

# indigenous ways of knowing and being

An Introduction to the Worldviews of Indigenous Peoples



**tân'si!** \_\_\_\_\_ **hello!**

**NAHEYAWIN**

## — facilitators



**Hunter Cardinal**

Founder & Director of Story



**Jacquelyn Cardinal**

Founder & Managing Director

## about us

Naheyawin offers sustainable, practical, Indigenous-based solutions for the **improvement of diversity and inclusion** through education and storytelling.

We work alongside entrepreneurs, educational institutions, non-profits and government helping them to **become stewards of Treaty and realize their capacity to create conditions of abundance** in their organizations, and beyond.

## our goals today



### explore

the shared roots of Indigenous worldviews in the lands, languages, and governance systems of Turtle Island.



### deepen

your understanding how the worldviews of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples diverge and influence relations today—especially as it relates to how we view and interact with the land.



### open

space for further discussion with time for questions and answers from those gathered.

## — before we begin

- This is just the **tip of the iceberg** of what exists about Indigenous peoples and the ways we navigate and experience our past, present, and future.
- **We are *nehiyawak***, and as such will often draw on examples from our own culture in order to illustrate concepts.
- We will be sharing knowledge by (digitally) **sitting in circle**. Please ask questions throughout our time together!



**tatawaw policy**



# opening circle

Tell us who you are, where your family is from,  
and where you make your home today.





From the German *weltanschauung*, a *worldview* is a way of naming the life perspective on which one approaches problems, looks for solutions, and thinks about life options.

**It is a set of beliefs about reality and influences all one's perceiving, thinking, knowing, and doing.**



## worldviews

- Indigenous peoples have resided on Turtle Island **as far back as we can remember**.
- The word “Indigenous” comes from the latin *indigena*, meaning “sprung from the land”.
- This connection to land is foundational to understanding the **complex and dynamic relationality** that underpins the worldviews of Indigenous people.

# worldviews



- As language comes from the land, it is said that speaking a language Indigenous to that place is **taking part in singing the song of the world.**
- These languages are diverse, some as different as German is to Cantonese some as similar as Italian and Spanish.
- It's a myth that Indigenous languages don't have written forms. Many do. For example, the **nêhiyawêwin syllabics.**

ri  
ji  
ki  
si  
yi  
ni  
mi

m la ta pa wa a

i  
p  
h  
s  
li  
ti  
pi  
wi  
i

re  
je  
ke  
se  
ye  
ne  
me

o wo po to lo n

ma  
na  
ya  
sa  
ka  
ja  
ra

e  
we  
pe  
te  
le  
aw  
w  
c

mo  
no  
yo  
so  
ko  
jo  
ro  
k

ri  
ji  
ki  
si  
yi  
ni  
mi

m la ta pa wa a

ma  
na  
ya  
sa  
ka  
ja  
ra

i  
p  
h  
s  
li  
ti  
pi  
wi  
i

e  
we  
pe  
te  
le  
aw  
w  
c

re  
je  
ke  
se  
ye  
ne  
me

o wo po to lo n

mo  
no  
yo  
so  
ko  
jo  
ro  
k



**sakihtuk**



## worldviews

- Because Indigenous peoples understand all things and beings as connected to the land, **we understand ourselves as connected to each other.**
- This belief influenced the creation of complex and varied governance models, many of which include a strong spiritual element at their core.
- A simple but powerful example is that of **the circle.**





# worldviews




- To facilitate peace between cultures, many different **processes of treaty-making developed** over time.
- Most treaty processes were **rooted in kinship** and were intended to be carried out before conflict occurred.
- An example is the **Dish With One Spoon** wampum which was made between the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee in 1142 CE.



# worldviews




- **Effective governance** allowed for an incredibly active Turtle Island, with Indigenous peoples travelling long distances and engaging with different cultures.
- We know this from the unearthing of ancient trade routes and **similarities between Indigenous languages**.
- We also know that **travel to Turtle Island** was happening before 1492.



*On an otherwise ordinary autumn day shortly after sunrise, the Arawak inhabitants of the Caribbean Islands noticed strange ships sailing on the horizon, much larger than their dugout canoes. As these ships moved closer and closer, they saw strange-looking people with light skins aboard, making odd gestures.*

*The Arawak youths stood at the banks hesitantly, and then some of the braver men began swimming toward the mysterious boats.*





*These strangers offered the Arawak red-colored caps, glass beads, and other curious trifles. In exchange, the Arawak brought parrots, cotton skeins, darts, and other items. Then the strangers drew out swords, which the Arawak, in ignorance, grasped by the blades, cutting themselves.*

*It was a symbolic act, this inadvertent drawing of blood. For the Arawak and the strangers looked at the world from opposite angles, and both were fascinated by what the other was not.*

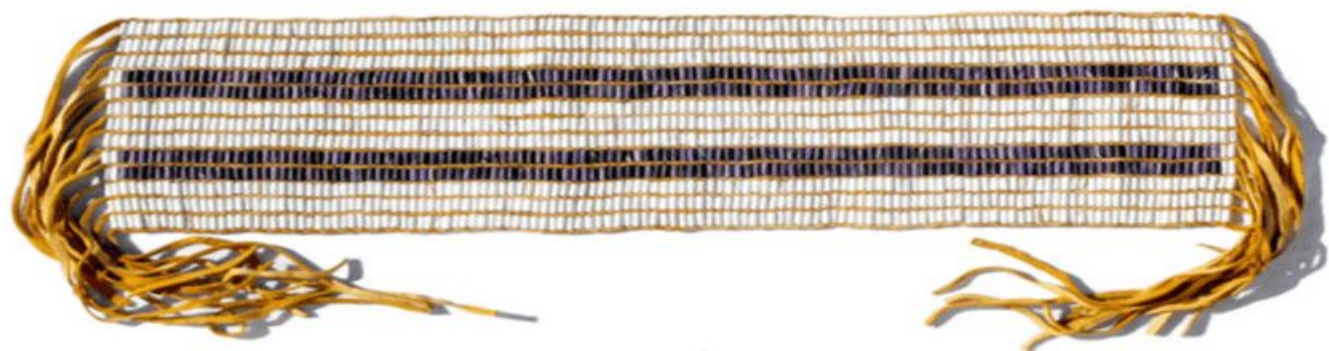
**The Free and the Unfree**  
by Peter Carroll and David Noble



# foundations



- The first relationship agreements on Turtle Island between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples **followed Indigenous legal tradition rather than European tradition.**
- One of the earliest was the “Two Row Wampum Treaty” or *Kaswentha* made in 1613 between the Dutch and Haudenosaunee. It is often considered the **grandfather of all treaties.**







**ayiwepi**



**break**

**NAHEYAWIN**

# reflection

- **Raise your hand** to let us know you'd like to speak, or **share your questions via text in the chat**.
- If we don't have an answer for you, **we would be happy to follow up** with some resources to help you continue your learning and engagement.
- Don't have a question right now, but think you might later? **Feel free to email us** at [jacquelyn@naheyawin.ca](mailto:jacquelyn@naheyawin.ca) or [hunter@naheyawin.ca](mailto:hunter@naheyawin.ca)!

**kinanâskomitin** ————— **thank you**

