness does not suggest homogeneity. Within each distinctness there is an internal plurality and diversity. Since the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* agreement was first formed, with multiple histories of colonization and settling, a heterogeneity exists within each of the purple rows that travel through the River of Life. The ethical space between the two rows continues to guide the relationship, and fully supports the multiplicity that characterizes each row.

The final principle is an active resistance to the ownership and private property mindset that marks the process of colonization. This *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* principle asserts that knowledge needs to be shared and cannot be owned. Indigenous understanding of knowledge is that it is something that circulates within the relationship, so that creating strong and trusting connections is essential to the production of knowledge. Knowledge is not made by humans, rather it presents itself as a gift in the midst of good relationships. Because “human beings, like all other

beings, have particular duties to practice and share their knowledge, the way to knowledge is to participate in the givenness of that gift: to learn, to conduct research, in this way of thinking, is to polish the chain of relationships with the elder brothers who are the custodians of that knowledge” (Hill & Coleman, 2019, pg. 354).

In the next section, Bonnie and Trish each share their experience over the past four years about what each has come to understand through the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* - Two Row Research paradigm by means of a canoe journey on the Grand River.

Bonnie: Trish, do you remember our last trip on the Grand River and how we struggled with the newly used canoe I brought on the canoe journey?

Trish: I do! I couldn't figure out what was happening, why it was that this year was so different. It seemed like we had figured out what we needed to be doing in the canoe, we had such beautiful paddling experiences the years before, and here we were again, capsizing not once, but three times!!

Bonnie: At first, I thought it was you and you weren't doing the work, and then I saw you were working hard paddling. So, I thought it was me that I wasn't doing something right. I couldn't understand what was going on with us or this canoe.

Trish: I felt so confused.

Bonnie: And I felt scared again.

Trish: It was an important moment, when we were paddling and trying to sort out what was happening. I would describe this as a moment when the canoe joined us in our conversation. It was when we started to talk about the idea that we actually needed to think about our relationship with the canoe. This wasn't just about the relationship between you and me - we had a relationship with this canoe. In this way, the canoe became the central part of this year's journey.

Bonnie: We had talked about space, relationship, ethics, the importance of communication and understanding. However, we had to come to understand the communication of the canoe, what it was telling us and to listen. Just as we had to learn how to listen and watch the water. Just like we had to understand the balancing of ourselves in this canoe. The same is in understanding a research paradigm. There is discourse and protocols, re-establishing our relationships, and the cultural forms of communication that are all part of a community we are working with. We have

to learn and adjust our ways of communicating, not the community to us. Part of that is through re-establishing our relationship, it is like when you and I come back to do this canoe journey. Once you become involved with the relationship you slowly learn the dialogue that is needed to happen in order to re-align our trust in one another – this was a humble realization. We confirmed our confidence in ourselves and each other and the skills that we have, and then we are opened to a new form of communication – we began to learn the canoe/space. My mother's people, the Algonquins are canoe builders and built birch bark canoes. They knew the canoe as a living entity, and the importance in having respect and a relationship with the canoe. They also understood that the canoe had a relationship with the water and the natural world around. Being in that canoe, we are a part of those relationships.

Trish: It is hard for me to fully grasp this, but it is like the canoe and the river were the dialogical space at the same time as they were sharing a dialogical space with us. And by being in that dialogical space, we had the chance to build our trust, in ourselves, in each other, in the canoe, and in the river.

Bonnie: But we did have more challenging times this year in navigating the river, the canoe and ourselves. We ended up capsizing three times this year. It is like with the silver Covenant Chain, our relationship became dull over the year and by us coming back on the canoe journey we were polishing and coming to know each other, the canoe and the river again. When I think of it in this aspect, I think of the Two Row and how when we first look at the *Kahswénhtake* we predominantly see the two purple rows and they become significant. It seems like the white rows of the *Kahswénhtake* get lost in the non-nuance of the expression of the wampum. We have to remember that the white rows are just as important. This wampum or this research paradigm is not just about the binary of two purple rows or Indigenous and non-Indigenous working together in doing research. The *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* is about the intersecting of all five rows as well as the beads that comprise this *Kahswénhtake*.

Trish: Without an appreciation of the lessons offered by the white background, when I view the Two Row Wampum, the primary thing I see are two purple rows running the length of the belt. I am not able to fully understand the nuances. I look at the belt and feel confused about its messages about difference. My bafflement comes from a binary worldview that places all co-existence

within the structure of a hierarchy. We've talked about this a few times, and, still, I have to work to wrap my head around it.

Our years together in the canoe, in motion and in relationship, have allowed me to pause and reflect about this binary worldview and its neoliberal source. Binary divisions determine worth and define the norms of everyday social experience. Man/woman, human/nonhuman, good/bad, Christian/non-Christian, white/black, rich/poor - it is a never-ending list. These binaries create a hierarchy and can be placed one on top of the other to define worth and entitlement. Consider the Doctrine of Discovery, where the Vatican declared that if there are no Christians on the lands that the settlers come upon, those lands are empty. If the people who are inhabiting the lands are not Christian, they have no right of title to the land, only rights of occupancy, just like the rabbits, deer, and fox that may also be on that land (Elliott, 2019; Lyons, 2015). There is a Jamaican philosopher named Sylvia Wynter who has looked closely at how land is taken from people (2003). She suggests that the definition of human is bound to the global colonial project. She has described the ways in which 'human' is defined so that colonizers assess themselves as human and everyone else as not human in order to justify the exploitation of life around the world. When human equals white male colonizer, then exploitation, accumulation, and extraction is substantiated (Greenberg, 2016; Smith, 2006; Smith, 2018; Lincoln, 2018; Wolfe, 2006). Of course, this exploitation characterizes so much research, as well (Michaud, 2007; Penak, 2019).

Bonnie: As a process, *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* research becomes holistic research that includes relationships between and beyond humans. The *Kahswénhtake* integrates the notion of 'being' and 'doing' as a method of *Kaandossiwin* (*Anishnabe*) or 'how we come to know' (Absolon, 2011). This process from an Indigenous perspective is spiritually based and connected to the land and natural environment. Martin-Hill, Darney & Lamouche (2008) express that Indigenous people move beyond the attachment to land and that "Our epistemology and consciousness is informed by the Creator and shaped by the land" (p.60). Therefore, knowledge that we experience on the land and in the natural environment is so different from the knowledge we obtain from within the institutions of the western academy (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). For Indigenous people, the land, water, natural environment, the canoe and animals teach us the importance of relationship, humility, and respect – that we are a small part of something bigger. To know from within an Indigenous perspective is to touch, feel, smell, taste, see, and to live the experience. Indigenous knowledge "does not flow exclusively or primarily

through our intellect” (Brant-Castellano, 2000, p. 29); it is multidimensional and engages all our senses which contributes to our knowing (Freeman, 2015). What is important is that ‘coming to know’ does not happen through steps, order, compartmentalizing or deconstructing the process of a research paradigm. There is movement with acquiring knowledge that is multidirectional with time and is joined so that each moment contains many directions with the past, present, and future.

Trish: Thinking about relationships as action, ‘doing’ relationships, brings forward a consideration of the responsibilities of relationships. In the Two Row Research group, the idea that partnered relationships can be distinct but equitable was explored. There was dialogue about how equitability is possible when we pay attention to the doing (the responsibilities) of the relationship. By inviting me into the canoe, Bonnie, you took on the responsibilities of an older sibling. By accepting your invitation, I took on the responsibilities of the younger sibling. This was difficult for me at times: while I was listening and learning from you, there were times when I was called upon to answer questions or to describe the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake*. I felt anxious about not having learned enough. Feelings of uncertainty remind me of my responsibilities in our relationship, and in my relationship with the many Indigenous knowledge keepers and community members I have engaged with since we began paddling together. The responsibilities are to listen and learn with respect. The anxiety I have experienced is connected to the Eurocentric urge to be the expert in all things. I believe that by ‘doing’ the younger sibling, I am co-building trust in our relationship. I am co-building a space where dialogue and exchange can happen.

Bonnie: A part of co-building our relationship together is also by turning our gaze inwards and to be open to new knowledge and lessons (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Through this openness, we can experience a deeper source of knowledge and consciousness which allows us to become the people we desire to be based on our values, principles and through the journey we share together. ‘Coming to know’ happens through our active engagement of ‘being’, ‘doing’ and ‘living’, which sometimes means capsizing and falling in the river. While we may not understand our experience or what we are to learn in the moment, it is not until we have taken the time and space to pause, reflect and then come back together to engage in conversation where collaborative learning evolves our consciousness.

CONCLUSION: *TEKÉNI TEYOHÀ:KE KAHSWÉNHTAKE*, JOURNEY, AND RECONCILIATION

In dialogue, Bonnie and Trish have gained appreciation for a research journey process that is guided by the five principles of *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* research partnership group. They have created an illustration that speaks to their experience:



Figure 1. *The relationship and ethical space of the canoe and the natural environment.*

At the centre of the illustration is the canoe, representing a dialogical space where relationships and different perspectives are shared and considered, in a deep way so as to inspire critical consciousness. The critical consciousness has been about the value of traditional knowledge, as well as the influence of colonizing presumptions that we are immersed in. Such critical consciousness intercepts a potential to disregard Indigenous knowledge, spirituality, and philosophy. Guided by the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake*, the canoe that Bonnie and Trish are in becomes an ethical space in which the respect for diversity and the understanding of relationships become an opportunity for growth and learning. Ermine (2007) writes of the differences that constitute ethical space:

These are the differences that highlight uniqueness because each entity is moulded from a distinct history, knowledge tradition, philosophy, and social and political reality. With the calculated disconnection through the contrasting of their identities, and the subsequent creation of two solitudes with each claiming their own distinct and autonomous view of the world, a theoretical space between them is opened. (p.194)

The relationship with that space can bring a recognition of the space between entities and the power of ceremony to respect and bridge that space. Each morning, before getting into our canoe, all the paddlers stood in a circle and participated in the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving address, where all of nature is acknowledged and thanked. This ceremony brought our minds together to affirm our deep relationship to ourselves, along with the wind, the sun, the water, the shoreline, the plants, and the creatures. The diagram acknowledges this web of connections. Within the dialogical space of the canoe, there are distinct responsibilities that work together to go with the canoe down the river. However, it is our openness in learning and understanding through our relationship with each other and with the canoe that our lessons or ‘coming to know’ have been at times easy and other times challenging.

Finally, in the diagram, there is movement in the river as in life to show that this is an interactive journey of the *Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake* and is always in motion and never ending. The same is true of our relationships with each other and with the communities we are working with.

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