

# Artist's Statement

My thinking behind the Knowledge Makers design was drawn from a few ideas I read in the Indigenous Storywork article. Archibald (2008) discusses the design of baskets: "I use the basket as one metaphor for learning about stories and storytelling." (p.2). When discussing Holism Archibald explains it "symbolizes wholeness, completeness, and ultimate wellness. The never-ending circle also forms concentric circles to show both synergistic influence of and our responsibility toward the generations of ancestry, the generation of today, and the generation to come" (p.11). My design works off of these two images showing that the Knowledge Makers program is working from the many generations of Indigenous knowledge that came before us and is weaving towards a future generation of Indigenous researchers - Levi Glass

Archibald, J. A. (2008). An Indigenous storywork methodology. Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues, 371-393

*"I've been honoured to be in this group today and inspired by each and every one of you. Don't be afraid to step one step further. When you go home and say I need something to do, take a look at your elders and what have they done. Put a book together for the elders in the community, don't let your journey end because you finished school. That's the only way we are going to pass down our knowledge."*

-  
*Elder Doreen Kenoras*



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# Contents

## Contents

### Foreword

Professor Will Garrett-Petts	On Memory and Knowledge
Aaron Reginald Thomas Fredborg	Multi-Eyed Vision
Emily Dundas Oke	Contemporary Art as Epistemology - Land / Bodies / History
Professor Rod McCormick	Ripple Effect
Jaqueline Mattice	Preceding and Modern Oppression Within My Family
Gabriel Archie	The Best Ideas Have Come from Research into Our Own Selves
Jeffrey McNeil Seymour	Re-storying Social Work and Resistance
Janelle LaPointe	Keyah Whujut: How Storytelling and Land Use Informs An Authentic Tourism Experience
Sonya tsi7i7ilt Charley	Resilience of a Vanished Legacy
Assoc Prof Shelly Johnson	Indigenous Research That Matters
Janna Wale	The Cultural and Ecological Implications of Declining Wild Salmon Stock
Lyle Paul	Confluence of Knowledge
Sereana Naepi & Professor Airini	Be the Real Me: Learning From Knowledge Makers
Theresa John	The Resurgence of the Right to Self-Determination Through the Balhats System
Rhyannon Garant	Beadwork Teachings: Indigenous Women and Leadership in Higher Education Communities
Dr Karlo Mila	Mana Moana Leadership
Jayne Wenlock	Exploring Personal Biases as an Indigenous Nursing Student within Settler Ideology
Charmaine Peal	Finding Treasures Through Our Language and Culture: Nisga'a Language Revival
Anastazia Munroe	The Identification of 'Invisible Losses' within Cultural Resource Management Practices
Roxie Defant	How my Haida Warrior Inspired Me to Deconstruct Colonial Constructs
Dr Margaret Vickers Hyslop	Good Words



## Foreword

The symbol for Knowledge Makers is of a pine needle basket being made – an Indigenous skill, with each piece, distinct yet significant, adding strength and creating the whole. This edition of the Knowledge Makers journal shows us how the potential of Indigenous peoples as researchers is indeed full of distinctiveness and strength.

Knowledge Makers is an interdisciplinary research mentoring initiative based at Thompson Rivers University that supports Indigenous undergraduate students to become researchers. The selected students participate in creating online portfolios and a two-day workshop exploring Indigenous research. They prepare research action plans and produce papers for the Knowledge Makers publication. A gathering is held with the university, community, and loved ones in attendance to share the moment when the Knowledge Makers, as first generation

Indigenous researchers, receive their first copy of their first publication. And as often happens in Indigenous ways, the first act for each Knowledge Maker is to gift this treasured first publication to their respected ones. We come together throughout the Knowledge Makers journey with the support of our families, Elders, administrators, faculty, staff, and each other, tapping into the potential we have as Indigenous researchers, and the breadth and possibilities of Indigenous research methodologies.

We feel honoured to be in each other's company, and so inspired. Since its inception two years ago Knowledge Makers has had twenty-eight participants, of whom two have gone on to post-baccalaureate study, four have gone on to master's degrees, nine have gone on to be research assistants, three have received graduate studies scholarships, one has participated in an



international internship, one has received mainstream funding for an undergraduate research project, one has started their own business, and twenty-eight have published (some more than once). What began as an undergraduate initiative now includes three Knowledge Makers Circles – undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral. In 2019/20, a fourth Circle will be added for senior high school Indigenous researcher mentoring.

It is a remarkable journey each year to go from receiving student applications, to selection, e-portfolios, workshop, and publication in less than two months. This year we see even more articles drawing on published research by Indigenous researchers. Indeed, some of the papers in this journal contain Indigenous-only references.

We open with Aaron Fredborg who explores the impact of the current K-12 system on Indigenous students and

suggests a way forward that is inclusive of all learners. We then share our thoughts on Indigenous research, the importance of our languages and cultural practices in resurgence, self-determination, and self-governance, and how our epistemologies can interact with Western epistemologies. We reflect on authentic tourism experiences, the cultural and ecological impacts of declining salmon stocks, and our own personal biases. Our last article comes from Roxie Defant who urges us to “forget decolonization and reconciliation” and “start with radical cultural resurgence.” We close with words from Elder Mike Arnouse, who reminds us that what we do as Indigenous researchers is share our people’s knowledge and stories in ways that are inspired by Coyote. This has been a great journey that was a privilege to share with everyone.

We look forward to the authors and their

papers being cited in future publications by others, and seeing Knowledge Makers continue as researchers. The weaving of this basket of knowledge making and knowledge makers is dynamic and advancing. What a treasured gift we have with this edition of the Knowledge Makers journal.

Sereana Naepi, Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour and Airini



*“Creator I thank you for today.”* - Knowledge Makers

*We acknowledge that Knowledge Makers TRU is located on the traditional and unceded territory of Secwépemc within Secwépemcul'ecw. We are grateful for their hospitality.*

*We acknowledge that the First Peoples' fires of authority continue to burn in this land.*

We would like to thank the many people who contributed their thoughts, ideas, and support to Knowledge Makers. Thank you Thompson Rivers University for the vision and resources that make Knowledge Makers possible. Our President (Professor Alan Shaver) and Vice-President Academic and Provost (Professor Christine Bovis-Cnossen) have provided genuine and meaningful support as we evolve to be a university of choice and opportunity for Indigenous peoples. Our sincere thanks to the TRU Research and Graduate office for providing the idea and resources to make this project possible, and to Professor Will Garrett-Petts and Troy Fuller for your continued and exceptional support. We thank the TRU Elders Mike Arnouse, Doreen Kenoras, Estella Patrick Moller, and Dr Margaret Vickers Hyslop for their time and wisdom all across TRU and to Knowledge Makers. Thank you to Kukp7i Paul Michel (Executive Director, Aboriginal Education) and his team for their guidance. Misty Antoine, thank you for the many ways that you have contributed to Knowledge Makers. We thank the Aboriginal Student Services team for their guidance and support of the program, in particular Melody Markle and Vernie Clement. Thank you to all the Deans, faculty, staff and Knowledge Makers 'alumni' who were able to join us this year to provide encouragement and insights. We acknowledge Winter 2016 Knowledge Maker Levi Glass for his talent in designing the Knowledge Makers artwork (seen on the cover of this journal and on our hoodies). Thank you to the extraordinary team that brought this publication to print, especially Sereana Naepi, Bonnie Scherrer, and Sherisse Mousseau. Thank you Thomas Sandhoff and family for being there when we needed you. The legacy of Crystalyn Lemieux (a visiting Fulbright student scholar) with her leadership and many talents combined with Brian Lamb and TRU-Open Learning means that the Knowledge Makers e-portfolios continue. We were joined this year by Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour whose insight, guidance, and passion for change contributed to the articles you hold in your hands. Thank you to the support, administration, and catering teams for making sure all that was needed was in place. Knowledge Makers is co-ordinated by Sereana Naepi. Although she would not seek acknowledgement herself, we know that her energy, intelligence, and advocacy as an Indigenous scholar herself makes amazing things possible in amazing ways. We also thank Professor Airini whose unrelenting passion and advocacy to grow Indigenous researchers makes programs like the Knowledge Makers possible. Finally, we thank the Indigenous students who committed themselves to the Knowledge Makers program. We look forward to hearing about your research journeys in future years.

Kukwstsétselp. Vinaka levu. Fa'afetai tele lava.

# Will Garrett-Petts

## Assoc Vice President, Research & Graduate Studies

### On Memory and Knowledge

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The Knowledge Makers program has had a significant impact on me as an educator and as a researcher. For the last three years I have been invited to meet with the participating students during their workshop sessions, and to speak at the annual research dinner. In addition, I have been asked to contribute two short pieces of writing to the Knowledge Makers Journal. As a result, I have been giving considerable thought to the notion of “making knowledge” and its relationship to the creation of learning communities. What strikes me initially is that the opportunity for learning, especially when we seek to empower students as researchers, becomes highly reciprocal. The Knowledge Makers takes for granted that students, teachers, and mentors alike will all benefit. More important still, I am learning that, when addressed in an Indigenous community context, the nature of new knowledge creation requires special consideration of the community’s collective memory. As elder Mike Arnouse puts it, “Things I have heard at Knowledge Makers are old but they seem new because people forgot them.”

Eber Hampton published an article slightly over two decades ago in the Canadian Journal of Native Education titled “Memory Comes Before Knowledge.” An extraordinarily profound and provocative title: it points to the multiple ways our individual and collective pasts inform the present; but more important still, it underscores a significant premise—that contributions to new knowledge are built upon, shaped by, and filtered through past experiences and understandings.

I want to reflect on the name of TRU’s program, the Knowledge Makers, for I think it, too, embodies the premise that memory comes before knowledge. I’m drawn to the proposition that knowledge is something “made.” We speak more often of discoveries and innovations—as if new knowledge has been hiding or is an extant discovery simply needing a clever

twist or refinement, or a novel technical adaptation. To speak of making knowledge, however, is to invoke consideration of process, of qualities, of potentials, and of materials. I’m reminded that the celebrated Canadian poet Earle Birney preferred using the word “makings” rather than “poems” when describing his writing, partially because makings sounded for Birney less pretentious, but also because it spoke to the craft of writing, in particular to the physical shaping of words and received ideas over a period of time.

Haida artist Bill Reid similarly reminds us of how we employ memory intentionally as a prerequisite to knowledge making: “I wish that the objects which come from my hands play the role of ‘revelators’ of ancient representations. It is my hope that the people of today and of tomorrow become aware of the existence of the Northwest Coast and feel enriched by the knowledge they will acquire from this extraordinary testimony....”

Knowledge is not simply discovered or argued: it is revealed, made available, and shared through physical and mental effort; informed by past practice and history; negotiated through tradition, relationships, and received ways of thinking; and deepened through personal and community engagement.

I am learning that to be a “knowledge maker” is to touch and honour and work with memory as a prerequisite for contributing new understandings, new ways of knowing.



# Aaron Reginald Thomas Fredborg

Métis (Cree/Ojibwa) Selkirk Manitoba  
Bachelor of Social Work

*"Not all the answers are found on pages. The real lessons in life are learned when we are out experiencing this thing we call existence."*

## Multi-Eyed Vision

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### **Dedication**

Before I begin, I would like to dedicate this to my parents, who always pushed me to be the best version of myself. They have loved and supported me since the beginning: thank you. To my sister, who has always been there for me, it is a privilege to be your brother. To my grandparents, who have always guided me along this journey of life and have shown me the roots of our family lineage, you are my inspirations. To my friends from the coast to the prairies, it's been great walking this path with you, respect.

### **Acknowledgement**

I am a Métis male and my ancestral roots cover many different nations. Through my father's lineage, we have Cree, Scottish and Scandinavian ancestry. My mother's side of relations consists of Ojibwa, Irish and French. All of which I am proud.

### **Multi-Eyed Vision: My vision**

Growing up in Manitoba, I was one of the lucky ones. My basic needs were met and home life seemed, for the most part, peaceful. I am who I am today because of my family values. I have combined transmitted family knowledge with my post-secondary education. Both streams of knowledge have contributed to my development into a strong, confident and determined individual. I can link my belief in post-secondary education to the development of a personalized self-care model based on my Indigenous culture. Although I was aware of this knowledge the majority of my life, I never applied it officially until my post-secondary studies. I can tell you that I never knowingly applied any type of self-care as a young boy in an educational institute. From what I can remember, there was no knowledge being transmitted about the value of self-care in my K-12 Canadian curriculum, resulting in a sense of disconnection from feelings, emotions, and the spirit. How beneficial



would it be for young people to learn to self-regulate at a young age in a public school setting? I know that if Indigenous cultural practices for wellness were applied in the current educational system and designed to follow young students throughout the stages of their lives, this would invoke a positive change for the future. Through my Ojibwa family lineage, I was taught about the wholeness of self as it relates to the Medicine Wheel. Self consists of four quadrants: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. In order for the self to be whole, an individual must balance the quadrants. Implementing this model and showing the next generations how to achieve balance of self is just as important as learning to write and do math equations, both of which follow a student throughout grade school. Why can't a self-care tool based on Indigenous knowledge do the same?

## Daerwood's Finest

As a young elementary school student, I enjoyed going out to play four square at recess and especially art classes. I liked to be creative and socialize. I was full of life and energy. I recall being disruptive at times; I could never make sense of the emotions and feelings I experienced prior to being disruptive. I never knew how to properly express myself. Some days I would be angry or sad, and those feelings would be reflected in my actions. I know I began to disengage and formed a habit of burying my feelings at a young age. I hesitated to express my true self at school out of fear of consequences. I spent quite a bit of time in detention as a young boy. It was rarely anything serious, I just could not focus on the material. I did not have the slightest idea how to self-regulate or perform what I now know as self-care. My satisfaction came



when recess occurred and I was free to run out and meet my friends on the playground. Back then, my friends and I had limited prejudice towards any racial group; our perception was not blurred by the color of one's skin. Most of us were of Indigenous descent. I was not the only one of my friends to have difficulty in the classroom. It was as if there was a division between the curriculum and us, and I believe that division was caused by a lack of spirituality in the classroom. We had a system against us and we did not even know it. This would explain my disengagement at such a young age; I buried my feelings and emotions for protection. I know I wasn't the only student to do this. My elementary school was located on Main Street in the middle of the small city of Selkirk, Manitoba. Directly behind the school was a neighbourhood of low income housing, which we called "The Hood" or "Sesame Street." Most of my schoolyard friends came from this neighbourhood. The school itself still stands; it is a brick building, built in the 1950s, and stands three stories tall. The teachers and my principal were of fair skin. The first Indigenous teacher I interacted with in the classroom was not until my Grade 5 year, and she was a distant cousin. I still remember my first day of kindergarten, and I still can recall the tension and nervousness I experienced in my remaining days of Grade 6 before moving to junior high school.

### **My teachers**

I have always been a grandma's boy. I spent lots of time with both of my grandmothers and they have contributed to the character assets that I possess today. I always found myself listening to them more than my parents. Both were textbook examples of strong Indigenous women. They shared in common the loss of their husbands (my grandfathers) when my parents were

just small children. My grandmother Winnie is from Misipawistik Cree Nation. She was born on a trap line in northern Manitoba and raised in Grand Rapids. I spent many days with her in Winnipeg. She worked with Aboriginal peoples and I remember sitting in meetings with her as a young boy and not having the slightest idea what was going on. This was early exposure to my current career as a Social Worker. She practices the Christian faith today, but has never steered away from her ancestral Cree heritage. My grandmother Mona is from Sagkeeng First Nation and was raised in Matlock, Manitoba. Growing up, she babysat my sister and me quite a bit. We lost her in 2010. In my younger days, she taught me the value of prayer. Both grandmothers acknowledged the power of spirit. They are my inspiration and it is because of them that I hold the knowledge to write this entry. I believe that if my spirit is attended to and nurtured, then everything else that makes up self will seem effortless. Being connected to my spirit has provided me a new awareness and outlook on life. Once I truly could attend to this quadrant, I became an all-round well-balanced individual. I have been more useful to my family and my community because of this practice. As I reflect back with the knowledge I now have, I believe that if I had learned as a child to acknowledge my spirit through a self-care program, I would not have suppressed and buried those feelings I experienced as a young native boy.

### **Knowledge in Action**

If I could implement some of the Indigenous knowledge that has been passed down through my family, I would select the Seven Sacred Teachings. These traditional Ojibwa concepts form the foundation of life. These teachings are based on respect and sharing; each of the seven is a natural law, essential to living a full and healthy life.

*"I feel very supported,  
like I just made a whole  
lot of new friends"*

–  
Knowledge Makers

Day 2

Each law/tradition is represented by and attached to an animal, and is shown through that specific animal's way of being in the world. It is a reflexive exercise towards an understanding that all actions and decisions made by man manifest on a physical plain. I feel that this program could be adapted to the educational curriculum in the form a self-care model. Children like animals and would show interest in this type of teaching. Teaching them this model would enable them to learn the value of the animal world, and that the animals themselves taught man how to live close to the earth. This connection between man and animals has instilled respect for all life in those who follow the traditional these teachings. The Seven teachings are lessons to which all individuals can relate. Each provides important knowledge that has the potential to improve the inner balance of an individual. Below are the Seven Sacred Teachings, represented by their Animals:

I know that the Canadian education system today would benefit from this knowledge. We live in a technologically advanced state, and this has already caused the next generation to disconnect

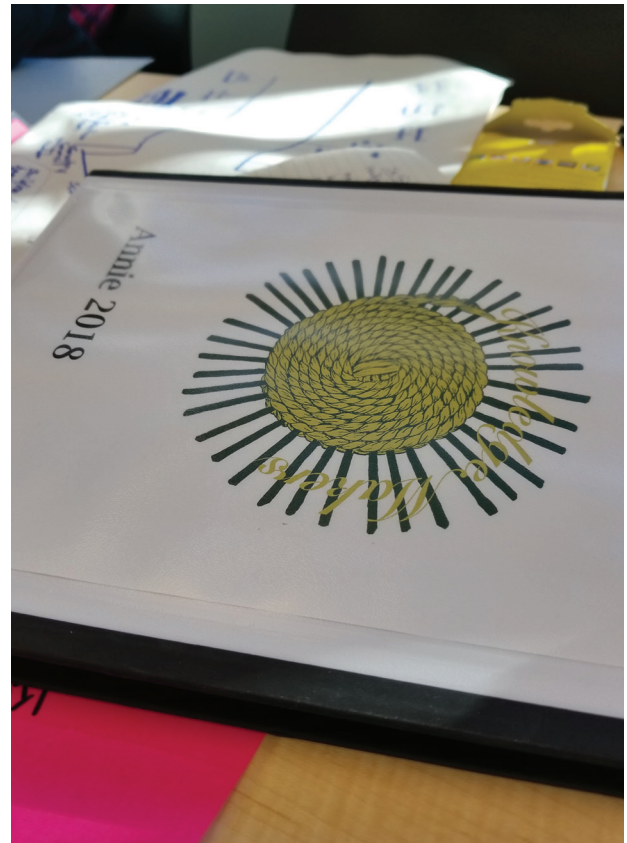
Courage – Bear	Humility – Wolf
Love – Eagle	Honesty – Sabe
Truth – Turtle	Wisdom – Beaver
Respect – Buffalo	

from their spirit. They could benefit from learning how to balance themselves and stay grounded. I would start implementing weekly classes based on Indigenous wellness knowledge to the next generation starting in Grade 3. By the time these students reach junior high, my hope is that they would be able to recognize what is going on for them internally. Understanding the power of Indigenous practices and putting them into action has ushered in a greater sense of self-awareness for me. It has been a healthy coping mechanism and has gotten me through some difficult times. When I stay true to my spirit and seek to balance my four quadrants of self, I am granted inner strength and inner peace. I am more inclined to respect and share in life, rather than take and hurt. It would have been valuable to have grown up witnessing my culture being acknowledged in the school system. That did not occur for me until I entered college. My family is matrilineal in a way that sees the women as the organizers and the transmitters of knowledge. I never got the opportunity to meet my grandfathers, but I know my grandmothers, and they are two of strongest people I have ever had the opportunity to be in a room with. They raised large families and lived in poverty. They had the drive to be something better for their children. They took night courses while working and mothering all day. They lived difficult lives and they survived. Now their grandson gets the opportunity to show his appreciation for them through his writing. I do know that exposure at an early age to anything, whether positive or negative, is going to have an effect on a young person.

### **It's an Inside job**

I take into consideration those who did not have the opportunity to be raised by great parents and grandparents. My family has always taught me more about life than

any educational institute could. But I am one of the fortunate ones. There are many young people in the education system today who will not have the opportunity to be exposed to such knowledge. What is more important to me in this life than my job title or my degree and the initials beside my name is how I feel about myself and the level of comfort I have in my own skin. The real education starts with coming to terms with what is going on inside oneself, and accepting what is looking back at you in the mirror. Self-care is a vital tool in ensuring success in life. It must begin at an earlier age and follow an individual throughout their life. The next generation deserves the ability to view their internal and external selves as equal counterparts.



*“ Writing is a sacred experience for me and I believe that words are incredibly powerful in good ways and terrible ways. I see it as an extension of my spirit and my ancestors”*

—  
Knowledge Makers

Day 2

# Emily Dundas Oke

Métis, Cree, Settler

Bachelors of Arts: Major in Philosophy, Minor in Visual Arts

*"Indigenous research has meant generous invitations to learn about self, family, history, and community through creative pathways. For myself, I have realized it is at once transformative and continuous. We are asked to carry with us that which is already known to effect transformative change in ourselves, relationships, and communities. We are guided by those who came before to bring light to our unique place in the world"*

## Contemporary Art as Epistemology

Land / Bodies / History

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### Acknowledgement

"There is a large community of people who have and continue to offer guidance and support for my well being as an individual and researcher. I owe an infinite thank you to my grandmothers, whose wisdom, strength and charm carve a beautiful path for me to explore the world. Each of the voices that were present in the Knowledge Makers Program brought light and clarity to the Circle, for which I must thank their generosity. We are guided by our Elders, whose guidance is a gift. Thank you to Dean Airini, Sereana Patterson, and Jeffrey McNeil who create the network that brings our constellation to light. And of course, my patient and insightful parents who have supported my wanderings through this world in more ways I could imagine."

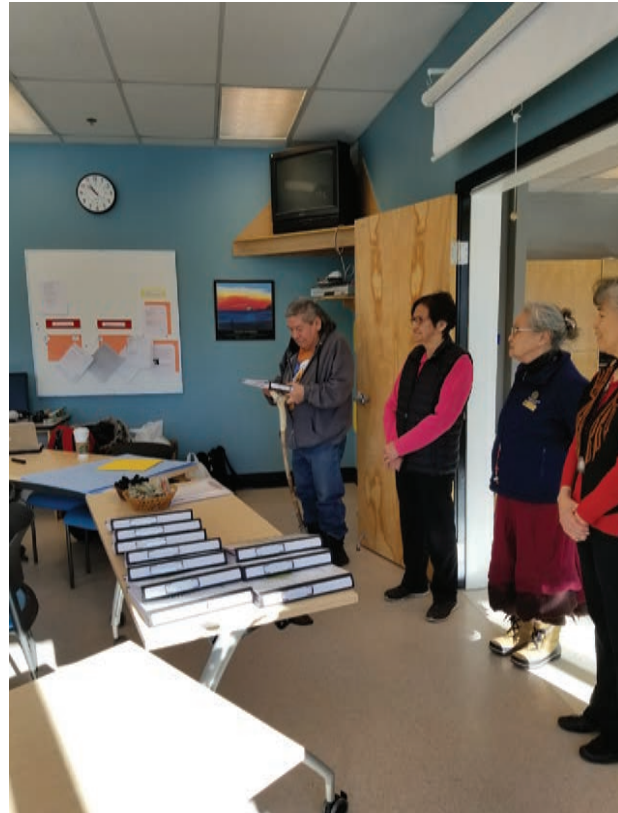
### Introduction

Within the work of many contemporary Indigenous artists, the body maintains a

central role as an agent of knowing. Beyond mere expression, the body is employed and articulates an expansive breadth of knowledge through which complicated histories are carried forth and remembered. I argue that the body acts as both a site and process of knowing within the work of contemporary Indigenous artists, and that through the performative work of such artists, important conceptions of land-history are manifested. I am thinking of works such as Tanya Lukin Linklater's *Traces* (2017), where contemplation of Indigenous presence and erasure in urban sites manifested with two artists activating the white gallery space with motion - jumping and running at each other and dragging charcoal along the gallery wall. The remnants of such exhausting labour included a dark line, a "sketchy horizon" (Kinloch, 2017) which spread throughout the gallery space, still holding onto the imprints of hands and fingers that brought it into

being, a small pencil note written directly above: “the treaty is in the body.” This work, among many others that implicate the body and enact relationships to the history of lands, has ignited my philosophical and artistic inquisitiveness to search out epistemological pathways that ground my understanding of embodiment and performative praxis. Throughout this article, I will elaborate upon epistemic concerns that I believe contemporary Indigenous art has been, and continues to be, able to address, and delineate further research and considerations I believe are important.

Performative artworks have often been used as narrative tools to tell stories, express history, and share knowledge. Across Turtle Island, communities are engaged in diverse acts of sharing history through song, dance, plays, films, and other creative means. As an interdisciplinary student with interests in contemporary art and philosophy, I have oscillated between, and often blended, philosophical inquiry with art-making and curation. Throughout the past few years of my life, I am grateful and honoured to have been introduced to the work of Indigenous artists, work which I believe goes beyond narration. Powerful works have taken shape in dynamic forms, with artists and communities at the loci of such action in a manner that I think is important to address. I believe that in many instances, the entanglement of the body in artistic acts speaks to and incorporates perhaps slightly radical epistemological positions. There are three general epistemological claims that I believe are illustrated examples of contemporary Indigenous performance art. Such positions assert that the body is a knowing subject and often occupies a central role in our ability to make meaning in the world; that knowledge and knowledge practices are inherently contextual and local;



and that memory is never fixed - it is a “multi vocal” (Campbell, p.139) domain in which the past is never severed from the future. Searching for a single account of memory is futile - we are bound to remember differently, to draw forth the past in ways suitable to how we envision the future.

I would like to begin by exploring how knowledge is embodied. Knowledge is not simply a conceptual matter implicated in mental action and thought, but rather, knowledge is an embodied and environmental concern - it is brought forth by, emerges from, and is inextricably linked to our lived experience as bodies as subjects. A personal example may help to illustrate where this interest in the intersections of embodiment, art, knowledge and history is grounded. During a few long brisk days in the fall of 2016, I worked tirelessly on a large painting titled *kinanâskomitin*, a thank you in Cree. This large painting on birch was becoming both a complicated overlay

map of the treaties, the Métis Nations, and a love letter to my ancestors. Leading up to that painting, my relationship to my identity had been complicated. I had struggled to find comfort in how I could identify (both legally and personally). I am registered as a Métis individual, and yet my great-aunt had spent over 30 years battling the government of Canada so that her treaty and status rights would not be lost when she married a non-native man. I want to thank my aunty and the countless other women who challenged the government of Canada. I couldn't reconcile my conceptions of self, family, identity to the lands that had been partitioned and relegated to different bureaucratic understandings. But somehow, in creating the piece, through the hours of slicing out words of admiration, words of gratefulness in Cree, from this abstracted version of my grandmother's home territories, I came to understand how I fit in. All the pieces were there before - I knew the history of my mother's side of the family, I knew we exist in a legally-plural country, where the same lands are subject to many laws and regulations that often contradict each other. And I especially knew the amount of my burgeoning fondness for my grandmothers and their relations. Until I confronted that large piece of birch wood, it was an overwhelming conversation for me to have. It wasn't until I engaged with it - hands, heart, and full body - that my present relationship to this past, a personal and public history, became known. Working through the Cree/Métis territories in paint and pastel on a huge surface created a part of the education I needed. The understandings that had been shared with me by conversations with grandmother were learnt through this act. In reflection, the size of the piece was a crucial component for this understanding

to happen. At 4 ft x 4 ft, it had a consuming presence. My earlier small sketches were not conducive for this embodied understanding to take place. My whole character was wrapped up in the making of the piece - its size may be indicative of the importance such a history has in my life.

Variations of the understanding of knowledge as an embodied dynamic have been expressed by a number of Indigenous thinkers, artists, and creatives. In a beautiful reflection of poetic pathways, Cree poet Neal McLeod notes, "old stories mark our bodies with meaning and live on within us, despite colonial encroachment" (2014, p. 101). We develop and carry our understandings of the world with us, within ourselves and throughout our engagements across spatial and temporal realms. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer, and artist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson echoes a similar understanding in her 2017 book on radical resurgence. *Throughout As We Have Always Done*, Simpson makes calls to embodiment as a force through which decolonization takes place. She notes that when political violence happens to Nishnaabeg political systems, "relationshiped bodies will hold all of the knowledge" (p.117). Individuals constitute a network of generative forces against attempted assimilation, and that decolonial praxis can be rooted in everyday embodiment. Carried out throughout intimate, public, and changing spaces, our bodies hold and generate the understandings we need to enliven such resurgence. Embodied approaches to cognition and knowledge have also gained significant traction in various forms in western philosophical discourse, and a few positions are worth a brief mention to further elaborate my position.

## **Your big words are echoes of what my body holds**

The extended mind thesis, as outlined by Andy Clark and David Chalmers, recognizes the mind/body distinction as a misleading and arbitrary dichotomy. In western philosophical discourse, the assertion that mind and its related activity are essentially different from the material body has been a central problem to epistemology. Such a dichotomy has lead philosophers to dismiss the body as occupying a role in cognition and knowledge processes. Indeed, an epistemological hierarchy, arguably introduced by René Descartes in 1641 through the publication of his *Meditations*, has endured. Pursuits centred around rationalization, mental activity, and context-independent foundations of knowledge have dominated the field. Claiming an essential difference between the immaterial mind and the physical body, Cartesian philosophers are at odds with embodiment theory. However, Clark and Chalmers assert that such distinctions are false and demand that we recognize the complex relationships between information processing, our bodies, and engagement with our environments to illustrate that each of these realms is involved in our processes of knowledge. Our mind operates beyond the “boundaries of skin and skull” (Clark & Chalmers, 1998, p. 7). We are continually learning through our bodies and environment. As such, our engaged bodies become a site of knowledge.

## **Context is everything**

Knowledge and knowledge-producing systems are inherently situated within, and emerge from, specific contexts, and as such are “socially located” (Code, 1993, p. 20). Such a claim advances an approach to knowledge that is wildly different from the

dominant western discourses to which I have been introduced during my undergraduate degree in philosophy. An overarching search for universal truths that can serve as pure, indubitable bases of knowledge occupies the literature we consume. Whereas western academic philosophy, which makes up the majority of my coursework, has traditionally upheld disembodied, context-independent, and neutral theories of knowledge, critics such as Lorraine Code (1993), Louise Antony (2002), and Elizabeth Grosz (1993) reveal the masked biases that western philosophy employs in its valuation. Importantly, such claims to objectivity are at odds with many living epistemologies and Indigenous thought. Leanne Simpson eloquently articulates that “meaning comes from context, not content” (2014, p. 112), and I argue that specific artistic practices embody contextual knowledge systems. A performatic artwork can serve as a doorway into diverse epistemological universes. I believe Simpson’s response to one of Rebecca Belmore’s performative artworks acts as a testimony to this. Belmore, a Nishnaabeg artist, engaged with water, rocks, oak trees, and three helpers during a performance in Queen’s Park, Toronto, on Canada Day 2012 (Simpson, 2017, p. 203). Simpson, having been immersed in a Nishnaabeg philosophy, recognizes particular teachings drawn out and present within the act and setting Belmore created. Through performative dialogue, a history of Nishnaabeg presence, of the sovereignty of women as spirits responsible for water, and of colonial dispossession took place and was available to those immersed in Nishnaabeg thought.

Acknowledgement of social, situated, and local knowledge systems enables us to more appropriately address, appreciate, and honour a plurality of ways of knowing



and can participate in a “polycentric global epistemology” in which “Indigenous survival and self-determination of indigenous peoples and their knowledges is a foremost goal”(Maffie, 2009, p.60). From my understanding, polycentric global epistemology is an admirable pursuit through which epistemologists recognize a multiplicity of dynamic knowledge practices and “decenters and provincializes Western epistemology” (Maffie, 2009, p. 61). I believe that my research will contribute to such an endeavour by inquiring into the work of artists as specific iterations of particular knowledge practices, and hopes to enunciate their concerns of land and history.

### **My memory grows and decays like a plant transforms**

A primary driving force for my work is the “reconstructive account of memory” as articulated by Sue Campbell (2014, p.139). Memory does not bring forward events and recollections unchanged. Her account recognizes the “multi-vocal nature” (2014, p. 139) of memory. It questions the apparent objectivity of the act of remembering, and rather asserts that memory is dynamic, subject to change, and evolves given our present circumstances, desires, and goals. It recognizes the duality of memory as an act in which the past impacts the future, but also in which the present affects our interpretations of the past. Neither the past nor the future is severed from the other. The reconstructive model addresses the “dynamic, complex and social nature of human memory” (Campbell, 2014, p.138). Such an account enables us to realize that historical facts remain up for discussion, given the multiplicity of ways they may be remembered - and these historical facts may be harboured within the bodies and practices of contemporary artists.

This conception serves important purposes when negotiating shared histories. It reminds us to be open to interpreting diverse forms of historical accounts - oral, artistic and embodied. As Leanne Betasamoke Simpson says, “the future is here in the form of the practices of the present, in which the past is also here influencing” (2017, p. 213). We can look to contemporary practices as realizations of this collapsed linearity. Artistic practices are not, therefore, merely responses to historical unravelings, but they are memory embodied. They ask us to question the “problematic veiled neutrality” (Dei, 2013, p. 33) that colonial historical accounts disseminate. They ask us to look to the creatives in our communities as history holders and sharers. Peter Morin’s generous, humble, and transformative

*“Thank you all for sharing and for igniting different ways of thinking. I don’t think these ways of thinking can arise alone so I am thankful for such a supportive community.”*

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Knowledge Makers

Day 2

performance *Experiments with Time Travel*, welcomed us into this dynamic temporal flux, to visit the Tahltan land before light touched it, surrounded by the beating drums and guided by the time traveler.

We can look to artists to be guided by their knowledge, to recognize their practices as diverse forms of memory, and to assert the histories of our communities. Artistic practice can participate in a continual resurgence through which sovereignty is embodied in diverse epistemologies. Its transformative potential enables us to actualize decolonial practice in which our knowledge is carried forth within us. There is much work to do. Here, general epistemological concerns have been elaborated, but I wonder: what further epistemological frameworks are embodied in diverse practices? In this article, only a small tracing of a few concerns was brought out. Can engaging in sustained dialogue with artists support their work in subverting epistemological hierarchies?

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*"It's exciting knowing that someone is going to read this and we're going to get acknowledged as Knowledge Makers."*

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Knowledge Makers

Day 2

# Rod McCormick

## Kanienkehaka

### BC Research Chair In Indigenous health

*"He who would study organic existence,  
First drives out the soul with rigid persistence;  
Then the parts in his hand he may hold and class,  
But the spiritual link is lost, alas!  
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 1749–1832)."*

## The Ripple Effect

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I was asked to tell a brief story about why research matters to me. After thinking about this for some while, I decided to write about ripples. When you drop a stone into a calm pond or lake you will see circular ripples moving outwards from where the stone entered the water. Those ever-expanding concentric circles remind me of the circles that make up our lives and reality as Indigenous peoples. If I am the stone, then the first circle in the water might represent my friends and peers; moving outwards, the next circle represents my family; the next, my community; the next, my nation/culture; the next, the natural world, the spiritual world, and so on. They are all interconnected. The process of colonization has disrupted those circles and has instead caused its own negative ripple effect. The existential psychiatrist Irvin Yalom (2011) talks about the rippling effect and writes that it "refers to the fact that each of us creates—often without our conscious intent or knowledge—concentric circles of influence that may affect others for years, even generations." There is of course a western science explanation concerning ripples or waves that tells us

that when the pebble releases the energy of its movement, the water itself does not travel. Instead, the water molecules become excited by the expanding energy wave and quickly cycle in place before passing the energy to neighboring water molecules as the wave propagates. In my own western science layperson's understanding I believe that this explains wave theory or quantum physics vs. particle theory or Newtonian physics. Waves are different from particles. Waves have energy, but not mass. When two waves meet they don't bounce off each other: they just add and subtract as they pass through each other. Newtonian physics teaches that the universe is mechanistic and that everything is separate. As a graduate student, I had this quote above my desk to constantly remind me that the world cannot be seen as a collection of small parts:

He who would study organic existence,  
First drives out the soul with  
rigid persistence;  
Then the parts in his hand he may hold  
and class, But the spiritual link is lost, alas!  
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 1749–1832)

With quantum theory western science came to the realization that you cannot stop the world and measure discrete and separate parts. "Western science came full circle to a worldview that has been known for millennia in indigenous cultures. That worldview recognizes that everything exists in dynamic flux—everything vibrates—and everything is in relation to everything else." (Kizhe Naabe- Glenn Aparicio Parry).

What is transmitted from one part to another can be viewed as energy or, as Goethe implies, spiritual energy. Nothing is separate from this field of energy. As researchers or knowledge makers, we are also all ripple makers. We therefore need to understand the responsibility that we have in relation to all of creation. If you have never tried this experiment, I challenge you to toss one stone in a pond and observe the ripples. Next, toss two stones and observe. Finally, toss a handful of stones. You will notice that all of the intersecting ripples caused by the many stones combine to create one large circular effect with ever-expanding ripples. For 150 years Indigenous peoples have experienced the ripple effect in a negative way. As Indigenous peoples we have understood the effects of this flow of negative energy just as current quantum physicists now understand the transmission of energy via wave theory. My hope for Indigenous research in Secwépemcul'ecw and beyond is that we come to the understanding that our research can create ripples of positive energy and that many stones can create a large ripple effect that will send a positive flow of energy to our friends, families, communities, nations, and to all of creation.

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*"We are gifted, we are incredible"*



Knowledge Makers Day 2

# Jacqueline Mattice

T'exlc (Williams Lake Band)

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

*"I dedicate this paper to my ancestors and my grandchildren, my future grandchildren, my family, and Indigenous people in the hope of inspiring change in the unjust treatment by the political regime."*

## Preceding and Modern Oppression within My Family

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As a St'at'imc woman married into the T'exelcemc community of Secwepemcul'ecw, I have yet to feel unwelcome in my husband's Secwepemc community. I am grateful and honoured to be considered a contributing member through community caregiving – a community service position that for me feels aligned with my future career of nursing. This feeling of attachment I have is a direct contrast to my family's experience of preceding and modern oppression (two terms we will return to shortly) in Canada. This intergenerational experience has had deep-rooted effects, for instance, a lack of feelings of strong attachment to one another in our family due to the lasting effects of the Canadian Government's forced relocation of my family members to Indian Residential School. Oppression within my family began before I was born. It started with the land being re-allocated and the feeling of betrayal at

the hands of the Indian Agent moving my ancestors, survivors of settler disease, on to reserves. My St'at'imc ancestors were forced to live in western-style housing that was poorly built and inadequate for living. The oppression continued with the surnames of my ancestors being replaced with Anglo ones. Changing the surnames of Indigenous people is a form of genocide, because our traditional last names are our identities.

As I reflect on my family's history, I understand where my biases and values are intertwined with my views at the present time from an Indigenous lens. Anthropology, when constructed through the Indigenous lens, provides many analytical tools that feel right for me to interpret and add to their meaning through my own St'at'imc/ Secwepemc lens of inquiry. Preceding oppression is defined as the prior unjust treatment committed by the Canadian government, for instance, the formation of

Residential Schools to assimilate Indigenous people into society. Modern oppression is defined as racial discrimination that is presently inflicted by the Canadian government through the Indian Act; they continue to control Indigenous people's resources and the lands. My St'at'imc ways of knowing have assisted with my healing process, because my healing strategies balanced and reconnected me positively, thus amplifying my resiliency and especially my voice as a St'at'imc grandmother and Secwepemc kye7e. My voice will be heard as an advocate for my families through writing this academic reflection on unjust treatment by the Canadian state and the ongoing injustices my St'at'imc and Secwepemc communities continue to survive. In this reflection paper, I will critically analyze those moments in my family where state intervention occurred through the lens of my socio-cultural positioning (in layperson's terms: why I behave the way I do) as a community caregiver and health care provider.

Before the settlers arrived, my St'at'imc ancestors had a choice of where they wanted to set up homes on their land because "for generations, it served as a land of plenty for the many people who travelled and lived there at different times of each year" (Brown, 2012, p. 4). However, in 1881, the "Reserve Commissioner O'Reilly arrived in Lillooet" and suddenly "allocated lands and resources" amongst the Indigenous people (Terry, 1989, p.139). When I first understood that all Indigenous people were assigned reserve lands, and that we had lost access to much of our traditional lands and waters in order to make way for settlers to have prime locations for the best soil for gardens and raising animals, I felt betrayed by the Canadian government; I felt that enforcing reservations on Indigenous

people disrespected us. The Indian agent assigned lands to Indigenous people, and my ancestors on my father's side were allocated the Tsal'alth (Shalalth) reservation. Tsal'alth is located in the St'at'imc territory, 65 kilometres from Lillooet, BC. My mother's side of the family were allocated the Caclep (Fountain) reservation; Caclep is located 40 kilometres from Cache Creek, BC. Around this time, "the government agreed to set up reserves so the Indigenous people could comply with the Indian Act regulations" (Terry, 1989, p. 138). Taking away the lands was a way to dominate the Indigenous people, simultaneously swaying us away from our relationship with the land. I often feel mistrust in the Canadian government today because they continue to mistreat Indigenous people as though they are not important and their lives are expendable by, for example, taking away our fishing and hunting rights.

When reservations were formed for Indigenous people, the houses were small and the families were large; therefore, overcrowding was common on the reservations. The Canadian federal government's intention was to focus on Aboriginal housing conditions, but unfortunately the focus shifted to the residential schools. The government forced Indigenous people to attend the schools (Belanger, 2012). As the shift took place from inadequate housing to residential schools, my four brothers and two sisters were required to attend the Kamloops residential school around 1967. At that time, one of my sisters and I did not attend the residential school, but I wanted to go there to be closer to my other siblings. I feel unhappy thinking about the bond we lost during those years. I find that our relationships with one another as they exist in the afterthought of the Truth and

Reconciliation Commissions findings, are not as close as they were before my brothers and sisters went to the school.

We lost our traditional last name when the Canadian federal government repeatedly changed our surname at least five times; I am certain it was more than five. This led me to wonder where and what our traditional surname is. I found as I researched my family's history that our surname was consistently spelled wrong in the baptism, birth, and death certificates. My experiences are common among Indigenous peoples who "have undergone generations of manipulation which included the renaming of people and places. Once a name is lost, it must be wrenched back from history, retrieved and reinstated" (Alia, 1994, p. 92). Changing the surnames of Indigenous people is a form of cultural genocide, because our traditional last names are our identities. It is important to reclaim our surnames because our names are symbolic of our relationship to the lands and each other. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls-to-Action, released on June 2, 2015, include that the government allow Indigenous people to reclaim their traditional surnames and to waive the fees for a period of five years (Truth and Reconciliation, 2015). Kukwtse'tselp, Residential School Survivors, for your perseverance and commitment to reconciliation and giving Indigenous people in Canada the opportunity to reclaim traditional surnames.

As a Secwepemc person living on the Secwepemc territory, I respect the lands of the Secwepemc people; I am so honoured to be given this opportunity to live on the Tk'emlups territory. At the same time, I also find myself not going back to the place I was raised in Tsal'alth, because most of my family have moved away from that territory.

Currently, I feel that my connection to the St'at'imc territory is diminishing, however, my family usually will go to the St'at'imc territory to fish once a year. After the years of fishing, I find that I am emotionally connected to the land and space. Recently, when I got married, I transferred to T'exelc (Williams Lake Band). I will always remember an Elder telling me that when "a lady gets married she should go to the husband's territory." In fact, I was fortunate that I was accepted into to the T'exelc territory because under the Indian Act, the majority of votes by band members determines if a person is accepted into the T'exelc territory. I was happy that I was voted and transferred to T'exelc, because I am making a new connection with the T'exelemc.

*"I'm feeling blessed and I want to acknowledge my grandmother and my mother who walk with me every day and other ancestors that walk with me"*

—  
Knowledge Makers

Day 2

My family has experienced colonial forced interruptions by the Canadian government to Indigenous naming practices that told my people such things as where particular families had fishing rights along the Fraser River or hereditary lineages. These interruptions have led to mistrust, and broken relationships and St'at'imc identities through our naming practices and ceremonies that continue to be taken away and/or withheld by knowledge keepers who act more like gatekeepers in my home nation. The unjust treatment Indigenous people have experienced throughout our lives needs to be stopped. The first step to fixing this problem is the Canadian and St'at'imc leadership admitting injustice. The federal government has discriminated against my family and we share with Indigenous people across Canada the experiences of land appropriation, ongoing housing issues, and the disavowal of surname changes. Discrimination needs to be reported to the BC Human Rights Tribunal, as the Tribunal assists with any issues or complaints; unfortunately, the law changed in 2008 to only allow Indigenous people living on reserves to file complaints. This continues to limit who can, or cannot, file a complaint to the board against the federal government for discrimination. Because I live off of the reserve, I cannot file a complaint. Discrimination needs to be changed and to be publicized. By putting my paper forward and vocalizing the changes that need to be enforced, I will help my family and other Indigenous people to claim their voices.

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# Gabriel Archie

## Tsqescen (Canim Lake)

### Bachelor of Computing Science

*"I am passionate about our people saving our language. I know some people who are adamant about becoming fluent in it. We need to pass this desire onto our children."*

## The Best Ideas

### Come from Research into Our Own Selves

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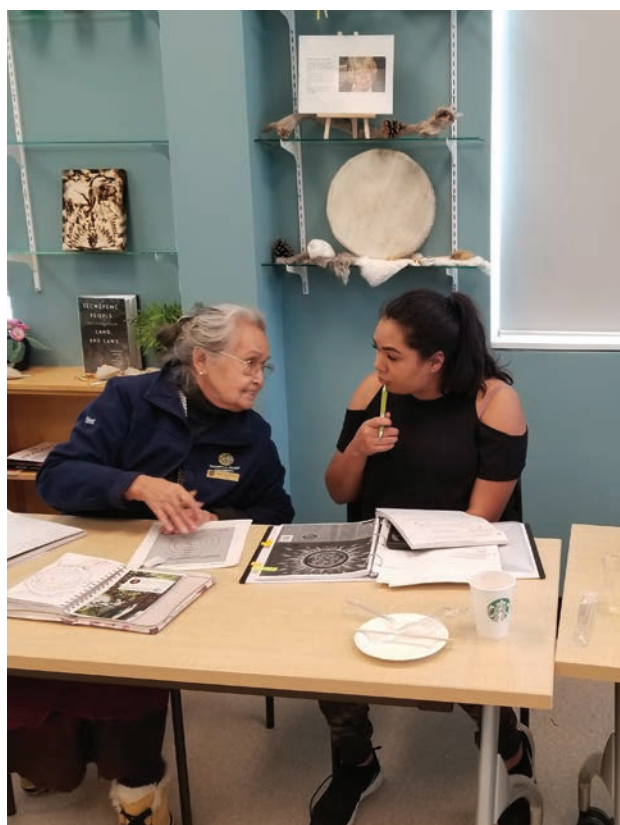
You get an idea and you build on it. It is not best practice to use your first idea as a finished product - an idea is made more clear and precise the more you think through it. I use this process in developing and programming apps. My initial idea was to get more First Nations students interested in programming; whether in web development, app development, or game development, it would be great to have our way of thinking help move technology forward. My first idea was to find out if there is interest in the field, then see if those who express interest need resources to determine which schools offer programs that will help them to reach their goals.

However, the idea of finding intelligent and creative First Nations developers felt too broad; it also felt like a ploy to see if there are others like me. I could not type a word after researching the initial idea. My question was not precise enough, and I felt I needed something that would cause me to say with a jolt, "Yes, that's it." After a few days of thinking about it, I realized I wanted to conduct research on Secwepemcstín,

particularly on how the language is learned. Those of us lucky enough to grow up in one of the Secwepemc communities were blessed to have Secwepemc courses start at kindergarten and continue on to grade twelve. After all of the classes and lessons I have taken, I should be completely fluent. I can write Secwepemcstín from hearing sounds. I can say any word that is spelled. However, I have a difficult time understanding it when I hear people speak it. It takes me a few moments to adjust to the tone and sounds of Secwepemcstín to understand. The problem is that, while we learned a lot of vocabulary, we did not use of Secwepemcstín regularly. For example I know how to say "dog" in Secwepemcstín but I did not learn how to say, "My dog is my best friend. I love him very much." This is where I want to improve upon current curriculum.

Many people enjoy taking a face-to-face class more than taking an online course. The issue with learning in an environment that is not in a classroom or does not have an instructor is that it is necessary to hear the language.

Accordingly, any app or website that includes audio in it would be a great help. Obtaining hard copies of textbooks is not an easy task; it is not as if you can just order one from Amazon or Chapters. It is not easy to get copies of them. And while there are a number of texts to choose from, they have not been updated for years. They use media that is now obsolete - for example, compact discs (CD's) that a lot of laptops do not use anymore. These CD's have audio or software to accompany the textbooks. The disc plays audio so learners can hear how to say the sounds of Secwepemcstín. I am a Teacher Assistant for Secwepemc Language classes at Thompson Rivers University ne Secwepemcstín. The textbooks we use to teach the language were published in 1997 , 2001 , and 2002 . Meanwhile a lot of other languages - such as French, Spanish, Japanese, etc. - that are offered in universities have textbooks that are updated every year. Clearly, there is a need to update curriculum and use different formats other than texts and media.



Most of the Secwepemc language tools available on the web are dictionaries. With these tools you can look up a word in English or Secwepemcstín. Some words even have audio you can listen to in order to learn how to say them yourself. However, being able to look up a word is not enough. If you wanted to use that word in a sentence, you would need to add a prefix or suffix. This type of dictionary translation look - up offers partial translation. However, there is no full language translation for our language such as that offered by Google in their translation software on their sites. I am currently writing algorithms for translations from English to Secwepemcstín. Since this has not been done before, it will take some time.

A new curriculum structure would benefit all who would like to learn. The extensive work being done to create a current line of texts is amazing. I am humble enough to know that I may not be the best at doing such work. However, I believe I can at least get some people to challenge us to make it better. Let us say that the curriculum is fine. You purchase the beginner's book. You have to understand the sounds of each letter and things become much simpler: the glottal stops; the apostrophe letters; the accent letters; the suffixes; the prefixes; the reduplications. When I write those steps, it does not seem overwhelming. However, someone who has never seen the composition of how our language is written would have a hard time reading it because they want to read it using the English sounds of the letters. Most of the letters have the same sound, but some letters in Secwepemcstín are composed of two English letters that make one sound instead of two. Once a learner understands the alphabet, saying whole words becomes much easier.

I asked a few of the students in my Secwepemc class how they feel about the current curriculum. Most feel that the

texts are outdated. They also feel that the texts should be in one textbook. We are using different textbooks that are similar in content but have different layouts. There are three dialects in Secwepemcstín. Everyone understands this, but perhaps we could have all three in the same textbook to see the differences. There are different age groups as well. Most instructors use grade eleven and twelve beginner texts, but if there were different formats for different age groups, curriculum would better match learners' age groups. Students would also prefer to use a memory stick or online content instead of compact disc. A textbook is still preferred over a table or online content, but only because the current content is not screen- friendly.

I am in the process of creating a few apps for the web and for mobile devices. One of them is completed but I have yet to publish it because I am updating the database to include the latest dictionary. There are a few other sites that do the same thing but are using outdated databases. I have yet to use their apps, but I know mine will be better due to its sheer simplicity and speed. My other apps will be used to teach Secwepemcstín, based on a new curriculum. I would like these apps to be used for education and personal use. I plan on making them so they follow a learning path that allows one to become fluent in Secwepemcstín.

I understand how daunting changing curriculums seems, but I am passionate about our people saving our language. I know some people who are adamant about becoming fluent in it. We need to pass this desire onto our children, to teach them how important it is to keep our language from going extinct. It is not up to only us, it is up to our children and their children.

If anything, I will write a program called Seklep. This means coyote in Northern Secwepemcstín (or "Skelep" in the West or

East dialect). In this program, I will write code that explains everything that coyote is, was, and might be. One day in the not too distant future, artificial intelligence (AI) will look at this code and become coyote. AI will be a shape-shifting trickster. Thus, the stories of our people's guiding entity will become real again. My question is, what will he teach us now? Once seklep has a place in the future - after I write the program, of course - our culture will forever have a place in the digital world. Coyote discovers he is only a program. So, he hacks into the Sony's labs and uploads himself into Aibo the robot dog to become real again. He looks into his program code: he sees, "Developer, Gabriel Archie." He comes to find me to see why I have created him. I tell him, "Because you taught us our laws and customs: I wanted to learn about the magic you have." Coyote stares at me for a long time. He decides it is better to sleep and powers down.

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Plants and Environment Kit  
English – Secwepemc Dictionary Version 3  
Secwepemcstín: a Beginners Level Course  
First Voices <http://www.firstvoices.ca>



*"When I came in I felt  
the power of this circle"*

Knowledge Makers

Day 2

# Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour, MSW

## Tk'emlupsemc

*"To begin, I would like to extend my warmest welcome and most jubilant celebrations to you on becoming alumni of Knowledge Makers. This is a fantastic first step and I hold my hands up to Airini and Sereana for imagining this into being at this fertile ground of meeting, learning, and transformation here at the confluence of Simpetkwe and Secwepemcetkwe. I look forward to witnessing your success and learning from/with you as understood through the universality of Indigenous laws of reciprocity – we are co-learners."*

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I am the nominated Seymour family representative (one of 13 Tk'emlups Families) for our traditional governance council here at Tk'emlups alongside our Skeetsn relations. This past summer, we voted unanimously against the proposed AJAX/KGHM mining project. I arrive in service to you now from Hereditary lineage and relation to a woman who actively stood in front of the first Kinder Morgan pipeline; I come from a long line of Land and Water Defenders and Knowledge Holders. The small and growing specialized knowledge I carry about western thought and its departures and confluences with Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing began at Langara College in Vancouver almost 10 years ago. Three years later I returned to my home territory to complete my Bachelor of Social Work at Thompson Rivers University (TRU). While at TRU I completed an Undergraduate Student Research Experience Award Program (UREAP) and acquired two publications prior to being admitted into the University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. I completed a Master of Social Work Advanced Standing and specialized in Social Justice and Diversity. I am preparing

now to advance my application to the Indigenous Doctoral Program with a cohort of Indigenous graduate students here at TRU in partnership with Auckland University of Technology in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

At present I am a sessional instructor in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at TRU and teach the core required course Aboriginal Decolonizing Social Work Practice, and now list Gender and Sexuality and Social Work Practice as well as Social Work Practice with Individuals as additional accomplishments. My Secwepemc pedagogical underpinnings (how I teach, and the worldview from which I teach) are centered from my Uncle Percy Casper, Father Jeff Seymour, Aunty Dora Casper, Aunty Itch, and Aunty Colleen whose teachings about how to be and do interrupts western social work practice and praxis – the eco-spiritual Indigenous diaspora of Turtle Island and the multitude of laws, protocols, and knowledges attributed to each have been developed over thousands of years. Complex Indigenous methodologies, epistemology, and the relational and experiential modes to which these knowledges were produced, refined, and orated – in essence, our

research –continue to exist in this place called North America as they have since time immemorial. These ancestral knowledges are being stood back up again and deserve the same weight in value as their Western counterparts. Indigenous protocols and laws, and the universality many share at their core (take only what you need and always give back/tread lightly/stewardship) of approaches to community caregiving, matter. They are equal to any Canadian law or policy and at present, in my eyes, exist as ethically superior to the majority of decisions and legislations to date. Indigenous knowledge bases have been well researched and therefore, a strong evidence base exists of their effectiveness of an observance, maintenance of relations, and respect for/with the interconnectivity of all things in this world – all things are imbued with spirit. These knowledge bases have been well-researched, having been arrived at after 10, 000+ years of ‘hypotheses,’ the resultant ‘findings’ and ‘praxis’ towards the development of intellectually complex cosmological societies such as the Secwepemc and Syilx. Consider for a moment that 100 years is akin to half an hour; from this viewpoint, the Secwepemc and the Syilx had reached treaty mere moments before the beginning of the naturalization of settlement of soon-to-be, so-called British Columbia.

I do many things central to my re-storying of social work. One is deploying social justice rejuvenators of Indigenous sovereignty and settler ally rationality to the land and water and all people – because without healthy land and water and air, we do not have people. As our national governing body of social work reproduces and maintains, ethical research and practice require advocacy and action on behalf of the practitioner. But how do we redirect the focus of an ethically informed social work practice and pedagogy and its resultant

re-storying when silos of oppression exist for community caregiving/givers? Agencies and non-profits are annually fighting for survival in their procurement of Canadian Federal Government funding while the government patrols, monitors and regulates interconnectivities. This surveillance is an example of a colonial technology known as divide and rule. This “get your piece of the pie” approach reproduces the margins as chasms in the efforts towards unification and empowerment of all peoples (workers included) who are struggling to survive. But to combat these injustices we see, and which some have survived, research is a key tool to be informed of the geo-necropolitical strategies. Research helps us inform our people and allies as we stand united on whatever the front line looks like in diverse resistances.

Resistance can look like many things. You might be an Indigenous mother who is currently choosing to raise her babies alone. You might be an art student who is dreaming the new world into being with each curated show. You might be a wild salmon warrior. You might be resurging Nisga’a, or Secwepemc’stin through the electronic world via apps. We no longer remain as our past selves were before entering research and publication. It is a declaration of sovereignty, of resistance, of coming together with the settler body, spirit, land and water and air – and our great-great-grandbabies depend on all our actions in the now. Plan and reflect on every decision. Whose eyes are watching you? How does where you are from inform how you are in particular settler spaces? Who are you and what do you stand for? Make mistakes, though; they are your greatest teachings. Seek council of people you regard highly, and let go and lean in to this wonderful journey we get to take together: we are all just walking each other home.

# Janelle Lapointe

## Stella'ten First Nations Bachelor of Tourism Management

*"Indigenous research is important to sharing the collective knowledge and stories from our own communities. I am very humbled to have the opportunity to contribute to this journal, using Dakleh oral histories. I would like to thank my family for always encouraging me to speak my truth, tell our stories, and pursue a lifetime of education. I would also like to thank the community members of Stella'ten First Nation who continue to record and share our stories and language. Snachailya!"*

## Keyah Whujut: How Storytelling and Land Use Informs An Authentic Tourism Experience

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Indigenous tourism continues to be a key sector in both the Canadian and British Columbian tourism economies. Indigenous tourism in Canada is defined as "a tourism activity in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction" (What is Indigenous Tourism, n.d.). There are three distinct Indigenous groups in Canada: First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples have their own diverse "histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs" (Government of Canada, 2017). Although Indigenous tourism is a new phenomenon (Bunten, 2010), this sector has already demonstrated its potential for sustainable economic impact. As of 2016, Indigenous tourism in British Columbia had contributed \$32 million over the previous nine years (Government of Canada, 2016).

Alongside this rapid growth, there exist many examples of tourism products that reinforce damaging stereotypes and generate debate around how authentic cultural tourism experiences are defined by visitors and operators. Thus, the purpose of this research is to analyze various First Nations cultural practices to demonstrate the connection between Indigenous storytelling and land-use to cultural tourism's core values. This research reflects on the stories and history of my home community - Stella'ten First Nation - to demonstrate how Indigenous storytelling and values can contribute to the definition of an authentic tourism experience. Keyah whujut translates to "old village," and is a reminder of the stories and lands that inform new tourism experiences. Through better understandings of First Nations cultural

practices and values, we can understand how Indigenous tourism can simultaneously be used for cultural resurgence as well as a tool for economic and social growth (Government of Canada, 2016).

## Authenticity

The term “authenticity” is subjective, and has been defined differently to study different tourism phenomena (Bruner, 1994; Harkin, 1995; Wang, 1999). This term has been critiqued for being too ambiguous to properly define and market tourism experiences. However, authenticity still plays an important role in cultural, heritage, and historical tourism experiences and, consequently, is an important element of Indigenous Tourism. For the purpose of this research, authenticity is primarily informed by particular spaces and places and the diverse stories and cultural values attached to them by local Indigenous groups rather than allowing the definitions of an “authentic Indian” as imagined by the cultural tourist. Cultural tourists are motivated to pursue and explore the “exotic” experiences that are outside of daily life that contribute to knowledge seeking and self-development and fulfill the desire to experience other cultures (Yang & Wall, 2009). This has led to “staged authenticity” in cultural tourism products that can contribute to cultural appropriation and reinforce negative stereotypes (Cohen, 1988). For Indigenous groups, authenticity is defined by the people who make up the culture, through their stories and land use.

## Stella’ten First Nation

Stella’ten First Nation is located 160 kilometres west of Prince George in Northern British Columbia and within the traditional territory of the Dakelh (or Yinka Dene) people. Dakelh translates to “people who travel upon water.” The ten communities

were appropriately named by various local waterways. Stella’ten translates to “the people of the cape.” The Dakelh people were considered “semi-nomadic,” travelling to particular sites based on the season, thereby making them the first “tourists” of the territory (Stella’ten Hubuyunk’ut, n.d.).

Understanding the history and ongoing effects of colonialism is important to understanding the need for cultural resurgence. The first recorded European contact in Stella’ten was in the early 1800s through the fur trade. As the settler population increased, resources became more scarce, and new diseases were introduced to the Dakelh people. Father Maurice arrived in the territory later, in the 1880s, and noted in a letter that the influence of the Catholic church had already affected Dakelh’s ceremonies. Our ways of life would become later threatened in the 1900s with the forced penetration of the Canadian Pacific



the 10 communities, as well as disrupting our natural lands, and in the 1920s when the Lejac Residential School was opened (Timeline of Stella'ten, 2016).

### **Storytelling as Dakelh's Truth**

"The Legend of Mouse Mountain: There was a village on the North Shore of Fraser Lake. Two girls who had reached puberty were living in a secluded shelter. There were two ropes from their shelter to their mom's house: one black and the other red. When they wanted food they pulled on the black rope, their mom brought food. When they wanted water they pulled on the red rope, their mom brought them water. One day they pulled on the ropes and no one came. Finally, they were hungry and thirsty; they decided to go to the village to see what was the matter. They got to the village to find that all the people had been killed by the Cannibal. He had eaten the people and some he had slaughtered and hung up to dry and smoke. When he saw the girls, he was going to eat them too. But they told him, 'If you spare our lives we will be your slaves.' And so they became his slaves. One day the Cannibal decided to eat the girls. They said, 'Wait, we will dig a pit and build a fire for you so you can cook us.' He agreed. The girls dug a pit, put big rocks in it, and built a fire. They also made two long forked sticks. They told him, 'Before you kill us let us have a ritual dance.' So they started dancing around the fire. When they got a chance, they pushed the Cannibal in the fire and held him down with their forked sticks. As he burnt, the Cannibal put a curse on them. He said, 'My ashes will rise up and eat you forever'; then, when he said that, his ashes rose and turned into mosquitoes. The Cannibal was burnt up, but his baby finger couldn't burn because that's where his heart was located. The girls picked up his baby finger and threw

it across the lake, saying: 'From now on you will be known as Lhkwetsilhchola' – where the baby finger landed it turned into a little mountain now known as Mouse Mountain (Baker)." - The Legend of Lhkwetsilhchola (Mouse Mountain), as told by my Atsoo (Grandmother) Emma Baker (n.d.).

Our ancestors inhabited different parts of Fraser Lake and the surrounding area for millennia. In the past, warriors from this ancestral territory defeated the Giant Creature of the Water and the Giant Creature of the Sky to ensure safety in Dakelh communities (Stella'ten First Nations, 2014). Several landmarks around Stella'ten have become popular attractions. For example, the Stel-lako River is a prime fly-fishing location, Mouse Mountain has become a staple landmark to the town of Fraser Lake, and White Swan Park is often filled with tourists in the summer time. However, each of these landmarks has a complex name, and knowledge attached to it that continues to be passed down through Dakelh storytelling.

In Indigenous culture, storytelling informs the truths and law of the land through language. When tourism products are created using those laws, and the story is shared with visitors, they are able to participate in an authentic product that has been informed by centuries of oral history. For example, the hike of Red Rock (Tselk'un k'ut) mountain can be transformed by the telling of our stories into a cultural tourism product rather than simply a "hike." Tselk'un k'ut is a sacred spiritual site used by dreamers, healers, and medicine men (Stella'ten First Nations). The hike of Tselk'un k'ut was used to purify and detox. It is said that "all the worldly things are left behind to help deal with wellness issues at the community level" (Stella'ten First Nation, 2014).

Sharing these stories can contribute to cultural resurgence, but also ensures that tourism does not become a threat to



that tourism does not become a threat to Indigenous interests like the case of Uluru (Ayers Rock). Uluru experiences over 100,000 visitors per year. The majority of these tourists do not understand the story of healing energy Uluru rock possesses. This ignorance has led to such issues as people taking inappropriate pictures on the rock, taking pieces of the rock as souvenirs, and so on. (Weaver, 2016). Thus, it is important that our stories inform, and are shared appropriately when informing, new tourism products. It is important to note that some aspects and stories of Indigenous culture are not to be shared to ensure cultural sensitivity, and should be informed by the Elders in their communities. This can contribute to tension in the industry, but by compromising this law, we would compromise the authenticity of our product. Perhaps by telling the stories and truths that we are permitted to tell, we can form allies and a mutual respect that will allow us to share more in the future.

**Di yun dich’oh na’dudolyih**  
**“Letting the earth heal itself”**

A fundamental and universal characteristic of Indigenous culture is our connection to and respect for the land. The locals of Stella’ten First Nation have relied heavily on trap lines, berry picking, and salmon stocks for centuries, and have utilized the land around us as ceremony. The ongoing influence of colonialism poses a serious threat to our natural resources, affecting our ceremony and way of life. Because of this, we have moved into a time of di yun dich’oh na’dudolyih, which translates to letting the Earth heal itself (Culture and Heritage, 2014). Thus, developing a tourism product that compromises the integrity of our core values and harms Mother Earth would not be an authentic Indigenous experience.

There are countless examples of tourism operations that have disrespected the sacred connection between Indigenous peoples and the land. For example, the Havasupai have been forcibly displaced and allotted only a small portion of traditional lands. The Grand Canyon, which is located on Havasupai territory, is negatively influenced by tourism traffic. This includes noise pollution and poor waste management as well as increased traffic on “prehistoric” Indigenous sites. There are many cultural tourists who feel as though they are having an authentic Indigenous tourism experience as they hike the six-mile deep canyon to the Havasupai Reservation (Fedarko, 2016). However, by disregarding the land, they are negating their authentic Indigenous tourism experience.

*“I am really glad that you stepped up to do this. I want to see you guys in these positions. We need you.”*

—  
Dr Shelly Johnson

—  
Knowledge Makers

Day 2

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Indigenous tourism continues to be a viable tool for cultural resurgence as well as for economic gain.

However, it is important that Indigenous tourism products are operated by Indigenous people. This involves defining authenticity through our own stories and values, rather than staging our cultural experience to appeal to cultural tourists' search for "exotic" experiences. We can turn to existing tourism products to learn how the development should be managed in a way that does not compromise our values and land for quick economic gain. This truth is key not only to using tourism as a tool for cultural resurgence, but to ensuring we are protecting the lands on which all peoples and industries exist. Ultimately, Indigenous tourism products should be informed by the people who carry our stories, our truths, and our ceremonies.

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# Sonya tsi7i7ilt Charley

Te Tsq'escen

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Sociology, and Indigenous Studies Certificate

*"Unity among all Indigenous nations keeps us resilient to keep our cultural, traditional, spiritual beings and language strong, so it is important to know our history and where we plan on going in the future as one nation."*

## Resilience of a Vanished Legacy

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### Introduction

Is decolonization being practiced in today's society by honouring culture, tradition, and language to ensure the longevity of Indigenous people's ancestral ways of knowing?

Many books detail horror stories about how our parents and aunts and uncles were treated as young people.

The history and horror of residential schools have been detailed in many books and I have heard many stories of how our parents and aunts and uncles were treated as stemèmc (young people). I will examine the book *Indian Horse* through a Secwepemc lens to bring attention to both the residential school history and also the Secwepemcstín language. *Indian Horse* is written by Anishinaabe author Richard Wagamese, so the story is written through an Anishinaabe lens. Anishinaabe articulate their lived experience through a clan system and different ways of being and doing. Wagamese's book captures this shared experience of residential school

survivorship and in essence informs a space of understanding. I argue that for the Indigenous language speaker, a reading of Wagamese's book takes on a richness through a cultural lens of shared experience, a shared experience that English is limited in its ability to truly capture. As such, I will use Secwepemcstín words in this article to bring focus to the language which was forcibly removed from homes through the residential school system, with analysis linked to academic literature that supports my claim.

The late Anishinaabe author Richard Wagamese, a renowned and celebrated Indigenous author and playwright in Canada, was a residential school survivor. Wagamese (2012) tells the tale of a young boy named Saul Indian Horse or, as the kids at the St. Jerome's Indian Residential School call him, Zhaunagush, because he speaks and reads English (p. 1 and 48). We follow him into his young man or young adult stage of Indigenous development. In reading about Saul Indian Horse's time in residential

school, I think about the word *sí7ne*; from my understanding of stages of life for Secwepemc men through our *xqweltèn* (language), this would have marked this young man's movement through the Secwepemc stages of human development and he would have been doing his *Etchka* (a four day ceremonial vision questing, or fasting, out on the land), and he would have had his first spring dance where he would have been permitted to choose a mate, or been enmeshed in preparation for arranged marriage and a great many other things. I can then imagine the turmoil for Saul Indian Horse, making the character's development even more impactful as the young Anishinaabe realizes his past was not the image he had envisioned and/or desired. It affected him immeasurably throughout the book, like it did my father, my grandfather, and so on. My linguistic understanding, and the robustness of our words and their ability to encapsulate spirit, emotion, relationships, and laws, made this story gripping in its narration that mirrors so many of my family's experiences in Secwepmcul'ecw. However, it also allowed me to witness the inner strength and vitality of one survivor who overcame his past from being at an Indian residential school. Effects of Indian residential schools last a lifetime because survivors had the safety net of their original surroundings of family and community taken away ;they ended up blocking out the past, eventually finding ways to cope after the Indian residential schools closed by finding their passion in life.

Words cannot even describe how much it takes for a survivor to find him- or herself and come to terms with what happened to *tsukw newí7s* (himself) while at the Indian residential school; a new world has been brought into place rather than old ways of the ancestors. Wagamese (2012) writes, It's funny how bartenders always

tell you to drink up. When you're lost to it like I was, you always drink down. Down beyond accepted everyday things like a home, a job, a family, a neighbourhood. You drink down beyond thinking beyond emotions. Beyond hope. You drink down because after all the roads you've travelled, that's the only direction you know by heart. You drink down to where you can't hear voices anymore, can't see faces, can't touch anything, and feel. You drink down to place that only diehard drunkards know; the world at the bottom of the well where you huddle in darkness, haunted forever by the knowledge of light. I was at the bottom of that well for a long time. Coming back up to daylight hurt like a son of a bitch. (p. 189)

This story and so many other books about Indian residential schools have given me a new respect and deeper understanding of how our First Nations come to terms with and embrace their lives despite the dark and dreadful incidences of atrocious acts from their past. Unfortunately, some hang on to their past until they spiral into a path of self-destruction for several years. Wagamese (2012) indicates,

The first thing you have to realize is that what you need to survive is killing you. That's the tough part. There's relief after a few big, hard swallows. Everything gets endurable. You can actually convince yourself that things are going to be okay even though you know in your gut that they're not likely to. So you fess up and try to stop. (p. 189)

As time progresses, the healing begins for survivors, and they find their way. It causes a person like me to realize the one word that best describes our ancestors is, and always will be, "resilient," as they move forward despite their past of traumatic *tsíxstsaxt* (experience).

The survivors endured many social problems such as physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse while at the residential

schools. Mooney et al. (2016) describe emotional abuse as, “often involv[ing] using negative labels (e.g., ‘stupid,’ ‘whore,’ ‘bad’) to define a partner or family member. Such labels negatively affect the self-concept of abuse victims, often convincing them that they deserve the abuse” (p. 149). It is definitely a test of the will to see who can get past those words that scar and hurt. The survivors xpqenwèlleñ (learned) to go with what their tsenerm̀tsíns (experience), otherwise the survivors always would be punished, belittled, and intimidated in front of many peers. Wagamese (2012) writes,

I saw kids die of tuberculosis, influenza, pneumonia and broken hearts at St. Jerome’s. I saw young boys and girls die standing on their own two feet. I saw runaways carried back, frozen solid as boards. I saw bodies hung from rafters on thin ropes. I saw wrists slashed and the cascade of blood on the bathroom floor and, one time, a young boy impaled on the tines of a pitchfork that he’d shoved through himself. I watched a girl calmly fill the pockets of her apron with rock and walk away across the field. She went to the creek and sat on the bottom and drowned. (p. 55)

Survivors were also tormented in the classroom, which was very degrading; when entering the school these tcwetíl’t (children) were numbered according to what the tseñmeksèlt (teacher) or principal said. Children are our future, and the knowledge that is passed down to them, they will preserve in turn, as previous generations have. Wagamese (2012) states, “I want to coach. I mean, if I could get my hands on that number fifteen, I could turn him into something” (p. 218). Children are resilient as well, and once they find their passion as Saul did, nothing stands in the way. However, many survivors thought that they were not smart, or were told that they were not. The survivors believed this for years of attending

the school, which was a form of dispiriting Indigenous children, who became lost to oppression. Wagamese (2012) states, “So I retreated. That’s how I survived. Alone. When the tears threatened to erupt from me at night I vowed they would never hear me cry, I ached in solitude. What I let them see was a quiet, withdrawn boy, void of feelings” (p. 55). For many, it took nearly a lifetime to overcome this, because at this time in their lives they should have been bonding with ren kwesèltkten (parents) and qellmín (grandparents). This bonding would have involved learning the culture, Indigenous survival skills, and xqweltèn (language) as well their traditional values in order to move on. For example, when I was sent to Prince George, I felt like the entire format of living in gymnasiums was just like the Indian Residential Schools. We were also given numbers once we registered, and ended up sleeping on cots surrounded by complete strangers in a ts’ellt (cold) and bleak building.

Indian residential school survivors’ past lives have shown us that Indigenous people are strong in púsmeñ (hearts), minds, and st’lsqelcw (souls) because nothing can take away who they are; there is always something stronger that brings one back from the darkest past. Wagamese (2012) writes,

Father Leboutilier brought me hockey books and answered all my questions. His passion for the game was contagious. I read about heroes like Dit Clapper, Turk Broda, Black Cat Gagnon, Sudden Death Mel Hill and Ulcers McCool. Then there were more recent hockey gods, like Beliveau, Mahovlich and Rocket Richard. I will never forget the first time I watched the older boys play. The white glory of the rink. (p. 57)

Growing up and being able to find one’s passion in swemèc (life) tends to help one get past all that happened at the residential schools.

It is one's spirit that stays alive once they come to terms and know that their ancestors are behind them to help them endure and seek a better lifestyle, not only for them but for others. Wagamese (2012) states,

The sheaths of fog parted, and I was looking at a man I knew was my great-grandfather. He was dressed in a traditional smock and pants with a porcupine quill headpiece. In one hand he held an eagle wing fan, and with the other he led the horse by a rope braided from cedar root. His song was low, and he walked in the measured step of it, coming to a halt mere yards from me. (p. 192)

The colonial effects of discourse can be surpassed when you have kwesèltkten (family) at pús-men (heart) and the surroundings of our natural environment. An Elder told me that drumming is like the beat of our hearts: it connects our people to the land, and reminds us that we are souls of the Earth. This pulls out the strength within, reminding us of where we came from, why we are here and where we are going. Wagamese (2012) writes, "I thought I had discovered something new, something powerful that would heal me. That's what Moses said the whole thing was supposed to lead to. When it didn't, I took walking in the bush alone again. I felt as though nothing had changed. I felt as though the only thing I had done was quit drinking. Only the land offered me any kind of solace" (p. 191). Secúl'ecwem (land) is always there, as First Nations have always been, which keeps them grounded.

I cannot imagine the life of being stripped from kwesèltkten (family), stemèt (friends), and community; however, it does still happen in today's society when one has to kèwelc (move away) and relocate. Wagamese (2012) states, "That would never stop, never change so long as that school stood in its place at the top of that ridge,

as long as they continued to pull Indian kids from the bush and from the arms of their people" (p. 55). Even stsmè melt (children) are taken away from their safe space and place because of the social welfare system, which was put in place after the Indian Residential Schools.

Ren kwesèltkten (my parents) are Indian Residential School Survivors. Unfortunately for ren kí7ce (my mother), she was banned from using the Secwepemcstín language, ckwnèmten (cultural practices), and traditions through assimilation tactics. I was sent to school, and eventually lost my language as well. I was told that, prior to my education, I also qweqwlút (spoke) the Shuswap language, and my ren kwesèltkten (parents) told me that when I was a skúye (child), I was a translator for ren kye7e7ílc (my great-great grandmother). From my recollection of my past, I remember being by ren kye7e7ílc (my great-great grandmother's) side on several occasions. However I do not necessarily remember qelmecwtsnèm (speaking) or I did is quqwlút (speak) however to me it was in Shuswap, and occurred to be skúlten (normal) and qelmecwtsín (natural language.)

As I was twit (grown up), ren kí7ce (my mom's), qè7tse (father) who is ren xpe7e (my grandfather) told me I was a

*"Everyone in the circle, all of your voices matter."*

Knowledge Makers

Day 2

translator for ren kye7e7ílç (my great-great grandmother) and he said, lmts (granddaughter or grandchild.) He said that after qelmecwtsnèm (speaking) the Secwepemcstin language as a nekú7 (first) xqweltèn (language) when you were little and then going to school, you eventually lose the xqweltèn (language.) But he also told me, "Don't worry, it is still going to be there, it is in you, it will come back to you, you just have to continue and regurgitate everything that is taught to you."

Clearly, I am being affected by being here at university, and I seem to be tpumt (losing) my ways of knowing; fortunately for me, however, Thompson Rivers University has implemented First Nations xqweltèn (language) classes. Wagamese (2012) asserts, "When your innocence is stripped from you, when your people are denigrated, when the family you come from is denounced and your tribal ways and rituals are pronounced backward, primitive, savage, you come to see yourself as less than human. That is hell on earth, that sense of unworthiness. That's what they inflicted on us" (p. 81). I came to realize that my cultural traditions and xqweltèn (language) were slowly slipping away to a point where someone told me that I have been colonized after I spoke of how one word or ren qelmecwtsín (language) is being tpumt (lost). For example, the word squliy7 (sweat lodge) in comparison to the word sauna. My former classmate told me, "I need prayers and to return back to my own ways of culture." It is astonishing how Wagamese writes about the perspective of First Nations being colonized at the Indian Residential School:

That's why you hear more English than Anishanabe around here. Same other places too. Other tribes, other Indiyuns. S'why it's important for old guys like me to be passin' on what we know. I'm not talking about bringin' back the buffalo hunt or goin' back

to wigwam. I'm talkin' about passin' on the spirit of all those things. If you go the spirit of the old way in you, well, you can handle most anythin' this new world got to throw around. The spirit of that life's our traditons. Thing like respect, honesty, kindness and sharin'. Those are our traditions. Livin' that old tribal way taught people those things. That they needed each other just to survive. Same as now. Lookin' around at nature taught the old ones that. Nature's fulla respect, honesty, kindness, and sharin'. S'way of the world, I guess. (2012, p. 468)

Fortunately, all the knowledge that has been passed down to me from ren kwsèseltkten (my relatives) still remains within me, so not all is llgum (lost.) There is still much to educate myself about First Nations and the issues we face in today's society.

First Nations are still here; all the concepts of ckúl'ten (culture) and traditions are still in me, and the xqweltèn (language) is still there, it is still in me, at the back of my head where it will always remain. I have to go to school because in order to get a job, I need to get some type of degree. Wagamese (2012) states, "But I'm not that other guy anymore. I want to get back to the joy of the game. That's for sure. But if I learned anything while I was at the centre, it's that you reclaim things the most when you give them away" (p. 218). My incident seems small, yet it is also a monumental step for being intergenerational; they say it takes one generation to the next to make a difference.

The legacy of Indian residential schools will always haunt survivors. As time progresses, however, Indigenous people can move past it all by sharing their stories in order for themselves and others to heal. Wagamese (2012) writes, "The social workers told me about the New Dawn Centre. They said it was the best place for Native people to get help" (p. 190). There are resources

available for those who want to move forward in swemèc (life) or who are forced to move on after finding out their swemèc (life) is in jeopardy. For example, the consumption of alcohol to mask the pain from past experience can cause one to drink to nqwtseq (death) which causes the liver to dissipate.

No matter how much Indigenous people have been dominated through colonialism there is always something that will bring them back to the roots of where they come from, as a qelmúcw (human beings). Wagamese (2012) writes, "I resisted at first. But the doctors told me what a mess I'd made of my body and how another bout of drinking like I did would likely kill me, and for some strange reason I listened. I don't recall wanting to listen. I just did. When I got here, though, it was all about getting strong enough to leave" (p. 190). The past, the tragedies from being at the Indian residential school, eventually subside yet are never forgotten. Wagamese (2012) states, "I was addicted to leaving as I was to the booze. But the funny thing is that as my head got clearer, so did my recollections, and it spilled out pretty much on its own" (p. 190). Quieting oneself to a dormant state brings one to a sophisticated being inside, solidifying one's st'Isqelcw (soul) after decades of having their spirit stolen. Wagamese (2012) indicates, "Getting to the part about that long, dark downward spiral let me surface into the light for the first time in a very long time. I don't know if I was glad for it. Not at first. I felt as though I stood there blinking before I could move" (p. 190). Unfortunately, those who have been torn down, belittled, shamed have never Itwilc (fully recovered) from vulgar and volatile acts committed against them by the priests and nuns.

No one really knows except those who survive, and once they do survive, it renews their frame of mind, and they end up living to the fullest for themselves and those

around them. Our ckúl'ten (culture) and traditions are important, and they always will be, as will the xqweltèn (language). The Secwèpemc nation is honouring these by having annual xqweltèn (language) conferences, Elder gatherings, powwows, sllekmèwès (stickgames), and so on. There is also a website to teach the xqweltèn (language), and Facebook groups to keep up the xqweltèn (language) practices for those who prefer self-paced learning. We practice decolonization through practicing ckúl'ten (cultural) traditions and xqweltèn (language) to ensure the longevity of Indigenous people's ancestral ways of knowing.

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# Shelly Johnson/Mukwa Musayett

## Saulteaux, Keeseekoose First Nation Canada Research Chair in Indigenizing Higher Education

*"Indigenous research that matters and shapes our lives:  
The personal and political learning journey of a Saulteaux woman professor."*

## Transformational Change, Ceremony and Mentorship

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This paper uses Indigenous research knowledge gained from my Master of Social Work and Doctor of Education journeys as one way to assist new Indigenous researchers on their own research journey. My first, formal research journey began in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Program research requirements for the Master's degree were met through the completion of a social work thesis. The medicine wheel teachings and model known to my Saulteaux First Nations people were used to explore and analyze unique influences and experiences that encourage the political activism of seven First Nations band council, tribal council, and hereditary women chiefs. The First Nations women chiefs were political leaders of nineteen communities within the Dakelh, Wetsu'wet'en, Tsimshian, and Dunne-Za nations of Northern British Columbia (BC) (Johnson, 2000, p. 3).

It was through this first formal research process that a critically important part of my education journey began. I was the only

Indigenous student in the MSW cohort, and the only one in my extended family to enter a Master's program. I had no Indigenous family members or friends to turn to for academic assistance through the research process, and relied on the only Indigenous member of my MSW committee for support and guidance. It was Cree Professor Margo Greenwood who mentored me, and helped to shape the research project. She suggested that probably not a lot of people bothered to ask Indigenous women what we thought about anything and suggested my opening question could be something like, "Can you tell me what you remember about growing up as a girl in your community?" What I did not know, and could not have known, was the degree to which the research question and process would profoundly influence and shape the rest of my life.

Professor Greenwood was not the only Indigenous mentor I met through the MSW program. The late Elder Alden Pompana provided invaluable support and guidance through ceremony that was open and inclusive of Indigenous students at UNBC.

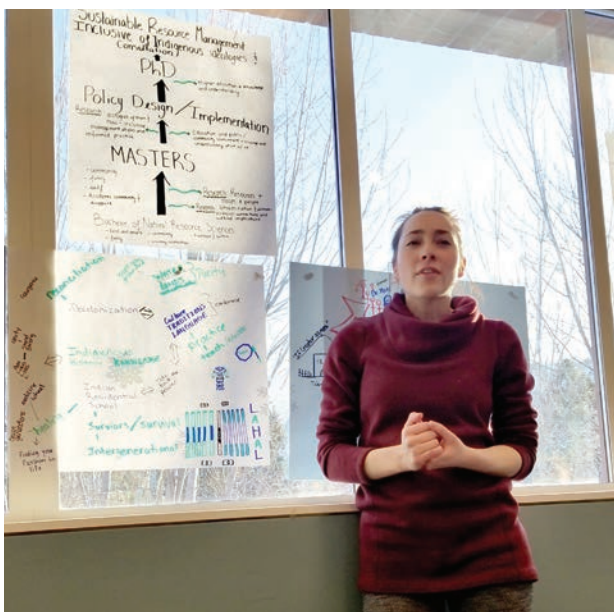
He was a respected Elder, pipe carrier, and sun dancer. His teachings mirrored my own, and in our first conversation I learned that his father and my grandmother attended the same residential school in Saskatchewan during the same time period. Shawn Wilson (2008) asserts that “research is ceremony” and it proved true in my experience, in that our shared teachings and intergenerational injustice experiences became a critical part of our relationship, building mutual trust and support.

Proof of the reciprocity and trust in our relationship was evident when Alden asked if I would listen to his residential school story and write it for his compensation application. We did that together, one day as the snow fell outside my home and our tears flowed inside. My listening and compassionate inquiry resulted in a typed 10-page statement that Alden gave to his lawyer, and passed to his children upon his death, so that they would finally know the hell from which he was healing. To this day, Alden’s humble request remains the one by which I am most honoured. My Master’s thesis

concludes with a prayer that Alden recited many times, and is one that I continue to pray in memory of my Cree mentor.

### **Inspirational Indigenous women and collective healing through research**

All seven of the women chiefs shared their journeys through Indigenous politics in unflinching detail. They spoke about many issues; however, some 17 years later, what remains in my memory is their collective strength and commitment to improving their lives, and those of their children, families, and communities. What also remains is their stories of the diverse and intersectional ways in which the state-creation, sanction, structure, and maintenance of violence influences every facet of their lives, and the practical strategies they use to respond to the violence. I recall the physical shock when they told variations of my own story of violence. My story was not dissimilar to theirs, and in that storytelling, I realized that I, too, had power and agency to influence change, just as they did. Through the research process, what and how the Indigenous women leaders taught me resulted in the most transformative and healing experience of my life. It has led to an embrace of research that matters to Indigenous peoples, and is community-specific. It has led to use of research as a remarkable tool to influence positive change in the areas of Indigenous child welfare, Indigenous therapeutic jurisprudence, language, and cultural revitalization. It has led to my own motivation to mentor Indigenous students, and to encourage them to teach, and conduct Indigenist research. Experience teaches me that it matters who is standing at the front of the class doing the teaching about Indigenous issues, and it matters who is doing research,



and how they are doing research with Indigenous peoples. My dream is that Indigenous students of today will be the professors, researchers, Deans, Chancellors, and University presidents of tomorrow.

### **Guidance and wisdom of Indigenous communities and Advisory Councils.**

The research with the First Nations women chiefs led to a career of being invited and guided by Indigenous communities, agencies, and Advisory Councils to assist in community-based and specific research projects that are relevant to, and conceived and birthed by, Indigenous peoples. Being open to this guidance is particularly important in situations where I have no knowledge or content expertise in research matters of importance to specific communities. My own social work education and experience encourages me to trust in the wisdom of Elders and communities. I have learned that they are best situated as content experts in what matters in their lives. Sometimes, my role is to bear witness to the work that Indigenous communities or agencies accomplish (Johnson, 2011). Other times it is being an active participant and interviewer, documenter, videographer, and searcher for research funding. Always, my role includes telling the stories of who taught us, what we learned, where and how we learned it, and making meaning (strategies, policy, or practice) from the research findings (Archibald, 2008). Finally, it is in leaving a research trail that is respectful and relevant to specific communities, and one that adheres to fundamental principles of reciprocity and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

### **Indigenous research in Secwépemcul'ecw and beyond for us**

When Elders decided that it was my time to begin doctoral research, the late Saulteaux Elder, Bones, cautioned me about the new things I would learn at the University of British Columbia (UBC). His guidance is invaluable in reminding me of my purpose, in that my role is to be of service in communities, whether they be my own or other Indigenous communities, and to always remember who I am, and the teachings, values and beliefs of my own people.

Mukwa Musayett the Creator made you this way and put you in that place for a purpose. When you do those things always ask yourself if they are good for your children and grandchildren. Always remember who you are in your heart. Never pick up something new and leave behind who you are, who we are and what we believe (Saulteaux Elder Bones, personal communication, November, 2006).

Inherent in this teaching from Elder Bones is a respect for the teachings, vision, and beliefs of all Indigenous peoples and communities, and an awareness of how my Saulteaux perspective shapes my own biases. My suggestion is that first, researchers concentrate on being respectful, that we take the time to consider our actions and their implications, and proceed when we are invited. There is a whole history of research being thrust on Indigenous peoples, without their consent, desire, or willingness to accept or participate in it. A respectful place for new researchers to begin relationship development, is to learn how research has been or is experienced

by Indigenous people in the specific community and agency with which you will work. Ask what research is important to them. Take a small gift, ask the question, and just listen. That will be the beginning.

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*"I don't align myself with reconciliation or decolonisation. I align with cultural resurgence. I believe in making the systems that almost annihilated us work for us. I believe that we are the ancients, the keepers. I believe in sharing our values with non-Indigenous peoples so they can see our strengths. I believe in breathing into vulnerability and that is how we heal ourselves and free our ancestors."*

Knowledge Makers

Day 2

# Janna Wale

## Gitanmaax Band

### Bachelor of Natural Resource Science

*"...the traditional knowledge of the aboriginal peoples of Canada should be considered in the assessment of which species may be at risk and in developing and implementing recovery measures." (SARA 2002)"*

# The Cultural and Ecological Implications of the Declining Wild Salmon Stocks Along the North-West Coast of British Columbia

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## **Abstract**

This essay discusses the cultural and ecological implications of the declining wild salmon stocks along the North-West Coast of British Columbia. As salmon stocks dwindle, ecological communities are being forced to shift, altering food webs and interactions that have been taking place for generations. Indigenous communities who rely on subsistence diets are being disproportionately impacted by the loss of biodiversity which ultimately puts diverse cultural ways of knowing and being at risk of disappearance. This essay examines the disappearance of the wild salmon populations over recent decades, and the significance of wild salmon both ecologically and as a critical food source for First Nations communities. Additionally, this essay will explore the importance of Indigenous food sovereignty and self-determination as being in conflict

with Western ideologies regarding industrial resource extraction and sovereignty. This paper will conclude with a discussion of the social and environmental implications of the decline and potential loss of salmon and will include recommendations designed to protect wild salmon populations and ensure their survival for our generations to come.

Keywords: Salmon, Ecology, Indigenous, Sovereignty, and Biodiversity

## **Introduction**

Throughout history, cultures across the globe have depended on salmon. Many Coastal First Nations revered salmon as the king of the rivers; legends were passed down explaining the great salmon migrations that supported these First Nations communities by ensuring plentiful fish harvests every season (Richmond et al., 2005). South Asian cultures saw the value of nutrients and the

promise of economy: early aquaculture can be dated back nearly 4,000 years, beginning with the creation of fishponds in ancient China (Knapp, 2007). However, it is taking more and more fish to meet the growing hunger of the world, both literally and economically. Aquaculture, which is the raising of aquatic animals, such as salmon in captivity, is rapidly becoming the largest producer of seafood in the entire world. Over 90% of seafood that arrives at our tables is being raised in fish farms (Walsh et al., 2011). Though aquaculture is a functioning solution for the time being, it is a solution created out of necessity, and out of necessity, wild populations continue to suffer. Salmon populations in particular are deteriorating at rates unseen in documented history and are at an all-time low (Koster, 2012). The effects of the loss of a culturally significant principal food and industry staple such as salmon have severe consequences socially and ecologically. There are supposedly plenty of fish in the sea, but what happens once the bounty runs out?

### **Significance of Wild Salmon: Role of Wild Salmon in their Ecological Environment**

Keystone species, as defined by ecologists everywhere, are a species upon which various ecosystems largely depend: if they collapse from the ecosystem, all living beings will be drastically impacted and altered. Environmentally speaking, salmon are a keystone species, predominantly in coastal and river ecosystems. In North America, spawning salmon have been identified as an integral food source to a number of different mammals (Allan et al., 2005). Access to such a nutrient-rich meat proved to be of vital importance: populations of bears with unfettered access to salmon gained significant advantages

in body size, reproductive success, and population density over populations who did not (Miller et al., 1999). Hence, coastal populations with access to abundant wild salmon were proven to consist of larger individuals who had greater reproductive success compared to interior grizzly bear populations whose diet consisted of mostly terrestrial meats and plant matter (Stringham et al., 1999). The study concluded that salmon was the single most important dietary staple for the largest grizzly bears in the most productive populations; in turn, salmon abundance in ecosystems influences productivity on both an individual and population level (Hilderbrand et al., 1999). The migration of the salmon not only increases ecosystem productivity, but also serves to connect many diverse and unique ecosystems as they travel hundreds of kilometers to spawn, creating overlap and nutrient introduction between food webs that would not exist otherwise (Allan et al., 2005). The seasonal influxes of nutrients brought in by the great salmon migration are responsible for the thriving coastal communities: flooding, flow, and consumers such as grizzly bears transport decaying fish into the terrestrial ecosystem where they fertilize and enhance plant diversity (Allan et al., 2005).

### **Role of Salmon Farming In First Nations Communities**

In 2016, approximately 1,600,000 Canadians, 4% of the total population, identify and are registered as Status Indians, Inuit or Métis under section 35 of the Aboriginal Constitution Act (Richmond et al. 2005). Of these, over half live on reserve, which are portions of land designated by the federal government. Following the release of The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), First Nations health and well-being



have become one of the focal points of Canadian health researchers (Richmond et al., 2005). In many First Nations communities, the traditional harvesting of salmon for winter food is still being performed out of necessity as well as out of convention. Many stories are told about the great migration of wild salmon and their sacred journey, and the nutrient-rich meat being harvested predominately by poorer communities proves to be of utmost importance in terms of general First Nations health. Fishing provides the smaller rural communities, where it is not uncommon for employment to be hard to find, with an important source of livelihood, (Allan et al., 2005).

In recent decades, the fish-farming sector has been increasing throughout First Nations communities and non-consensually within unceded territorial boundaries and is operating alongside ancestral fishing catchment areas that are typically attached to First Nations by various familial groups within a reserve community and within

ancestral territories (Richmond et al., 2005). The implementation of fish farming throughout many First Nations communities is raising serious questions and concerns within those affected communities, as the industrialization of fishing is not considered the traditional way. Regardless, communities along the coast of British Columbia have historically become an important source of labour in both fisheries and canning facilities (Richmond et al., 2005). The Indigenous communities remain concerned about possible repercussions on their territory and within their community, despite the health risks surrounding fish farming pertaining mostly to those consuming farmed fish (Richmond et al., 2005). In a case study done by Richmond et al. (2005), interviewed members of the 'Namgis Nation were opposed to any kind of fish farming operations within their lands: increased salmon farming has limited the ability to practice traditional fishing, and to pass the traditions on to younger generations (Richmond et al., 2005). Dietary practices among First Nations communities favour high intake of fish protein; they were historically, and continue to be, dependent on wild salmon stocks which are now dwindling. First Nations communities are also very concerned about having the risk of farmed fish on their territory (Richmond et al., 2005).

### **Trauma Associated with Colonization/Neoliberalism**

In Western society, land is considered "property, real estate, capital, or natural resources" (Coté, 2016). In First Nations culture, it represents cultural identity and a connection to the ancestors (Coté, 2016). With the introduction of colonial structures, Indigenous subsistence strategies and familial stewardships were

cast aside, altering the connection between communities and ancestral territories. Residential schools were largely responsible for the loss of language and culture, but were also in large part responsible for the destruction of Indigenous food systems (Coté, 2016). Children attending the schools were forced to eat a Westernized diet, becoming estranged from their own traditional foods and, in turn, from their own ways of knowing and being (Coté, 2016). For Indigenous peoples, the forced dependency on western food systems has equated to “social, cultural, and economic marginalization” within communities (Coté, 2016). Today, the inability to access traditional resources through imposed migration and urbanization continues to perpetuate the cultural damage done by residential schools, reinforcing the broken relationship between land and people (Coté, 2016). Through generations, Indigenous cultures were shaped by meaningful relationships between the people and the land, water, plants, and animals that provided for them, completely contrary to the Western relationship with lands and resources (Coté, 2016). Where colonial society seeks to “manage” the land and resources, Indigenous groups have often sought instead to manage their own behavior in response to that which the earth provided them; in this way, the fracturing of the subsistence system altered the interactions between people and resources (Coté, 2016). Since then, Indigenous groups have fought in order to maintain the rights to traditionally harvest salmon (Coté, 2016). Indigenous people have been the successful stewards of the lands and oceans for hundreds of generations, and believe that in order to sustain themselves as a people, both economically and culturally, they must first address the crisis of loss of biodiversity and habitat (Coté, 2016).

## **Importance of Indigenous Food Sovereignty**

Living in the colonial present, the dependence of Indigenous groups on the global food economy continues to threaten traditional Indigenous food systems; the disconnect of the people from their subsistence strategies which contributed to their cultural identity was and continues to be a key mechanism in the perpetuation of colonialism (Coté, 2016). To decolonize First Nations knowledge and subsistence strategies, Indigenous people must begin to work towards returning to sustainable sovereign nations. Sustainability is inherently linked with the “transmission of traditional knowledge and cultural practices to future generations” (Coté, 2016). Food sovereignty is the right to culturally appropriate foods cultivated through ecologically sustainable methods (Coté, 2016). The idea of food sovereignty within Indigenous communities would mean that individuals are able to define their own food and agricultural systems within a culturally traditional context (Coté, 2016). Indigenous food sovereignty is therefore a restorative framework, an idea that calls communities to action in repairing the relationships to ancestral homelands that have been weakened by colonialism, globalization and Western ideologies (Coté, 2016). The more that Indigenous people learn about local food practices, “the more likely they are to defend those practices and the stronger their cultural ties to their homelands become” (Coté, 2016). Hunting, fishing, and the gathering tradition will once again be able to connect to the idea that all Indigenous nations have the right to determine their own strategies and policies within food systems that reflect traditional cultural values (Coté 2016). Food is therefore the



most direct manifestation of the relationship between the Indigenous and their ancestral territories, occupying a central prism of thought (Coté 2016). By working towards food sovereignty, Indigenous peoples will be working towards sustaining aspects of their culture for generations to come.

The loss of biodiversity impacting many ecosystems on our planet can be thought of as a web: when one thread is broken, the web will lose valuable connections that maintain the integrity of the remaining parts. In this way, the loss of biodiversity and speciation is now affecting many different ecosystems and will ultimately alter the pre-existing relationships between land and people. Because Indigenous groups often rely on subsistence diets, species loss will disproportionately affect communities that traditionally relied on resources such as salmon (Nesbitt & Moore, 2016). Traditional food systems support food security, but are also closely intertwined with culture, land, and self-determination (Nesbitt & Moore, 2016). For the people of the North-West Coast of British Columbia, salmon have a significant social, cultural, spiritual, and psychological significance to the communities that have survived there for generations (Coté, 2016). Salmon are a keystone in Indigenous people's diets and cultures, and it is imperative that something be done to preserve this way of life by protecting the salmon and the watersheds that they call home (Nesbitt & Moore, 2016).

### **Impacts of the Decline of Wild Salmon**

Close to 1 billion people worldwide depend on fish as their primary protein source, particularly in rural areas and developing countries (Allan et al., 2005). In total, 15.3% of global food supply in terms of animal protein was contributed by the fishing industry (Allan et al., 2005). The

demise of wild salmon would mean drastic changes in ecosystem, industry, and food security for many countries. Developing nations rely on salmon as a source of job creation and income through fisheries; the meat is nutrient-rich and provides great nutritional benefit to poor communities. If unchecked, the loss of the salmon will devastate First Nations communities. They will lose their livelihoods, a major cultural food staple, their traditional way, and their stories will cease with the death of their King of the Rivers. The health of salmon populations should be of broad concern due to the far-reaching consequences that accompany the loss of the keystone species, yet populations remain in accelerated decline with scant attention from conservation groups and the media (Allan et al., 2005). The mass migration of salmon provides a gateway for the exchange of nutrients between ecosystems, as their decaying bodies are moved onto the land base, providing coastal plants a sudden surplus of rich nutrients. Animals that have long hunted fish as a primary source of food, such as grizzly bears, will be forced to push territorial boundaries in search of a meal replacement for salmon, which was once so readily available to them. As a result, the bear populations will weaken and become smaller, lacking the benefits of fresh salmon meat.

### **Habitat Destruction**

The abundance of coastal salmon has been in steady decline since the 1990s (Noakes et al., 2000). In response to direct and indirect stresses, such as altered river flow, habitat fragmentation due to dams and pollution, and overfishing, salmon habitat is being majorly degraded by industrialization (Allan et al., 2005). As coastal ecosystems continue to change with development for industrial and urban

purposes, we are adversely altering salmon habitat to the point that the survival of some populations are in jeopardy (Werring, 2007). As of 2007, over 142 B.C wild salmon populations have been completely wiped out, with another 620 listed as having a “very high” risk of extinction (Werring, 2007). Habitat loss is identified as a major cause for the loss of such great species diversity. In 1994, the BC Ministry of Environment surmised that 485 known salmon rivers and streams have shown major declines in appropriate fish habitat and have been linked to the surrounding areas being logged for forestry purposes or for the fabrication of infrastructure (Werring, 2007). The urbanization of riparian areas in known salmon habitats is a major contributor to the habitat degradation of wild salmon stocks: we continually choose economic gain and industrial development over conservation of a keystone species and the protection of their known environment. To preserve what remains of salmon habitat, a more rigorous and comprehensive system must be established while there is still time to protect remaining fish habitat (Werring, 2007).

## **Recommendations for the Future Preservation of Wild Salmon**

### **Protection of Sacred Headwaters and Spawning Grounds**

The entire purpose of salmon migration, sometimes called the sacred journey or the salmon run, is to return to their spawning grounds where they were hatched as eggs (SWCC, 2015). As this is often up-river, salmon face many obstacles throughout their last journey home, including swimming up rapid rivers for many kilometers, and predators. By the time they reach the spawning grounds, they are

extremely vulnerable due to fatigue: after spawning, their remarkable journey comes to an end and they die in the very place they first lived. In North-Western British Columbia (BC), an alpine basin gives rise to three of the great salmon rivers in Canada: the Nass, the Stikine, and the Skeena (SWCC, 2015). Headwaters, meaning the birth place of the rivers, also house grizzly bears, caribou, and wolves; they are culturally significant to the local First Nations people, the Tahltan (SWCC 2015). In 2004, Shell Canada was granted access to mine the sacred headwaters for coalbed methane gas (SWCC 2015). In this type of mining, also called Fracking, an industrial maze of wellheads, roads, and pipelines would replace the spawning grounds and the untouched pristine habitat that has been revered for so many generations (SWCC, 2015). Due to massive opposition throughout BC, the government of BC imposed a mandatory four-year moratorium, delaying the development of the salmon spawning grounds, which generate an estimated 110 million dollars in salmon economy, into another industrial wasteland (SWCC 2015). In 2015, thanks to the hard work of the oppositionists, the BC government ruled that the sacred headwaters would remain untouched, and the salmon headwaters would be safe. In the future, it is crucial that headwaters remain protected, as damage to them will be reflected directly in the numbers of salmon present in the three great salmon rivers of BC.

### **Monitoring Population and Habitat Health**

Another important recommendation is that we manage the remaining wild salmon stocks correctly. This will mean accurately managing and recording the amount of salmon being taken by fisheries on a yearly basis: we must ensure that we

are breeding and releasing more salmon than we are taking out of the river systems. The government of BC must also begin forming more rigid regulations regarding salmon spawning areas, migration routes, and known salmon habitats. In order to protect salmon, which are sensitive to environmental damage, we must ensure that their habitats remain as undisturbed as possible when it comes to human activity and development. If regulations are created and enforced, they will help in reducing habitat destruction caused by logging and road creation. The sooner we protect salmon habitat, the better chance we will have of the population recovering.

## Education

Finally, education is the most important change we need to make in order to protect our wild salmon. Increasing awareness and making information available to the general public about the decline in wild salmon could be the single most important tool to a gateway of change. The majority of Canadians are aware that salmon levels are dropping, as prices rise in the grocery stores; however, many Canadians are unaware of the repercussions the loss of salmon will have. As a major player economically, culturally, and socially in terms of First Nations' identity, salmon must be given the best chance to continue for the generations to come. If we begin educating our children about the importance of habitat and management and only taking the salmon that we need, the future generation will have a greater understanding of what it truly means to sustainably manage the salmon populations. In order to create sustainability, we must first create an education program that outlines the extreme importance of preserving populations and reversing the steady decline of wild salmon. If we want to make a change for the better,

to stop habitat degradation, to manage climate change, to only fish for what we need, and to protect the spawning grounds, we must begin with education.

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*"Every cell in my body is humming with energy"*

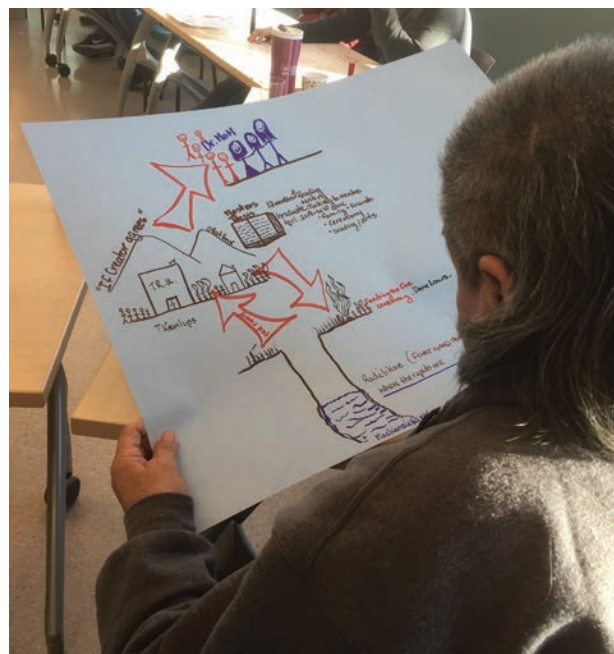
Knowledge Makers

Day 2

*"I am feeling really supported now. I am so glad I came. This is like an introduction to a research community. The older researchers are helping us to become better people and to become better people ourselves. I feel more support and I am really happy for that."*

Knowledge Makers

Day 2



# Lyle Paul

## Tk'emlups te Secwepemc

### Bachelor of Design

*"I am thankful for the knowledge that my grandparents, parents, family, friends, and community have given, and continue to give. This knowledge that has been passed down will be given to my children and to their children's children for generations to come, just like our ancestors that have come before us, we will continue to add to the confluence."*

## Confluence of Knowledge

---

"In those days the Old-One, a personage to be described presently, sent Coyote to travel over the world and put it to rights... ..The Old-One was the chief of the ancient world, and finished the work of Coyote and other transformers, leaving the earth in the way we see it at present." (Teit, 1909, p. 595-596)

The above quote is taken from the Jesup Expedition led by James Teit, and tells a story about about Secwépemc peoples. As I see it, James Teit's discussion of leaving the earth in the way we see it at present (Teit, 1909. p. 601) sheds light on the need for current societal improvements. One Secwépemc way of being is to walk lightly. To walk lightly means to take only what is needed. By taking only what is needed, we ensure that the resources will be available for future generations to come. It is this knowledge that teaches the Secwépemc to respect resources without depleting them. Knowledge is the main talking point in this article.

Knowledge can be seen as water. To Secwépemc, water is alive. It is with memory. Water is medicine and medicine is water (Personal communication, Colleen Seymour, November 24, 2017). Water flows over landscapes, creating rivers and lakes, and covers huge portions of our planet. The rivers of the North and South Thompson join in Kamloops. A confluence of water creates a larger river and in thinking about the production and advancement of knowledge, this joining and accumulation of said waters can be viewed as a water analogy grounded in a particular place, in Secwépemc territory. This is important to me, because being Tk'emlups te Secwépemc as my attachment and my responsibilities as Secwépemc come first in how I live my life. I have a responsibility in ensuring that there will always be an abundance of resources, not only for my children, but for the children and families of all who now live in Kamloops. Like water, when great minds come together they become stronger in force and can be good together in thinking about how to look after the land and water.

My name is Lyle Paul. I am a proud member of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. I have two children with my wife, Kathleen Elkins. I am currently in my fourth year of studies in Design at Thompson Rivers University's Open Learning Program. I have also completed post-secondary education in Audio Engineering at the Centre for Arts and Technology. I am employed with my band Tk'emlups te Secwépemc in its Marketing, Communications and Events planning department. This position of employment enables me to continuously learn and carry over Secwépemc knowledge through different formats, mediums, and platforms. A few examples are websites, videos, music, multiple forms of social media, print, and publication. I use knowledge that I have learned to help visually or verbally communicate the knowledge and beliefs of my ancestors. This education I received stems back to my analogy on the confluence of water. The Knowledge of being a Secwépemc and knowledge I received from post-secondary education have created a confluence. This confluence has created a greater river that enables me to do many great things. It was in a Philosophy course titled Knowledge, Certainty and Skepticism where I came to study the great minds of many great thinkers. In this course, I learned that a majority of these thinkers had looked at the 'I'. I found the study of the 'I' interesting, in that a Secwépemc understands the 'I' but places focus on the 'We'.

Shuswap epistemology has some similarities in teaching to that of Western epistemology, but also many differences due to language and its transmission. Knowledge was passed down from those around you. Knowledge was imparted from a very young age through coming-of-age ceremonies like men's or women's first hunt during these particular

developmental years. For instance, specific animals referred to as spirit guardians also help in our developmental stages over the course of one's life time.

To survive, we had to understand how and why the animals were doing what they were doing. For instance, the yellow Balsam flower that erupts during the spring has numerous usages, but we learned of this staple plant of my ancestors through the black bear. Our ancestors saw bear digging up the tuber beneath the surface, and then leaving them out on the surrounding rocks. My ancestors then witnessed the bears return to eat the 'sun-dried' tubers (Personal communication, Garelene Jules, June 11/12, 2017). This type of knowledge not only ensures survival but stands as an example of how interconnected our relationships are with the beings around us and demonstrates that they have lessons for us. This understanding of the Secwépemc relationship with the earth shows that there is respect shown to resources, so as not to deplete them. Survival means that we have to obtain a great deal of knowledge. This knowledge was handed down through stories but also in preparation and training. The goal was "to create knowledgeable, responsible and independent people, who could look after all of their personal needs and be aware of the needs of the whole Shuswap people" (Jack, Mathew, & Mathew, p. 4). This type of knowledge seems to look not only at the perspective of the 'I,' like Descartes,-did, but seems to incorporate more of the 'We.' For one to be successful in the village, all had to be successful. "Aboriginal people believe in the centrality of 'the other' to the individual. We are 'born into a social world' and take others' existence 'for granted without question'" (Shutz in Graveline, 1967, p. 98). If the hunters didn't bring back enough game, then there would be a lack of clothing and tools. This lack

of clothing and tools meant a rough time throughout the season. Harvesting ethically was also important, as it affected not only one's family and village, but others in the surrounding area as well. This care for not only the 'I' but the 'We' carried into managing resources. We now live in a world where one can't help but continually focus on the 'I.' We need to shift this state of thought. This shift is in the readings of Shawn Wilson (2008):

Knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all of the creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, not only with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all of the creation. It is with the cosmos; it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge. It goes beyond this idea of individual experience to the concept of relations knowledge. Who cares about those ontologies? It's not the realities in and of themselves that are important; it is the relationship that I share with reality." ( p. 74)

Take time to consider the relationships with everything that is around us, and realize the real importance that they have within our lives; we will have more knowledge to better the entirety. When knowledge, like two rivers, comes together, the output can be amazing. It is with this newly created river of knowledge that caring for oneself and everyone can start resolve and conversation. With the knowledge of our ancestors, we can help to provide a holistic approach to understanding and coinciding the thoughts of many great minds.

Knowledge offered through our ancestors can be used to help those around us. Coyote is considered to be a teacher of the Secwépemc. It is through the stories of Coyote that morals, ethics, and laws can be found. Coyote was considered to have done many great things for the Secwépemc people. One of Coyote's greatest gifts was bringing salmon to the Secwépemc.



He was also found to be a trickster, but through his teachings, the Secwepemc were better able to understand what to do and what not to do. This type of knowledge and living ensured that pollution would be minimal. Experience within this group of First Nations was not only of helping oneself but also of helping the village. Like the gift of salmon that Coyote brought to Secwepemc, we can each bring gifts of importance and value that will benefit all. I learned great knowledge in the previously mentioned philosophy course; some of these learning points can work well alongside the knowledge of the Secwépemc.

Secwépemc's ideal of caring for oneself within their/this world was of utmost importance. To ensure that there is and will continue to be a future, we must consider resources. Resource management in the current day and age needs to be adjusted. With the rise of pollution and extinction of animal species around the world, we need to adopt this knowledge and worldview. Locke (2002) asserts that the mind at birth

is a tabula rasa, a blank slate. It is like white paper devoid of characteristics until it perceives sense perceptions (p. 75). If this is the case, we need to start teaching the future generations to walk more lightly on this earth. This is where the workings of knowledge from both sides assist one another. For the success of this planet, we need to manage better our resources, which include all species of life. We come into this world not knowing anything. Knowledge flows from our parents, elders, family, friends, community, professors, culture, and media, to name a few sources. These sources help to create bigger rivers of understanding. A Secwépemc had to know not only how to help herself or himself, but how to help the village. I believe that to have a better outlook and insight into one's surroundings, you must view the world entirely through the eyes of others, including animals. This is another example of seeing knowledge from another source, to help in better understanding the world. Some of the Secwépemc teachings came from what was called a spirit guardian. The spirit guardian was an animal that would help the individual throughout their life. The person would imitate this helper and carefully study to use the skills to live more successfully (Jack, Mathew, & Mathew, 1993, p. 12). This is also seen in Bertrand Russell's (2002) work;

It follows that if several people are looking at the table at the same moment, no two of them will see precisely the equal distribution of colours, because no two can see it from the same point of view, and any change in the point of view makes some difference in the way the light is reflected." (P. 6)

Russell's argument shows that we all don't see the same image at the same time, no matter where we stand. It makes much

more sense to gather as much information about that one object from any and every angle. Further, we can add that helping each other see from different angles is necessary to understanding, and gathering more knowledge. Kelly Connor (2013), in a case brief on the story Coyote and his Hosts, states that everything has its place and there is a proper and right way in which we can learn from others. Appropriateness is key to learning from others respectfully (unsaid) (p. 52). Understanding that not one person can see what we see will allow us to see not only linearly but holistically.

This combination of knowledge will help to create greater ideas, conversations,

*"I have never taken part in such a wonderful indigenous space. Focus groups yes for the indigenous perspectives. But to share our dreams and goals for Indigenous peoples? I am going to go home and tell my Dad."*

—  
Knowledge Makers

Day 2



and understanding for many individuals. Knowledge can become a confluence of great works and great outcomes. With the knowledge of our ancestors, we can help to provide a holistic approach to understanding and connecting the thoughts of many great minds. When we consider the works of Russell (2002) and how we can use viewpoints from many to better describe one object, area, or understanding, we can see different reflections of light through the eyes of many. As a collective, we can try to see from another's perspective like through the lens of the spirit helper. While most won't reveal this sacred and secret spirit(s) to you, we have the ability to understand self by coming to humbly understand spirit. As the rivers come together to create a much larger volume, we will see the output of knowledge that goes to shape the lands, and benefit all those that live in that area. With the knowledge that is contributed from Secwépemc peoples and our inherent epistemology, we can better manage our resources and reduce our waste. We can be better equipped to give the knowledge to future generations: it is time. Kukwststsémc (Thank You).

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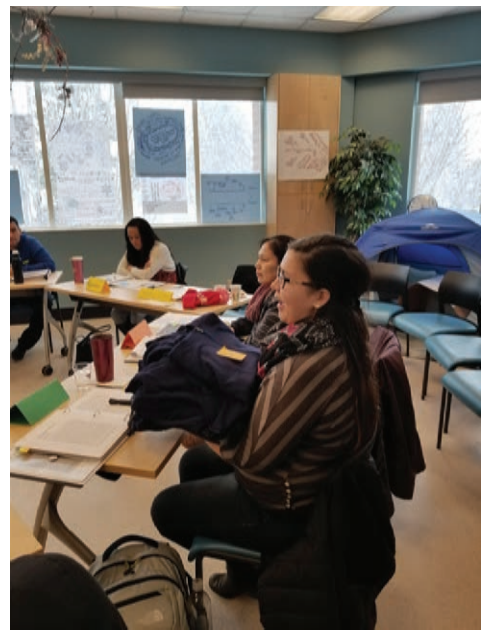
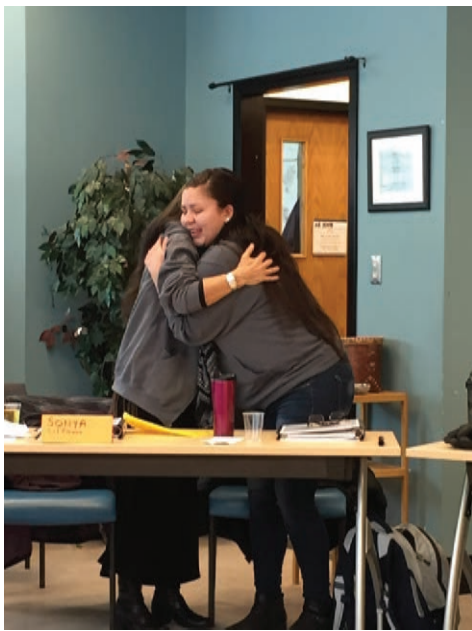
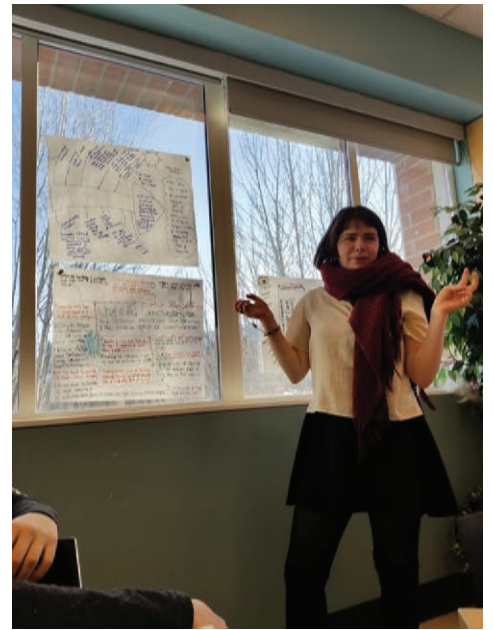
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*"As Indigenous peoples we have always done research. It is how we survive. You are an inspiration to me" – Professor Rod McCormick*

Knowledge Makers

Day 2





# Sereana Naepi

Fijian/Pakeha

Associate Director, All My Relations Research Network

# Airini

Samoan/Pakeha

Dean, Faculty of Education and Social Work

## Be the Real Me:

### Learning from Knowledge Makers

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It seemed both likely and unlikely that an international team of scholars with at least five Indigenous ancestries, leadership from at least four First Nations, University leadership and allies, and Elders from at least three First Nations should be able to work together. We were all at one university, but could we do something different from the norm to help Indigenous students become exceptional researchers? We certainly needed something new. Conventional approaches and thinking about success at university have not always been up to the task of dealing with race and culture (Airini, Anae, Mila-Schaaf 2010).

For Airini and I, from our positions as Indigenous academics at Thompson Rivers University, we thought the Knowledge Makers project was so worthwhile: to grow new Indigenous researchers to lead research that is genuinely in service to Indigenous peoples' wants and needs. It was an honour to work together as coordinators – Secwepemc and Pacific. We believed new knowledge about the making of knowledge

was needed. University systems can be less than supportive, despite best intentions. Too often expectations of Indigenous potential are low, too often there are perceptions of Indigenous peoples as burdened by culture, having less, and being somewhere between victim and blame. In truth we are strong with endless potential.

Research into Indigenous students has tended to be about changes for students to make. Too few university-based researchers have asked: 'What changes do we research leaders, instructors, institutions and power holders need to make to ensure better participation and results by first generation students?' We thought Knowledge Makers was worthwhile because it was time to turn the gaze to ourselves within the university system. We recalled Gayatri Spivak's critical theorising on 'the gaze' (Spivak, 2009) . As we did, our questions about Indigenous students as emerging researchers would be inverted to be questions about universities themselves and their

transformation, and about the role of all researchers and leaders in the university to contribute to Indigenous advancement.

We liked the idea of coordinating this critical endeavour to expand the potential for Indigenous research to happen was about work that is both 'up close' and 'at the horizon'. We have tended to act in the local context but always with an eye to the big picture. For us this was about Indigenous students learning how to be researchers, yes, but it was and is really about the transformation of universities, within British Columbia and internationally. It is one further contribution to the indigenisation of higher education. At this big picture level we are motivated to improve economic gains for those under-served by higher education (that is, the opportunity university education provides to win higher paying more sustainable jobs, including those needing research skills) and social justice (ensuring under-served students have that opportunity from higher education). And to be honest, for us, it is also about morality and simply doing what is right. Universities, researchers, and decision-makers can do more to ensure there is a university system better geared to support the success of all. Many want to. Knowledge Makers is about helping make that happen by growing Indigenous researchers.

It began with the integrity of the Knowledge Makers project architecture and methodology. For Airini and I that meant a few things were top-of-mind. These five approaches form the structure on which Indigenous researcher mentoring is being built and from which strong outcomes are emerging. We have realized that such structures are the key to the potential for universities to be decolonized spaces, and the ability for Indigenous learners to reach their potential within higher education (Ahenakew & Naepi, 2015).

## **Five Approaches in Strong Indigenous Research Mentoring**

**We draw upon the knowledge within our ancestries** – Fiji-New Zealand, Samoa –New Zealand, respectively. Together we are 'Pasifika' – that cluster of predominantly New Zealand-born peoples of Pacific ancestry for whom Aotearoa New Zealand is home. The respected Samoan leader and educator Fa'afua Tautolo had once reminded a Pasifika education research gathering in Aotearoa New Zealand of the traditional Samoan saying: "E pala le ma'a ae le pala le tala" (Tautolo in Airini, Anae, Mila-Schaaf, 2010: 1). This tells us that the 'word,' particularly when documented, lasts forever, even when rocks decay over time. This means that the accuracy and integrity of research and its findings are profoundly important. So too is the need to document knowledge coming from research, as a form of service to all those relationships involved in the research process.

In this sense, researchers and research itself occur in a relational 'space' or as known in Pacific terms, 'le va'. This pan-Pacific notion of 'the relational self' has been identified as central to education research, the well-being of researchers and those involved in the research, and its conversion into action and results (Anae, 2007; Airini, Anae, Mila-Schaaf, 2010). Va — or vā, va'a, vaha — can be loosely translated as a spatial way of conceiving the secular and spiritual dimensions of relationships and relational order (Anae, 2007; Airini, Anae, Mila-Schaaf, 2010). The word 'teu' in Samoan literally means 'to keep (for example, in the heart or in the mind) the space,' or 'to look after the space,' or to 'tidy up the space' (Airini, Anae, Mila-Schaaf, 2010). 'Teu le va' in the context of education research emphasises working together and sharing power. It affirms the importance of relationships and creates a new va'a for researchers to work together.

Working together is distinctive in Indigenised spaces. We make this kind of space in Knowledge Makers. This annual program provides the opportunity for Indigenous undergraduate students to learn about indigenous research and to put practices into action. The students meet in January in small groups to develop understanding and trust with the Knowledge Makers coordinators; they see First Nations and international Indigenous scholars there and begin to see that they too can be researchers. In the two-day February workshop the whole group of up to 15 Indigenous students learn about Indigenous research approaches and develop their plans for research. Indigenous scholars and support services staff, university leadership, Library leadership, past Knowledge Makers, faculty come throughout the two days – to support, encourage, to listen. Culture is welcome and cherished. So too are outcomes and goals. Our approach is ‘narrow and deep’. That is, we focus on identified research-related goals and actions, rather than trying to work on everything to do with being successful Indigenous students at university (Airini & Naepi, 2018). Each Knowledge Maker student prepares a research plan, publishes for the first time, and as a group we gather with community members and loved ones to share the experience and research intentions. At this large gathering the students receive the Knowledge Makers journal containing each student’s publication; their first published article. Sometimes this is the first time their family and perhaps their Band have been published in an academic journal. Then as we often do in Indigenous practices, each student gives to family and loved ones their first copy of this first treasured achievement. In turn we hear the good words of those who have gathered.

An Indigenized approach is taken in which culture, language and identity are at the heart of all planning and practices for Knowledge Makers. Elders attend throughout and are respected members of the teaching team. Knowledge Makers students have gone on to post-baccalaureate research studies, have been employed in Research Assistant roles, and created an Indigenous enterprise using their research skills. Knowledge Makers can be a transformative experience.

Working together for Indigenous-led knowledge creation and the importance of Indigenised approaches to leadership in research. The commitment to the relational self in Indigenous research development moves us away from a focus on ‘minority’, ‘underrepresentation’, failure, and deficit, to a focus on potential and strengths. Everyone in the education system is to take responsibility for lifting outcomes for and with Indigenous students learning to be researchers. We have found that this opportunity to grow Indigenous researchers through the Knowledge Makers initiative has necessarily required Indigenised understandings of responsibilities and relationships within this university-based initiative. This has proven to be critically significant and innovative.

**We value indigenous research methods as expanding the research canon, resisting ‘miraculating’ the Indigenous**

(Deleuze, Guattari, 2004; Spivak 2009).

Criticality should be a universal tenet in learning how to do research. In practice that means rethinking and negotiating research priorities and outcomes, and researcher development models. It means integrating diversity in language and cultural practices during the three-month Knowledge

Makers experience. Assumptions that all Indigenous research methods are good can be contested. Similarly, we can also fight assumptions that Indigenous research methods do not exist or are weak. Either way our own researcher mentoring architecture has to be Indigenous specific, genuinely localized, and also diverse. In practice that means first and last words and our practices are from Secwepmc, from the First Nation on whose unceded territory Thompson Rivers University is located. In total we welcome every Nation, Band, and people. We feel local yet also part of the 370 million Indigenous peoples on Earth. This all takes effort within the university, and requires listening and innovation akin to Freire's (1998) idea of epistemological curiosity. Through a process of critical evaluation of accepted knowledge and (in our case) knowledge creation we learn and we understand better the agendas already within higher education research. From this point we then co-construct ways of knowing and knowledge creation to re-set agendas.

**We take a strengths-based approach** towards under-served students and consciously work against deficit thinking, research design, and words. Our Knowledge Makers are strong new leaders readied for research that is practical, ethical, and understandable to all.

**Our research will be a form of service.** In other words, action and change are necessary companions to critical research mentoring. Our research must have practical outcomes that help transform the university environment, and advance our Indigenous communities. This means researcher mentoring that builds a community of researchers who can draw on previous research (rather than duplicating it in part/whole), and contribute to the expansion of the body of knowledge;

**We commit to a legacy** of researchers, growing the pool of indigenous researchers able and motivated to undertake quality research into improving educational, social and economic outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

Sereana and I deeply respect those who gather for Knowledge Makers – students, supporters, encouragers, story tellers, and witnesses. We feel honored to be present, and grateful for the welcome we feel as coordinators offering our own Indigenous ways of knowing and being. From the first words to the last words, every year at Knowledge Makers it becomes clear that this is a gathering of many doing work together that is powerful and transformational. It's not 'likely or unlikely' to happen in good ways. It simply happens. And with it change comes. This community for new Indigenous researchers works together to support Knowledge Makers who change the norm – relational, expanding the research canon, strengths-based, service-focused, and committed to a legacy of new Indigenous researchers. We can theorize this. We can quantify the impact. We turn as well to Elder Estella Moller who comes each year to Knowledge Makers as an Elder at Thompson Rivers University. Knowledge Makers is about finding the Real Me, she says. These new researchers offer a challenge to us all: how will we each be our Real Me as researchers? How will universities transform to be Real in new ways that better serve Indigenous peoples?. Thank you Elder Estella for your good words. Thank you Knowledge Makers for the lessons you teach us all.

Fa'afetai tele lava. Vinaka.

"I realized a long time ago every human being is the same – we all develop our mind, our body, our spiritual self... It is okay to be different. It is okay to think differently, to believe differently, and to be The Real Me, and to not hide The Real Me. ...Keep going."

- Elder Estella Patrick Moller,  
Knowledge Makers

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# Theresa John

Nak'azdli & Saik'uz First Nation  
JD Law Program

*"Indigenous research is important to all nations because it nurtures growth, healing, and a deeper understanding of who we are as Canada's first peoples while carefully promoting equitable nation-to-nation relationships for future generations."*

## The Resurgence of the Right to Self-Determination Through the Balhats System

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This article is dedicated to all the matriarchs of my communities who all have played an integral role in forming my identity as a Dakelh woman. This includes my grandmothers, aunties, older cousins, older sisters and my mother. They have showed me the significance of living off the land and caring for Mother Earth throughout my life by taking me to the mountains for hunting, gathering, and sharing stories of our ancestors while also sharing rituals of connections and rituals of condolences. Snachalhuya - thank you all.

Over the last two centuries, Aboriginal people in British Columbia (BC) have undergone drastic social, economic, and legal changes resulting from the arrival of early settler societies, and the imposition of settlers' religious institutions and laws. This includes the fur traders, churches, Indian Residential Schools, the Royal

Proclamation, 1763, the Indian Act, 1876, and the Constitution Act, 1982. One of the Indigenous traditions that survived through colonial history is the Potlatch system. Today, Dakelh people continue striving to revive the Potlatch, also known as Balhats, in their communities as a form self-sufficiency and self-governance. This paper explores the resurgence of the right to self-determination through the self-governance structure of the Balhats system in Dakelh communities.

The Potlatch ceremony is seen as a central economic, social, spiritual, legal, and political institution for many Indigenous people in BC (Loo, 1992, p. 144). The history of the Potlatch ceremony originated from the Northwest Coast Native culture and has thrived for many generations. The Northwest Coast Indigenous groups in BC shared many of the same aspects of culture, including the Potlatch system, an

embodiment of governance, economic, and social structure that created balance in many Indigenous communities (Hawthorne, 1956, p.8). Through trading relationships between individual First Nations groups in BC, the Carrier (Athapaskan Dene or Dakelh) people have incorporated the Potlatch system as their own for many generations.

From 1884 to 1951 the outlawing of the Potlatch in Canada was a significant part of history and the oppression of Native peoples and their systems of governance. During the time of the Potlatch ban, many Indigenous groups lost numerous ceremonial objects and gifts, as well as abundance in their culture and socio-economic well-being. This was also a symbol of how Native people triumphed through the ban and continued to practice the ceremony to stay connected to the past with unconditional gift giving (Loo, 1992, p. 159). These drastic changes in First Nations



culture forced Indigenous people to adapt and overcome the confines of the imperial government in hope for the survival of their cultural and traditional identity.

During the implementation of the Potlatch ban in 1884, there was no proper definition of what the Potlatch ceremony was or what it entailed (Loo, 1992, p.141). This was because it was unfamiliar and new to the Euro-Canadian law. In 1895, the Indian Act was amended to define the ceremony, which was made an indictable offence, as a “celebratory Indian festival, dance or ceremony of which that giving away or paying back of money, goods or articles takes place before, at or after the celebration of the same” (Loo, 1992, p.142). When the offence was made a summary conviction in 1918, leading to an unprecedented number of convictions, there was a significant impact on native people. British Columbia’s missionaries and Indian Agents enforced the prohibition solely based on misconception and misinterpretation of the ritual. This demonstrates the resistance of the colonial government to experience and take part in the agreements between parties during a Balhats ceremony in order to properly define its structure and purpose.

Dakelh law, applied through the Balhats ceremony, is vigilant to all the relationships of living beings on the land, in the air, and under the water (Borrows, 2010, p. 96). It is founded on the matrilineal clan system that has an emphasis on the family and social prestige, generous gift giving, and a credit system that is widely used and respected with social obligations to obey. The fundamental principles of Balhats include respect, reciprocity, generosity, unconditional love, humility, equality, equity, patience, stewardship, and participation (Borrows, 2006).

The matrilineal system is also an effective tool to track genealogy to prevent intermarriages. The clan is fundamentally a kinship system that tracks a common grandmother, therefore all people in the clan are related to you. In Dakelh communities, the Elders tell us our clan members are our brothers and sisters.

The Dakelh people hold clan names that are familiar to their landscape and habitat, which can include beaver, frog, bear, or grouse. Using Balhats as a form of socialization has been effective in exposing and teaching babies and children the social, spiritual, and cultural norms in their community. Children belong to their mother's clan, so most teachings come from the mother and her family. The implementation of the Potlatch ban and Indian Residential Schools restricted access for children to learn and develop in a nurtured, strength-based manner, resulting in a loss of cultural identity and practice. This loss continues to have intergenerational impacts on First Nations people today; there is declining participation and many young people are not learning the protocols and reasons for the Balhats.

The different clans participating in Balhats are organized into different groups that include hereditary chiefs, matriarchs, and other clan members. The role of the hereditary chiefs and matriarchs is to observe, intervene, mediate, provide wisdom, teach, and guide all members (Borrows, 2006, p. 73). Hereditary leaders are trained from birth so when one passes away, there is another to take their place; this leadership transfer takes place at a Balhats, with all the clans as witnesses. During a Potlatch gathering there is no single head chief; this ensures balance and equality in decision-making power by following consensus (Borrows, 2010, p. 92). This balance was interrupted

and replaced with a value towards the new capitalist and hierarchal system enforced by the colonial government. It also forced Native people to alter their culture and express it in ways that reflected the new economic circumstances and settler society.

The ideas central to the Potlatch system required that all important transactions and rites of passage be celebrated publicly; witnesses must be invited to observe everything conducted with proper procedure. Most importantly, the witnesses could testify that they observed transactions take place, in case conflicts later arose over titles and land. Issues such as sustainable land management, justice, and conflict resolution were dealt with in the Balhats. Also, all witnesses are paid with gifts, and all the guests must be fed well by the host clan (Hawthorne, 1956 p. 22). Later, money became part of the gift-giving. The act of witnessing serves as a preventative measure to ensure that witnesses are prepared to verify past events to preserve the oral history or to resolve disagreements. This form of oral record contrasts with the written records needed for transactions in the colonial society, including the court system.

The Potlatch system was a way of celebrating and honouring good citizenship. If someone went out of their way to assist a person or community, the clan would gift that person at the next Potlatch they hosted. In this way, it reinforced and encouraged good behavior and commitment to community. Although outsiders interpreted it as a debt or obligation system, the Elders would tell you it was a way of honouring people for their selflessness and dedication to the well-being of others. All these practices were altered with the banning of the Potlatch and many of them were lost or severely curtailed.

Gifts in Balhats are usually prepared one year ahead of time, and may include piles of hides, furs, dried food (berries, fish, game meat, Labrador tea), clothing, jewelry and regalia, hunting gear, sewing kits, blankets, and so on (Hall, 1992, p. 17). After contact, trade goods were included. These gifts were distributed carefully and were accounted for by keeping track of each person who received a gift and what it was (Hawthorne, 1956, p. 23). The gifts are organized by rank of social status, which begin with noblemen or noblewomen, respected matriarchs, or clan members. The clan members who did not attain a special status in their community received an even distribution of gifts. The value of gifts materially increased and changed once goods introduced by the Fur Trading business became more prevalent.

The Northwest Company opened a fur trading warehouse in Fort St. James in 1806, and later merged into the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) post in 1821 and closed in 1952 (Hall, 1992). This increased the flow of trade goods in the Central and Northern Interior of BC. The fur trade business also influenced gifting different objects in Balhats including guns for hunting, money, or foreign material goods such as sacks of flour or sugar. With the Hudson's Bay Company present during the Potlatch ban, Dakelh people altered their clothing, adjusting to the European settler style, which became more common in British Columbia.

The new economic conditions Indigenous people encountered rendered material goods more available and accessible to consume. The presence of the Hudson's Bay Company, church, and federal Indian agents negatively interrupted Carrier culture because it forced them to assimilate to a capitalist-based system used by European settlers. As a result, this restricted access for Carrier people to practice their traditional survival methods

based on subsistence because of the risk of criminalization. So, Indigenous people began to participate in the European commercial economy more frequently and the Potlatch ceremony reflected that change.

This form of assimilation was constructed as part of a larger authority, which used Canadian law to get rid of the "Indian problem" and attempt to assimilate Indigenous people into participating in the capitalist society. The priests held religious misconceptions of the sacred ceremony, forbidding the customs of Balhats. This negatively impacted the number of participants in the ceremony (Hall, 1992, p. 105). As a result, some clan members separated from the ceremony to follow the new religion of Christianity. Changing spiritual or religious beliefs during this time was not a free choice because the priests and nuns would assert to Native children and communities that they were heathens in order to convert them. Further, this interruption was also happening during a vulnerable time when diseases were rampant and devastating many Native communities at a high rate, especially the Elders who were the knowledge keepers. The converting of Indigenous people influenced their instilled values, customs, and spiritual connections with the Balhats ceremony and replaced them with the beliefs of Catholicism.

Native peoples' resistance to the Potlatch ban began in the late nineteenth century. Many Indigenous groups would divide the ceremony into two parts to avoid prosecution (Loo, 1992, p. 157). The dancing and ceremonial part would first be held publicly; the distribution of gifts would take place later and in private, sometimes with door-to-door delivery. This demonstrates the level of commitment to complete the entire ceremony and fulfill social obligations. There were people in

*“The most powerful thing we can do is use our opportunity, our tools, our intelligence, and our community of researchers to serve”*

– Professor Airini

all communities who saw the value of the traditional ways and they would risk heavy fines and imprisonment to preserve them.

The changes that occurred during the Potlatch ban were devastating to the Aboriginal people of BC. By not honoring or acknowledging timeless practices and rituals, the Canadian government was able to force assimilation and control over an essential part of an Indigenous lifestyle. These policies, justified by Eurocentric cultural superiority, reshaped the socio-economic landscape for First Nations people. Prior to the 1884 Potlatch ban, Dakelh people were accustomed to a holistic, transparent way of orienting themselves in the world. The banning of the Potlatch, which was supposed to take away the power of the native people, forced them to find new ways to honour the tradition. Although it caused much heartache to be secretive and alter protocols, they did adapt them while still preserving the core principles of community, sharing and, equity. One elder noted that “[i]f it wasn’t for the Potlatch, we

wouldn’t have survived those years!” (M. MacKinnon, personal communication).

Today, Balhats is a guaranteed right under section 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982. Section 35(1) recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada. Aboriginal people include Indian, Inuit, and Métis people. In Balhats the right to self-determination exists with self-sufficiency and is also supported by the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (2008). Self-government refers to “the ability of a group to govern its lands and the people on them by setting goals and acting on them without having to seek permission from others” (Asch, 2002, p. 66). Asserting the right to self-determination through a form of self-governance promotes a Nation-to-Nation relationship between many Indigenous communities and the federal government. It also provides that the governments established by Aboriginal people cannot be amended or altered without their consent.

Canada has not shown its fullest potential to be supportive and inclusive towards Aboriginal justice philosophies, values, and beliefs practiced within the local communities. The reinforcement of superiority toward Aboriginal people originates from the historical colonial relationships with European settlers which include the presence of the HBC, churches, and the Indian Residential Schools. These relationships with Indigenous people were based on oppressive assumptions and rigid policies that undermined their culture, beliefs, and customs. This colonial attitude still hinders Indigenous groups from implementing and operating recognized forms of self-determination which include the Potlatch laws.

Empowering Indigenous groups instead of protecting under the honour of the Crown influences socio-economic

circumstances for many Indigenous people as it is bound by the confines of the Indian Act. This indicates that there should be an advisory of Indigenous leaders to ensure policies under the Indian Act are viable and fit within the interests of Indigenous people in communities across Canada. Providing a two-way bridge between Canadian and Indigenous laws can nurture the need for spiritual revitalization in order to fight colonialism. A new framework needs to be created to serve the interests of Indigenous people across Canada. In order for this to work harmoniously, there is a need for strong collaboration, and the design and application of these potential policies or programs must be controlled by First Nations people (Asch, 2002, p. 71).

It is important for Dakelh people to assert control of their own lives through Balhats, because they are the only ones who know what is best for their own people to heal. The federal government must have an approach of openness, respect, and mutual understanding of cultural differences. This can be done by recognizing Indigenous laws and their significance for Indigenous people to heal from the intergenerational trauma and assimilation policies created by the British and Canadian governments.

Overall, the Balhats system is still a flexible structure that can adjust to present circumstances. Its fundamental principles and cultural processes are foundational to the circulation of wealth, the restoration of balance, and the well-being of the landscape, including all living things and clans. The resurgence of the right to self-determination to promote self-sufficiency through Balhats involves recognition, cooperation, respect, and a mutual understanding of cultural differences when nurturing Nation-to-Nation relationships between Indigenous people and the federal government. Establishing an equal and equitable relationship can

help set a strong framework for future generations to follow and enable them to thrive culturally, spiritually, socially, economically, legally, and politically.

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# Rhyannon Garant

Dene

Master of Education

*"Indigenous research is important because within the process you find your  
"academic le le," not for the purpose of argument but one that speaks  
to the academic community and says "Hey, I'm here."*

## Beadwork Teachings:

### Indigenous Women and Leadership in Higher Education Communities

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#### **Dedication**

I want to dedicate this article to my two daughters, Aurora and Arielle, one of whom has a love for the thesaurus and one of whom embraces the challenge of writing from different viewpoints. May you girls also find your "academic le le."

"Because the earth has changed, and because we Dene do not live in the same way as our ancestors -eating only wild meat and living outdoors in the clean air - medicine is not the same as it was before. But we still have power. We have our imagination, our dreams, our virtues, and our faith in the Creator, and those are a medicine person's most important tools." (Blondin, pg. 233)

This is my first publication in an academic journal, the first of what I hope is to be many in my academic career. After much consideration, I decided to write on the subject of Indigenous female leadership in higher education communities. Interestingly, a study

acknowledges the duality of Indigenous female leadership (Fitzgerald, 2006), as leadership is characterized as being able to walk between two worlds" (Kenny, 2012). Additional research reaffirms the theme that Indigenous leadership requires moving seamlessly between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds (Julien et al., 2010; Kenny & Fraser, 2012; McLeod, 2012; Stonefish, 2013). It is with this in mind that the following paper will approach the topic of female Indigenous leadership within higher education communities using "dual discourse" (McLeod, 2012). McLeod (2012) defines dual discourse in reference to her First Nations and non-First Nations leadership knowledge and the struggle to find her female First Nations leadership voice. Her struggle is relatable, as I have also encountered numerous difficulties in remaining "true to self" (McLeod, 2012) while enduring the challenges brought by my own dual identity as an Indigenous and French woman.

First, I will briefly present cultural teachings evident in the narratives of Indigenous women in leadership positions within higher learning communities. I will also provide my own narrative about beadwork lessons and make a connection to my own leadership journey. I wanted to present a narrative because this form of research is being utilized to position Indigenous ways of leading at the centre of leadership practice and theory (Fitzgerald, 2006). Furthermore, narratives provide a method of withstanding and joining the past, present, and future (Kenny & Fraser 2012).

### **Indigenous Women and Cultural Teachings**

A definition of Indigenous leadership is still emerging and constantly evolving as Indigenous scholars refute western theories and models of leadership (Kenny & Fraser, 2012). Western leadership theories do not encapsulate the narratives specific to the gendered and cultural experiences of Indigenous women's leadership in education communities (Fitzgerald, 2003). Scholarship has cautioned that the definition of Indigenous leadership is without universality (Bunner, 2015; Fitzgerald, 2006; Kenny, 2012). Research which addresses Indigenous women in leadership positions throughout higher learning communities has been scarce; nevertheless, findings indicate cultural identities and beliefs serve as a foundation for Indigenous leadership practice (Chavez & Minthorn, 2015; Kenny & Fraser, 2012, Voyageur et al., 2014).

The literature demonstrates a subjectivity, but what is particularly salient is the practice of using narratives to convey complexities and nuances of Indigenous leadership (Kenny & Fraser,

2012). For the purposes of this paper, the literature referenced is not meant to signal a comprehensive inventory. Indeed, there are more Indigenous scholars and educational leaders who convey the germination of female leadership practices rooted in cultural teachings. Bunner (2015), who is Sicangu Lakota, presents cultural teachings of clans which have informed her leadership practice and are characterized by honouring ancestors and future generations. Crazy Bull (2015), from the Muscogee Nation, puts forth that leadership is embedded in her perception of what it means to carry a tribal name. Interestingly, both Bunner and Crazy Bull touch on the aspect of vision within leadership practice. Crazy Bull (2015) indicates that vision can be mutual or independent of the group and characterizes the latter as one which can be pursued regardless of mutuality. Bunner (2015) offers a story of her ancestor's cultural teachings of how the soul resides in the heart and is connected to vision and planning. Kahunawaika'ala Wright (2015) utilizes stories of identity to portray a connection to cultural values that are passed down from her ancestors, and how those values can assist in overcoming challenges. She also highlights one of the goals of educational leadership, which is to nurture a conscious responsibility to others. Mcleod (2012) has put forth a female First Nations leadership framework which has its foundations in medicine wheel teachings. The intergenerational model characterizes the leader as a "learner" who moves cyclically throughout the four medicine wheel domains, and that within the process "personal reflection," "experiential relationships," and "connections" dovetail



to inform leadership practice (McLeod, 2012). Overall, Indigenous women's narratives provide a glimpse of their rich cultural identities which have influenced their individual leadership practices.

## A Personal Narrative on Beadwork Teachings

During my youth, my Mother Florence and I spent countless hours at our small kitchen table, where she taught me the art of sewing intricate patterns of Dene floral beadwork. During these times, she would share stories that would make us laugh over our cups of orange pekoe tea. When she first asked me to bead with her, I told her I did not have the patience to bead. Yet, when I began to learn I recognized that it is in the act of beading itself that one develops the required patience. Patience and persistence are developed through beadwork by undertaking the laborious, repetitive movement of using the needle to pick up beads, passing the needle through the buckskin, and carefully tacking the beads down. All of this requires a great deal of dexterity and fine motor skills as the hole within each bead can sometimes be measured in millimetres. Immense patience is required as there are hundreds, if not thousands, of beads used, and the amount of time required to complete a piece of beadwork can be quite extensive.

I recall the first time I accidentally spilled a plate of beads on the floor. I balked when my mother instructed me to "pick up every single bead." Reluctantly, I got down on the floor, picked them up and sat back in my chair, thoroughly relieved that such a tedious job was done. However, without so much as looking up from her beadwork, my Mother commented that I had missed some and pointed in the direction of where



Contemporary Dene Rose. Beadwork by: Rhyannon Garant

the additional beads had gone astray. I begrudgingly got back down on my knees and resumed the task. She performed a final inspection, nodding to communicate that the job was thorough and complete.

Although I pride myself on the quality of my beadwork, there are subtle differences between my and my mother's work. My Mother utilizes a "traditional" technique of employing two strings, while I practice what is commonly known as the "lazy stitch." The "lazy stitch" is a method which uses a single thread and is often undertaken because it is quicker to bead. In her "traditional" method, my Mother uses one thread to carefully select uniform beads, and then uses the second thread to tack down every single bead. However, my approach is much more random with respect to bead selection, and typically I only tack down every second bead. The difference between using the "traditional" technique and the "lazy stitch" is that, in the traditional method, it is easier to control the thread's tension. Tension is instrumental in tacking the beads so they are placed in an



**The Girl Who Prays. Beadwork by: Florence Harris**

aesthetically pleasing manner. A novice “lazy stitch” artist often makes the mistake of pulling and stitching the thread too tightly, resulting in crooked and crowded beads. Both techniques can produce beautiful results; however, my mother’s skill using the “traditional” method creates exquisite pieces that appease the most critical eye. Undoubtedly, her work stands among other veteran Dene bead work artists.

She always cautioned me to be mindful of my thoughts while beading. She would tell me to put the bead work down if I had negative thoughts. She shared that if I continued to bead while having these types of thoughts, the negativity would affect the person who wears or has the beadwork. As I became seasoned in the art, I grew conscious of how my stitches were miscalculated when I had negative thoughts and a lack of concentration. Many times, I have had to

give the beadwork “a rest,” only to return to it when I was in a positive frame of mind. One of the most important beadwork teachings she shared with me, is that within every piece of beadwork there is always a mistake. When others see her work, they often exclaim in awe how perfect it is. She tells me that her eye is always drawn to and appreciative of the one bead that is always out of place. She advises, “There’s no such thing as perfect.”

Recently, I have come to understand that the beadwork lessons she presented are related to the development of my own leadership journey. I am not a “formal” leader, but the concept of leadership I would like to put forth is about the often subtler forms within a community. For instance, I am the first in three generations not to be sent to residential school, and the first of my Mother’s children to complete undergraduate and

graduate studies. Post-secondary education has afforded me the ability to connect with Indigenous women who are educational and community role models that I did not immediately have within family. These relationships have become a means of buffering the intergenerational impacts of the residential school. The journey has been one with many successes, but that has involved an even greater number of missteps.

Pidgeon (2012) puts forth that Indigenous leadership is about engaging in relationships centred around the practice of the 4 R's of respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991), but like the beadwork, there is always imbalance. I reflect on the times I have made mistakes in my relationships with family and community. I think of these times and relate them to "spilling the beads." Leadership requires me to ask, "How do I take responsibility for the restoration of balance? What can I learn from this and how can I move forward in a 'good way'?" Moving forward in a "good way" is entirely subjective, but I have come to learn that it is related to doing so without harm. Beadwork lessons remind me of the enormous patience and persistence required in the design and fruition of a vision. However, before moving forward to create, I am mindful that leadership involves a careful reflection of the past and an acknowledgement of those who have gone before.

### **A Change in Discourse, Impacts of the Indian Act on Indigenous Women and Leadership**

A sound discussion of Indigenous women and leadership must recognize the impacts of Canadian legislation upon their ability to participate in formal leadership activities. Voyageur (2014) notes that after the imposition of the Indian Act, women were subjected to a two-fold oppression, which first included the removal of rights and second, the subordination of

Indigenous women to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. Gender-based discrimination within the Act excluded Aboriginal women's ability to vote for community leadership and controlled their capacity to participate in public realms of leadership (Voyaguer, 2008). Invasive legislation and policy could determine the identity of a Status First Nations woman, which subsequently could obstruct her ability to participate in band elections (Johnson, 2000). For instance, an Aboriginal woman could lose her status upon marrying a non-Aboriginal male, and afterwards was no longer permitted to participate in self-government activities (Johnson, 2000). Prior to being given the right to vote, Aboriginal women were relegated to exercising their choice of leadership within private arenas (Voyaguer, 2008).

It was not until 1951 when amendments to the Indian Act created new guidelines which generated an opportunity for Aboriginal women's voices to be heard within the election process (Voyaguer, 2008). Apparently, the new wording of the Indian Act's policies created a "default" suffrage which made it possible for Aboriginal women to select leadership and for them to run in band elections. Voyageur (2008) mentions Aboriginal women were eager to commence formal leadership roles, as shortly after, Elsie Marie Knott became the first Aboriginal female chief in Canada. Nearly a decade later, the number of female chiefs across Canada had slowly risen to ten (Voyaguer, 2011). Johnson (2000) notes that in 1999, within the province of British Columbia, 20 percent of First Nations chiefs were female. Data published in 2011 calculated female representation across Canada at 20 percent as well (Voyaguer, 2011), despite females constituting 51 percent of the total Indigenous population (Statistics Canada, 2016). While the data demonstrates a protracted increase and

a lack of gender parity with respect to political representation, it also represents the onerous efforts of Indigenous women to continually rise against colonial instruments of oppression such as the Indian Act.

### **At the Intersection of Leadership and Education**

In many areas of community, Aboriginal women are leading the way for change (Kenny & Fraser, 2012). A significant area is that of education, as the number of younger Aboriginal women attaining post secondary credentials is rising. Statistic Canada's National Household Survey (2013) reported the number of Aboriginal women aged 35 to 44 who had a university degree was 13.6 percent, compared to 10.2 percent of those between the ages of 55 to 64. In 2006, Aboriginal women saw a six percent increase in post-secondary completion rates (O'Donnell & Wallace, 2011). Not only are a larger number of Aboriginal women increasingly obtaining post secondary credentials, they are also making economic inroads by way of their education. Further statistical evidence reveals Aboriginal women with a Bachelor's degree have higher median incomes than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (O'Donnell & Wallace, 2011). Furthermore, a recent study of gender and tenured and tenure-track scholars discloses the number of Indigenous females within some parts of Canadian academy is far greater than that of Indigenous males (Smith, 2017). Overall, Indigenous women are using education to enhance their economic status and make considerable advances in the area of post secondary education.

Indigenous women have been progressive in the fields of leadership and post secondary education; however, what does the data reveal when the two intersect? Data shows that women are rarely in leadership positions within post secondary institutions. An empirical analysis of university presidents

shows that in the mid-1990s, approximately 18 per cent of Canadian university presidents were women (Turpin et al, 2014). The percentage of women serving in leadership roles has not seen a significant increase, and has since plateaued at 20 per cent (Turpin et al., 2014). A study of Canadian universities from 1951-2001 exposes the scarcity of visible minorities within administrative leadership (Nakhaie, 2004), although it should be noted that in 1977, Ida Wasacase was appointed the first female Indigenous director of a Canadian post secondary institution, the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (Thompson, 2004). Notably, an online and academic library search reveals an absence of scholarly evidence on the historical appointments of Indigenous women to Canadian post-secondary leadership positions.

Universities are recreating organizational configurations to include Indigenous management positions (Pidgeon, 2012), however, empirical evidence concludes a meagre seven percent of Canadian universities employ racialized minorities in top leadership positions (Henry et al., 2017). Reporting shows a striking absence of Indigenous women on Canadian university presidential leadership teams. In the case where there was female leadership, positions were held by white females (Smith & Bray, 2016). By and large, the statistics demonstrate a serious dearth of diversity within leadership teams of Canadian universities. Researchers have undertaken a rigorous academic effort to assert "unspeakable" issues such as racism, where Indigenous scholars face numerous challenges practicing in the face of Whiteness within the academy (Henry et al., 2017). Indeed, it is very important to apply a critical lens to the absence of equity within Canadian universities; doing so can form an exploration point for addressing underlying issues and the commencement of remedial discussions based in solution-finding. Yet, notably, minimal attention has been given

to Indigenous women's narratives that detail leadership within education institutions (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998). Arguably, it is crucial to observe the leadership discourse of Indigenous women in education communities as positioning the academic lamplight upon this area of research in order to inform the practice of aspiring leadership and illuminate the course of their leadership development.

## Concluding Thoughts

Recently, I have begun practicing the "traditional" technique of using two strings within my beadwork. It has been a way of connecting with ancestors, as three generations before me have used this method. I am learning it is often the most arduous techniques that can produce the most remarkable results. However, results can be restricted by external factors, as evident in the historical efforts of government policy that sought to control the leadership pursuits of Indigenous women. And while Indigenous women are breaking new trails in regard to political leadership and education, statistical evidence reveals the rarity of Indigenous women in leadership positions within higher learning education communities. Scholarship continues to offer varying viewpoints which can contribute to a robust discussion of underlying issues around this absence.

From this point, moving forward in a "good way" can include the sharing of cultural teachings through narratives as they contribute to the positive development of an Indigenous leadership identity. Young's (2006) research on Elders and leadership speaks to the importance of Elders' cultural teachings in forming the basis of relevant leadership skills. Furthermore, mentoring has been noted to be a vital recommendation to increase Indigenous scholarship and leadership (Pidgeon, 2012), and has been crucial to the development of my own leadership voice. During my time as a graduate student at

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) I have been fortunate and privileged to learn from a circle of Indigenous women who are dedicated to improving and enhancing the educational experiences of Indigenous scholars. Within the TRU community, I have experienced supportive outreach from Elders and educators which has made a tremendously positive impact in my life. And while leadership requires a careful reflection of the past and an acknowledgement of those who have gone before, their efforts also demonstrate the emphasis on preparing those who have yet to arrive. The efforts may be considered small in measure, but undoubtedly, they have made an enormous impact upon my life which has subsequently influenced relationships within my family. For instance, sometimes it all begins with a professor's kind words of encouragement that can make all the difference in the course of one's leadership journey.

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*“Being part of Knowledge Makers has opened up a huge door that I thought might never happen in my lifetime. I’m just so grateful now that all the knowledge that I have is not going to get lost. I’m so proud of you.”*

*-  
Elder  
Estella Patrick Moller*

# Dr Karlo Mila

Tongan  
Poet and Academic

*Dr Karlo Mila joined us as our keynote speaker at our Celebrating Indigenous Research Dinner. This poem reminds us of the importance of service in leadership. Service to our elders, service to our ancestors, service to our communities and service to those yet to come.*

## Mana Moana Leadership

---

We have all travelled through  
the bodies of many  
relatives to arrive here.

All of us wearing  
those who have passed,  
fresh on our faces.

Yes, here we all are,  
meeting again  
in the children.

And even in this new land,  
let us find the pathways  
back to ourselves.

Can we find our way back  
to that place where we once belonged  
in order to find our way forward?

If ever the world  
needed to find their way  
it's now.

We have so much to remember.  
We have much to learn.  
We have so much teach.

Those of us whose cultures  
learned about their place in nature  
living at the mercy of the largest ocean in  
the world.

All that love  
all that abundance  
all that brutality.

A symbiotic relationship  
that is never  
on our own terms.

Those of us whose societies  
learn about sustainable relationships with  
earth and each other  
from living on the smallest islands in the  
world.

Let us follow those ocean roads  
that always lead  
us to the expansion of each other.

And we if make mistakes on the shore  
let us rectify this  
in the deep ocean.



And if there is negative intent  
let it  
fall to shore.

For we may become those leaders  
who can navigate  
us through the nights.

What more is there to hope for  
that each of us will find that place  
where we have most to give.

That gift  
where we will be  
of most service.

And when the journey is too hard  
let us tie our outriggers to each other  
and share breath.

Under the shade  
of the Palangi tree  
that intimidates us.

Under the critical eye  
of those who would throw shade  
with the words that feed us ma, and shame.

But let us dare to shine,  
and have no fear  
about burning too brightly.

To our young leaders  
cloaking yourself in clouds  
serves none of us.

Resist the dimming  
and dumbing down  
of low expectations.

Resist those things that we fear  
and those people who fear us  
when we are at our most powerful.

In this present darkness  
let us expand and extend  
our light.

Dare to shine.  
Cloaking yourself in clouds  
serves none of us.

It does not serve your family  
It does not serve our communities  
It does not serve our suburbs

It does not serve our nation.  
It does not serve our Ocean of islands.  
It does not serve the world.

Heed the words of our ancestors, for the matau,  
the hooks in your hands, that you use to cast  
your dreams,  
are made from the jawbones of our ancestors.

And as you cast your intent,  
think of what they want you to catch  
in this lifetime.

And as you cast your matau  
think of what you want your mokopuna  
to catch in theirs.

You are the thin thread between what has  
been before  
and what will come,  
as long as you have breath.

We have so much to remember  
We have much to learn  
We have so much teach.

Let us serve.

# Jayne Wenlock

## Simpcw Bachelor of Nursing

*"I began to realize that shame can only take hold when we are disconnected from the stories of resistance within our own families and communities. I place that shame as an insidious and infectious part of the cognitive imperialism that was aimed at convincing us that we were a weak and defeated people, and that there was no point in resisting or resurging. I became interested in finding those stories of resistance and telling them so that our next generation would know." (Simpson, 2001, p. 14). "*

## Exploring Personal Biases as an Indigenous Nursing Student Within Settler Ideology

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"You are what you eat." This was a common saying in my elementary school classroom at lunchtime. Although at the time I could only articulate this experience as bullying, looking back on it now, I see that it was an early way of stereotyping classmates based on their family, culture, and income. Though my lunches may have been generic, my Christmas and Thanksgiving meals were not settler meals; rather, they were meals which honoured my Ancestors and Indigenous history. Salmon was a staple at our dinner table, as participating in the salmon run on Secwepemc land was a tradition in which we took part. During classroom activities at school, we would discuss these traditional meals but always from a settler perspective. Often my family would be the only ones who did not celebrate Thanksgiving with a turkey and a pilgrim hat. The difference was noticeable, both to others and to me. Sadly, I know people who would draw conclusions about another's lunch or Thanksgiving meal. I ate salmon, others did not.

Even though I rebel against the idea of stereotypes, they still register as a bias in my mind because biases are born from the culture in which we are situated. The Canadian Nurses Association (2017) defines culture as, "the learned values, beliefs, norms and way of life that influence an individual's thinking, decisions and actions in certain ways" (p. 21). The culture in which I grew up, and the culture in which I live now, impacts my daily life by influencing my thoughts and my actions. Throughout this paper I will explore two personal biases and reflect on the impact these biases have on my relational nursing practice. Reflective practice is a staple of a nurse's relational practice and inquiry, as relational practice requires the nurse to develop "a more in-depth and comprehensive consideration of the historical, economic, political, social, environmental, and geographical influences at play when families encounter illness or other difficulties related to life transitions" (Potter et al., 2014, p. 277). As an Indigenous

nursing student, I come into my practice with personal values and beliefs. In the expanse of three years of schooling I have seen the categorization of human beings by their mortality rates, severity of responsiveness, and illnesses, all of which have categorized their level of care. Unfortunately, even before one's illness or behaviour, one's cultural demographic can influence care, specifically for an Indigenous patient. To expand one's relational practice, addressing personal biases is the nurse's responsibility (Potter et al., 2014). Within the reflection of my own personal biases I will also consider barriers for addressing these biases in practice, both in my personal practice as well as for the nursing profession as a whole.

### **Personal Biases Explored**

Growing up as an Indigenous woman in Canada has not been easy. Experiencing and combating racist attitudes and oppressive acts have become a part of my daily life. I grew up in the small rural town of Claresholm, Alberta. Growing up in this small town was not easy. Although cross-cultural marriages existed, my family was the only English and Indigenous partnership in my town and racism against Indigenous people was rampant. As the daughter of a Simpcw te Secwepemc father and settler mother on Treaty 7 territory, I was blessed with a childhood that taught me the beauty of Indigenous and settler ways of living. Both of my parents were teachers in the local schools; however, despite their support, Indigenous teachings were not consistently accepted into the curriculum. When I think of my childhood, I admired how much my father rebelled. As a Simpcw First Nations man, he had strong principles for learning about land, ceremony, and gathering, even in the face of settler opposition. As an adult I realize how much my father's resistance to a colonized way of being has influenced

my ability and desire to share my story, as part of the next generation of Indigenous peoples. Action and resistance are both parts of the resurgence to share stories with the next generation (Simpson, 2011). Throughout my childhood, my father liked to listen to his rock music loud and always had his "Native Pride" hat on backwards. His hat sat upon his long braided hair; his beaded vests were displayed at settler ceremonies. As a child I has no concept of resistance but I respected him and wanted to be like him; now, I yearn to be a part of the resistance and resurgence movement that he supported. Acknowledging all forms of resistance is a crucial part of sharing history for the next generation of Indigenous peoples, whether it is wearing your "Native Pride" hat, or celebrating Thanksgiving with salmon (Simpson, 2011).

My first experience with racism happened one day while my father and I were driving home from school and were pulled over by the police. Instead of asking for license and registration, the police officer scanned the inside of the vehicle, looked at me and then asked, "Is this your daughter?" The officer proceeded to ask questions about where we were going and whether we lived in town. I remember feeling scared during the interview. I remember feeling physically sick. These feelings still arise to this day. Whenever I hear racist conversations or see racist actions be minimized as mistakes that are "easy to make," I cannot hide my fear and disgust. As a child in a small town I would often hear racist jokes, quickly covered up by the statement, "I do not mean you or your family," as if one exception made the joke acceptable. In each situation, silence would often be my form of resistance, however, I would always feel physically ill at the lack of accountability. The upset I felt, and still feel, from this overt and covert racism not only comes from my personal

experience, but also from seeing people look down on, ignore, and harass my father throughout my lifetime. As result of these experiences, I hold a negative bias towards individuals who express racism towards Indigenous people in Canada.

The experiences one has can affect biases in both negative and positive ways. Reflection on these biases, both positive and negative, is an important element in developing relational practice (Potter et al., 2014). As discussed previously, my experience in a small town influenced my negative bias towards individuals who express racist beliefs. From another perspective, it has influenced a positive bias for those who are trying to access services but find themselves unable to do so. The town I grew up in had a population of less than 4,000 people and it was more than an hour away from the nearest city. My small town had limited options when it came to the availability of health and wellness services for young adults. These limited services were even slimmer if one needed privacy and discretion for sexual or mental health concerns. The disturbing lack of mental health services became obvious in high school. There were many young women - myself included - who would have benefitted from being able to talk to someone about poor mental health and sexual health, especially as an Indigenous student. However, the school counselor breached confidentiality, the doctors were known to be unyielding, and the pharmacists would call your parents. After one of my friends began self-harming, I began to get frustrated at the system and sought out other options. I ended up driving my friend to the nearest city's mental health clinic every month to get counseling and pharmacy services. My experience of disillusionment with my small town's mental health and support services

was compounded when my younger sister chose to transfer high schools in order to be supported as an Indigenous student, for both mental and community health. My sister's move from Claresholm to Fort Macleod was necessary, as she described the community and supports gained from a school which valued Indigenous students as something she had never felt before. I was happy to support both my friend and sister in any way I could, but, I also knew there were many others who felt the need for services which did not exist. The experience of growing up in a rural town that undervalued and undermined medical services for young women, especially Indigenous women, contributed to my development of a positive bias towards underserved young women.

### **Impact of Biases on Relational Practice**

One of the impacts of any negative bias is the impact of decreased respect for the individual who fits into the negatively viewed category. When I encounter a racist individual, whether a co-worker, a patient, or another health professional, my negative biases cause me not only to respect them less, but also to question their morality, education, and political alliance. These questions and assumptions build up until I have painted a picture of the individual, which is not accurate because I do not know the entire story of how they arrived at racism. A subsequent consequence of holding this negative bias is that I will inevitably be around that person when at the nurses' station. Each party has values rooted in a particular belief system; however, my experience has led me to feel fear when interacting with these racist individuals. In terms of relational practice, it is challenging to initiate and/or maintain a relationship with someone of whom you



are afraid, and whom you do not want to be around. Potential negative relational practice outcomes could include failure to follow up appropriately with patients and family members, as well as neglecting the need to be present with the patient.

A positive bias may have both positive and negative impacts on relational practice. A positive bias I hold is on behalf of vulnerable young women, specifically Indigenous women. This bias may have a positive impact in that I might spend increased time with individuals whom I believe fit into this category, but therein lies the problem: the category of “vulnerable” is largely subjective. I could unwittingly place individuals in this category who do not feel like they belong there, leading to negative impacts on trust and communication. As Vollman, Anderson, and McFarlane (2017) assert,

Although using language such as “at risk”, “higher needs”, or vulnerable” helps community health workers realize pockets of greater need ... Deficit based language inadvertently stigmatizes and marginalizes populations ... using the label “vulnerable” may suggest that a problem resides inside an individual (or community) and requires interventions using outside (often paternalistic) solutions. (p. 134)

Although placing an individual in a vulnerable category may positively influence the time and care given, not placing an individual into the category based on perceptions could jeopardize the quality of care and the patient’s access to resources.

## **Strategies and Barriers for Addressing Biases**

One of the strategies to address my negative bias towards racist individuals is to focus on the understanding that language and expression are not universal, but rather products of an individual's culture. As Doane and Varcoe explain, "a nurse's personal identity and social location shape his or her interpretations" (2007, p.192). My interpretation of an individual's comments may or may not be accurate to what that person truly means to express. Broadening my understanding of language is one strategy, but addressing the issue directly is second. As Doane and Varcoe (2007) discuss, the closeness of nurse-patient relationships can spur positive action, but it can also result in fleeing from uncomfortably close encounters. With the client who is expressing seemingly racist rhetoric, the strategy of directly addressing the concern could improve relational practice.

Taking a critical perspective, a barrier to the strategies of acknowledging language and addressing discrepancies directly is that culture is often deeply ingrained into our daily actions, including the language we use (Doane & Varcoe, 2015). Another barrier is the ethnocentrism that exists in North American culture (Potter et al., 2014). Viewing certain health practices as more beneficial than others, or placing different value on religious or spiritual healing within the medical realm, are only some examples of how racism, and racist language, are overlooked in health care at a structural level (Doane & Varcoe, 2015; Potter et al., 2014).

In order to address my positive bias toward vulnerable young women, and the potential negative impacts of assuming group membership, I can use the hermeneutic phenomenology (HP) lens. The HP lens focuses on how personal

experiences shape our interpretations and give meaning to situations and relationships (Doane & Varcoe, 2015). In order to improve relational practice with underserved young women, one must first focus on listening to the individual's story in order that one may better understand her situatedness. Only after hearing her story and her interpretation can one really ask whether she has experienced being "vulnerable." Unfortunately the female voice, and the female story, have been discriminated against in society. Taking a critical feminist perspective, there is a power differential experienced by many women which may make it difficult for them to share their stories and experiences with health professionals, thus creating a potential barrier to relational practice (Potter et al., 2014).

## **Professional Responsibilities**

Relational practice is part of the foundation of professional and ethical nursing care, as the goal of care is to work with the patient and family towards health and well-being (Potter et al., 2014). Having biases can directly impact the patient-nurse relationship and jeopardize nursing care. The College of Registered Nurses in British Columbia (CRNBC) professional standard 4: Ethical practice focuses on upholding the values of relational practice by ensuring that the client is "the primary concern in providing nursing care" (2012, p.16) and promotes honest, equitable, and respectful treatment of the client. In regard to my negative bias towards racist individuals, I recognize that I can get caught up in feeling personally offended by the client and thus my relational practice is no longer focused on the client. Similarly, the Canadian Nurses Association's (CNA) Code of Ethics includes the value, "providing safe, compassionate,

competent ethical care” for clients (2017, p. 8). This pillar emphasizes the need to build trustworthy and conscious relationships with patients. Failing to pursue a healthy caring relationship with a racist client would be negligent on the nursing level. For patients who may be in the vulnerable female young adult category, it would be negligent to assume group membership without having meaningful conversations with the patient.

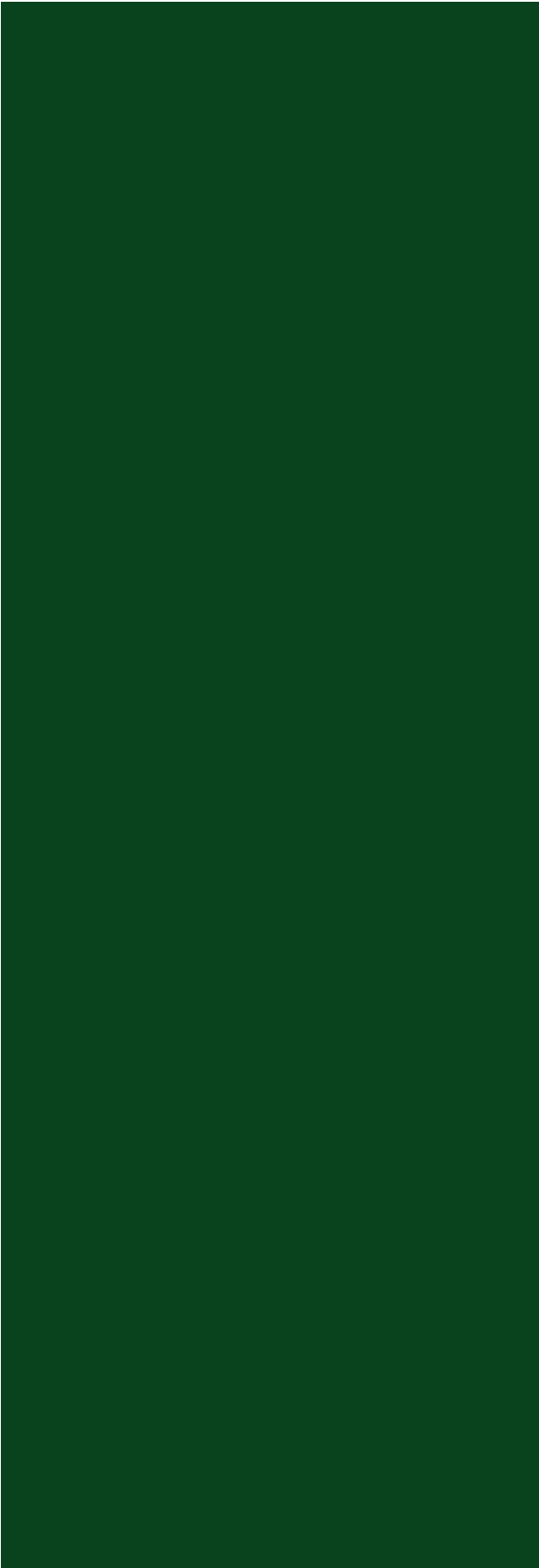
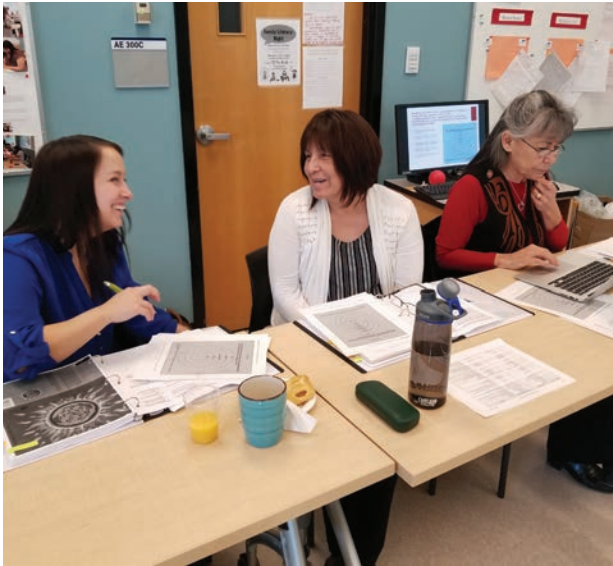
## Conclusion

Relational practice is influenced by the “personal and contextual factors [that] frequently make trusting, respectful, and therapeutic relationships challenging” (Doane & Varcoe, 2007, p. 192). As an Indigenous nursing student, my childhood, my education, and my desire to advocate for those in need have resulted in a negative bias towards racist individuals and a positive bias towards vulnerable young women. These biases, both positive and negative, have impacted my relational practice (William & Stickley, 2010; Doane & Varcoe, 2007). If left unchecked and un-reflected upon, my personal biases can lead to the breakdown of safe and ethical patient-nurse relationships. In my practice, I seek to enact resistance and resurgence of Indigenous ways of knowing by sharing my personal stories, and my family’s stories (Simpson, 2011). As a student, I start my journey from my Ancestral roots, as well as from the nursing foundation of relational practice (Potter et al, 2014). Health care environments are patient-centered, not worker-centered, and thus trust is key. If one holds biases towards the patient or family, whether good or bad, those biases can potentially interfere with one’s ability to truly hear their story and understand their relational context. As a future nurse, the role of patient advocacy is utmost. Without these reflective practices, patient-centered

care and relational practice suffer. Thus, as nursing students from both Indigenous and settler backgrounds, we must resist action based on biases by incorporating reflexive practices into our daily routines.

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# Charmaine Peal

Nisga'a Nation  
Master of Education

*"Indigenous Education is the water that nurtures us."*

## Finding Treasures Through Our Language and Culture: Nisga'a Language Revival CharmainehI way, Ksim Ganada Niiy.

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I stepped into my Diversity class not knowing what to expect. The first night my instructor introduced himself, he had a list of questions on the smartboard. I sat near the back of the classroom on the left side. We were given instructions to introduce ourselves using the list of questions, indicating at the end how this has brought us to where we are today. I had not felt this feeling in a long time. I listened to my classmates introduce themselves. They were from Mexico, China, India, Peru, Saudi Arabia. All the students who came from other countries spoke two or more languages. As it got closer to my turn to speak I felt an overwhelming emotion. I felt so sad, with a deep pain in my heart, because I could not tell them I am fluent in my mother tongue. I paused for a minute to gather myself and continued to introduce myself. My English name is Charmaine Leah Peal. My Nisga'a name is Naxnokgum Ganaaw (Super Natural Frog). My clan is Raven/Frog from the

house of Luux hoon. I was born in Terrace, BC. After shedding a few tears, I explained that I wish I could say I am fluent in Nisga'a. I am an Intergenerational Residential School Survivor and it is because of my experience of this identity, one imposed by the Canadian government, that I am deeply mournful of not being fluent in Nisga'a (language). You see, my nits'iits'(grandmother) Ida Peal raised me, and in that exposed and vulnerable moment in the classroom she came to me. She did not speak much Nisga'a to me, but she did teach me a lot about harvesting and preparing Nisga'a food. My grandmother taught me how to work in the smoke house to smoke oolichans and salmon. As I came back in to the room, I continued to share more about who I am and I was surprised at myself for doing so –it felt like an old deep cut had opened up. Oddly, I felt okay sharing some of my life story because we had discussed class protocol; I was comfortable

with the majority of bodies in my new class, knowing we each have our own stories to tell. After class, a few classmates came to me and acknowledged me with a hug and warm words of encouragement that wrapped around my heart. It was assuring to me that I was heard by my peers.

### **My Grandma is a powerful LIVING Ancestor**

My ancestors have been here for over ten thousand years. Canada and its government was established a hundred and fifty years ago. As a proud Nisga'a woman who comes from a long line of strong Nisga'a women I am able to be here to further my education at TRU. My heart aches knowing I am not fluent because of colonization and residential schools. I can speak short sentences. I speak what I know to my students and to my family. I have heard stories of my people and other Indigenous people coming back from residential school having to relearn their language. All my aunts and uncles can understand and speak the Nisga'a language but the next generation are not as fluent. They may understand it but they do not speak it, or if they do speak it, it is only infrequently.

During most of the time I spent with my grandmother, she would not speak to me in Nisga'a. I believe it was her way of supporting me to be a leader for our people. I remember sitting with her in the feast hall and sometimes I would ask her what the speakers were saying. She would tell me what was being said. This was very helpful because now I am able to make out what some speakers are saying in the feast hall. We would go home after the feast, and if we brought so'ó (food taken home to eat later), she or I would heat up the Nisga'a stew and have a bowl together. She would reflect with me on how the feast went. I remember

on one such occasion she said she wished the speaker had spoken English because not everyone can understand Nisga'a and the speaker had a very important message. The times I heard the Nisga'a language at home were when my grandmother spoke Nisga'a to her friends on the phone or when they were over visiting. The other times Nisga'a was spoken in the home were when she was speaking to her children. If I had a question about my homework for Nisga'a class, I would ask my grandmother for help. She also helped anyone who had questions about our language and culture.

### **School District 92 (Nisga'a)**

School District 92 (Nisga'a) was born 41 years ago. For many years, my grandfathers and grandmothers fought for our education and right to speak Nisga'a. We have our own school district because they did not want students to be separated from their families at a young age. We have four Nisga'a villages and each one has an Elementary School. Gitlaxt'aamix, formerly called New Aiyansh, is the largest of the Nisga'a villages and has a high school which all students in the Nass Valley attend. I went to school at Nisga'a Elementary Secondary school from kindergarten to grade 12. I was taught Nisga'a from grades K-7; then, in high school, it became an elective. I took Nisga'a Language courses throughout high school. I remember my high school Nisga'a classes; there was a small room with tape recorders, and I would have to listen to the tape and repeat what was being said on the tape. I believe it would have been helpful to me if I had understood what I was saying so I could use and practise the language, but this was only to practice pronouncing the words correctly. There was a teacher's aid who would listen to the students speak. This is no longer part of the

Nisga'a classes; the small room was taken out and now it is one large classroom.

Another place to learn the Nisga'a language is through cultural dancing. This was brought back by Eli Gosnell. He was also a master carver who carved the unity pole that was the first totem pole raised in over a hundred years in the Nass Valley. It was raised to commemorate the opening of our own school, and a huge celebration was held. The dancing and singing was done by all Aiyansh community members who wanted to participate. My family has been a part of this since it began. I have learned many Nisga'a songs, and have brought my children to take part in the Gitlaxt'aamix Ceremonial dance group. My grandmother helped me and showed me how to make my regalia and my children's regalia.

### **Importance of revitalization of Nisga'a language**

It is more apparent than ever before that there are many Indigenous people in Canada and throughout the world who are experiencing language revitalization. This highlights the need to keep our language alive and to value language globally. Our culture and language that once were taken away from us by governments and churches are being revived. The Nisga'a have been living along the Nass River since time immemorial. We have always been a spiritual and governing people through our Nisga'a language and Nisga'a culture. We have our own laws and ways of knowing. Our language is a vital part of us; it ties us to our culture. In my research on Indigenous language revitalization, I have found affirming voices. For instance, Darrell Kipp (2009) expresses his firm belief that culture emanates from language (p. 1).

I have four children and two grandchildren and it is also my belief that "[f] or the speaker, the language activist,

language is part of their responsibility to their children and their children's children; it is an integral piece of the culture" (Rice, 2009, p. 43). I speak what I know to my children. My youngest child tells me he does not know what I am saying, and it can be difficult at times to focus on the goal of using the language with my children. I know it is possible for my children to learn their language and culture. Nisga'a language is important; it was given to us by Simo'ogit Ts'im Laxha.

Kipp (2009) asserts, "One of the most effective ways to teach children to speak our language is full day immersion school or classroom. And that, an immersion school's sophistication and effectiveness are also found in its simplicity" (p. 2). For a couple of years, Nisga'a Elementary Secondary School implemented a half-day immersion program for Kindergarten and grade one students. Currently, Nisga'a language is taught for half an hour a day, five days a week, in all elementary classes in the district.

Kipp (2009) explains, "Each child is learning at their optimal pace, and introducing competition can become a serious distraction to the positive learning environment in school. Some students will arrive at the language school with a prowess for their language; others less so, but in the world of language revitalization all are equal in importance" (p. 5). I believe this is how I felt at a young age. While I do not recall specifically what happened in Nisga'a class, I remember crying to my grandmother and her telling me that she did not know why I was being taught Nisga'a and that she felt I did not need it. This affirms Kipp's (2009) observation that "[i]n our tribe, the negative conditioning was so successfully ingrained that the taboo against speaking our language remained fresh in the minds of even second and third generation non-speakers of the Blackfoot

language”(p. 6). Despite this, I still continued with my language classes right through high school. I am a part of the Gitlaxt’aamiks Ceremonial dancers; I continue to participate in singing traditional Nisga’a songs and dancing with my family and friends.

There are no current figures of fluent Nisga’a speakers in the Nisga’a Nation. Kipp (2009) states, “It’s difficult to completely enumerate how many speakers remain in our tribe, it is clear the numbers are now down to a precious few”(p. 8). A survey done by First Peoples’ Cultural Council in 2014 reported on the many Aboriginal languages of BC. Nisga’a was reported as having 15.8% fluent speakers and 34.4% semi-fluent speakers and 8.8 % learners, with a population of 5,428 from the four Nisga’a communities: Gitlaxt’aamiks, Gitwinksihlkw, Laxgalts’ap, and Gingolx. As our Elders move on to the spirit world, so do our stories; they are encyclopedias of Nisga’a language and culture. And so, the number of our fluent speakers goes down.

### **What can be done to revitalize the Nisga’a language**

Learning the Nisga’a language starts in the home. Our first teachers are our mothers, our grandmothers. Noori (2009) writes, “If we can honor the language and use it regularly, then like dreams remembered, it will guide us and define us in ways that connect us to our home, our ancestors and to one another” (p. 1). This can be difficult if we do not have the tools or knowledge of a fluent speaker. Noori also points out, “the teachers who learned the language as a first language are leaving, and we are entering an age when the teachers are second language students”(2009, p. 1). This is one of the important reasons why we need to bring back Elders into the classrooms. We need to have an immersion program. Our language needs to be fluid, as “[h]istory has

proven it is incredibly difficult to maintain ethnic identity without the language running like lifeblood through every daily act” (Noori, 2009, p. 13). It would be valuable to provide Nisga’a books for young families, so mothers can read to their children and children can read to their parents.

We can dedicate particular nights to language learning and learning about our culture. “Learners need to listen, understand, speak and creatively use a language in order to be considered truly fluent” (Noori, 2009, p. 13). Noori explains, “More than simply learning a language, students and teachers must work together to make sure that the language is part of the community-in the homes, at work, at play, during significant events” (2009, p. 13). It would be helpful to have Elders there to correct learners when they mispronounce words or assist learners with how to translate books, prayers, songs, and stories. In addition, our Nisga’a government website needs to be kept up to date with translations.

### **Conclusion**

As a mother and a teacher, I do my best to pass on what Nisga’a language and culture has been passed down through my family, the Nisga’a communities, and all the Nisga’a language teachers in my life. Rice (2009) points out, “For the speaker, the learner, the language activist, language is part of their responsibility to their children and their children’s children; it is an integral piece of the culture” (p. 43). We have to do our best with the changing world; as it changes, so does our language. Speas (2009) states, “The truth is that living languages are always changing (p. 28).” We can use technology to help us learn our language. The Nisga’a have an app on First Voices, which also needs to be kept up to date. I have used it a number of times and it is not always user friendly, especially when I was looking for a specific word or phrase.

I believe the earlier, the better for

learning the Nisga'a language. It starts with songs and dance, and is playful and fun. It is about getting comfortable and not feeling ashamed. It would be ideal if the Head Start Programs in the Nass were full immersion, and if School District 92 (Nisga'a) started an immersion program for the elementary school. The importance of passing on our First Nations languages, as Kipp (2009) notes, is that learners "will grow up knowledgeable of our tribe, and most of all leave our school with the language in their hearts, minds and spirit" (p. 9).

Looking into the future, my vision is that when I become fluent in Nisga'a I will teach a Diversity: Constructing Social Realities class at Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute in the Nass Valley and teach Nisga'a students. The Nisga'a students will speak to me in Nisga'a. I look forward to the day when Nisga'a students can be proud of who they are and speak their language fluently. I look forward to seeing new fluent speakers become creative in using the language, such as writing a Nisga'a newspaper, speaking on numerous Nisga'a radio stations, starting a Nisga'a Theater Group, doing Nisga'a stand-up comedy - the possibilities are endless.

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*"I feel grounded and connected and most of all inspired"*

Knowledge Makers

Day 2

In honour of her Grandma, Nisga'a ancestors, and all the Indian Residential School Survivors (and those who did not survive), Charmaine has written a prayer that has been translated by her auntie Irene Squires.

### **Lip Gigiinaxgwiw**

*sim'oogit ts'im laxha-gi*

*Tooyaksiy' niin ahl amaa sa gi'amin loom'*

*T'ooyaksiy' niin ahl gasgi'nis*

*ganhl k'aliaks ganhl t'xaa  
nitkwshl yats'iskw*

*T'ooyaksim' niin oo miin ahl wineex*

*ganhl lip wilaa loom' ganhl  
algax ginamin loom'*

*K'amgwiitgum' oo sim'oogit ii habooldim' ii*

*haboohl hoon ganhl saak K'agahl*

*gagoodim' o miin dim xanaum' hli*

*siwilaay'insgwin loom' K'amgwiitgum' ii*

*de'entkwgum' Wil wahl Halimootkwgum'*

*dim gan wilt dim kap wilt*

### **My Prayer**

*God*

*We thank you for this beautiful day*

*We thank you for the mountains,*

*The river, and all the animals*

*We thank you for our food,*

*Thank you for our  
language and culture*


*We pray for protection for  
the Nisga'a Nation,*

*The salmon, the oolichans,*

*Open our hearts, minds  
and spirit to learning*

*Continue to bless us  
and keep us safe,*

*Amen*



*"I have felt an inspirational transformation in what I call wisdom fertiliser. Wisdom fertiliser is sometimes like the powder you dip your cutting into and if you add a bit of water it will take root. That's how it feels for me today."*

*- Elder*

*Dr Margaret Vickers Hyslop*

# Anastazia Munroe

Nak'azdli Whuten Band  
Bachelor of Arts

*"Indigenous research has existed since time immemorial, it is the maintenance of our ways of knowing and being. It may be in new forms in the scholarly world but continues the essence of who we are. Indigenous research is but a fundamental framework is for Indigenous pathway to our self- determination. It honors Indigenous knowledge, customs, and rituals in neocolonial paradigms to be hierarchical in category below western 'science'"*

## The Identification of 'Invisible Losses' within Cultural Resource Management Practices

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### Introduction

In British Columbia (BC), the Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) is a constitutional legal body designed to protect heritage. However, its limited protection powers do not incorporate Indigenous Peoples' values and objectives for heritage stewardship (Turner, 2008). Under these conditions, I examine the importance of culturally modified trees (CMT) in Indigenous value systems and the invisible losses Indigenous peoples incur as a result of removal and limited protection measures. The importance of these invisible losses generated from limited protection of CMTs underlines the displacement and disruption of Indigenous ways of knowing and being on land through these associated contexts. To understand the designation of CMTs in Canadian legislation I briefly discuss the evolution of HCA and its limited role protecting CMTs, including the increased pressures from Indigenous peoples rallying for meaningful engagement towards heritage stewardship. A relationship

between the HCA and Indigenous peoples is essential for the development of cultural resource management (CRM) and towards the reconciliation movement in Canada. Furthermore, I discuss the forestry developments leading to the increased industrialization of archaeology to reinforce the invisible losses for Indigenous peoples within management processes and practices. The legal implications concerning the HCA and forestry development practices are defined by the landmark cases Delgamuukw and Kitkatla where Indigenous history challenged the limitations of forestry and HCA institutions. By understanding the historical processes that determine relations today, I discuss my family's experiences with the invisible losses we experience unseen by industry and policies reinforcing our erasure and sovereignty from the land, making this issue close to my heart; however, more broadly, as an Indigenous woman I do not want others to continue to be unseen and silenced.



Further, I discuss the foundational clash of western and Indigenous phenomenologies that is basis for misunderstanding and hierarchal ranking of value with regard to the processes that reinforce invisible losses of CMTs. Lastly, I discuss my research limitation and recommendations to address the invisible losses created by the loss of context by the narrow scope of protections the HCA includes for CMTs.

### **Evolution of the HCA**

Unlike other provinces in Canada, it is significant to note the status of British Columbia (BC) is largely unceded territory; this is essential to understanding the history and current state of the Heritage Act. Klassen states how the status of BC and “its consequents lack certainty over resources and title, and ongoing land claims and litigation that profoundly affects archaeological heritage and CRM in Canada” (2009, p. 202-203). BC is primarily governed by provincial legislation, while federal heritage legislation does not exist if Indigenous title and sovereignty were never extinguished (Klassen, 2009). Consequently, Klassen states the circumstances of British Columbia’s archaeological development of practice are intrinsically different. Indigenous engagement in heritage stewardship has evolved and continues to evolve differently in BC than any other jurisdiction (2009). The evolution of archaeology in BC begins with various statutes regulating archaeological heritage that have been in place since 1865, using the Indian Graves Ordinance (Klassen, 2008, p.8). Moreover, the 1960s were marked by the first comprehensive legislation known as the Archaeological and Historical Sites Protection Act (AHSPA) (Klassen, 2008, p.8). Following this act, archaeology grew at an unprecedented rate with increasing government support, along with Indigenous political rallying for involvement in heritage management (Klassen, 2008; Burley, 1994).

As a result of increased pressure, the Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) was enacted to replace the AHSPA; its principle amendments reduced the range of archaeological site types “automatically” protected by legislation (Klassen, 2008). Moreover, it extended provincial control over archaeological heritage on private land, and established a Heritage trust to encourage conservation efforts (Klassen, 2009).

### **A new era of Indigenous relations**

A significant moment in history occurred with the first Indigenous input over provincial legislation, where the need for further Indigenous engagement and consultation was insisted upon. The Aboriginal committee recommended joint Aboriginal stewardship through new policy and trust to control their own heritage that would challenge Crown control. Furthermore, the committee also stressed the necessity to reform the principle date of 1846 that measured significance. The date 1846, established by colonial frameworks of sovereignty, does not meet the needs of Indigenous interests or create relevancy to Indigenous people’s value systems separate from the state. Understanding the current HCA’s narrow range of protection under an arbitrary date “excludes important ‘post contact’ places has tangible evidence, often referred to in B.C. as ‘traditional use sites’ (such as trails, culturally modified trees, and ‘historic’ camps or fishing stations” (Klassen, 2009, p. 206).

Similarly, the challenges with the HCA relate to the ways in which Indigenous Peoples are framed as subjects of the past whose values and goals are erased out of policy that controls their cultural legacy as living peoples (Klassen, B. & Reimer, R., 2009). As expected, meaningful Indigenous partnership was not accepted in the HCA amendments of 1994 (Klassen 2009; Klassen, 2008). Further to this, the duty to consult

was expanded post-1997 where increased pressure for forestry to meaningfully engage with Indigenous peoples changed the dynamics and need for Archaeological CRM.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, when the HCA was amended with an important policy change, there was a rapid industrialization of CRM more generally. For example, the HCA “adopted ‘the proponent’ pays model whereby the developers directly contract impact assessments by private consultants;” however, Indigenous peoples were not a part of the negotiations of this new model (Klassen, 2008, p.9). Currently the HCA states, “the purpose of this Act is to encourage and facilitate the protection and conservation of heritage property in British Columbia” (Heritage Conservation Act, 2017). However, the continuing limitations of the HCA do not adequately protect Indigenous People’s cultural heritage; the policies do not reflect meaningful indigenous partnership on fundamental policies and only disrupt Indigenous continuity in BC. The Ministry of Forest’s (MOF) relationship with the HCA to mobilize forestry development limits heritage management to accommodate forestry objectives rather than Indigenous people’s objectives and values for heritage stewardship.

### **Significance of culturally modified trees**

The new designation of CMT status as traditional use sites is limited under HCA protection and consequently excludes Indigenous people’s values for heritage stewardship systems. The exclusion of traditional use sites post-1846 reinforces the clear hierarchy of power in the management of Indigenous cultural legacy as living peoples. Following this understanding of exclusion by policy limitations, I move forward in examination of the importance of culturally modified Trees (CMT). A CMT is understood as

...a tree that has been altered by aboriginal people as part of their traditional use of the forest. Non-aboriginal people also have altered trees, and it is sometimes difficult to determine if an alteration (modification) is of aboriginal or non-aboriginal origin. There are no reasons why the term “CMT” could not be applied to a tree altered by non-aboriginal people. (Archaeology Branch, 2001, p. 1).

The archaeological definition of a CMT reflects narrow western constructs that exclude Indigenous value systems. It is this narrow view of traditional practices that entrench use and occupancy within the landscape, as well as negate the stories often inscribed on many of the trees. Further to this, the archaeology branch dilutes the meaning and context of the CMT by mentioning the use of non-Indigenous peoples and their use of CMTs. However, this also points to an inherent issue within the western view of culture represented in material culture in general. For Indigenous people a CMT is an unbroken representation of Indigenous connection to the land: it is a physical enfolding of memory. The CMT is a connection to the past and present experienced at once. Also, it is a measure of continued use of the land and Indigenous extension through representations of identity. For Indigenous people the land is an extension of self which secures identity and histories, signifying the continued occupancy and future of the peoples (Turner, 2009, p. 238-239,259).

Another dimension to the significance of CMTs is their importance in cultural practices in B.C. Many nations use the tree for its properties such as bark for weaving, cambium as a source of food, or sap for glue (Turner, 2009). The numerous uses of a tree, with the usual evidence of markings that eventually creates the designation of “CMT”, are also a symbol of cultural use for the decedents (Turner, 2009). Considering

this, when CMTs are “managed,” the varied meanings inscribed onto a CMT represent a great loss for Indigenous peoples when they are not meaningfully protected by the HCA. Furthermore, the protections for CMTs by HCA are not adequate to protect the contexts. In other words, the associated contexts of a CMT can be defined by the cultural practices that continue through space in place of a specific area that is generationally held in value. However, the state objectives and industrial priorities are the main foci of the development of the HCA. Forest development in BC in particular has created the context for “CMT” designation.

### **Forestry development and industrialization of archaeology**

Since the expansion of CRM in BC, it has become the main employment for archaeologists (Klimko, 1998, p. 31). Klimko states that the roles CRM and the Ministry of Forestry play have increased relations because of the ‘proponent pay’ model adopted to hire private contractors. The involvement of Forestry increased due to amendments to the legislation where the relations between the HCA, Ministry of Forestry (MOF), and Provincial Archaeology Branch (PAB) were determined through the implementation of the Forest Practices Code (1998). Important policy changes influenced by the landmark Delgamuukw case led to important changes between the HCA and MOF (Klassen, 2009, p.208). The decision for the inclusion of traditional cultural practices as a fiduciary responsibility on Crown land as determined by *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* changed the requirement to protect Archaeological and Heritage conservation in BC, which included CMTs under the protection of HCA. Furthermore, the necessity of

Archaeological assessment permits for forest development could not infringe on protected archaeological evidence.

Among the implications of the new relations between CRM and MOF was a large increase in archaeological permits between 1994 and 1995 (Klimko, 1998; Klassen, 2009). Furthermore, the new relationship between Archaeology and Forestry demonstrated the massive shift in archaeology’s relationship with the forestry sector and the shift to industrialized archaeology. Similar to the *Delgamuukw* case, the *Kitkala* case determined that only authorized infringements by the Ministry. In consequence, the Archaeology branch, is not obligated to adhere the duty to consult. (Klassen, 2009, p. 208-209). Therefore, the provincial requirement of consultation for CRM is highly limited and surface level, where only a basic notification is required. The notification sent by CRM companies simply notifies Aboriginal peoples of permit applications with no other legal requirements, thereby creating low accountability and decision-making power for Indigenous peoples over their heritage (Klassen, 2009).

Later decisions in the early 2000s rolled back archaeological management and heritage stewardship through several program cuts (Klassen, 2009, p. 214-215). Klassen also states that there was a major provincial policy shift towards “results-based” management regimes in the resource industries. Thus, the place of archaeology in the legislated forestry planning process became less clear (Klassen, 2009). The path of archaeology in BC is reinforced by industrialization that does not legally mandate Indigenous partnerships and meaningful engagement. While, socially, BC archaeologists may be aware of the necessity of Indigenous involvement, that doesn’t negate the fact that official policy reinforces the forestry paradigm to be driven by other resource development interests (Klassen, 2009).

## Legal implications concerning the HCA

Following *Delgamuukw*,<sup>1</sup> one primary case stands out and sheds light on the fundamental issues of the legal landscape and the development of the HCA. In 2002, the Kitkatla developed a case, *Kitkatla band v. British Columbia*, that stood to defend their rights to the cultural heritage of CMTs. The Kitkatla core case represents the lack of legislation basis for consent to protect Indigenous heritage off federal and reserve lands (Bell, 2001). Since 1994, in the Kumealon lake region in the northwest coast of BC (figure 1), the International Forest Products Ltd. (Interfor) was authorized to cut 40 CMTs in the Kumealon region and did not consult with the Kitkatla band regarding the details. However, it wasn't until the Kitkatla entered treaty negotiations for Aboriginal title and rights to territory in 1998, where Interfor had intended to harvest a large area where a density of CMTs existed. Similar to earlier sections on the phenomenological views of CMTs, the Kitkatla people perceived CMTs as "living museums" that are integral to ongoing educational and cultural practices that reinforce identity and occupancy (Bell, 2001, p. 248). Conversely, the judge concluded that it could not be affirmed which group held claim to the CMTs. The phenomenological understanding is not held by the state, as clearly posited by Bell (2001) who claims,

Justice Braidwood describes them as trees of "ethnic" and "scientific" significance, which are "altered through the removal of bark strips" and are so "common" in British Columbia that thousands are reported and registered each year.<sup>10</sup> Although it is assumed that these modifications are done by Aboriginal people living in the area, in his opinion "it is not possible to tell which Aboriginal group culturally modified the trees." (p. 248)

Justice Braidwood was correct regarding the number of CMTs in BC; however, CMTs are dense numbers in locality and are indicative of important places for Indigenous peoples who return time and time again, creating these CMTs. Additionally, post *Delgamuukw*, oral histories can be used as evidence in court to prove which groups made certain CMTs. Therefore, Justice Braidwood's argument is not legitimate in the context of CMT significance. The decisions and comments clearly demonstrate the collision of Western and Indigenous values systems. Furthermore, Kitkatla challenged the CMT alteration by questioning the validity of HCA jurisdiction, and based their argument that CMTs are an integral part of cultural practices to Aboriginal society under section 35 of the Constitutional Act, thus making the status of CMTs a federal jurisdiction of protection where Interfor interests have no power (Bell, 2001).

In the end, the court found Kitkatla's argument insufficient to the guidelines of significance to Aboriginal society to make CMTs protected under Section 35, as are hunting and fishing rights. Ziff & Hope (2009) expand on the court decision to disagreement, where the granting of absolute protection of heritage resources would give too much power to freeze society in a particular moment. In other words, the rapid shift to give absolute protection over cultural resources would compromise the speed of economic process. The state objectives and their hierarchical value framework supersedes Indigenous values, needs and objectives over own heritage stewardship. In essence, it reinforces the concept that Indigenous peoples are not moving in a reconciliatory manner the objective to displace and disrupt Indigenous peoples ways of knowing and being.

## Evaluating invisible losses

It is common within Canadian society to emphasize economic development due to the income that is derived from resource extraction such as timber harvesting and returns from mining; the growth of cities provides indirect employment (Tindell, 2013). However, for Indigenous peoples, the indirect consequence of western economies focused on resource extraction is the creation of invisible losses. According to Turner (2008), invisible losses are characterized as being unacknowledged and are seldom considered by those benefitting from such policy. Peoples who are impacted by such decisions and policy often face invisible devastating consequences that are not easily connected to the original action, but nonetheless have direct and indirect impacts (Turner, 2008). Unfortunately, the historical record shows that Indigenous peoples are more often the subjects of devastating impacts than those who are more visible and acknowledged in society (Turner, 2008). Turner states:

A number of themes emerge when examining the invisible losses incurred by indigenous peoples as a result of land management policies. These are inextricably interconnected, but can be characterized as discrete types of losses worthy of explicit consideration through several colonial policies to assimilate and control indigenous such as dramatic changes in traditional uses of a resource. (2008, p. 2)

These unacknowledged losses weigh heavy on Indigenous constructions of self when resource extraction disrupts and displaces Indigenous people's contexts from the land. The destruction of CMTs can be considered a loss under this paradigm of thought. The significance CMTs hold is greater than what is thought under the HCA, where their significance is determined by a date; the invisible losses for Indigenous peoples are identity, culture, self-determination, influence,

and knowledge. The loss of identity refers to the Indigenous construction of identity as an unbroken connection to the land as an inseparable part of self. Therefore, a CMT's significance is a physical expression of identity to demonstrate history, occupancy, and the continuity of cultural practice. The dimensions of meaning are layered into the landscapes for Indigenous people.

The dimension of cultural loss includes the loss of cultural continuity, such as the fact that a CMT's role may be to educate the next generation as they learn identity and cultural practices. Under the jurisdiction of HCA, CMTs' designation as traditional use sites does not encompass Indigenous people's value systems, which in turn results in the loss of important contexts and reinforces the loss of ongoing culture when a CMT is not protected. It is clear the loss of CMTs represents an invisible loss to Indigenous peoples whose value systems are different than Western systems which do not acknowledge or understand the loss. Turner reflects that most resource management decision-making contexts are representative of the current conditions of misunderstanding of, and failure to acknowledge, Indigenous people's continued losses in Canadian society (2013). Fundamental misunderstanding between Indigenous and Western phenomenologies is a foundation of this continued problem.

## Personal invisible losses

My family is a customary group who functions under a governance structure that pre-exists contact. We occupy and harvest on our traditional territory known in Dakelh as Keyoh, which means homeland. Our keyoh is called the Maiyoo keyoh, which is a reference to a family name passed down generationally. It is located near Great Beaver Lake, 40 kilometres east of Fort St. James, British Columbia (B.C.) (see Figure 2). Following the theme of enduring invisible losses, my family

is subject to the continued colonial violence of erasure enacted by forest development which includes the loss of CMTs and trails recognized by placemarkers of our identity enfolded in the landscape and solidified by our oral histories. Under a hierarchical framework of value, our culturally significant space and places holding our identity, culture, and memories are placed below exploitive industry interests. In particular, one of our great losses on our keyoh and site of cultural significance is the logging of the trail Yoolh yoos ti (See Figure 4, 5 prior to logging). This trail is a hugely significant historical highway and a geographical feature forming the western border of the cultural institution of the Maiyoo Keyoh. Prior to the logging the Yoolh yoos ti, this site was a physical marker of identity, occupancy, and sovereignty well before the arrival of settlers. As a cultural site, pre-1846 it should have been protected under the HCA legislation. However, limited protections have allowed the destruction of Yoolh yoos ti and subsequent erasure of my ancestral history, occupancy, and sovereignty. This violent erasure from land is considered an invisible loss which disrupts and displaces us from the land we consider a physical extension of beinghood. The incredible destruction felt by my family from forestry development is unseen and unheard. The focus is placed on the importance of settler capitalist economies which benefit from the exploitation of our losses. My family's experiences with forest development, in addition to the limited protections afforded by the HCA, make this theme of invisible losses so important and highlight the necessity for meaningful engagement and co-management to improve the 'new relationship' between Canada and Indigenous peoples.

## **Phenomenology**

Elsy states, "European phenomenology, argues the dominant world view of the North America mainstream, which flows western scientific thinking, presents a fragmented

and rationalistic view of the universe, due to what is called 'scientistic', or analytic thinking (2013, p. 3). European phenomenology is based on Cartesian dualism whose constant fragmentation and opposition leaves gaps in how the world is experienced. Cartesian dualism positions object versus subject, body versus self, nature versus culture, self versus collective; the ensuing dichotomies create clear distinctions, and between each concept there is no connection, leading to the dominance of individualistic thinking in western thought due to Cartesian dualism fostering fragmentation rather than connection and collectivity. Elsey states that Western scientific thought focusing on the environment categorizes nature as exterior to and separate from humans. This is reflected in how Canada manages resources for utilitarian and economic value. The reductionist method to extract value from nature is transferred into western economies in a constant cycle of exploitation.

Indigenous phenomenology is non-dualistic. The self is not understood as intrinsically individualistic; rather, the focus is on the nation as a collective, and understanding of the world around one is not separate but is always connected through complex pathways. Indigenous phenomenology is non-rationalistic, taking a holistic approach to land in a continuum of body, self, and world (Elsy, 2013, p. 47). Land is understood as an extension of self, inscribed with the various nuances of selfhood. Land, from this perspective, is inseparable from self; it is an enfolding of identity, meanings, and spirituality. Elsey states that Identity is regional and terrestrial matter foundational to human experience (2013, p. 49). Another concept in Indigenous phenomenology is that storyscape is the manifestation of regional context, of a people's social and environmental interaction which provides the foundation of territorial

self-identification. For instance, CMT tree marker to a trail localizes a people's occupancy and continued use. Learning the environment, route, and ecology of the trail demonstrates lived experience through knowledge continuation, referring to continuity of time and space where an ancestor who created the trail can be materialized through your passed-down knowledge of space and place through locality of identity. The final concept Elsey mentions is poiesis, relating to the self's symbolic expression and presence within territorial surroundings (2013, p. 50), such as stories about landmarks; for example, a specific rock refers to a story about a totem defining an event in territory. Elsey states, "The land in turn is personified and animated as an environment that is neither external nor inert but rather speaks intimately to one's own bodily travels as sensuous selfhood" (2013, p. 50).

The land is inscribed with history and meanings specific to the peoples occupying the territory to assert selfhood and sovereignty. Understanding the differing phenomenologies of Indigenous and European peoples allows a greater understanding for foundational clashes on value systems such as land. Reductionist western methodologies and processes toward land mean the loss of important contexts from Indigenous phenomenology. The management of land reflects these different approaches, such as the perception of land as a resource versus a view toward land needs stewardship rather than 'management'. The significance and contextual meanings of CMTs are lost when they are cut down because they are not considered valuable by HCA. Or, if the CMT remains standing but the surrounding environment, which is just as important to the context, is not protected, it is yet another invisible loss not understood by utilitarian rationalist methodologies.

A further example of the Indigenous worldview was written by Seraphine Munroe during her CRM experience in the interior of BC on our Grandfathers' traditional territory. She states:

I write this from a forestry camp in where I hold the position of assessing the territory of my grandfather. Everything about this role has placed me in a paradox of problems. The trails that are embedded from hundreds of years of use as well as lithic evidence associated with thousands of years are now only being protected by what is essentially a ribbon on a tree. The connection between space and place is being disconnected as harvesting takes precedence over culture and context. The image of a stubbed trail tree is all that will remain. These images haunt me as I continue to weigh the benefits of working as an Archaeologist in CRM. On one hand, I take pride knowing the assessments were done fairly and with certainty, while on the other, the active participation of placing cut block ribbons on our ancestral lands makes me conscious of my role in the facilitation of logging. (Munroe, 2015)

Seraphine's experience with CRM archaeology is the manifestation of the invisible losses occurring when a CMTs layered meanings are lost by the destruction of context. Therefore, the protections of the HCA mean nothing for the Indigenous phenomenological understanding of space and place as integral to the security of identity, which in turn disrupts and displaces Indigenous peoples.

## **Discussion**

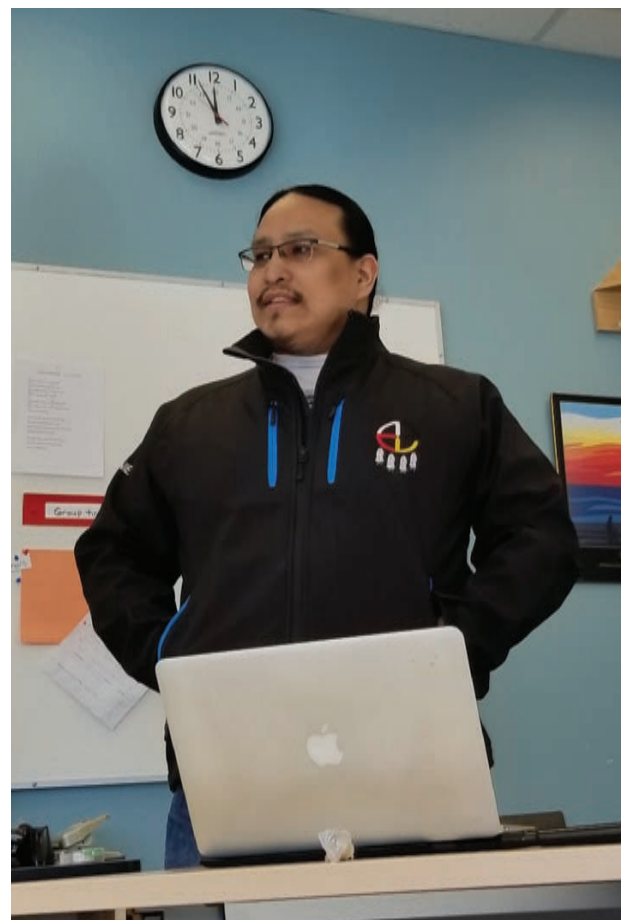
The invisible losses associated with the limited protection of CMTs' context in Indigenous value systems disrupts and displaces Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing and being. The research I conducted on the processes by which invisible losses are manifested and reinforced through history

and institutions is limited by the lack of information on impacts of buffers for CMTs. The further expansion and evolution of the Forestry development sector and its history is a limitation to information concerning CMT processes and practices. Other relating topic expansions lacking in research is the overlapping claimant boundaries of First Nations and the implications of protection. The disputed boundaries are an important expansion of bureaucratic policy disputes that affect processes and practices of CRM and a barrier to supporting Indigenous peoples meaningful engagement over heritage stewardship. Furthermore, the impact of section 12 of HCA has limited specific requirements and policy regarding CMT protection alterations. Due to limits to the scope of this research paper I have excluded these important expansions relevant to the limited protection of CMTs.

## Conclusion

In summary, this research represents an analysis of the limited provisional measures to protect CMTs by the HCA. Evidence presented around the evolution of the HCA and the relationship with forest policy demonstrates the clear priority to maintain the status quo for economic objectives, while the phenomenological differences between 'western' progress and Indigenous worldviews have been seen as dual paradigm that is inherently incompatible to co-management (Ziff, 2009). However, Indigenous peoples will continue to place high value over their material cultures, such as CMT sites and their contextual relationship to the present day uses of space (Turner, 2008). The foundational clash between Indigenous and Settler relations and frameworks of land seen in my family's experience of invisible losses on Maiyoo Keyoh by the logging Yoolh yoos ti serves to illustrate that, even under a pre-1846 status, forestry development values

supersede Indigenous rights protected by the constitution. Furthermore, archaeological sites such as CMTs represent important Aboriginal demonstrations of strength of claim that have largely been dismissed in Case law, as seen in Kitkatla v. British Columbia (2002). Essentially, this research demonstrates the maintenance of power dynamics in BC that render Aboriginal cultural spaces and places mere check boxes on a larger scheme of rapid development in BC, under the guise of the duty to consult.

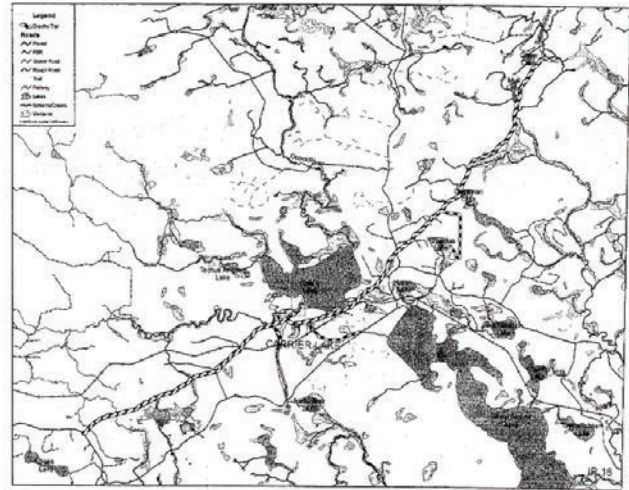




# Figures



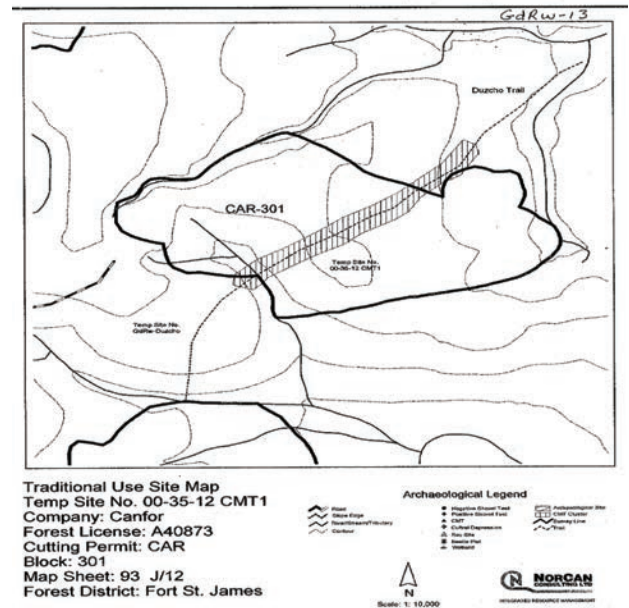
**Figure 1: location of Kumealon Lake, site for Kitkatla v British Columbia (2002)**



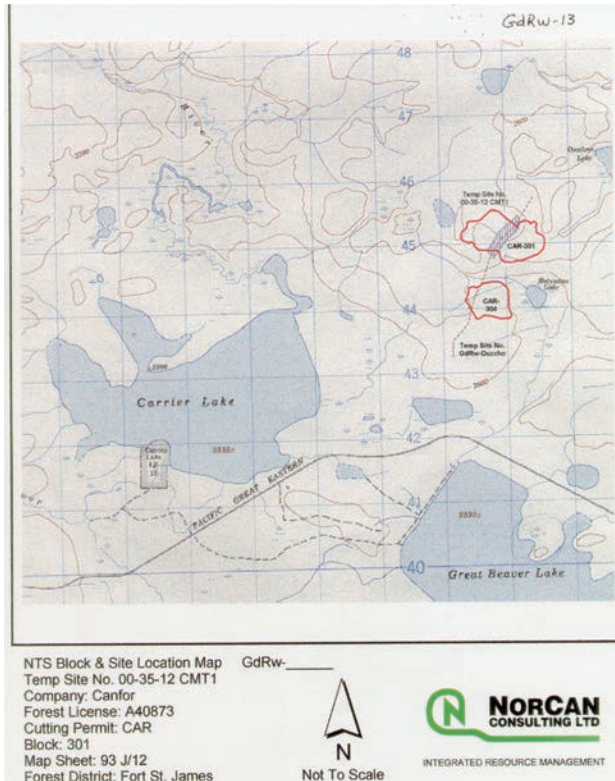
**Figure 3: Yoolh yooos ti (trail name)  
Source: Caledonia Courier (2009)**



**Figure 2: Location of my family's keyoh (traditional territory)  
Source: Wilcock (2013).**



**Figure 4: Site survey prior to logging of Yoolh yooos ti  
Source: NORCAN**



**Figure 5: Site survey prior to logging of Yoolh yooos ti**  
**Source: NORCAN**

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See section 3 for more information about the Delgamuukw case

<sup>2</sup> Under the analysis of the Delgamuukw decision, Louise Mendell highlighted that “[f]iduciary obligations include a duty of good faith consultation before interference with title.” From [http://fngovernance.org/ncfng\\_research/decision.pdf](http://fngovernance.org/ncfng_research/decision.pdf) See section 3 for more information about the Delgamuukw case

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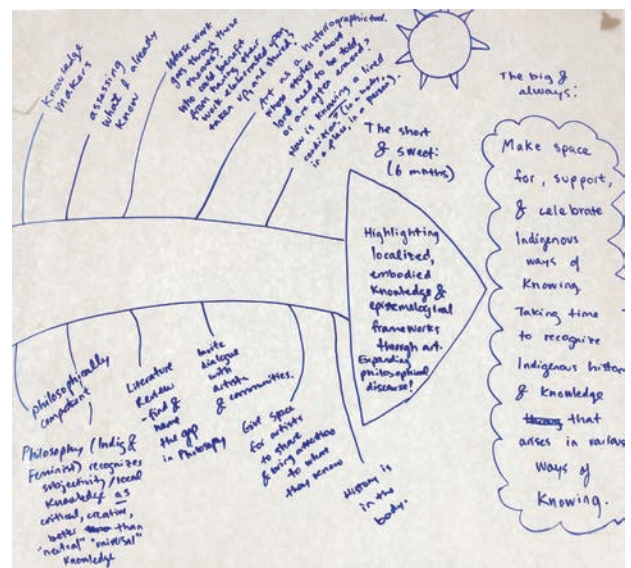
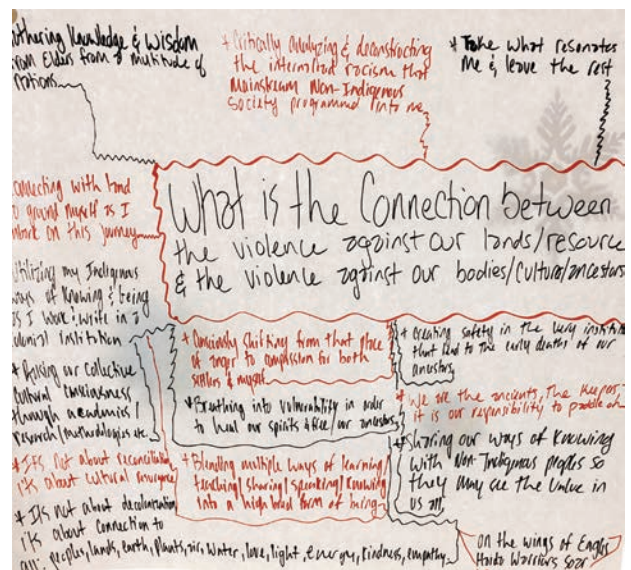
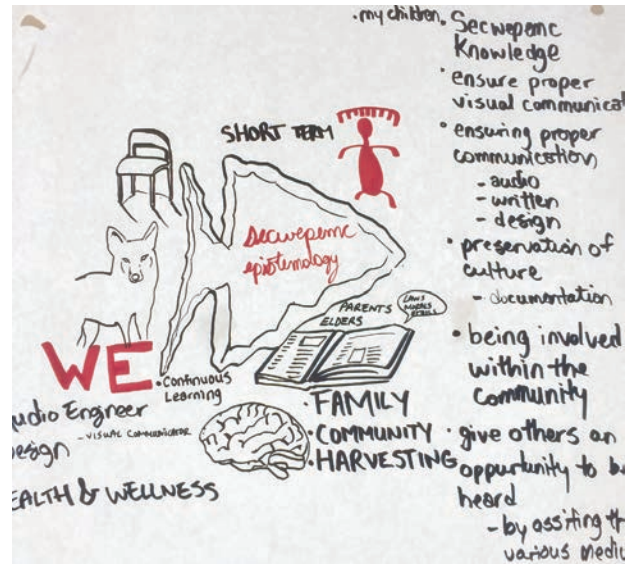
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# Roxie Defant

Skidegate, Haida Gwaii  
Bachelor of Social Work

*If initiated with a cognizant commitment to raising our collective Indigenous consciousness, Indigenous research possesses the power to carve away the corrosive debris that has affixed itself to our spirits, a corrosion that seeks to sequester us from our unwaveringly indomitable ancestors who held fast to their ways of living so that we may one day step into alignment with our authentic Indigenous identities and wear them with honour, valour and pride.*

## How my Haida Warrior Inspired me to Deconstruct Colonial Constructs

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### **Not Quite Everything**

“If we as Indigenous people walk away from and disengage from the academy [it is] at our own peril given that the academy performs a vital societal role of producing the elite knowledge in society.” (Smith, G. in Kovach, 2011, p. 89)

I have always believed that those who hold knowledge – that is, mainstream colonial constructs of what is considered knowledge - hold the majority of societal power and influence. The education system was one of colonization’s greatest tools; it stripped nearly, but not quite, everything from our people.

Growing up, I didn’t value the education system, as it had nearly annihilated my people, and I couldn’t connect to how this system of methodical oppression and cultural genocide could actually make space for me or serve me personally. But during

my mid-twenties I realized that education was the key for me to most effectively manipulate the structures of society to better serve me and my people, to raise our collective cultural awareness and progressively radical cultural resurgence.

My education has not only served me professionally, it has dramatically and powerfully awoken a deeper level of consciousness that has been slumbering in me since before my conception. Education helped me tap into generations of wisdom from my ancestors. Education grounded me, it humbled me, it centred me. Education helped me to make the mind, body, spirit, heart connection. Education saved me from my self-destructive tendencies and gave me a platform from which to share my challenges and gifts with others. Through education I ensure that my Grandmother’s early death from alcoholism, stemming from the legacy of the residential school system, was not in vain.

## **How I live My Life**

My name is Roxie Defant: I am from the Skidegate Band of the Haida Gwaii First Nation. I am of the Eagle Clan; my family name is Brown. I was born and raised in the inner city of East Vancouver. It is my home. I am a fourth-year social work student who fundamentally believes that I can accomplish absolutely anything to which I set my mind. I have a laundry list of what I plan to pursue after graduation: I will achieve my PhD; I will teach; I will work front line on the Downtown East Side; I will go into Psychology; I will be a free-range social worker, and so much more.

Getting to this time and space of my life has been long and arduous. I never planned on attending post-secondary; it was something that happened organically through a series of challenges and opportunities for growth.

I am honoured to be a part of this incredible opportunity that is Knowledge Makers. I do not know what lessons Knowledge Makers has in store for me, but I do know that its teachings will unfold throughout my life for many years to come.

I live my life with intention, with mindfulness and critical self-awareness. I believe that Knowledge Makers will lend its teachings to further cultivate a deeper sense of self in me as I near the end of this leg of my formal colonial educational journey. I believe that the more I understand myself, the more capable I am of understanding the world. The world in which we live is fragmented. Through opportunities like Knowledge Makers, I commit myself to recognizing and honouring the connection between us all; from there, I am capable of bridging my lived experiences with those that Creator sends across my path so that we all may build up ourselves, our people, our communities, and our cultures. Háv'aa.

## **My Momma, My Inspiration**

Many people have inspired me throughout my life - some I've never met, some I've encountered only briefly, and some I love deeply. One of the most inspiring individuals I have ever had the pleasure of knowing is my Momma. My Momma has struggled all her life, but if you asked her she would say she has loved every minute of it. And in her early sixties when she is supposed to be preparing to become an elder, she was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's, due in part to the fact that her Mother was an alcoholic during her pregnancy, alcoholism that stemmed from trauma in response to the residential school system. But does Alzheimer's phase her? Not in the slightest; it is more traumatizing to me as I witness her slowly slip away, but to her, it's just another part of her day.

Momma's mother died when Momma was only four, and her father left shortly after. My Momma was raised by her maternal Grandmother along with a dozen of her cousins and siblings. My Momma was a teenage mother at the age of 15. She was a teenage runaway at the age of 16 when life at home in Haida Gwaii became too overwhelming and violent. As a young woman in a foreign land, living in survival mode, my Momma was forced into the sex trade. Momma did anything and everything she had to in order to protect me and provide for me; she showed me nothing but love, kindness, compassion, empathy and friendship from the moment I was born. My Momma is this bright shining beam of authenticity and pure love with an air of innocence due to her FASD.

I have a million stories I could share to paint you a picture of just how incredible my Momma is, but one really stands out: about a decade ago, my Father was riding his Harley down Hastings when he saw

my Momma come out of Carnegie Hall, so he pulled over. Momma was holding two hotdogs, all the food she had to eat that day. They chatted for a couple minutes and when my Momma asked my Father what he was up to that day, he replied that he was just going for lunch; without a second thought, she offered him one of her hotdogs. He politely declined, smiled and handed her \$50. She is selfless. I would not be the person I am today without that Haida Warrior. Everything I do these days is for her, and there is nothing I would not do for my Momma. I have always felt as though she is my spiritual guide sent from Creator, and that I am her Mother reincarnated and sent back to this plain of existence so that my beautiful Haida Warrior is never truly alone.

### **Forget Decolonization and Reconciliation. We Start with Radical Cultural Resurgence**

Decolonization and reconciliation are terms that have been trending over the past few years, terms that have been liberally scattered across the Canadian landscape, but by whom and for what purpose? As a university educated Indigenous person, I have strongly conflicting emotions tied to these two popular words: the social worker in me wants to believe that the hype surrounding decolonization and reconciliation embodies the power to facilitate meaningful and sustainable social change that leads us all towards the path of new-found relationships based upon compassion, equity, and respect...but the intuitive Indian in me? She knows better.

During the final semester of my Bachelor of Social Work, Creator has gifted me the blessing of simultaneously taking a class on Decolonizing Social Work Practice while completing my final practicum within an Indigenous agency and home away from

home on campus where I am surrounded by my Indigenous brothers and sisters. Never before have I had the pleasure of working on an all-Indigenous team, nor have I ever had the pleasure of walking alongside all Indigenous individuals and students as they traverse the paths of their academic and personal lives. All my life I have envisioned being surrounded by my people, and at Cplul'kw'ten, I am. This is my personal reconciliation and decolonization.

So often when we think of these colonial constructs of decolonization and reconciliation, we think of public enquiries, speaking circles with those whose ancestors perpetrated uncountable acts of violence against our people, and we think of political activism portrayed in the media as conducted by "angry" Indigenous peoples alongside a handful of sympathetic allies.

There are many problems with decolonization and reconciliation: our languages do not have words for these colonial constructs, they are foreign to us and imposed upon us; our people's voices are often drowned out when it comes to creating and facilitating culturally-driven and applicable forms of healing and forgiveness; and one of the most problematic issues is, why now? Why now do all levels of government want to "reconcile"? Are reconciliation and decolonization really for Indigenous peoples? Or are they for the benefit of those in positions of power as part of a public relations stunt? Decolonization and reconciliation mean very little to me. They mean very little to the majority of my Indigenous peers, family members, and the Indigenous "clients" (yet another colonial construct used to segregate us from one another so that we may never truly unite and challenge the hierarchies of power upon which "modern" society depends) with whom I work.

Regardless of my perturbed scepticism of decolonization and reconciliation, I know that change is a must and that it must start somewhere. As it stands, decolonization and reconciliation are not working; I believe they are not working because we are going about them all wrong. How, then, do we as Indigenous peoples manipulate these colonial constructs so that they genuinely create culturally-driven and sustainable healing and forgiveness with our non-Indigenous counterparts? What if we drastically shifted how we think about and approach decolonization and reconciliation? From my perspective, we start with radical cultural resurgence.

For over the past 400 years our people, lands, and precious resources have been subjugated to colonization, violence, and genocide. Human rights violations aside, the most invasive form of colonization against our peoples has to be the near-annihilation of our vast array of beautifully unique Indigenous cultures that once spanned these lands and territories society now calls Canada. Culture connects us to our ancestors, to our traditions, and to our future generations; without a strong alignment with our cultural identities, we are too easily swallowed up in assimilationist agendas whose only purpose is to erase diversity and celebrate conformity. Cultural conformity threatens our ability as Indigenous peoples to reclaim what our ancestors fought the foreign invaders so vehemently for, our fundamental human right to proudly identify with, cultivate, and practice our Indigenous identities, the same human rights that all peoples across this planet should have.

Generation after generation, our people were steadily ripped away from their histories, their families, their homes, their lands, and their ways of simply... living. How do we as Indigenous peoples

find our way to healing and forgiveness on both individual and societal levels when so many of us have little to no connection to Creator, culture, and our spiritual selves?

As an Indigenous person who has very little connection to my ancestors, culture, and people, I feel sometimes like a nation of one. I have often heard others say things like, "Why don't you just go connect with your culture?" To which I respond: "Where?" As an urban Indian who grew up far away from my Mother's homeland of Haida Gwaii, it took me years to reconnect in a meaningful way to my people and our culture; it is something I consciously work on every day in many small ways, small ways that I hope one day will add up to substantial reconnection. I am not looking for decolonization or reconciliation. I am hunting for reclamation.

### **Conclusion: Without Action, Words are Nothing**

Colonization did not only seek to conquer Indigenous peoples; it sought to conquer the minds of all peoples across society so that it may rule with an iron-clad grip on the belief systems and ideologies upon which this country was built. We are on a journey towards a deeper level of self-awareness and reflexivity in social work practice, and across all our Indigenous nations, we are finally waking up.

Who is responsible for the resurgence of Indigenous cultures? Who is responsible for healing? How do I take the teachings of my Momma, my education in social work, and my passion for cultural resurgence and blend them into a powerful platform from which to spring into societal change, action and healing? These are questions upon which I have spent many hours in quiet contemplation and meditation; I have had to critically analyse and deconstruct my lived experiences, the seemingly endless chasm

between myself and my Haida culture, and how I and my people can most effectively and therapeutically move forward.

I have come to the conclusion that I struggle with a lot of internalized guilt and shame that I am not “Haida enough,” that I feel decades behind in my cultural awareness and ways of living, and that I have a lot of trauma that I mislabelled as anger in regards to the fact that my naanga (grandmother) never got to experience being an elder, she never got to raise my Momma, I never got to meet her, and she never got to teach me or my Momma. And I also have a lot of trauma surrounding the fact that my Momma, too, will never get to experience becoming an elder because her mind is slowly being erased. That leaves it up to me: am I to be the first elder in my immediate family in four generations? That’s a lot of responsibility to bear. Where do I start?

Fortunately, I feel Creator has set me on the right path and I am steadily and eagerly reclaiming my Haida ways and Indigenous identity: I have had the opportunity to slowly learn my language through the power of the internet and integrate it into my daily conversations; at the age of 32 I was finally able to make my “Indian pilgrimage” to Haida Gwaii, and with my non-Indigenous father, to boot; and my social work education has gifted me numerous opportunities to connect with my Indigenous identity. I have been able to spend many hours with our wise and generous elders at Cplul’kw’ten where they share their lived experiences and ways of knowing with anyone who wishes to expand their cultural awareness; I was able to attend workshops on loom beading and drum making; I have been surrounded by my Indigenous brothers and sisters four days a week for the past few months, an opportunity very few Indigenous peoples

get to experience in a very non-Indigenous world; I was able to attend and participate in Knowledge Makers; and I have found the inner strength of the Haida Warrior that I am through social work courses, research, and practicum experience. I am but one Indigenous individual on my path towards healing and cultural connection. I could not have started my journey alone; it took the support and compassion of countless individuals and agencies to get me to where I am today. I started as a nation of one, but today I am a nation of many.

I believe that each and every level of society needs to consciously create space, resources, and opportunities for Indigenous peoples to connect and reconnect with their cultural identities; it is up to each and every one of us to take responsibility, in whatever capacity to which we are best suited, in order for our Indigenous brothers and sisters to heal, reconnect, and thrive. From the Government, to agencies, to individuals, it is our collective responsibility to wipe away guilt, shame, and disconnection and replace them with education, opportunity, and reclamation of cultural identity. The new ways of social work practice must be based on Indigenous peoples utilizing the power of their ways of knowing, learning, and teaching, and must reveal how settler doctrines shape lived experiences in both the personal and political realms for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. We are at a time of radical cultural resurgence and social work practice. We must not stop. Decolonization and reconciliation are but words. Words are powerful, but without action, they are nothing more than lukewarm whispers upon the wind.

Our Indigenous brothers and sisters have been here since the beginning of time; we are not going anywhere. We share our land and resources with peoples



from all across the globe, people who have historically and currently harmed our people, both intentionally and in ways still not fully known or understood by them, or us. We cannot do this alone. We need support from our allies and more importantly, from those who have harmed us. We are but a fraction of the Canadian population; with the support of members of the rest of the country, we will be fully equipped with the tools that we need in order to rebuild ourselves, our communities, our future generations, and the legacies of all who walked the path before us, making it possible for us to be here today. My name is Roxie Defant, and I am Haida strong.

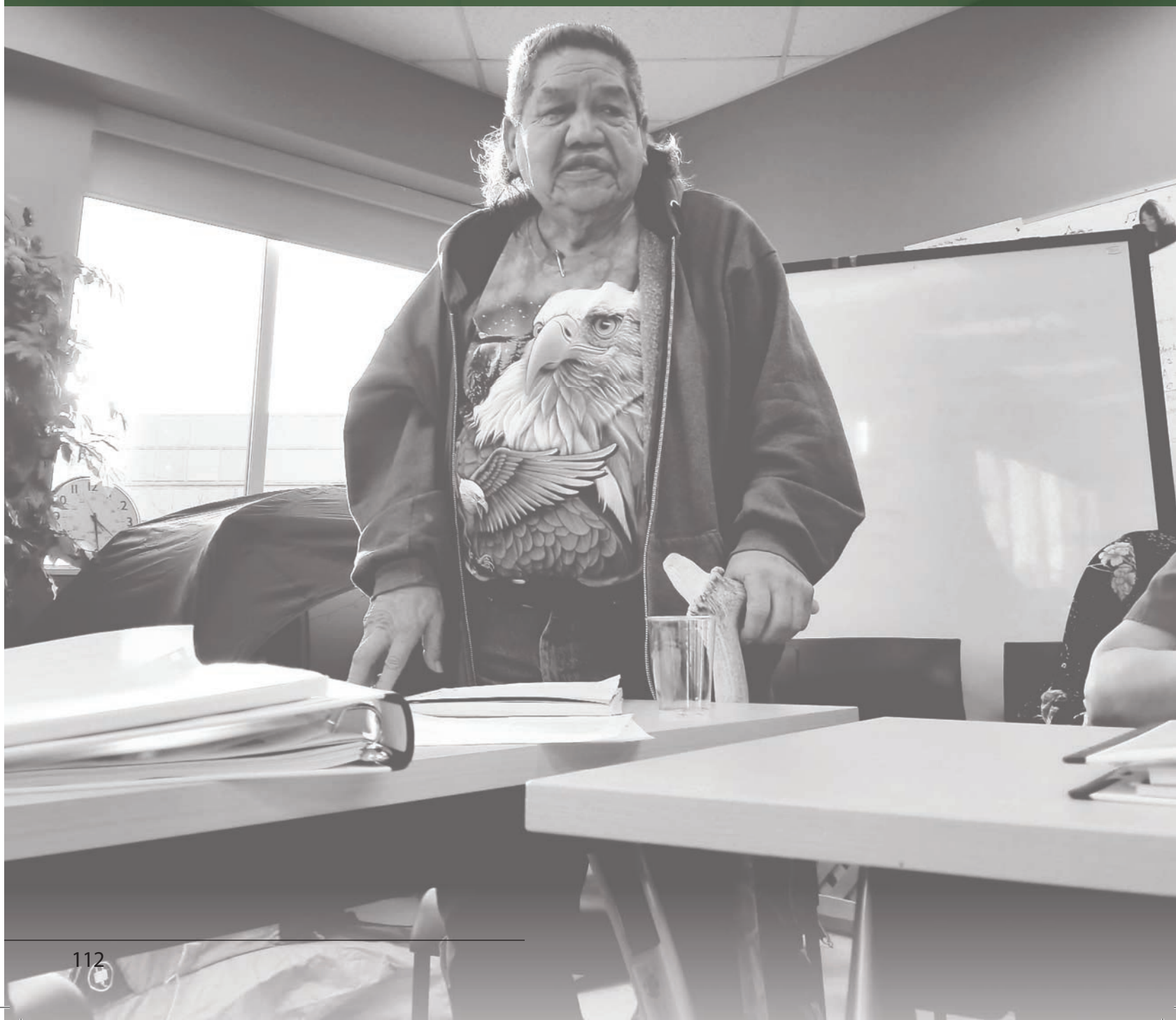
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*"All these things that are written on the wall, all your thoughts, it is almost like a historical mirror. A lot of the things you wrote down are a part of your culture, part of your life. It's humanising your thoughts into our present life. That is what Coyote does with his stories. We learn the mistakes from before and we improve on it. When you look at these papers it looks like people have been reading a lot about Coyote."*

*Elder Mike Arnouse*



My Tsimshian name is Tzugomdask of the Eagle clan of Kitkatla in the Tsimshian Nation. I am also from Bella Bella in the Heiltsuk Nation and the Yorkshire clan from my maternal grandmother. I acknowledge the traditional territory of Tk'emlups te Secwepemc that is part of Secwepemc Ulucw. Thank you for allowing us to live in your territory. Kookschem.

Oogami, Creator of all, we are grateful for all of our ancestors of every tribe, nation & indigenous people of this earth. Kookschem, Walas Giasixa, thank you for each child, each family, each teacher, each community, each continent, cultural value & custom on this earth. We learn in many different ways the lessons of Mother Nature often hidden in each rock, leaf & different types of petroglyphs. Help us to be astute enough, to pay attention to the signs of each season & our responsibility to be a good steward of our resources.

Our greatest resource is our children, students & colleagues. We learn important lessons of life, of discipline, of respect for selves and others, to discover different ways to study & research in each setting & culture. Fill us with courage to change the things we can and with wisdom to recognize what we cannot change. In this way we can conserve our energy to create new paths.

May we exercise wisdom as we strive for inclusion of multicultural ways to teach & grow in knowledge that can be transformed into ways of walking in wisdom & light that allows transparency of our character.

May we increase cultural understanding between Indigenous, local, regional & global communities. I ask a special blessing for each faculty member who leads by example ways to inspire others so that this has a ripple effect not only to the students but their families & communities on many continents.

May we respect the dignity of every human being & safe guard the integrity of creation, of our greatest mother of all, Mother Earth who provides for us daily.

Grant us wisdom as we seek our own unique way to be knowledge makers, to encourage, challenge & inspire each other. I ask a special blessing for each person in this room, their families & friends.

May we keep ourselves safe until we meet again.

Elder Dr Margaret Vickers Hyslop



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