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“We Stick Out Our Tongues” De-essentializing for Decolonization: A Storywork Study on Indigenous Relationality

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“We Stick Out Our Tongues”

De-essentializing for Decolonization: A Storywork Study on
Indigenous Relationality

by

Chantai Michelle Minet

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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Abstract

For Indigenous people, one of the most powerful acts of decolonization is reclaiming who we are and sharing our stories with the world. Indigenous relationality describes who we are in relation to all of creation. Our relationality is diverse, multifaceted, and inappropriately underrepresented in literature. To date, much of the literature aiming to guide work with Indigenous people is essentializing, reducing Indigenous relationality into pan-Indigenous or uniform formulas that are inaccurate and harmful. This research directly addresses the issue of essentialization through exploring relationality. From an Indigenous (Lingít) research paradigm, I use Indigenous Storywork (ISW) to explore and amplify four Indigenous graduate students' diverse experiences of their Indigenous relationality. Our filmed research conversations, stories, and poetry took on a life of their own, leading to a collective meaning-making circle and reciprocity poetry as an expression of Indigenous relationality. This study provides insight around the construction and preservation of Indigenous relationality and addresses the essential role of reciprocity within Indigenous relationality. This study is a courageous, decolonizing, reciprocity effort that honours our Indigenous relationality and our respective Indigenous and academic communities. This study responds to the recommendations made in *Psychology's Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Report*, and creates space for reclamation, reconciliatory conversations, and social change.

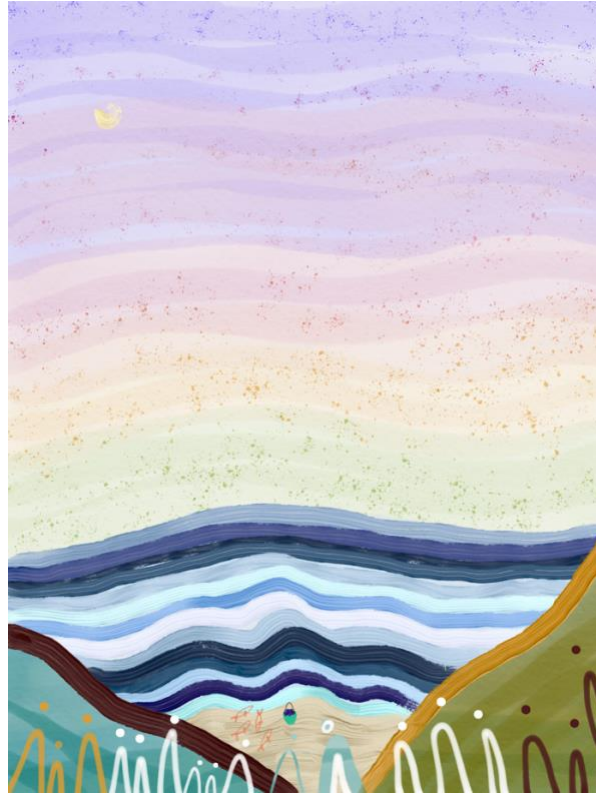
Keywords: Indigenous, Lingít, Indigenous Storywork, relationality, decolonization, reciprocity, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, counselling psychology, film, poetry

Acknowledgements

I'm not trying to be wise, that would be foolish. I'm just chattering.

— Mary Oliver

To all who joined me in this chattering, thank you – gunalchéesh. My art is my acknowledgement and my wholehearted gratitude.



Gunalchéesh, Dikée Aankwáawu – God – my conversation with everything. Thank you, my mothers – Michelle and Lenora – it all started with you. Thank you, my sisters – in blood and in spirit – I believe in you too. Gunalchéesh, Pops – for carving Lingít into my life. To Pearl, Ashley, and Stephanie – my brave teachers and admired friends – Gunalchéesh. Thank you to my academic guides – Karlee and Tanya – my support and scholarly spine. To Elisa – the hummingbird who brought me a drop – thank you. Gunalchéesh, Grand Chief Peter Johnston – may we walk on that trail again. And to the love of my life – my husband, Karim – thank you for being the music.

Dedications

*to the children who became my grandparents,
and to those who did not have that chance,
to my parents – and my sisters,
their children,
and my own,
i gu.aa yax x'wán,
(have strength and courage),
it keeps going.*

A page intentionally left blank, for pause and prayer.

Sh káa x'aydagáx (we all pray about it).

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Epigraph

Pinch and pluck,
Thumb and index finger working together,
We drop nature's tiny juice balloons into our empty ice-cream pails,
Moss cushions for our nimble knees,
We kneel – and pick,
We pick – and pick,
Don't eat too many now,
But how can we resist,
The berries beckon us
They know things we don't,
They know there is more than enough on the bush to go around,
We – humans – are the ones who fear lack,
The children obey the berries,
Pick and pluck,
Suck and spit,
Berry patch bliss,
The day is done once the sun is down,
Handing over our pails – half-full,
And hoping that nobody will notice the missing handfuls,
These berries do not hide who they are,
We stick out our tongues – a purply blue.
– *On Us As Berries: A Relationality Poem*

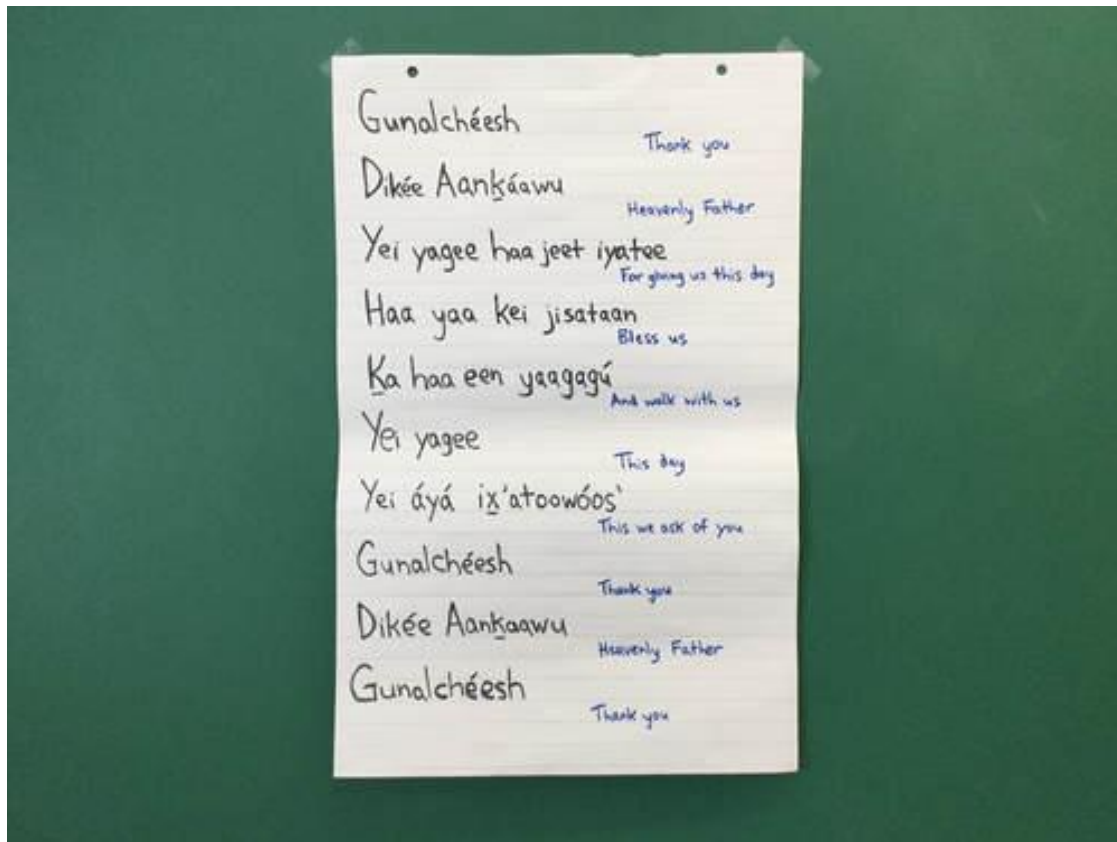
The Backbone of a Fish: Chapter 1

Gunalchéesh (Thank You)

In my First Nations culture, Lingít (Tlingit), we often begin gatherings with prayer. We thank the Creator for all that has been given and ask for wisdom and guidance. Beginning with humble prayer creates a cultural learning process and promotes respect, reverence, responsibility, and reciprocity (Archibald, 2008). One of the Elders involved with Archibald's (2008) Indigenous Storywork (ISW), Vincent Stogan, said, "We always pray first to the Creator.... I think in your kind of work [spirituality] will help you a lot, it's no shame to pray to the Creator" (p. 50). My research is my ceremony (Wilson, 2008); and for that reason, I would like to begin with a traditional prayer.

Figure 1

Khàtinas.àxh Community School's Lingít Opening Prayer



Note. From *Prayers/Songs*, by Teslin Tlingit Language, 2018

(<https://teslintlingitlanguage.weebly.com/prayerssongs.html>). In the public domain.

On Place (Land Acknowledgement)

“Indigenous narratives vary in relation to place and context, as Indigenous nations and people have unique stories and experiences. By definition, the term Indigenous makes reference to being from a particular place” (Fellner, 2018, p. 288). For me, this means that the respectful and responsible way to enter this research is by beginning with place. In order to do that, I first want to acknowledge holistically whose land I am on: the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), as well as the Tsuut’ina First Nation, and the

Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta.

The Calgary Foundation (2019) released this statement alongside a film titled, *Land Acknowledgement*:

Acknowledging the land in which we are situated is happening more frequently than ever before. Stemming from stories of the land that span generations, it is a traditional custom of Indigenous people that dates back centuries when welcoming outsiders onto their land and into their homes. We acknowledge the land as an act of reconciliation that honors the authentic history of Turtle Island and the original people of this territory. Calgary Foundation encourages others to incorporate land acknowledgement into their reconciliation journey.

Please take a moment to watch and listen to the voices of these respected Knowledge Keepers and to acknowledge the land we are on: [Land Acknowledgement - Calgary Foundation](#)

On Terminology

I recognize and respect that there is great diversity amongst Indigenous peoples. I acknowledge that the use of incorrect or non-specific terminology can be problematic, offensive, and even structurally violent. With that said, the terms we choose to use can also support populations with the power to self-identify and communicate who they are. For these reasons and with deliberate care, I have used each of the following terms in this thesis when appropriate and as directly quoted by a source: (a) Indigenous; (b) First Nations; (c) Native; (d) Aboriginal; (e) Indian; (f) Métis; and (g) Inuit. Additionally, for the purpose of this research, I have used the specific terms: (a) Lingít; (b) Mi'kmaq; (c) Blackfoot; (d) and Oji-Cree as identified by the storytellers in this thesis.

Haa Kusteeyí (Our Way): Introducing My Lingít Heritage

The Lingít are First Nations peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast of North America. In our language, Lingít means “People of the Tides.” I only know a few words/phrases in Lingít, which is a heartbreaking consequence of the colonization of Canada. These stories of colonization, cultural genocide, residential schooling, and continued injustice against Indigenous peoples in Canada have been told by my family and many other families in spaces such as the TRC (Joseph, 2018; TRC, 2015a, 2015b). The Lingít have a matrilineal kinship system. Children are born into their mother’s clan, and property and hereditary roles are passed through the mother’s line (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994). Lingít culture and society developed in the temperate rainforest of the southeast Alaska coast, and we maintained a complex hunter-gatherer culture based on semi-sedentary management of fisheries (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994). An inland group, known as the Inland Lingít, inhabits the far northwestern part of the province of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory in Canada (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994). My family, through my grandfather’s bloodline, is part of the Inland Lingít people. Haa Kusteeyi (Our Way) is what defines the Teslin Lingít. As stated on the Teslin Tlingit Council website (2021), “Haa Kusteeyi is our collective and shared understanding of who we are: our knowledge, language, art, history and relationship to our environment.”

Seta yóo xat duwasáakw (My Name is Seta): Introducing and Situating Myself

Within an introduction or a greeting, Lingít people traditionally introduce themselves by their name, clan, and family. This introduction helps shape the story of who you are and of where you come from in relation – your bloodline and rich history. With respect to Lingít cultural protocols, as I introduce this research, it is essential that I simultaneously introduce and position myself within the research. By beginning my research this way, I am respecting my cultural

protocols as well as what is required by Indigenous axiology and methodology of relational accountability within an Indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2008). I position myself holistically in this thesis work (heart, mind, body, and spirit) through relationships, stories, poems, dreams, prayers, film, art, academic work, and self-reflection. Archibald (2008) calls this holism, which refers to the interrelatedness between the intellectual, spiritual (metaphysical values/beliefs and the Creator), emotional, and physical (body, behaviour, and action) realms that form a whole, healthy person. In the practice of holism, I introduce myself and my research.

My name is Chantai Minet. My given Lingít name is Seta. It means little bird or little snipe in Lingít language. I belong to the Dèshitàn (Split Tail Beaver) clan. I am the granddaughter of Michelle Minet and Wilbur Smarch who belongs to the Dakl'awedi (Eagle) clan. I am the daughter of Lenora Minet who belongs to the Dèshitàn clan, and I am from both Indigenous (Lingít) and non-Indigenous (European, Chinese, Vietnamese) heritages and homes. I am an Indigenous researcher with a mixed cultural background, on an explorative journey of relationality. Relationality, as Fellner (2016) described it, is an alternative to the term “identity” where one considers themselves-in-relation as opposed to being an individual, independent of all their relations.

A Mixed Plate: Understanding My Relationality

In this section, I aim to provide context for my own relationality journey. I share my early memories, some experiences that have helped me understand, as well as more recent aspects of my relationality. From an Indigenous paradigm, considering my story in this way is a significant part of holistically understanding this research.

Though I was born in Red Deer, Alberta, my family and I returned to the Yukon when I was eight years old. My mixed heritage has been a source of both great strength and privilege, as

well as bewilderment for me. In many Indigenous cultures, including Lingít culture, one of the ways to share knowledge is through story. For me, poetry is a form of storytelling that can contextualize an experience in a way that no other form can. For this reason, I trust that the most appropriate way to acknowledge my intricate relationship with my own Indigenous relationality is to share this poem I wrote to describe my intersecting relationality. I have represented the poem in italics to indicate that it is from my own personal writing collection. From this point, any of my personal writings (poems, journal entries, etc.) will be presented in italics.

*A side of me – a side of me not fully known,
A side that gnaws smoked salmon from the backbone of a fish
A First Nations tradition I learned upriver,
at fish camp,
as a young girl,
First remove the scales, the guts, fillet, then hang and let the smoke do the work,
Dominant culture looks on surprised as if I don't fit the description of Indigenous,
As if the white blood in me takes precedence,
As if therein lies the power and the privilege,
As if it is more of an activity than an identity – to fish,
This fish gave up its life to make it to my dinner plate tonight,
I laugh at my mother,
I laugh at my mother because I have never had smoked salmon with turkey dinner before,
But why is this so funny?
I don't know.
I don't know but ... maybe I do.*

*Wedged within my crowded plate of potatoes, corn, and stuffing is a vibrant fillet of Taku
river salmon,
Intuitively my mind tells me that it doesn't belong there,
Intuitively my heart tells me that it does,
My salmon fillet sits stranger to my candied yams and I too wonder if I belong,
This, of course, is not the first time I've wondered such things,
The initial 7 years of my life I did not understand I was Lingít,
When I found out I remember being excited to belong to them,
Then – when we moved in they pulled my hair and called me chinaman and chink,
What was I supposed to think?
They told me to go back to where I came from,
Which is incredibly hard when you aren't sure where that is,
But isn't that just so?
Isn't that as it's always been?
That we keep these things separate,
The spruce bough from the vitamin C tablet purchased in the pharmacy,
The power of story from empirical validity,
First Nations from normative data,
The bounce of a body – arms out wide – as the drum plays,
from the heads bowed in liturgical prayer,
I pray too you know,
I love to pray,
Still, I do not love the terrible things done to my people in the name of God,*

*Terrible things done to my family,
My mind drifts to thoughts of my grandfather's experiences of residential school,
Oppression in the form of cultural genocide,
As rarely talked about as salmon with turkey dinner,
And as I push and pull my fork and knife across my plate and drag this poultry through
the crimson blood of cranberries,
As I gnaw the salmon from the backbone of a fish who gave its life,
As I bow my head in silent prayer,
I wonder what it would be like to add dim sum to this dinner,
I like this idea.
But what would I know?
I'm just a mixed plate after all.*

I wrote this poem during the first few months of my Master of Science in Educational Psychology, specializing in Counselling Psychology degree program. The poem was my first earnest attempt to make sense of the tensions I was feeling within this new form of academic pursuit called graduate school. It was my attempt to say, "I am Indigenous AND I belong here." In some way, it was the ongoing, echoing, attempt of younger me to make sense of where I came from.

I was urgently motivated to find the words that would best communicate my plea to belong within the academy. I sincerely wanted to stand in my Indigenous relationality and be accepted. Simultaneously, I was resisting the history of colonial thinking that enforced the idea that to be Indigenous is to be less than. On many occasions, I found myself discussing how the colonial mindset is so profoundly embedded in the academy and how difficult that was for me.

Though, to my knowledge, the University of Calgary is relatively conscientious and forward acting in regard to honouring diversity and Indigenous inclusion, it is my experience that much more is still required in order to reach our aim of equitable engagement.

During my time in graduate school and my exploration of my Indigenous relationality, I hoped for an education that would walk me around and around again until the meanings were made (Archibald, 2008; Fellner, 2016; Kovach, 2010a; Lacerda-Vandenborn, 2020; Wilson, 2008). I longed for my Indigenous relationality to be respected, and I wanted my culture to be represented in the education I was receiving. I hoped for inclusive spaces for circular knowledge, and although I did experience many of those spaces, there were still occasions when I experienced discrimination.

At this point, I would like to acknowledge that my experience within this system was not, I hope and trust, intended by any individual I collaborated with – faculty, colleague, or otherwise. My experience, I believe, is deeply linked to the history of colonization in Canada. The systemic inequity that I, and many others, are experiencing is a direct consequence of colonial practices and policies intended to assimilate and eliminate Indigenous people (TRC, 2015a, 2015b). Many generations of trauma are flooding into the here and now. My experience is much more than the present moment. Sometimes, in this process, I feel the weight of those who have gone before me. I feel the weight of those people, and I fall down and cry.

The following journal entry is from an autoethnographic study I completed as a part of a qualitative research methods class. This study served as a pilot study to this thesis. By sharing this entry, I aim to provide context and richer description of what intergenerational trauma can feel like and the impact it may have:

My heart beats like a fast-paced drum, like my heart is rhythmically trying to whip up a batch of soapberry ice cream. Soapberry ice cream is a Lingít delicacy created by intensely beating soapberries with a willow branch until they thicken into a whipped cream consistency. Then, by adding sugar, you make it sweet.

*From a colonial worldview, some might label my current experience as nervousness, anxiousness, stress, or fear. But what if it is simply the weight of this undertaking beginning to fall on me? What I anticipated to be a ripple has turned out to be a mighty, heavy wave – and it’s currently landing on my seemingly small body right before I am to speak. **Perfect timing.** It’s 10:11 a.m. in my qualitative research class. I am waiting in the conceptual queue to “informally” present a template for my pilot research. How can this be informal? How can this be anything but severely personal – spiritual even? I feel hot water building up within my body until it reaches the surface of my face. **If I blink the water will fall from my eyes and add to the already colossal wave that has me tumbling.** This is the first time I will speak about it – my experiences with intergenerational trauma. This is the initial unveiling of my project and it is as vulnerable as bare skin in the wilderness.*

When I say this, they will see. Even the parts that are messy to me, they will see. They will see my discomfort and pain. They will see my family’s trauma, mine too. They will see, and they may not understand. They might look to me to help them, but I am not so sure I can do that either.

I feel myself backing away from this moment with my hands high in the air, as one would if confronted by a bear in the wild or a police officer while bearing coloured skin. I am pacing backwards slowly when, somewhere deep inside me in that untouchable

place, I feel this is too important to back away from. In that moment, I know I must keep going. I open my mouth and begin to share and simultaneously what feels like the Niagara Falls of saltwater spills over the mountainside flesh walls of my face. I say out loud in a quivery voice, “This is hard for me. This is so personal and so weighty.” As the words rest in the silent air, I begin to feel some relief. I am reminded of the Lingít namesake ceremony where Elders pile traditional blankets upon your shoulders, and everybody is there to see. Where you can feel the weight of your namesake building up on your body. Where, without doing anything at all, your name is spoken and deeper into you, you root.

In my experience, with the exception of a few articles, lecture slides, and two guest speakers, the resources for Indigenous-based learning and research within my program were sparse and indistinct. It was clear there was a gap: more Indigenous faculty needed, more Indigenous representation. Recognizing this gap, I realized that I needed to lean on other Indigenous scholars and gather knowledge from communities outside my program if I was going to learn about moving forward in a good way in my research. “The phrase ‘in a good way’ is commonly used in Indigenous scholarship to refer to approaches that are genuinely respectful of Indigenous people, protocols, and values. These approaches centre Indigenous voices and desires” (Fellner et al., 2020, p. 643). As my motivation to discover more about Indigenous research increased, not surprisingly, so did my desire to understand my own Indigenous heritage and relationality. This relationship between exploration of my relationality and research seemed to have a slowing down effect on me, like moving through honey. I watched my colleagues seemingly bolt along in their research endeavours from one step to the next. I felt I was exerting tremendous effort but moving slower than the rest. It was through this experience I resolved that

because relationships are the basis within an Indigenous worldview, as a researcher, I would need to take my time with people.

It is hard work being in graduate school. It is hard work, and it is heart work as one of the storytellers in my research told me. The following is a poem I wrote around the time I acquiesced to the slower and more mysterious way of the Indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2008). This poem depicts my full surrender to the research process, a relinquishing of control, and a building up of relationship between me and the research the Creator has given me:

*I sit in ceremony,
I stand in this research,
I lay down on the land,
And wait.
I listen for God,
And to the blood of many worlds,
Rivering within me.
I listen to the voices,
of then and of now,
who speak of oppression and of hope, from all directions.
I lay down on the earth,
Let the data emerge,
And I wonder how in the world will I do this?*

Situating the Current Research

As I gave into the research process, I experienced my own Indigenous relationality. The idea for my autoethnographic study (the pilot study for this thesis) was revealed to me in a

dream. Intuitively, I knew that this was the instruction I had been waiting and praying for. So, with the guidance of my academic Elders, supervisor, and instructors, I conducted the pilot study and called it, *The Blood of Two Worlds Rivering Within Me: An Indigenous, Art-Based, Autoethnography of a Lingít Intergenerational Residential School Survivor*. This project took me on a journey that was significant for my development as an Indigenous researcher. It was the birthplace of my curiosity toward contemporary Indigenous relationality. My work from that project informed my research, and many of the people I formed relationships with during that project became significant guides for this thesis. For these reasons, I have included the Abstract from the pilot study and Figure 2, which illustrates my findings through a *Life Totem Design*. These findings are critical points of reference for situating my current research within an Indigenous paradigm as well as understanding my own Indigenous relationality.

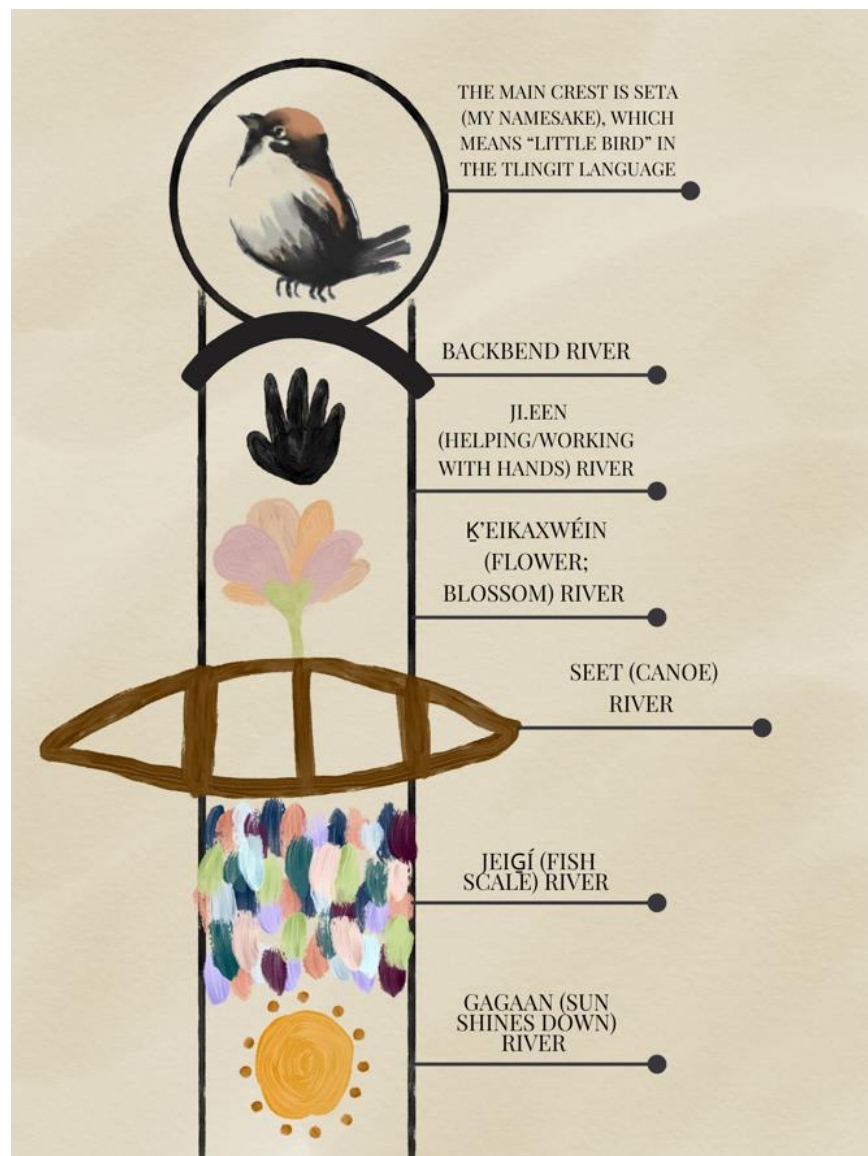
Abstract From the Pilot Study

I am standing with one foot on each side of a great divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways. My contextual existence uniquely positions me to explore what it means to be an intergenerational residential school survivor. In my autoethnography, I explored and documented my own cultural relationality and experience of being an intergenerational survivor of residential school. I integrated an Indigenous (Tlingit First Nations), art-based, autoethnographic approach. The data were collected from my own journal entries, poetry, a genogram, art, photos, letters, and social media posts. Through ceremonial meaning making, themes were chronologically identified and symbolized into the following names of rivers: (a) gagaan (sun shines down) river; (b) jeigí (fish scale) river; (c) seet (canoe) river; (d) k'eikaxwéin (flower; blossom) river; (e) ji.een (helping/working with hands) river; and (f) backbend river (see Figure 2). The rivers were joined to create a comprehensive totem pole design to represent and

document my story. This project provided important insights regarding the construction and preservation of my own cultural relationality within the context of being an urban-based, mixed ancestry, second generation Lingít survivor.

Figure 2

Minet's Life Totem Design



Note: From *The Blood of Two Worlds Rivering Within Me: An Indigenous, Art-Based, Autoethnography of a Lingít Intergenerational Residential School Survivor* by C. Minet, 2019.

This pilot project helped me return home to my Indigenous relationality in ways I had not ever experienced. It helped me remember the generations that came before me. It gave me a clearer understanding of who I was and where I came from. Through my experience, I came to believe that the process of coming back to ourselves and reclaiming our relationality, as humans and as researchers, is the beginning of meaningful Indigenous research. I believe that in order to tell who we are, we must – in some way – know who we are. Over the course of my work on my pilot project, I found myself reconnecting with the land in a powerful way. I was outside all the time. I was praying and smudging. I was letting the earth take what I had been carrying all these long years. I was listening for the wisdom the land had to share with me. One day, I found myself swimming in a cool pool of water looking up at a waterfall stemming from the sky. I waded deeper in the water and waited for quite some time. As I waded there, the following poem was given to me. This poem illustrates the crucial process, within my research, that I describe as coming back to my Indigenous relationality:

*The water pooled around me is cool,
I, submerged breast-high, look up to the sky to see columns of mist,
Lit up by the sun,
Oh they sparkle, and dance, and burst forth,
I feel wrapped up in Creator's arms.
My eye moves to the mouth of the waterfall now,
Its voice pours over the edge,
Appearing to me as the fountain of life.
Then I remember the Pocahontas in me,
I feel at home in my body,*

Enough to forget my body,

Part of the land,

Part of the water.

Looking back now, this moment played a crucial role in the inquiry that eventually became my thesis. The process of coming back to my Indigenous relationality, maybe even for the first time, was revealing and healing. Thus, I began to wonder how many other people were experiencing or had experienced something similar. Much of what I had read about Indigenous peoples in my counselling psychology textbooks was essentializing and certainly did not accurately or holistically represent me/my people. I questioned how many other contemporary Indigenous people were living with a sense akin to mine. My interest was piqued, yet I did not act on this hunch right away. I was not ready at that time. My supervisor and academic Elders in Indigenous research advised me that there was no rush and that I would know when that time had come. They were right. When the time came, I knew.

The Talking Rock: Situating My Research Topic

During a group research meeting with Indigenous researchers and scholars, I wafted smudge smoke over my body and then my heart. The sweetgrass was tough to light that day. My supervisor suggested that it was likely due to the fact that we were in a university building that had limitations on where and how we could smudge on campus. We persisted, and the braid eventually burned. We sat there together and passed around a talking stone. It was smooth and black, and it had a good weight to it. Each of us took turns introducing ourselves and sharing about our research. As the stone moved closer and closer, I began to tense up. I could feel the heat in my body, my heart pounding. I was at an awkward place in my process and ashamed to admit that I did not yet know what my research would be. To date, I had multiple ideas and had

even written a few research proposals. However, none of them felt right. Much to my discomfort, the talking stone landed in my hand, and I began to speak. I shared who I am, Chantai Minet – also Seta – and where I come from. What came next surprised me. I began to share my story about my complex relationship with my mixed cultural heritage. I shared about how I am constantly pulled between what feels like the many different sides of me. I shared stories about my confusion, about my hardship, about my shame and my disappointment. I shared about the tension I experience when I lean into my Indigenous relationality. I explained that sometimes I want to lean in deeply and that sometimes it feels like too much and I want to run far away from it. I shared my growing passion for my Lingít people. I shared stories from my childhood and when I first noticed this sense within me – a sense of not quite belonging. I told the group that day that I often hear an internal, drumming voice that asks, “Am I really Indigenous or am I really something else or can I possibly be both?” Tears leaking from my eyes, I came to a close by saying, “I really have no idea why I am sharing all this with you. I know we were supposed to talk about our research...” That was when I noticed my supervisor looking at me from across the table with a curious grin on her face. She replied, “I think I know exactly why you are sharing this Chantai; I think this could be your thesis.” As she said it, something dropped into place within my heart. As she said it, I knew it would be my thesis topic.

During this same gathering, I heard the stories of other students. I was moved by the beautiful diversity and complexity of contemporary Indigenous relationality; my curiosity deepened. As I listened closely to each person who held the talking stone, I began to wonder how knowing who we are as Indigenous people impacts us and our current social context.

Responding to *Psychology's Response to the TRC Report*

During my discussions of this experience with Dr. Fellner, she directed me to read *Psychology's Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Report* (Canadian Psychological Association [CPA] & Psychology Foundation of Canada [PFC], 2018) of which she was a co-author. As I read it, I quickly recognized that the research I was proposing would be a necessary and direct response to the recommendations made by the task force.

Next, I share samples of the report recommendations which I have attempted to address within my research. I believe that responding to these recommended calls to action, with my research, will have significant implications for socially just change within the field of psychology and beyond.

Celebrate Indigenous

Psychology's Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Report (CPA & PFC, 2018) proposed celebrating psychological research from Indigenous researchers. The task force recommended that members of the profession enhance their understanding of research methodologies and projects done with Indigenous methodologies. The task force also called upon the CPA to regularly highlight these methodologies at its convention and stated that research conducted by scholars from Indigenous communities should be presented and celebrated by the CPA.

Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Literacy

Within the area of education, the task force (CPA & PFC, 2018) recommended that graduates of psychology programs should be able to demonstrate Indigenous cultural literacy and engage in discussion about the value of Indigenous traditional knowledge. The task force emphasized how the profession of psychology has a responsibility to teach principles of social

justice and Indigenous cultural literacy to psychology students. Indigenous knowledge and cultural literacy should be a core competency for all psychologists.

Experiential Learning

Psychology's Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Report (CPA & PFC, 2018) recommended that psychologists should participate in experiential learning, where possible, and interact with community members and Knowledge Keepers. The task force emphasized the diversity amongst Indigenous communities and cautioned against adapting education based on just one Indigenous community (or person). Additionally, the task force suggested that the field of psychology must generate novel ideas and approaches in order to address current situations and issues that were not present in precolonial times.

Psychology as an Ally to Indigenous Peoples

The task force (CPA & PFC, 2018) reported that many in the field of psychology do not see advocacy and social justice as significant parts of their role; however, the task force recommended changing this view. The task force presented the idea that psychology can be an ally to Indigenous Peoples (p. 31). The task force emphasized that reciprocal knowledge transfer between the profession and Indigenous communities, nationally and internationally, can be of great value for both the profession and the Indigenous population in Canada.

Rebirth of Indigenous Culture

The task force (CPA & PFC, 2018) advised that:

The profession of psychology invest in the rebirth of Indigenous culture. Indigenous culture has much to offer the community in general and mental health in Canada. All peoples are deserving of support, and Indigenous people are supported by being in a circle, physically and conceptually, and respecting traditions. (p. 31)

Introducing and Situating the Storytellers

Before moving further and in keeping with the method of Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008), which I describe more thoroughly in Chapter 3, I take this time to situate the storytellers within the context of this thesis by way of introduction. Though these introductions are commonly made later on, within my Indigenous research paradigm, it is important to honour the storytellers in the beginning. I have known the storytellers for varying lengths of time and in diverse capacities through my own involvement with Indigenous communities at the University of Calgary. These communities include the Alberta Indigenous Mentorship in Health Innovation (AIM-HI) Network, SAGE – Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement, and my supervisor's (Dr. Karlee Fellner) Indigenous scholar gatherings. Each of these storytellers was in the room with me the day my research topic was formed. Each held the talking stone alongside me, and each eventually volunteered to tell their story in this research. The following are the names, photos, and personal introductions provided by the storytellers for the purpose of this work. I have chosen not to label and title these images as figures out of respect for the storytellers and my relationships with them. The act of marking these images as figures would objectify the storytellers and contradict the relationality I am exploring in this research.



Pearl Yellow Old Woman-Healy

My name is Pearl Yellow Old Woman-Healy. I am a person of Indigenous ancestry who grew up in two communities. I am half (paternal) Blackfoot from the Siksika Nation in Alberta and half (maternal) Oji-Cree from the Red Sucker Lake Nation in Manitoba. My field of study and specializations are Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies - Community Health Sciences.



Stephanie Tipple

Kwe', teluisi Stephanie Tipple. Qalipu mi'kmaq e'pit wejiey elmastukwek ktaqmkuk.
Hello, my name is Stephanie Tipple. I am a Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation woman from the Bay of Islands, Newfoundland. I am a 23-year-old scholar currently completing my MSc in Counselling Psychology at the University of Calgary, with hopes of also completing a PhD in Counselling Psychology.



Ashley Cornect-Benoit

My name is Ashley Cornect-Benoit and I am Mi'kmaq, French, Irish. My family and ancestors are from the Port au Port Peninsula Payun Aqq Payunji'j, Newfoundland Ktagmkuk. I was born and raised in southern Ontario and spent a lot of time traveling back and forth between these two places I refer to as home, a blessing that continues to shape the person I am today. I am 28 years old and am currently completing a PhD in Population and Public Health through the Department of Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary.



Chantai Minet

Chantai Minet/Seta yóo xat duwasáakw (My name is Chantai Minet/Seta). Deishítaan áyá xat (I belong to the Split Tail Beaver Clan). Ax tlaa Tsínt' yéi duwasáakw. Dleit kaa x'éináx Lenora Minet (I am the child of Lenora Minet). Ax léelk'w Gadzóosdaa yéi duwasáagin. Dleit kaa x'éináx Virginia Smarch. Ax léelk'w Tl'íku yéi duwasáagin. Dleit kaa x'éináx Jimmy Smarch (I am the great-granddaughter of Virginia and Jimmy Smarch). Ax léek'w Michelle Minet yéi duwasáakw, dleit kaa x'éináx. Ax léek'w Kukdláa yéi duwasáakw. Dleit kaa x'éináx Wilbur Smarch. Daak'laweidí dachxán áyá xat (I am the granddaughter of Michelle Minet and Wilbur Smarch, who belongs to the Eagle Clan). I am 29 years old. I am currently completing my MSc in Educational Psychology with a specialization in Counselling Psychology at the University of Calgary.

Research Question

My research question came about relationally – through the storytelling and wisdom sharing of the people who were introduced above. In fact, the research question itself is relational. All the parts have to do with each other, each communicating in a unique way, what Indigenous relationality is.

Since Indigenous research paradigms are inherently relational, it makes sense that the only way I could form the research question was in the context of relationships. I agree with Wilson (2008), regarding Indigenous research, that “[a]n idea cannot be taken out of a relational context and still maintain its shape” (p. 8). Thus, in order to understand Indigenous relationality, being in relationships with those experiencing it is essential.

The research question for this study is: How have you, as an Indigenous person and graduate student, come to know and experience your Indigenous relationality?

My Body as a Bridge: Chapter 2

My research is positioned within an Indigenous (Lingít) paradigm. I approach this chapter from my Lingít perspective and uphold the principles of Indigenous Storywork (ISW) in my process of framing this literature review. Respect is essential to the Lingít people and is also one of the core principles in ISW (Archibald, 2008). Within a research context, respecting cultural contexts and story protocols is very important (Archibald, 2008).

In my Lingít culture, dreams are a respected form of knowledge and guidance (Lenora Minet, Teslin Tlingit First Nations, Dèshitàn clan, Yukon Territory, my mother, personal communication, March 20, 2021). Additionally, Archibald (2008) suggested that dreams can be a source of Indigenous knowledge that guide the research process. Dreams have played an important role in my own research journey and, for this reason, I introduce this chapter with a dream I had about relationality. My dream serves as Indigenous knowledge and as a framework for understanding and organizing the oral communication, film, and literature that are relevant to my research topic. My dream is a thematic connection to my research topic of relationality. It demonstrates the felt tension that exists between non-Indigenous and Indigenous worlds while largely focusing on the reality that a person's experience of that tension is an underrepresented story of Indigenous relationality. The following reflections on my dream serve as an opening to my literature review where I highlight contextual elements that are critical to understanding the research question. Some of these contextual elements include the tensions of relationality, the importance of a sense of Indigenous pride and self-determination, the impact of colonization and trauma within relationality, decolonial and transformative education, and meaningful aspects of Lingít relationality as explored in conversation with the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations Peter Johnston.

A Crack in the Earth

I woke from a dream so real I could feel it in my body. My muscles still taut, my breath still tense, as I opened my eyes – and my heart was pounding.

The earth stretched out before me, dry as drought. Cracks and crevices decorated the ground in a morbid way as if to communicate illness and impending death. These were not the wrinkles of an old earth. These were empty scars, unanswered prayers of the soil our ancestors lived on and were buried within.

I stood there looking out at the scorched, dusty earth and the ground beneath me rumbled. I looked out and saw a great divide – a wide, and growing wider, crevasse. I looked towards the horizon for hope, but I saw no end to this separation. The divide spanned the length of the earth and appeared to be splitting it in two in front of my very eyes. Like a handsaw against the trunk of a great oak. Intuitively, I knew that one side of this earth was called Indigenous and the other, not. Even in a dreamworld, I was not comfortable with that. I knew I was supposed to stand there, to straddle the divide, one foot on either side, and not give in. I laboured with all my effort to hold the earth together with my body. My thighs burned and sweat dripped from my furrowed brow. I wanted to give up. I wanted to take my foot off one side and fall with ease to the other. I wanted, at moments, to let the earth split in two, drift wide apart, and swallow me whole. But there was something else happening too. Something deeper in me. Something in my spirit. So, I planted my toes down deep in that dry earth and held on tight, for my life.

Then I woke up. My body a bridge: relationality.

Indigenous Pride, Indigenous Choice

Chief Simon Baker (Baker & Kirkness, 1994) stated that education is the tool necessary for self-determination. Self-determination is emphasized in the principles of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) articulated by the First Nations Information Governance Centre (2014) and furthermore is described by Castellano (2004):

The right of peoples to construct knowledge in accordance with self-determined definitions of what is real and what is valuable. Just as colonial policies have denied Aboriginal Peoples access to their traditional lands, so also colonial definitions of truth and value have denied Aboriginal Peoples the tools to assert and implement their knowledge. Research under the control of outsiders to the Aboriginal community has been instrumental in rationalizing colonialist perceptions of Aboriginal incapacity and the need for paternalistic control. (p. 102)

Baker said, “self-determination will take time and that first of all, our young people need pride” (Baker & Kirkness, 1994, p. 176). This thesis aims to benefit and support Indigenous people while creating pride that bolsters self-determination. Fellner (2016) remarked that spaces, like my thesis, must be established for Indigenous people in order to provide a sense of belonging, comfort, and the opportunity for conversations around cultural relationality (whether we were raised traditionally or without any connection to traditional cultures). She stated that, “forming these spaces is part of locating ourselves and fostering a sense of pride in being Indigenous” (p. 272).

Once we establish a sense of pride in who we are as Indigenous people, it follows that we have an increased sense of self-determination (Baker & Kirkness, 1994).

As an Indigenous woman and scholar, an important aspect of self-determination is the ability to choose which parts of my family history and personal experiences to share. For me, the process of reading and writing about the subjugating history of this nation is often horrifying, limiting, and re-traumatizing. As Duran (2006) framed it:

Historical trauma is cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences; the historical trauma response is the constellation of features in reaction to this trauma. The historical trauma response often includes depression, self-destructive behavior, suicidal thoughts, and gestures, anxiety, low self-esteem, anger and difficulty recognizing and expressing emotions. It may include substance abuse, often an attempt to avoid painful feelings through self-medication. (p. 47)

Throughout my education and during the process of this research, I have experienced historical trauma. I have become aware of many of my own historical trauma responses as well as the presence of historical grief in my life. Duran stated that historical, unresolved grief is an associated effect that accompanies historical trauma responses, and that this grief may be considered fixated, impaired, delayed, and or disenfranchised. Several of my personal experiences with historical trauma responses and historical grief were experienced in the creation of this thesis. The following is a personal journal entry I wrote during one such historical trauma response. In this excerpt, I am writing about and processing a difficult experience of reviewing literature on the topic of residential schooling:

November 3, 2020 – On Reading About Residential School

It's November in Calgary, meaning the air is dry. This is my only explanation for why my cheeks are burning from the salt in my tears. I am standing at the kitchen island, my tears

plummet and splash off the quartz countertop and I have no idea what I'm crying about – at least, not really. I'm about to film an interview for another university student about my own Indigenous experience. I have been preparing my own heart meanwhile compiling my literature for Chapter 2 of my own thesis. This morning, I was reading about the history of residential schooling in Canada, something I know mostly from the grim stories my grandfather tells – and the ones he doesn't tell. I read about the abuse, the systematic separating of children from parents, siblings, homes, beliefs, and culture. I read about the lasting consequences that still exist. I read these paragraphs as black-on-white typed font, but I feel them like tar on my body. It's too much for me to handle so I take a break. I step away. Hours later, I haven't returned but I am standing at my kitchen island crying the tears of my grandfather. Or are they mine? I'm beginning to wonder the difference. This is not an uncommon happening for me. I call it Chapter 2: Hitting the Trauma Wall. When my grandfather was in residential school, he was kept from speaking his native language. I'm in university studying counselling psychology and, in so many ways, I feel that pain, while at the same time feeling the grief of never getting to know my Lingít language.

Recalling and addressing the atrocities done to my ancestors and my own family is an enormous undertaking that cannot be considered without a great deal of gravity. In talking to the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations, Peter Johnston, I was encouraged to learn that although it is important to look to the past for wisdom, we are not intended to stay there (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021). It is important that such learning moves beyond retraumatizing Indigenous people or we run the risk of reifying the internalized messages of inner turmoil, chaos, and self-destruction

conditioned by colonial education (Wilson & Nelson-Moody, 2019). On many occasions during my education, such as the event illustrated in my November 3, 2020 journal entry, I have had to endure events and interactions which elicit historical trauma responses without my informed consent. Sometimes these encounters happened in a classroom setting. Sometimes I experienced a historical trauma response as a result of communications with a faculty member or staff at the university. Oftentimes, these responses were elicited as I attempted to relate to a course syllabus, readings, or other materials that confronted my Lingít relationality. While there were several occasions during my educational journey when I spoke up and advocated for equitable change, there were also many instances when I did not feel safe or comfortable in doing so. This chapter and my entire thesis are, in part, my own efforts to speak up and privilege my Lingít relationality within the educational system.

I do support appropriate education on the history of colonization and see it as an essential aspect of decolonization. I understand, respect, and support that many Indigenous scholars, past and present, have chosen to write about aspects of colonial history in their work in varying capacities. However, at this point in my journey, I do not accept the role of teacher for this particular topic. As an Indigenous woman and an intergenerational residential school survivor, I do not believe it is my responsibility or obligation to educate others on the trauma that my people, my family, and I have experienced. I believe teaching others about these experiences is a decision that cannot be made lightly. Therefore, based on my current experiences of historical trauma, I choose not to re-traumatize myself in order to write my thesis. Furthermore, I do not aspire to focus my attention or the attention of the reader on the traumatic things that were done to my people. In the wake of cultural genocide, it is critically important for Indigenous people to understand how reconnecting with who we are as Indigenous peoples is essential in our healing

and reemergence (Duran & Duran, 1995; Fellner, 2019). Thus, I aspire to explore and share – in strength – who we are today.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Necessary Reading

Though I have chosen not to provide a comprehensive history of colonization and its ongoing impact, readers are strongly urged to read the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada (ideally before continuing this journey with me; 2015a, 2015b). The TRC's mandate was to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools (IRS). The TRC documented the truth of survivors, families, communities and anyone personally affected by the IRS experience. The TRC included First Nations, Inuit, and Métis former IRS students, their families, communities, the churches, former school employees, government, and other Canadians (TRC, 2015a). The TRC hoped to guide and inspire Indigenous peoples and Canadians in a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships that are based on mutual understanding and respect. Part of this effort has been realized through the TRC's Calls to Action and the response to them – this thesis being one such response (TRC, 2015b).

The TRC (2015a) states:

For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as "cultural genocide." (p. 1)

The personal stories, collective history, and ongoing impact of colonization in Canada is extensively documented in the TRC (2015a, 2015b). Education on this topic is necessary work. Fellner (2018) wrote that professionals working with Indigenous people must take responsibility to work through any internalized biases, whether they are stereotypes, prejudices, or internalized oppression and lateral violence (p. 289). Learning the history of colonization is part of that responsibility.

Transformative Pedagogy: A New Way

There are many courageous and creative Indigenous scholars who have made exceptional choices in their scholarship in order to engage in decolonizing efforts as well as reclaim and protect their culture. For me, an antecedent to realizing widespread social change is transformation within people and systems; this change involves engaging in transformative education one brave step at a time. Transformative pedagogy must model resiliency, innovation, and abundance as the Indigenous scholars mentioned in this research have demonstrated (Archibald, 2008, 2019; Battiste, 2000, Fellner, 2018; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Kovach, 2010a; Poitras Pratt & Danyluk, 2019; Wilson, 2008; Wilson & Nelson-Moody, 2019). Within an Indigenous research paradigm, this can be called “hard soul work” because it functions to free our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits so we can be the fullest and most complete version of ourselves in relation to others (Archibald, 2008; Blackstock, 2018; Cajete, 1994). My presentation of the oral and written literature in this chapter is my active effort to decolonize, create change, and establish a more transformative pedagogy for the Indigenous students of tomorrow. As I said to Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021), “My hope is that because of the work I am doing, a door will be opened for the next generation that was not open for me.”

Opening these academic doors for Indigenous students means embracing and celebrating who they are within the academy. In *Indigenous Peoples and Professional Training in Psychology in Canada* (2019), Dr. Karlee Fellner provided the following insight on ways in which these spaces within the academy can be created:

It is critical to include required coursework in Indigenous approaches to wellness and psychology. However, such coursework must be implemented thoughtfully to foster student learning in a good way. Although such a course may be facilitated by an academic staff member, community Elders and knowledge holders should be the primary instructors. Ideally, much of this course work should be land-based and experiential, reflective of traditional Indigenous pedagogies and curricula. The instructor may then work with students to debrief and deconstruct their previously held colonial ways of knowing, being, and doing. (p. 270)

By embracing Indigenous worldview, culture, methods, and sense of relationality, the academy stands to generate significantly different research that speaks to the needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities and Peoples (Kovach, 2010a; Lacerda-Vandenborn, 2020; Linklater, 2014; Simpson & Smith, 2014). Beyond generating meaningful Indigenous research by embracing Indigenous worldviews, institutions will be actively engaged in decolonizing work.

Decolonizing is a verb (Fellner, 2018). As Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird (2012) stated, “decolonizing is the meaningful and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands” (p. 3). Fellner (2018) emphasized this concept of active resistance in remarking that, “decolonizing is an active, intentional, moment-to-moment process that involves critically undoing colonial ways of

knowing, being, and doing, while privileging and embodying Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing” (p. 284). In order to embrace Indigenous ways, an embracing of Indigenous people must occur. Poitras Pratt and Danyluk (2019) suggested that embracing Indigenous people, generally and within educational institutions, can look like listening to and learning from their worldviews, stories, and experiences. Receiving, embodying, and applying the knowledge of how Indigenous people experience relationality is an imperative aspect of decolonization. As Fellner (2018) stated:

Indigenous people and communities have a tremendous amount of wisdom to offer the world today. This wisdom not only comes through our traditional teachings and knowledges, but also through our survivance in the face of oppression, violence, and attempted genocide, and through contemporary teachings and knowledges that are constantly evolving and (re) emerging. (p. 289)

In order to transform and decolonize educational systems and the field of psychology, it is necessary to invite Indigenous voices and learn from Indigenous ways of doing, knowing, and being (Archibald, 2008; CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, 2018; Henderson, 2000; Poitras Pratt & Danyluk, 2019; Wilson, 2008). Therefore, instead of focusing on non-Indigenous views and voices in this literature review, I aim to carefully present unique, Indigenous views of relationality by way of a conversation between key sources (Purdue Online Writing Lab, 1995). As Wilson (2008) stated, “Indigenous researchers have often had to explain how their perspective is different from that of dominant system scholars and dominant scholars have seemingly needed no such justifications in order to conduct their research” (p. 55). Lacerda-Vandenborn (2020) emphasized that this common approach to research places the onus of defending the legitimacy of Indigenous ways of knowing on Indigenous scholars and Knowledge

Keepers. Thus, the purpose of this literature review is not to defend Indigenous relationality or contrast it with non-Indigenous models of self; it is to share an Indigenous view on relationality in its own right and on its own terms. Therefore, in keeping with the sensibility of my Indigenous research paradigm, this literature review is presented from my Lingít perspective, as a conversation between myself and others on the topic of Indigenous relationality.

Returning to My Dream: Indigenous Relationality

I introduced this chapter with my dream about my body, my relationality, being a bridge across a great divide on the earth. Today, Indigenous young people often negotiate their Indigenous relationality and ways of being within larger colonizing Western societies. This negotiation represents two worlds that Indigenous young people must live within and between (Salusky et al., 2021). Fellner (2018) acknowledged that, “Indigenous narratives and relationality can vary in relation to place and context, as Indigenous nations and people have unique stories and experiences” (p. 288). She also emphasized that “it is important to validate contemporary expressions and experiences of Indigenous relationality, so learners are reminded to not impose a static or historicized understanding of tradition in their work with Indigenous people” (p. 290). For example, many Indigenous people (including Lingít) acknowledge that each person comes into the world with gifts and a purpose in relation to balance and harmony in the greater community (Fellner, 2016). Therefore, remembering and understanding who we are – our unique, Indigenous relationality – is vitally important for ourselves, our communities, and the environments in which we live and work. Dauenhauer (1990) quoted the poetic words of Sitka Elder and the co-founder of Sealaska Heritage, George Davis, who spoke to the seriousness and urgency of understanding who we are:

It’s fine.

Yes.

A while ago I listened to your voice.

You told us then about the beat of the drum.

Now,

yes,

our grip has wearied on our Lingít identity

that we were holding in place

with a pole. (p. 297)

As I am the primary researcher involved with my thesis and I am Lingít, it is most appropriate for me to offer a Lingít perspective on relationality. I offer this view by citing direct conversations with Lingít knowledge holders including the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations and my family members, and by examining my own knowledges and additional Lingít scholarly knowledge. I acknowledge that I am still learning and that there are many parts of the Lingít way that I have not considered in this chapter. Based on where I am in my own lifelong learning journey of what it means to be Lingít, the following is my current understanding of a Lingít sense of relationality as it relates to my research.

Introducing and Situating Grand Chief Peter Johnston



Grand Chief Peter Johnston

Peter Johnston is the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations. He is a member of the Teslin Tlingit Council and belongs to the Yanyèdi (Wolf) clan. Grand Chief Peter Johnston spent twelve years of service in Teslin Tlingit Council Government. He is passionate about passing on his cultural teachings to the younger generations and is proud to support the priorities of Yukon First Nations.

Beyond Grand Chief Peter Johnston's official roles and title, he was also my neighbour in the village of Teslin when I was a young girl. He witnessed many of the childhood experiences I relate in this thesis. He was kind to me and my family back then. This kindness remains in him

today, which is one reason I look up to him for wisdom on my own journey of learning my Lingít self in relation.

On May 13, 2021, I sat down (virtually) with him to talk about Lingít relationality. I explained my aim to approach this literature review from a Lingít perspective, drawing heavily upon oral literature which would be gathered through our conversation. Grand Chief Peter Johnston supported my goal, offering his time and knowledge for the purpose of my thesis work. He said that the conversation would be a way of reconnecting and his act of reciprocity toward the next generation of Lingít people (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021).

In the next section of this paper, I provide a sincere understanding of Lingít relationality. I share aspects of my conversation on Lingít relationality with Grand Chief Peter Johnston as a framework for a wider conversation that includes additional Lingít sources. The aspects that shaped this conversation were: (a) respect; (b) responsibility; (c) purpose; (d) the gift of art; (e) being on the land; (f) communal lessons and ceremony; and (g) reciprocity.

Lingít Relationality

Dauenhauer (1990) stated that there are two terms commonly used in Lingít to talk about *we are* (Lingít relationality). Those terms are *haa kusteeyí* (our culture) and *haa Lingítx sateeyí*, which is more difficult to translate but literally means “we who are Lingít.” According to Dauenhauer, it can also be translated more loosely as “our way of life.” As I continue the chapter, it will be helpful for the reader to remember that Lingít relationality embodies *haa kusteeyí* and *haa Lingítx sateeyí*.

Respect: The Highest Law

Respect encircles who we are as Lingít people. During our conversation, Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021) welcomed me into a humble understanding of Lingít relationality as it relates to the highest law of respect. He said:

It may be too simple for some people, but the highest law of being Lingít is respect.

Within respect is love, kindness, empathy, and appreciation. Respect is mutual. It is reciprocal. It flows both ways. You can have love but without respect it isn't real love. If I claim to love you but I am not respectful to you, that could be harmful and hurtful. Love without respect can look like forcing yourself and your own ways upon someone else.

That is not what it is to be Lingít.

Ha Kus Teyea—The Teslin Tlingit Way: Declaration and Charter of Teslin Tlingit Nation, created by the Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC; 2005), further speaks to the important aspect of respect within Lingít relationality. I would like to acknowledge that although the spelling of haa kusteeeyí and ha kus teyeyea differ in these documents, they refer to same meaning. Haa kusteeeyí is the more widely accepted spelling; however, I am using both terms to remain consistent with the original sources.

Teslin Tlingit law is our identity –

Reflecting the unity and inclusiveness of our Clans and communities;

Demonstrating the value, uniqueness and dignity of each person; and

Enriching all aspects of Teslin Tlingit community and personal life.

Under Teslin Tlingit law, each Person –

Is a valued part of the community; and

Is taught to respect the spirit living within themselves...

... To act with fairness and understanding in personal relationships;

To do no harm;

To accept personal responsibility for actions that affects others;

To acknowledge actions that do hurt others, and take responsibility for the harm done;

To make restitution to those harmed, and to seek forgiveness; and

To be reconciled within the Clan, and to the community. (pp. 2-5)

Dauenhauer (1990) wrote that “respect is the single, major concept that most Lingít Elders place at the top of their list of imperatives to know, understand, and practice in the study of Lingít culture” (p. xxix).

Responsibility: Tending the Trail

As Lingít people, we appreciate the value of haa kusteeeyí and view it as an honour and a responsibility to take care of our Lingít relationality. Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021) shared an analogy to help me understand Lingít relationality. He told me to think of a trail that has been packed hard with moccasins, as our ancestors walked that path, over the course of history. If – over time – we let that trail grow in and we do not take care of that trail, we end up in a place like we are in today – a place shaped by colonial impact and lateral violence. He stated that it is our responsibility as Lingít people to take care of that trail, to keep it clean and wide, so that many can walk upon it – especially our own people.

We all have the responsibility and are accountable to lead by example every day through being who we are and using our voice to talk the truth (Grand Chief Peter Johnston, Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021). The notion of

using our voice respectfully is significant in Lingít relationality. Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1994) remarked that the art of using our voice and speaking publicly is highly valued in traditional and contemporary Lingít society. Lingít oratory tends to be complex in style and content and, for that reason, “a speaker must be the master of several areas of knowledge as well as be capable of connecting these areas poetically, using simile, metaphor, and other rhetorical devices” (p. 44). To be a public speaker within Lingít relationality, one must “be sensitive to human needs and know how to build appropriate bridges among individuals, families, clans, and communities, and between the material and spiritual worlds” (p. 44). For Grand Chief Peter Johnston, honouring who we are, by tending our trail, helps us remember our true voice as Lingít people; and sharing our true voice in the world is part of Lingít relationality (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021).

Purpose: Born With It

Purpose is essential to our Lingít relationality as it is part of our spirituality, which connects us to all things (Creator, our people, our culture, the land and animals, and ourselves). Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021) and I discussed that although many Indigenous people are caught in the tension between the ongoing impact of colonial violence and lateral violence, the purpose for Lingít people was not to be victimized. Both Grand Chief Peter Johnston and I have had experiences of navigating that gap, the tension of two worlds, and have come to similar conclusions that we must simply do our best to be who Creator made us to be each day. Purpose, through Creator, is also Lingít relationality. Grand Chief Peter Johnston said:

This purpose is in us from the time we are in our mothers’ wombs. Our mothers have the opportunity and the responsibility to begin teaching us from when we are in the womb –

about purpose, respect, love, kindness, and all these things we are going to be; even before we are born. We are being prepared for that birthing moment. The moment we enter the world we have purpose and yet we still rely on our relationship with our mother to survive.

He also remarked on the significance of the fact that we are one of the only beings completely dependent at birth. He shared stories of how moose stand and eat all on their own right after they are born. He talked about how the fox and the wolf come into the world playing. Yet, humans are entirely dependent on the world around us to take care of us in our early years. This, Grand Chief Peter Johnston suggests, is tied to the relational aspect of being human and the sense of honour and respect that exists from birth.

The Gift of Art

Our art, songs, and dances are meaningful aspects of who we are as Lingít people. Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021) shared his childhood experiences with traditional dancing and said there were many times he felt ashamed to be “Indian dancing” in front of people. He commented that later in life, he became more aware of just how important those songs and dances were to who he is today. Grand Chief Peter Johnston remarked that he would not take those experiences back for anything now. I, too, have had moments of embarrassment and shame when I would engage in my traditional dances and songs. However, as I mentioned to Grand Chief Peter Johnston, I always knew deep down there was an artist in me. I intuitively knew that the songs, the dances, and the art were profoundly in me and that I had not “made it up” in myself. Grand Chief Peter Johnston responded to my experience with intuition by saying:

We are gifted that. We are all gifted that. It's a gift from Creator and we are born with that spirit. I mean, regardless of if you don't know your language, the language is in you Chantai and it's up to you to unearth it in your way.

Consistent with my experience and Grand Chief Peter Johnston's view, Thornton (2015) stated that Lingít art references events, emotions, kin, places, and other themes that are fundamental to individual and social group identity. Thornton emphasized that, "Lingít art including song, dance, and visual iconography (the at.óow of design) contains an essential and expressive means through which people represent sacred relationships" (p. 31). Thus, in our Lingít art, we may find our Lingít relationality and vice versa.

Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021) continued to call attention to the idea that we need to clear our people's overgrown trail. He said we need to uncover our culture for us. Today, Grand Chief Peter Johnston suggested, many are uncovering their culture for the sake and the pleasure of others (for tourism, for outside attention, etc.). He recounted how, in old times, Lingít people used to have to earn each and every bead and button on traditional regalia. Those buttons were a source of cultural pride that was respected. Now, he stated, we cover ourselves in these beads and buttons that we have not earned in order to show off or look important. This, he regretted, was not the Lingít way. Lingít relationality, in this sense, means that we respect our customs and traditions and we do not engage in them for the sake of gaining others' attention. We engage, instead, as Grand Chief Peter Johnston stated, "for the sake of our ceremonies, for our children, and for our own connection with the gifts we've been given inside." Grand Chief Peter Johnston encouraged me to consider that the work we need to do now is to respectfully engage with our culture in order to find out who we are each supposed to be.

Being on the Land

Lingít Elder, Gabriel George, is quoted in *Being and Place Among the Lingít* saying, “These lands are vital not only to our subsistence, but also to our sense of being as Lingít people” (Thornton, 2015, p. 3). Therefore, as Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021) remarked, it is hard to understand who we are as Lingít people until you spend time on the land and begin to feel it. This belief is further supported by the TTC’s (2005) statement:

We are Teslin Lingít, people of the land, people of the water –

People of the mountains, the forests, and the Wolf;

People of the rivers, the lakes, the Frog and the Beaver;

People of the Eagle and the Raven Children, we walk below the skies of the creator in the footsteps of our ancestors. (p. 2)

The land, its medicine, and the power the land gives to us are key components of Lingít relationality (Grand Chief Peter Johnston, Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021). An important means by which we make connections to our place (our land) is through shagóon, which means the heritage and destiny of a people/the way things are (Thornton, 2015). shagóon is connected to the collective ancestry, history, and geography of our people and it extends to all descendants (Thornton, 2015). Thus, being on the land connects us to our ancestors and ourselves. Grand Chief Peter Johnston urged that we need to go back on the land in order to reconnect and re-energize our spirits. He stated that we need not “do” anything on the land except “be” and then we will experience the spirit of our Lingít relationality. Grand Chief Peter Johnston acknowledged that we are gifted with intuition which helps us connect with the land:

It is everything from the smell of the mountains to the way in which the wind blows to the various types of snow that come with different seasons. All of these things are purposeful teachings and communicate purpose within us.

This speaks to the Lingít notion that “places, like human beings, can possess things, even people, and communicate in powerful ways; because of this, the Lingít people respect lands, as they do people” (Thornton, 2015, p. 80). Grand Chief Peter Johnston asserted that unless – and until – we get back on the land in a regular and meaningful way, we will not be wholly connected to our Lingít relationality. As Thornton (2015) stated, “We should all be so aware of *being in place* and of *place in our being* as aanyatx’u saaní, children of the land” (p. 197).

Communal Lessons and Ceremony

Our grandparents, aunties, and uncles have always played an important role in teaching lessons to young people who are coming into their own (Grand Chief Peter Johnston, Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021). Grand Chief Peter Johnston reminded me that traditionally, our grandparents, aunties, and uncles led ceremonies for young men coming into their manhood and young women coming into their womanhood. *Ha Kus Teyea—The Teslin Tlingit Way: Declaration and Charter of Teslin Tlingit Nation* (2005) refers to this aspect of Lingít relationality by stating that we are to “care for our children, teach and nurture our youth, and help them to learn our values, traditional knowledge and rites of passage” (p. 4). So, within Lingít relationality, the community, as a whole, has a responsibility for the well-being of our young people. Consistent with Lingít custom, our extended family and community members offered traditional teachings with patience and kindness, and in ways that parents might not have been able to engage in with their own children (Grand Chief Peter Johnston, Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory,

personal communication, May 13, 2021). Through this community effort, Lingít children were ideally raised with Lingít values, kept safe, and built strong relational connections with the people in their community.

The communal aspect of Lingít culture is not only practical, but also ceremonial (Grand Chief Peter Johnston, Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021). Doing work together as a community and as a family is seen as an important aspect of who we are as Lingít people. Being on the land and working together (fish camp, hunting, cooking, berry picking, etc.) is ceremonial for our people.

Sharing our stories amongst each other and with outsiders to our community is also ceremonial because it is seen as offering a gift. Ceremonially sharing stories has always been a part of who we are as Lingít people. Storytelling, in this sense, is living from our true Lingít relationality through reciprocity. Many aspects of the values shared by Grand Chief Peter Johnston are represented by the TTC (2005) in *Ha Kus Teyea—The Teslin Tlingit Way*:

Declaration and Charter of Teslin Tlingit Nation:

We are one spirit, one mind, one people –

Dakhł'awèdi, Ishkitàn, Yanyèdi, Kùkhittàn, Dèshitàn

Each is equal, with an honoured history

Etched in the names and sacred places entrusted to its care, and

Told in the stories, songs, dances and symbols that are our language. (p. 2)

Reciprocity: Understanding What is Ours and Giving Back

Part of living respectfully within the Lingít way is giving back. Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021) remarked that our personal relationship and relational history was an important

part of his decision to share his knowledge with me for my thesis. He stated that it is a part of his own reciprocity efforts and obligation to give back to the next generation of his people and his community. He cautioned me that what we each carry within us is precious and that we need to be careful to whom we choose to give it, so that it still remains ours to share as we choose.

Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1994, p. 43) emphasized this aspect of Lingít relationality by explaining that the two main features that characterize Lingít culture and oral tradition are ownership and reciprocity (popularly called balance). This concept of ownership is called *at.óow* in Lingít and refers to all sacred possessions (Thornton, 2015). *at.óow* and reciprocity are found all throughout the Lingít way. For example, the two moieties (halves of a society) within Lingít culture, Eagle and Raven, balance each other (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994). Members of one moiety traditionally selected marriage partners from the other. This balance is also represented in host-guest relationships at ceremonies. At these ceremonies, both moieties share in each other's joy, and they work to remove each other's grief (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994, p. 43). One way that this ownership and reciprocity are reflected in Lingít oral literature itself is the way that, within these Lingít ceremonies, a song is matched with a song, speech is matched with speech, and a display of art is matched with another display of art (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994, p. 43).

Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021) closed our conversation poetically, advising me that:

In this life, we overcomplicate things when they truly are simple. To be Lingít is to live an honourable life and to do your best. In the end, people will respect you for who you are because you've done the best that you can.

Keepsake From the Trail: A Chapter Summary

As the exploration of relationality in this chapter was vast, the following section is intended to serve as a review of the key topics covered in this chapter. I call this a keepsake from the trail as these topics are meant to be kept in mind as you continue down the trail of my research journey.

Recall my dream (A Crack in the Earth) I shared to begin this chapter. The dream was used as a thematic connection to my research topic of Indigenous relationality. In this chapter, I discussed the tension often experienced by Indigenous people in the midst of exploring their relationality, a tension of living in two worlds. I considered the historical and ongoing impact of colonization, including the impact of intergenerational and historical trauma/trauma responses. I highlighted the importance of having a sense of pride in one's Indigenous relationality and how that will contribute to a rise in self-determination for Indigenous people. I suggested changes in education that may lead to transformative pedagogies that are more equitable for all students, including Indigenous students. I focused comprehensively on Lingít oral and written literature in order to inform my research topic of Indigenous relationality. The conversation of Lingít relationality in this chapter was consistent with my Indigenous research paradigm and relational axiology in that it allowed me to carry out my research in a respectful and holistic sense. Finally, the exploration of Lingít relationality was a necessary realization of my response to the research question, "How have you, as an Indigenous person and graduate student, come to know and experience your Indigenous relationality?"

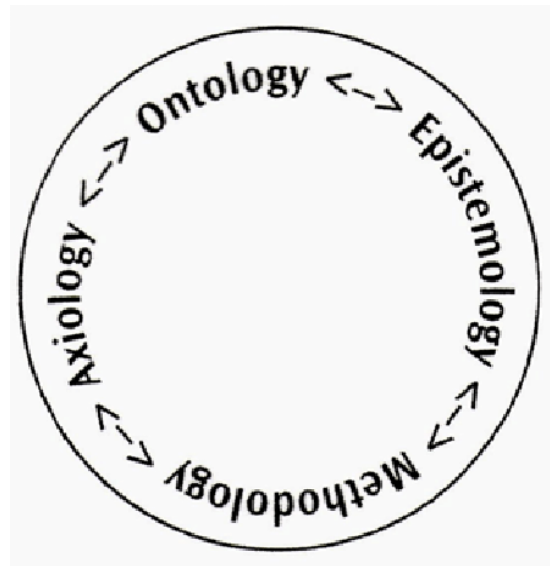
Indian Ice Cream and Research as Gift: Chapter 3

Indigenous Research Paradigm

Relationality is the essence of an Indigenous research paradigm. Wilson (2001) described the Indigenous research paradigm as “a set of beliefs about the world and about gaining knowledge that goes together to guide people’s actions as to how they are going to go about doing their research” (p. 175). As illustrated in Figure. 3, the components of an Indigenous research paradigm are related to each other and to relationships. Within an Indigenous research paradigm, the components of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology are represented in a circular way to show the relational nature of this paradigm.

Figure 3

Wilson’s (2008) Circle of Indigenous Research Paradigm



Ontology refers to beliefs about the nature of reality (Wilson, 2008). It is our way of being and our beliefs about what is real (Wilson, 2001). As Hart (2010) remarked, “Spirituality and reciprocity are two key elements of an Indigenous ontology and are key in this Indigenous research paradigm” (p. 7). Within an Indigenous ontology, it is understood that the spiritual

realm and the physical realm are interconnected and that we are in relationship with both. Within our ontological relationships, a central aspect is reciprocity. Hart (2010) stated that, “reciprocity reflects the relational worldview and the understanding that we must honor our relationships with other life” (p. 8).

Whereas ontology refers to what we believe is real in the world, epistemology, in an Indigenous research paradigm, refers to how we think about reality (Wilson, 2001, 2008). Kovach (2005) suggested that Indigenous epistemology is a fluid way of knowing that comes from teachings passed from generation to generation through storytelling. Within this view, each story is alive with the nuances of the storyteller (Kovach, 2005).

Methodology refers to how knowledge is gained or how one will use epistemology to gain more knowledge about reality (Wilson, 2008). Wilson (2001) also described how Indigenous methodology involves relational accountability, meaning that the researcher is fulfilling their relationship with the world around them.

Finally, axiology is the ethics or morals that guide what information is worthy of searching for and how research should be conducted (Wilson, 2008). Axiology, in an Indigenous paradigm, means that research must do something beneficial in this world (Wilson, 2001). Each of these components of an Indigenous research paradigm is intended to be seen as a part of and connected to each other.

Ontology and epistemology are based upon relationships that form a mutual reality whereas methodology and axiology form upon maintaining accountability to these relationships (Wilson, 2008). From an Indigenous research paradigm, reality is found within relationships between these spiritual and physical realms. This means that as an Indigenous researcher, I am informed by my relationship with creation (the natural world) and the Creator (the spiritual

world). These worlds include relationships with others, with myself, with Aankáawu (Creator, God), with the land, water, animals, and with the research process itself. To be clear, within this Indigenous research paradigm, “it is not the realities that are important, but the relationship that we share with reality” (Wilson, 2001, p. 176).

In order to engage in respectful relationships and research, we must have space to show up as who we are. For instance, if I am not able to bring my Indigenous relationality into my research, then it is not possible to be in real relationship with me or my research; as a result, my voice is misused and the purpose of the research lost. From an Indigenous perspective, it is not possible to separate any part of myself from the research. This means that regardless of the obstacles I face, I must make an effort to show up to my work holistically. I show up as an Indigenous person and researcher. I show up as a woman with mixed ancestry (Tlingit First Nations, European, Chinese, Vietnamese). I show up as an artist and poet. I show with my faith and spirituality. I carry my family with me. I must go to be on the land and water, and with animals. I must cultivate good relationships with the storytellers. I show up in my body, spirit, mind, and heart. I must, and I have, in my most earnest capacity. Wilson (2008) described this concept of holism this way:

Indigenous people have come to realize that beyond control over the topic chosen for the study, the research methodology needs to incorporate their cosmology, worldview, epistemology and ethical beliefs. An Indigenous research paradigm needs to be followed through all stages of research. (p. 15)

Kovach (2010b) emphasized this in stating that an Indigenous research paradigm, Indigenous research methodology, and Indigenous research methods must be front and centre (and congruent) in order for the researcher to respectfully and effectively serve Indigenous

research and those involved. Kovach (2010a) explained, in doing Indigenous research, the explicitness of our choices and the beliefs that influence these choices send a purposeful message about who we are as researchers. Wilson (2001) contended that Indigenous people need to do research from an Indigenous paradigm, not just an Indigenous perspective, because we have the lifelong learning and relationship that goes into it. This relationality is within us far before the onset of our research and is throughout the axiology (the ethics of doing certain kinds of research) of an Indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2001, 2008). Indigenous research is informed by something far beyond our individual hypotheses and perspectives. We do not come up with research on our own; rather, it is gifted to us through relationship in an ongoing way (Wilson, 2001).

Wilson (2008) also considered Indigenous research as ceremony because, “when ceremonies take place, everyone who is participating needs to be ready to step beyond the everyday and to accept a raised state of consciousness” (p. 69). People who are involved in the ceremony of research enter into a space designed to host the extraordinary. In the book, *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Wilson (2008) described Indigenous research as ceremony in this way:

The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves. The research we do as Indigenous people is a ceremony that allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into our world. Let us go forward together with open minds and good hearts as we further take part in this ceremony. (p. 11)

In response to Wilson’s description, I would like to personally invite you into this research, this ceremony. Now, let us go forward into relationality as experienced by Indigenous

graduate students. Let us go forward together with open minds and good hearts as I present: (a) my methodology of Making Indian Ice Cream; (b) the method of Indigenous Storywork and use of film; (c) my research map/story; (d) the ethical considerations of this research; and (e) my reflexive writings relating to the research process.

Making Indian Ice Cream: An Intuitive Methodological Approach

One of the ways I honoured my Lingít relationality in this research was in the research methodology I created: the process of Making Indian Ice Cream. Next, I will explain how the methodology came to be and describe how it guided my research process.

It is important for the listener of a story to have context and to be able to visualize themselves within a story (Archibald, 2008). In order to understand my research methodology, it is helpful to familiarize yourself with the idea of berries and berry picking. For this reason, as a way of introducing my methodology and methods, I share a video I created of my grandmother and invite you into her story. I invite you to imagine yourself going to a berry patch, prepared for picking. Considering the possibility that you may not have had opportunities to visit a berry patch, I have asked my grandmother for permission to share her berry patch with you for the sake of this research. You do not know my grandmother, but if you did, you would understand that her response to this request was, “Oh yes! What a wonderful idea. Of course, you just go right ahead and use my berry patch.” (Michelle Minet, Yukon Territory, my grandmother, personal communication, November 7, 2020). Next, I invite you to please open the following link, listen to her story, and imagine yourself in [My Grandma's Berry Patch](#).

I hope my grandmother’s story helped you to imagine what it might be like to be in a berry patch of your own. Seeing yourself in the berry patch with the berries will help you to situate yourself in the story of my research methodology.

On Intuition

Before I introduce my methodology, I would like to offer an excerpt, written by Shawn Wilson (2001), to highlight the importance of trusting your intuition when determining your research methodology:

Personally, I spend a lot of time thinking, “Well what the heck are my methods?”... A big part of my method has involved using intuitive learning. Many people don’t trust their intuition. Some students or researchers come to university and their Indigeneity gets revitalized somehow or another, but they are still missing something. The same sort of thing happens when people are reexperiencing Indigenous traditional spirituality. It becomes a new dogma for them. Rather than living the life and internalizing the things that they are learning about, all you can see are the external trappings. The external show becomes more important than the internal feeling and integrity of the Indigenous beliefs. (p. 178)

My methodology emerged intuitively in the form of a metaphor. That metaphor is the process of making Indian ice cream. I wrote it down and shared it with my supervisor, Dr. Karlee Fellner, and she responded with enthusiasm and support, encouraging me to use what had been given to me; to use this process metaphor as my methodology for my thesis. Next, I introduce my methodology by sharing a process diagram (Figure 4) and a story about how I first learned to make Indian ice cream.

Figure 4

Making Indian Ice Cream: A Process Diagram



My Story of Making Indian Ice Cream

I remember when I was a small girl, my family went out to the bush for a cultural gathering. Families and clan members were scattered along the banks of the lake and many Elders gathered around the fire to sit and drink tea. Some of the women Elders began to teach us young ones how to make Indian ice cream – the old way. First, we had to go out with our pails and collect enough soapberries – bright-red little beads so full of juice and medicinal properties. All I could think of was making ice cream. Once my pail was full enough, I returned. Next, it was time to pick a willow branch. The willow would act as a whisk to beat the berries until they

got full and foamy. This whipping process took a considerable amount of time and, before I knew it, my arm muscles burned and tired. I wanted to give up, but I also wanted to keep going. That is exactly how this graduate degree and this research has felt for me. There have been many moments when I felt ready to give up, but something within me had me keep going. Sometimes when whipping the berries, I would try to switch to my less dominant hand for relief but that never was very effective. I tried that with my research, too. I tried switching my approach to something that would provide immediate relief and that would come with less resistance for me just because my allegorical arm – my heart – was tired. I learned through experience as a child with berries, and as an adult with research, that switching to your less dominant hand can result in expedited exhaustion. So, back to my dominant arm it was. As I whipped, the berries (the research) took shape. It is most important to recognize when you have whipped them just enough so as to not overdo it and have the ice cream go flat. Once the berries become foamy, there is an optional step of adding sweetness. Some people – mostly Elders – enjoy the natural bitter taste of the berry without any sugar. As a child, my palate was not accustomed to that bitterness. I added sugar to mine. I mixed it in until the sugar was incorporated into the berry foam and was inseparable.

This traditional childhood activity, this bowl of Indian ice cream, *is* this research. In many ways, this bowl full is me. Equal parts berry, equal parts sugar, inseparable. The whipping is the work – the process. Sometimes, in this process, our hearts burn and there are many moments when we want to quit. But, in the end, the berries and sugar blend together in a transformative way to become a delicious and nourishing gift for those who choose to enjoy. I remember the pride I felt as a young girl once I had finished making my bowl of Indian ice cream. I was so proud of all that went into making it that it felt natural to want to share it with

everyone. So, I wandered around camp – a little girl with a big bowl full – and offered this delight to anyone who wanted a taste.

While methodology is defined as encompassing both knowledge system and methods, the purpose of Indigenous research is to illustrate the unification of these aspects. An Indigenous research framework acts as a nest, encompassing the range of qualities influencing the process and content of the research journey. (Kovach, 2010a, p. 41)

This metaphor, my story of making Indian ice cream, is my methodological nest. It holds this research together. It is a collection of stories about contemporary Indigenous relationality as experienced by graduate students. It is the many things that make us, us (all the berries). It is the multiple pathways to becoming inseparable (the mixing). It is the courageous desire to be as unyielding as the Elder's palate for soapberries and the hope that we might be entirely accepted in a sugary world for our berry parts too. This research is the relational and ceremonial offering of ourselves. This research is reciprocity.

Within an Indigenous research paradigm, the value of reciprocity is the responsibility to give something back in return for gifts received. Many Indigenous cultures, including Lingít, believe that giving back is a necessary basis for relationships (Archibald & Parent, 2019; Kimmerer, 2013; Kovach, 2010a; Wilson, 2008). Since relational accountability is essential in Indigenous research methodology, engaging in reciprocity is foundational to meaningful research (Wilson, 2001). For this reason, I made my best efforts within this thesis to practice reciprocity in my relationships with each of the storytellers, my supervisors, and those guiding my research process. Later in this chapter, I provide a research map which explains, in further detail, how my reciprocity experience remarkably impacted my relationships, the trajectory of this research, and

my own relationality. For now, I highlight some ways that reciprocity is centered within my methodology and research methods.

In my research process, I established a deep reverence for the aspect of Indigenous research paradigms which honour knowledge as relational, shared, and something that cannot be individually owned (Archibald, 2008; Wilson, 2008). From this view, listening to, engaging with, learning from, and ethically passing on the stories offered in my thesis is one of the foremost ways to engage in reciprocity. Part of reciprocity in this form is sharing my own story and cultural background. Sharing who I am and where I come from, alongside the other storytellers involved in this research, is a form of Indigenous relationality and reciprocity. In the process, we are being reciprocal to one another by meeting each other's stories with a story. In telling our stories, we are also being reciprocal to our respective communities. For me, I am giving back to my Lingít community as well as contributing new knowledge to the field of psychology and the academic research community. Wilson (2001) supports this way of research, stating that we are not only involved in the research process to gain information from people; we are responsible for sharing our information as well. Wilson's (2008) understanding of an Indigenous research paradigm places emphasis on the importance of reciprocity in research and connects it to the role that reciprocity plays in our traditional ceremonies.

The Willow: Indigenous Storywork as a Research Method

Within the Indian ice cream methodology, the research methods are represented by our willow branches (our mixing tool). For my research, I have chosen Indigenous Storywork (ISW) as my willow (my research method). I chose this method to most responsibly and holistically represent the experiences of relationality as shared by the storytellers involved in this thesis. In the metaphor, the willow branch does not add or take away from the mixture. It is a tool used to

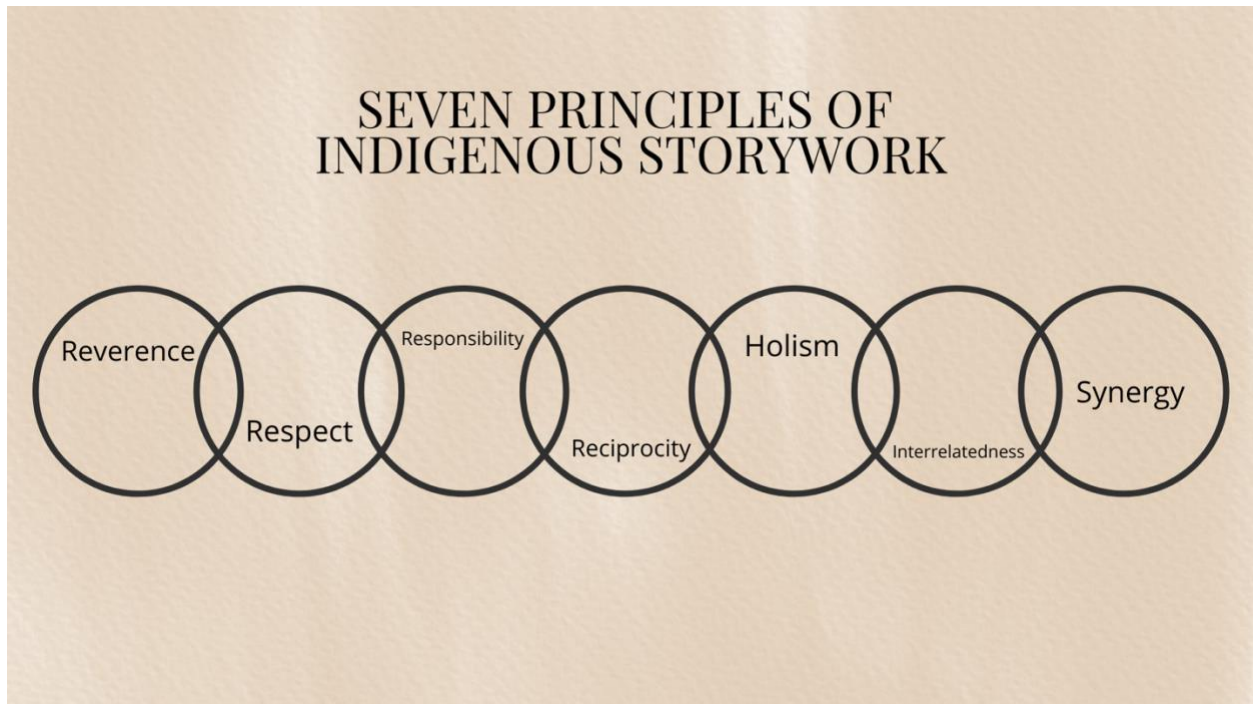
form a substance. The purpose of the willow is to move the ingredients around until they form the shape they are meant to take. In this case, the shape the research took on (the bowl of Indian ice cream) was stories of Indigenous relationality expressed in filmed research conversations, poetry, and art.

Archibald (2008) stated, “Storywork is not easy, but it is essential if First Nations stories are to be used to educate the heart, mind, body, and spirit, which is truly Indigenous education” (p. xi). ISW is the process of making meaning through stories (Archibald, 2008, 2011). ISW has a set of seven principles related to using Indigenous stories and storytelling for educational purposes (see Figure 5; Archibald, 2008). These principles were given to Jo-ann Archibald by the Elders she worked with in her own research. The seven principles of ISW are: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy (Archibald, 2008). The four R’s (respect, responsibility, reverence, and reciprocity) are traditional values practiced by the storyteller and the listener (Archibald, 2008). The other three principles, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy, are values that shape the learning process (Archibald, 2008, 2019). In the following section, I provide descriptions of the seven principles of ISW as explained by Archibald (2008, 2011, 2019; National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education, 2019)

Principles of Indigenous Storywork

Figure 5

Seven Principles of Indigenous Storywork: An Illustration



Respect. Archibald (National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education, 2019) described this principle as being open to learn from and with Indigenous people. This includes being open to learning how they have developed their stories or ways they would like to be portrayed. Archibald referenced Chief Simon Baker’s wisdom of “listening with our three ears” which carries the meaning of listening with the usual two ears as well as with the one in our heart. Respect, in this sense, can be shown in research through listening and hearing what people are saying. Archibald stated that respect looks like Indigenous people being given the space and time to be heard and recognizing that there is diversity amongst Indigenous people’s stories. Within the research context, respecting the cultural contexts and story protocols that come with hearing certain types of stories is very important.

Responsibility. Responsibility is taking time to build positive working relationships with the storytellers. Archibald said that if we work with the stories, then we are working with the people who tell them. An important part of this means taking time to become aware of the impact of colonial history. Archibald instructed us to learn about:

1. How the federal government banned the teaching and practicing of Indigenous culture;
2. How our Indigenous stories were “put to sleep” due to the denial of the sharing of stories and knowledge at gatherings such as the potlatch;
3. The impact of residential schooling;
4. How to have empathy for those who have residual generational trauma about school;
5. The resilience and survivance of Indigenous people; and
6. The current reawakening of the stories of Indigenous people.

Reverence. Reverence is the principle that is aligned with a sense of spirituality. It refers to a way of taking care of one’s inner spirit and handling emotional difficulties, especially those due to colonial impact. Reverence is learning to understand the relationship or the kinship that Indigenous people have with the environment.

Reciprocity. Archibald stated that the principle of reciprocity means that if you have been fortunate enough to receive the teachings through stories, then it is important to give back and share with others to keep that story knowledge going and passing down. This principle includes intergenerational learning (learning from those who have walked before us).

Holism. In the context of ISW, holism is a way of developing and strengthening our intellectual (forms of knowledge), physical (actions), emotional (empathy/compassion), and spiritual (our own inner spiritual nature) selves. It includes all realms of human development which are, in turn, composed of the circles of influence: self, family, community, and wider

society. From this principle, we must consider how the story we are being told might relate to all these realms.

Interrelatedness. Archibald stated that the principle of interrelatedness is how two or more of these realms interact within the story. The interrelationship between the story, storytelling, and the listener is a critical part of ISW.

Synergy. Synergy is when a spark happens. In ISW, this happens when you hear an idea that someone else shares and it triggers a thought/idea or deepens existing thoughts or ideas.

Archibald (2019) explained that in order for one to engage in Indigenous stories appropriately, especially experiential stories like the ones told in this thesis, it is necessary to reinforce the Storywork principles. She learned that stories can “take on their own life” and “become the teacher” if these seven principles are used (Archibald, 2008). Using the principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy, this research created a space for Indigenous stories to take on a life of their own, to become the teachers, and to guide the research process (Archibald, 2008).

Role of the Researcher in ISW

Within ISW, the role of the researcher is to actively listen to the storyteller and then to become a storyteller through sharing what they have witnessed, heard, and learned (Archibald, 2008). ISW is intuitive, which means, as the researcher, one must constantly be in relationship with the stories. This requires continuous thinking about and “playing with the levels of metaphor and implication found within story” (Archibald, 2008, p. 18). Akan (1999) described it this way:

If one were to try to give a metaphorical description of some of the features of First Nations thought, one might say that they go to school in dreams, write in iconographic imagery, travel in Trickster's vehicle, talk in metaphor, and always walk around. (p. 38)

As we "walk around" in our research, an important consideration for a researcher using ISW is cultural worthiness. As Archibald (2008) wrote, "being a culturally worthy person/researcher means being ready intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually to fully absorb cultural knowledge" (p. 41). This means that we, the researchers, must take responsibility for any mistakes in our research as those who shared their knowledge with us did so with great care and trust (Archibald, 2008). As you build your relationships with the storytellers and the stories, important meanings will be made. "Since stories can be heard again and again, the meanings that one makes or doesn't make from them can happen at any time. One does not have to give meaning right after hearing a story" (Archibald, 2008, p. 25). As an Indigenous researcher, I have learned that having patience and trusting the process are essential in making meaning. However, within ISW, once you have been impacted by the power of a story (or the knowledge a story offered you), you must be ready to share and teach that knowledge to others in a responsible and respectful way (Archibald, 2008).

Film in ISW

The use of film in this ISW research was intentional. Filming the research conversations safeguarded the integrity of the stories by providing a way for the conversations to be viewed as closely as possible to how they actually happened. When a story which was shared orally is transcribed, typed into black and white, it may result in the loss of the original meaning of that story. Within Indigenous storytelling, our stories are not always about the words but about what is being said. This can include implied meanings, body language, gestures, and a storyteller's

ability to have the listener visualize themselves as a part of the story (Archibald, 2008). The mere act of transcribing a story can be a form of mistranslation. It can distort what is being said.

Archibald (2008) wrote:

Sometimes Indigenous perspectives are presented without explicit comment – in accordance with the oral tradition of letting the listener, now reader, make meaning from someone’s words and stories without direction from the storyteller. Whenever Indigenous oral tradition is presented in textual form, the text limits the level of understanding because it cannot portray the storyteller’s gestures, tone, rhythm, and personality. (p. 17)

For these reasons, and in concordance with the preference of the storytellers, I used film as a method to document their stories and poetry. I did not alter the stories through transcribing them from their original form.

My Research Story

Next, in keeping with the Indigenous Storywork method, I provide insight into my research process by telling my research story. The modalities I use for telling my research story are: (a) a research map; (b) written sections that relate to the important events indicated on the timeline; (c); reflexive journal entries (in italics) that provide context and deeper understanding of how this research took place; and (d) documented accounts of meaningful correspondences I had with the storytellers and my supervisors. I included these because I want you, the reader, to be able to situate and holistically imagine yourself within the research process (Archibald, 2008).

My Research Map

As Archibald (2008) suggested, stories take on a life of their own and my research story certainly did. My research process was far from what I expected. I faced many personal and professional challenges during the course of this thesis work. These challenges included

confronting institutional resistance to my work and advocating for my research during my ethics application, dealing with the devastating loss of all the original video footage from my initial research conversations, and reclaiming my own Lingít relationality in the midst of a global pandemic and a collective surge in social justice responses to racial injustice. Through this, I learned that the only way to get where you are going in Indigenous research is to trust the process. As I practiced trusting the process, I had to respond with resilience, and oftentimes I had to adapt to unforeseen circumstances. Thus, in reality, my research story looks more like a winding pathway than a straight road. Nonetheless, I have created a research map, shown in Figure 6, that shows the chronological process of how the research happened. This research map is meant to be used as a guide to provide a clear reference regarding the timeline of the events discussed in this and the remaining chapters of this thesis. Please carefully review this research map before continuing and return to it for guidance as often as necessary throughout the remainder of this thesis.

Figure 6

Research Map/Timeline



In the following sections I provide written accounts of the experiences, illustrated in my research map, that were significant in my research process.

A Life Lesson in Ethics

Indigenous academics have been tirelessly working on advancing Indigenous knowledge in the academy while facing anti-Indigenous racism, microaggressions, and deeply embedded systemic racism in the academy. (Lavallee, 2020, p. 117)

During the process of my ethics application, I began to experience the ways in which my relationship with this research called me into action before it had “officially” begun. It was difficult, and at times intolerable, to stay honest to the Indigenous research paradigm while completing the ethics application in standardized format. These challenges led to multiple

discussions with supervisors, colleagues, and members of the ethics board. It also led to me being in tears on several occasions. This experience caused me to reflect on my reality (and what I was certain was the reality of many others in similar positions). This reality is that, as an Indigenous researcher, there are many extra steps to take in order to engage with the research process in a good way – a way that respects your own cultural protocols/ethics. This is an equity issue because these steps equate to extra work and extra energy required on behalf of the researchers. This, in part, is why many Indigenous researchers – including the storytellers – describe their own exhaustion in the academic field. We have to advocate and do more to reach the same outcomes as many of our non-Indigenous peers.

As one example of the extra workload and emotional barriers many Indigenous researchers can face, I have included an excerpt from a complaint I wrote to advocate for my research. Out of respect for the relationship formed, I have chosen not to disclose the original feedback to which the excerpt refers, and I have left out any identifying information. Though I will not disclose the implicating details, I believe it is important to share this aspect of my research journey to further elucidate the immense burden placed on Indigenous researchers carrying out their research while simultaneously advocating for social justice.

Hello _____ ,

The following are a few examples of complaints I have regarding the review I was given upon submitting my application. I would like it to be noted that it was difficult for me, as an Indigenous person and researcher, to read through the following examples of feedback. It was a very negative emotional experience for me, and it further perpetuates the exact reason research like the study I am proposing NEEDS to be done. It is feedback like this that can cause many Indigenous scholars to recoil and feel vastly under

supported, misunderstood and ultimately oppressed in the current academic system. I do not feel these remarks are acceptable, especially without further explanation and justification. The entire purpose of this study was undermined when the reviewer failed to listen and to see the study through the Indigenous paradigm upon which it was constructed.

This complaint was followed up by a video conference meeting where my concerns were addressed with kindness and what I experienced as a sincere apology. I was grateful for the response to my concerns and the way that things were handled. In that meeting, I saw an opportunity to speak up about the fact that although I was thankful for the understanding, kind response, and apology, that this type of conduct is not appropriate. I noted the extra time, effort, and emotional energy it takes for someone to have to advocate for themselves, their work, and for others. I explained that some people, such as myself in this instance, may have enough support to make it to the point of advocacy. However, others, unfortunately, will not. I encouraged the person I was meeting with to consider all the people who had experienced something similar to what I did but had not come forward. I shared my feedback for possible solutions to my concerns including a shift in the standardized format of the application. I suggested that for research done from Indigenous research paradigms, rather than giving feedback or questions in writing, an option be given to have a conversation. The person I spoke with agreed that my suggestion was more appropriate in many cases and committed to bringing it to their team to consider for the future.

Ethical Considerations

My experience during my ethics application caused me to consider the importance of ethical research on a personal and professional level. Although I was already committed to

following my own culturally ethical protocols, my experience motivated me to learn more about how to be ethically responsible in my research. My quest for knowledge of Indigenous ethics led to a deeper exploration of various resources including: (a) The First Nations Information Governance Centre. *Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP): The Path to First Nations Information Governance* (2014); (b) Government of Canada, Tri-Council Agencies: *Chapter 9 – Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada* (2018); (c) conversations with Elders, the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations (personal communication, May 13, 2021), family members, supervisors, various Indigenous scholars, and storytellers; (d) the work of Elders Reg Crowshoe and Willie Ermine on ethical spaces (Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership, 2020; Ermine, 2007; PolicyWise for Children and Families, 2016); (e) the literature on Two-Eyed Seeing (Bartlett et al., 2012; Marshall & Bartlett, 2018; Peltier, 2018); (f) the published work of other Indigenous researchers; and (g) *Psychology's Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Report* (CPA & PFC, 2018).

I learned many valuable lessons during my ethical exploration. Not surprisingly, in all the resources I studied, I noticed a strong emphasis on relationship building as well as respecting the research relationships and the knowledge provided through those relationships. From The First Nations Information Governance Centre's, *Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP): The Path to First Nations Information Governance* (2014) emphasis on respectful collection, protection, use, and sharing of data and information obtained in research with Indigenous peoples to the embodied traditional knowledge of Elders Crowshoe, Ermine, and Marshall, I gained a stronger sense of Indigenous axiology.

Additionally, I found an excerpt containing several questions presented by Wilson (2001) that encompassed many of the ethical values I learned from the resources listed above. These questions provided a means for me to practically engage my Indigenous axiology in my research:

What is my role as a researcher, and what are my obligations? You then have to ask yourself: Does this method allow me to fulfill my obligations in my role? Further, does this method help to build a relationship between myself as a researcher and my research topic? Does it build respectful relationships with the other participants in the research? Relationships with the idea or topic, as well as with the people or mice or trees or whatever you are working with, have to be considered. (p. 178)

These were questions I revisited throughout my research journey. I relied on these questions in order to evaluate the ethics of my research. I let these questions guide me in my work and in my relationships with the storytellers. These questions were my constant reminder of Indigenous ethics. When I held myself accountable to these questions, I was able to approach my research with a sense of freedom, an open heart, and confidence that I was doing my research in a good way. Each of the following sections speaks to aspects of my axiology and ethical considerations within this research process.

In the following sections, I outline specific aspects of how I followed through with my research using an Indigenous axiology.

How the Storytellers Gathered (Recruitment)

One of the ways I respected Indigenous axiology was by engaging the principles of ISW in gathering the storytellers (recruitment). I had built real relationships with the storytellers before I knew they would eventually be involved in my research. I spent time learning from them, supporting their research, and listening to their stories (informally) before inviting the

storytellers to join in my research. In order to describe this process, I return to the day when the sweetgrass was hard to light.

The sweetgrass had a hard time catching fire that day. As I reflect now, I believe the sweetgrass was preparing to carry many people's stories (including my own). That day, I sat amidst other Indigenous graduate students from across Canada, held the talking stone in my hand, and told my story. In Chapter 1, I noted that while I was in that room, I was moved by the beautiful diversity and complexity of Indigenous relationality. My curiosity deepened, and I felt the importance of working from an Indigenous research paradigm rise within me. Little did I know, as I sat, immersed in the stories of others, while having spilled my own self out, that the beating drum of several other hearts were pounding – in rhythm – with mine.

It was during the closing of that same gathering, as we opened the door and let the smoke waft out from the heart of the library, that all of the people involved in this thesis volunteered to share their stories should I decide to move forward. Through their listening, they offered a reprieve from my lonely experience of my Indigenous relationality within the academy. Through their words, they offered encouragement to me to continue to share my story and support should I need it, in sharing theirs. Those were the people who turned out to be the storytellers in this thesis. The way in which that gathering occurred is just one example of the wonder and mystery of relational connection and how it can inform Indigenous research.

The Official Invite

The next step was confirming the storytellers for my thesis (recruitment). The people who had orally volunteered to participate were officially invited to participate in this study. This relational recruitment is consistent with Indigenous research paradigms in that all the people involved in this thesis were connected through relationships established during my community

engagement with Indigenous student communities at the University of Calgary. The invitation was sent through personalized emails which included official letters of invitation. This recruitment strategy is consistent with: (a) an Indigenous research paradigm; (b) the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Government of Canada, 2018); and (c) ISW cultural ethics and protocols (Archibald, 2008, 2019; Government of Canada, 2018; Wilson, 2008). Three graduate students responded to the official invitations and were recruited to the study. The storytellers in this research (introduced in Chapter 1) were: Pearl Yellow Old Woman-Healy, Ashley Cornect-Benoit, Stephanie Tipple, and Chantai Minet (myself).

Consent

The storytellers were aware that this thesis would be documented on film and that anonymity would not be possible. With this knowledge, those who shared their stories did so openly and willingly through ongoing oral and written consent. Each of the storytellers indicated that it was important for them to be identified by their real names in order to honour their own stories, their families, and their ancestors. This supported my research as Wilson (2008) wrote that using one's own name in Indigenous research strengthens respect and accountability to research relationships as it outwardly acknowledges and honours the role each participant played as a storyteller in the process.

Each of the storytellers who participated was informed that they could withdraw from participation in this research at any time. They were also informed that upon withdrawal, all film recordings would be deleted and would not be used in the process of meaning making or be part of the dissemination of this research. None of the participants chose to withdraw.

Ownership and Dissemination of Findings

From the beginning of this research, I communicated and emphasized that the stories shared within this work belong to the ones who shared them. Furthermore, this thesis belongs to all of us who participated in creating by sharing our stories. Each storyteller had ongoing input and final say over how our own stories were represented in the film and poetry. No stories were shared without permission and official consent. Once all films, stories, and poems were reviewed and consented to, I shared the final draft of this thesis with all the storytellers. At this point, I welcomed any remaining feedback for revisions in order to ensure accountability and credibility of the final thesis. I gained final approval and consent from each storyteller involved in this thesis. I will keep all the raw filmed footage, and individual storytellers are the only ones who will be able to obtain their own raw footage.

Reflexivity in the Research Process

Once I was confident in the axiology of my research, I continued on in my research process. I conducted my initial filmed research conversations. During this part of the process, I centered the idea that listening and learning is a large part of ISW (Archibald, 2008). ISW is respectful, reflective, and centered on reciprocity (Archibald, 2008, 2019). For me, actively practicing reflexivity allowed me to situate myself in relationship to those involved with this research as well as to the research process. As part of my own reflexivity, I practiced journaling throughout the research. Oftentimes, my entries focused on the elements of the research process that most struck me. As I sat with the stories and reflected on the research conversations, I wrote about what impacted my heart and what the stories meant to me. Writing these things helped me process, make meaning of what was happening in my research, and build up my relationships

with the storytellers. I wrote the following journal entries about my initial research conversations with each storyteller.

Stephanie Tipple – September 18, 2020

She tells me that she feels like a fraud. That sometimes, when she wears the gorgeous, traditional, hand beaded earrings, she feels like a fraud. Like somehow the skin she's in doesn't deserve to be embellished by such jewelry. Like she isn't Indigenous enough to wear them with honour. But the thing is, she is Indigenous. It's in her blood, in her being. She was born Indigenous and did not learn or grow up smudging, or drumming, or singing. In fact, it wasn't until later in her life she found out about her heritage. And even at that point, I wager she would not have chosen to wear the earrings. But that's not the point. That's not what is important. What is, is that she is choosing to wear them now. In the midst of her own tension with her relationality, in the midst of shame fueled by onlookers, in the midst of this colonial "all." She is intentionally choosing to know what she does not "know" or cannot know in the world's perspective. She is rising up. And although it's not about the earrings themselves, it gave me goosebumps to hear her proudly proclaim, "I am going to wear the earrings, who cares what they think."

Pearl Yellow Old Woman-Healy – September 29, 2020

Today I am going to talk with Pearl. I am wearing my own traditionally hand beaded earrings, a birthday gift from a friend, in honour of Stephanie. And for Pearl, I take out my two-pearl, gold ring, an heirloom and a gift from my grandmother. It belonged to her.

Pearl's mother remembers the day she was born. She remembers where she was and things that happened. She remembers that her grandfather's whiskers were rough against her newborn face. She remembers.

The moment I heard Pearl tell the story, the hairs on my neck stood up, I got goosebumps, and most of all, I believed her. Without a moment of hesitation, I knew she was telling me something real.

Pearl is a remarkable storyteller. She makes silence feel like a blanket of comfort, not a space to fill. She thinks deeply before she begins to speak and she honours those who came before her. Before I left Pearl's home, I told her that I think, one day, she will make a great Elder. And for now, in the present, she is an inspiring mother to her children. "An extra dose of resiliency for us, as Indigenous people," as she quoted during our conversation. I feel those words in my body. When she speaks of the extra, generational, cellular burden we carry as we wake up and go into our lives, into our classrooms, every day I feel my guts begin to wring themselves out – like a cloth being twisted dry. When she speaks of the loss of her siblings, I feel it too.

I turn the camera off but we don't stop talking. I share with her about the addiction in my family, about my fear, about my pain. Her too. She tells me that this research, our research, will be deeply more personal than dominant forms of research. She says that people may not understand. When that happens, she tells me to consider who I am doing this research for. To remember that I do not have to prove that this matters to anyone. She tells me that the stories will come together and take on a life of their own and it's just my job to let them.

She walks me out. We joke about reality TV which reminds me of my grandmother. I remember the ring, two pearls sitting side by side on my pointer finger. I tell her why I wore it. She tells me she noticed it. I smile and walk to my car.

Ashley Cornect-Benoit – October 7, 2020

She honours her family. Before this conversation, she asked their permission to tell their story. That inspires me. Before we started our conversation, Ashley was sure to walk me through the branches of her family tree. She said that she didn't always understand the importance of having older generations in your life, but now she does. She was so proud to have had relationships with her great grandparents. I can relate. My Nanna is still one of my greatest strengths.

Ashley's beaded earrings beckon me, of course. I comment on them and she raves on about how precious each pair of beaded earrings are. Not only for their beauty, but mostly for their process. The effort and care and tremendous time that goes into beading each pair, that's important to her. As she says this to me, I imagine each little bead as a soul in her family tree. One threaded after another but connected by the same thread. It's not until we zoom out that we see the beauty they all make as they snuggle in side by side.

We settle into the interview and I listen to Ashley on relationality. I am so encouraged by the wisdom she's gathered from Elders over the years. As we speak, I am learning from her; and I wonder what her great grandparents are saying now.

Reciprocity in Poetry

The longer I sat with the stories mentioned in the journal entries above and the more times I reviewed the filmed conversations, the more they impacted me and created new meanings

that applied to my own life. From this heart space, I wrote *The Shape of Listening*, the reciprocity poem shared next, as part of my reciprocity effort.

The Shape of Listening

*Your story shaped my listening,
I heard you first through the anatomy of my ear,
But then I heard you with the ear of my own soul,
Something I was glad to do,
To hear you,
And to hear you now,
Telling me of your dreams that carry messages,
Of Elders who taught you to listen,
Of relationships with your great grandmothers,
And the happiest memories of your childhood trapline,
I hear you now,
The fear in your voice that mirrors mine,
That this might be the only time,
To share that the world is on fire,
And that you can feel it in your blood,
To tell stories of your hand beaded earrings,
Your grandfather speaking through salmon,
Your own efforts to “swim up river”,
And what it means to you,
Your mother remembers the day she was born,*

*And because of that you sit alone at lunch,
A braid of grass,
A bending willow,
Your story shaped my listening,
The hope of a hummingbird,
Who sees that this world is on fire,
And carries one drop of water in her mouth.*

I felt that writing this reciprocity poem was the most honest and generous way I could respond in my relationships with the storytellers, their stories, and my own story. My relationships with the storytellers and their stories became deeply connected. As such, I was determined to treat these stories with the utmost respect. My experience of listening to, learning from, and applying the stories in my own life had a powerful impact on my heart and work. Writing *The Shape of Listening* played a significant role in helping me understand relationality and in honouring the stories within the context of my relationships with the storytellers.

The Interruption: A Story About the Stories

*As the world spins around me,
I can hear Tanya's voice,
She reminds me urgently – and gently,
“to write it **all** down”,
And so,
I do...*

This section contains a collection of journal entries (in italics) and reflections on guiding conversations that occurred during and following the event that I call my “thesis interruption.”

When the thesis interruption occurred, I had finished filming the original research conversations more than six months earlier. I had sat with the stories for months and months, reflecting on meaning, and editing the final version of the film. I had received permissions for the stories I had chosen to show in my thesis and was nearing completion. All I had left to do was to export the film. It was during that final process of exporting and backing up my work that, somehow, all my footage was corrupted and lost. Next, I provide reflections on losing such a major aspect of my research, and on my decision to trust in the process and find what was to come next.

The Night It Happened: A Journal Entry from February 3, 2020

I am certain my heart just dropped out of my body and plummeted through the bottom of the earth – or at least that’s how this moment feels for me. I have spent months sitting with this research, re-watching these research conversations, letting the stories teach me. I have spent months editing this short film, having discussions, praying, and asking permissions as to which stories are to be shared. I have saved and backed up these files over 30 times. I have worked on this film until near completion. I have finally come to the point where I know, with confidence, the parts of the conversations that I want to share.

I had the stories. I went to save them, once again, and back them up on my external hard drive one last time. I click into the folder and that’s when I feel my entire body freeze, my breath stops, my face flushes with heat, and time seemed to slow down to a full stop. I opened the folder...empty. The final film edits, gone. The raw footage of the interviews, gone. Everything, just gone. I click into the Adobe program I have been creating the film on for months and open the project. My attempt fails. The program cannot locate my project files. I try to recover the files. I search every possible place in

my computers brain and on my external hard drives. I don't want to feel this. I don't want to believe this is happening. I can hear my heartbeat in my head. I try to calm myself by saying to myself, "don't worry, don't panic, things will work out, it will be okay." But, in this exact moment, I don't believe my own voice. I feel sick. My body is shaking. My tears fall.

What will I do now?

I cry with my husband and he attempts to help me recover what I know in my heart has been lost. I cry and say to him, "I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN!" And I wasn't trying to feel bad for myself with that statement. I was admitting to what I didn't want to believe from last week. Last week I had a dream. I had a bad dream that kept me tossing and turning all night. In the dream I lost all the footage from my research conversations and had to film it all again. It was that dream that led me back to the stories, to take a closer look and make the final decisions about the stories that would be included in the final work.

Around the same time last week, my therapist led me through a visualization exercise. In that exercise I saw myself creating an event. It was a collective gathering. I saw an art gallery opening but I knew it was a representation, not a literal picture. She asked me what I would be showing. I couldn't answer her. I told her I didn't know but I just had a strong sense it was the highlighting of other people's work. I was there to bring it together but I was really aiming to show off other people's stuff. She smiled and asked me if I had to say what I was offering by hosting this event, what it would mean. Without hesitation I answered her, "hope."

I don't understand why this is happening. It doesn't feel good to have worked SO hard for so long on something to experience it vanish into thin air. It hurts a lot actually. More than I want to admit.

Perhaps in some way, my dream was meant to send me a message about what was going to happen. I can't deny it feels connected as the main take away from my conversation with Ashley, and the story I asked her permission to use, was about her experience with dreams and how Elders had given her wisdom and guidance to listen to her dreams and that even the "bad ones" could have a message for you in them. It seems like I am living my thesis and learning the lessons of these stories that have been gifted to me in the most REAL way possible.

On Research Responsibility

Throughout my research, I had been as open and honest as possible with the storytellers, as well as those guiding my research. As Wilson (2008) framed, research from an Indigenous paradigm is done from a place of relational accountability.

Despite this, I was afraid to tell people about my error and loss of the footage. However, I reflected on what Archibald (2008) wrote about making mistakes in research:

This is a gentle reminder for me that I should also take responsibility for any mistakes contained within my research because those who shared their knowledge with me did so with great care and often said that they spoke the truth as they knew it. (p. 24)

After reflecting on Archibald's words, I felt a need to share my story of what happened with my supervisors and the storytellers. In my experience, story is as close as you can get to inviting someone to walk in your shoes. A story can hold the weight of the facts and the influence of the feelings at the same time. A story can invite someone to see a situation for

themselves and may support them in their insights on what they want to do next. Within an Indigenous research paradigm, those collective decisions have collective meanings as well. Thus, being relationally accountable is of utmost importance, even when it takes all the courage one can muster. Wilson (2008) described this way of thinking as such:

This is how I look at an Indigenous cultural system, an Indigenous way of doing things. Say you have a fire, and you have people sitting in a circle around the fire. And you ask any person to describe the fire. While they are describing it, and you are looking at the fire, it's not the same thing. But that doesn't mean they are wrong. They are at a different vantage point altogether. So, we say, if we share this information in the circle, we share this experience, the collective experience, we will get a bigger picture. Exactly what is the focus? So, we need to implement that. (p. 112)

The guidance offered in the work of Archibald (2008) and Wilson (2008) helped me decide that asking my supervisors, research guides, and the storytellers for their feedback and wisdom in response to the loss of the thesis footage was the respectful, responsible, and relational thing to do.

Next, I updated the storytellers about the lost footage through email and over the phone. I acknowledged the loss with a heavy, and apologetic, heart. Pearl, Stephanie, and Ashley all responded with compassion and kindness, offering to help me resolve the issue in whatever way they could and encouraging me by saying that we were in this research together. I felt supported as I took responsibility for my research mistake. I sensed that my relationships with the storytellers were strengthened through this adversity, and I recognized their relationality expressed through reciprocity in a very practical way.

Guidance From My Teachers

During this time, my conversations with a research guide (Dr. Elisa Lacerda-Vandenborn) and my supervisor (Dr. Karlee Fellner) provided meaningful guidance which helped me center my relationality and continue with my research in a good way. The following are excerpts from my journal entries on these conversations.

A Conversation with Elisa – February 4, 2020

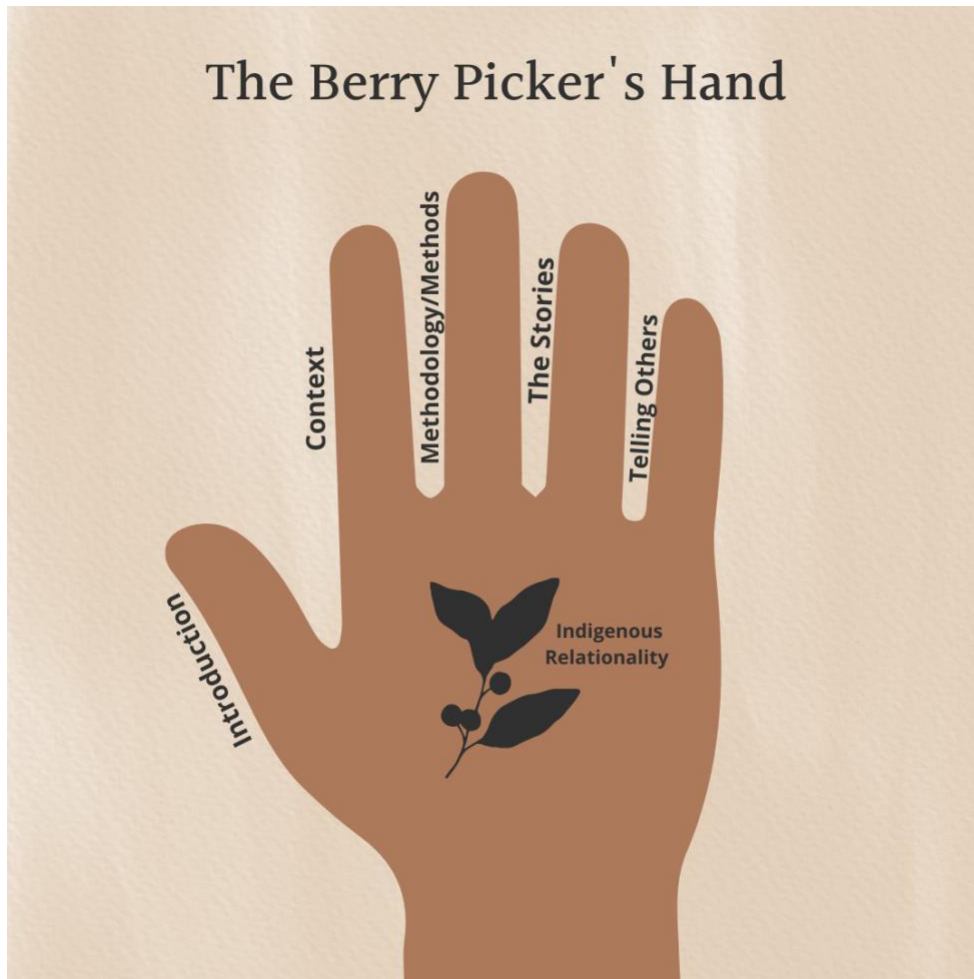
Elisa's suggestion echoes in my mind. Think of your thesis as a circle, not as a line. She reminds me that I haven't "lost" anything and that the stories are still with me.

I know she is right because I sense the stories within me. So I begin to consider my thesis as a conversation rather than a presentation. From this view, I can acknowledge my thesis interruption by responding to it in my research process. From this view, I am able to see that the lost footage does not mark the end of our conversation on relationality; rather, it invites an expanding of the conversation. Within my methodology of making Indian ice-cream, these original conversations/stories on relationality are represented by the berries, freshly picked, not yet transformed into the ice-cream. They represent who we are before the process.

[In this moment of synergy, I created a diagram of my thesis and named it, *The Berry Picker's Hand*. It is shown in Figure 7.]

Figure 7

The Berry Picker's Hand: A Thesis Diagram



A Phone Call with Karlee – February 16, 2021

Karlee asked me an important question today. She asked me how my thesis interruption relates to my research methodology. At this point, I have started to recognize that they are beautifully and intricately connected. However, Karlee's inquiry helps me refine my ideas about the relationship.

The process of making Indian ice cream is a transformative process. Starting with something raw, the berries, you begin to work with them. As they tumble around in the

bowl and bounce off each other they change form into something new – something that cannot be recognized on the surface as what they started out as. The old substance (the berries) appears to be gone, or lost, and the new substance (the treat of Indian ice cream) is formed. Though we may not be able to see it overtly, the berries are still the essence of the new substance. In the same way, my research started with raw relationships and conversations of relationality. As we (the storytellers) bounce off one another in dialogue/the research process, our stories of relationality will be transformed into something new.

Today Karlee urged me that I am on the right path and that although trusting the process is difficult, it will be worth it. She told me that these encounters happen often to Indigenous scholars as they are doing what they are meant to do. She referred to her own journey of writing her dissertation and losing significant amounts of work, having to find new ways to approach it, and learning lessons along the way. Lessons like writing down this experience and process and sharing it as a part of my thesis document.

Revisiting the Research Conversations: Reciprocity in Poetry

By leaning into relationships, trusting in the process, and centering my own Indigenous relationality, I was able to navigate through my thesis interruption with greater clarity about my research. I began to revisit my filmed research conversations with the storytellers. This time, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, my research conversations took place on Zoom. As a result of hosting the conversations on Zoom, I was able to show both the storyteller and the listener at the same time. This was an unforeseen benefit of having to return and try again during a pandemic. The conversations took on a much more dialogic and natural form, and I was able to reinsert my voice back into the story in a meaningful way. I did not intend or attempt to recreate

or replicate anything from the original conversations. Rather, I used those conversations as context and guidance on where to go next. I recognized in this process that my initial conversations were foundational to building trust and genuine relationships with the storytellers. In getting to know them expansively in our first conversations, I was able to revisit our second conversations with a sense of ease and in a more focused way.

Each of the second filmed research conversations began with a personal reading of *The Shape of Listening (Expanded)*. You can find the recording of those readings [here](#). The poem and the reading of the poem were gifts of reciprocity to the storytellers in response to their generosity in sharing their stories with me. As you will read later in this manuscript, sharing this reciprocity poem with the storytellers eventually, and significantly, changed the course and focus of my research.

Telling My Whole Story

While I was extremely grateful for the honour of getting to revisit the research conversations, it took immense courage for me to re-insert my voice back into the dialogue and narrative. One way I chose to do that was through expanding the version of *The Shape of Listening* which you just viewed on video by infusing it with more of my voice and story. I will discuss this further in Chapter 5.

In order to prepare for revisiting the research conversations, I went to multiple counselling sessions, prayed, and sought support from my supervisors, colleagues, and loved ones. Before I knew it, I was logging into Zoom for my first revisit with Pearl. I was sitting down, but my knees were wobbling. I knew what I had to do, but I was still uncertain if I would be able to do it. If there is one thing I learned in the process of this research, it is that when you have somewhere to go – someone to meet – it is so important to take your first steps on those

wobbly knees. Sometimes, that first step is all that is required to realize we are capable of taking the next one.

My conversation with Pearl gave me confidence to move forward as she spoke with me about rebirth and purpose after disaster. After my revisit with Pearl came Stephanie. After Stephanie, Ashley. Each conversation inspired me and bolstered my confidence to share my story alongside them. Step by wobbly step, my footing became firmer and more grounded. In the last conversation, Ashley spoke of the harm that dualistic thinking (right and wrong, us versus them) can cause. The interrelatedness of our stories struck me.

For as long as I can remember, I have been afraid to share my story. I have been afraid to be who I am. I have been afraid of the judgements of others. It is a tension I still feel today. Sometimes, I feel a crushing pressure to justify my beliefs and to justify who I am. In an interview on Grand Chief Peter Johnston's *Rock the Talk* radio show (Johnston, 2021, 14:45), I spoke to this feeling, which is also experienced by many Indigenous people today, stating that, "We can often feel torn between two worlds, not knowing where we fit. We can feel like we are standing in a gap – torn between all these sides of ourselves." Many people I have spoken with during this research process have said that they relate to this feeling. Many of us have felt, and do feel, responsible for defending our existence to others. Do you recall that little girl in my poem (found in the first chapter, in the section titled A Mixed Plate)? Many of us, Indigenous people, feel like her. We feel we do not belong, we feel pushed out, we feel rejected, we feel silenced, and we feel the impact of a colonial legacy that attempted to erase us.

I have come to believe that one of the most powerful acts of decolonization that I can engage in is to discover and reclaim my Indigenous relationality and to help others do the same. For most of my life, I have not felt that I have had a space where I was welcome to openly

reclaim my Indigenous relationality or to talk about this part of my story. However, the process of this research has shown me that my thesis could be such a space for myself and for others. As I noted to Grand Chief Peter Johnston on his radio show (Johnston, 2021, 15:15), “I want my research to be a space where people who have felt this way can share their stories. As we are able to tell our stories, we provide hope for the next generation. We provide hope that there is a place for them to belong and they aren’t wrong for being who they are.”

Thus, by leaning on various elements of my Indigenous research paradigm (including a deep focus on Indigenous axiology), my methodology of making Indian ice cream, the seven principles of ISW, and the relationships I built with the storytellers in this research, I have created a space for sharing brave stories. As I sat and listened to the brave stories of others, the most remarkable thing happened: I got brave too, and I decided to keep telling mine. I decided to write myself back in.

Stories: Chapter 4

The mystery, magic, and the truth/respect/trust relationship between the speaker/storyteller and the listener/reader may be brought to life on the printed page if the principles of oral tradition are used. (Archibald, 2008, p. 20).

Guided by ISW principles, in this chapter, I aim to bring mystery, magic, and the truth/respect/trust relationship to life. I will do this by sharing our stories, our voices, our conversations, and our poetry as a form of our relationality as we continue exploring the question, “How have you, as an Indigenous person and graduate student, come to know your Indigenous relationality?”

Part of storytelling and the truth/respect/trust relationship is a responsibility to be honest. Being honest, as Cuthand (1989) wrote, is more than conveying information; it is energy. When we are honest, there is strength transferred from the storyteller to the listener, which has an impact on our learning and our experience of our relationality. In this chapter, I created honest spaces in two main ways. First, I used poetry to enact my own relationality and write myself back into the story. This was an important step in my own journey of reclamation as well as for the purpose of engaging in honest and real conversations with the other storytellers. The other way I created an honest and trustworthy space for the exploration of relationality was by using film when I joined the other storytellers to discuss our experiences of Indigenous relationality. Filming the conversations, as Stephanie said during our initial research conversation, “keeps what we say as real and unaltered as possible. When someone sees me on a video, they know I am the one telling the story and how I am telling it.” In the following sections, I begin by writing myself back in to the story before sharing three stories of relationality from my storytellers. Presenting in this way is an intentional act of decolonization and reclamation.

Writing Myself Back in Through Poetry

Reclaiming my Indigenous relationality for myself, or as the Grand Chief Peter Johnston said, “uncovering my trail”, is a powerful act of decolonization and a vital aspect of my research. Poetry has played an important role in my process of reclaiming my Indigenous relationality. Thus, as I re-insert myself back into the story, I do so in poetry.

On Us As Berries

You can watch and listen to an animated reading of *On Us As Berries* [here](#).

On Us As Berries

Pinch and pluck,
Thumb and index finger working together,
We drop nature’s tiny juice balloons into our empty ice-cream pails,
Moss cushions for our nimble knees,
We kneel – and pick,
We pick – and pick,
Don’t eat too many now,
But how can we resist,
The berries beckon us
They know things we don’t,
They know there is more than enough on the bush to go around,
We – humans – are the ones who fear lack,
The children obey the berries,
Pick and pluck,
Suck and spit,

*Berry patch bliss,
The day is done once the sun is down,
Handing over our pails – half-full,
And hoping that nobody will notice the missing handfuls,
These berries do not hide who they are,
We stick out our tongues – a purply blue.*

I wrote *On Us As Berries* as a reflexive poem on relationality after the initial creation of *The Shape of Listening* (reciprocity poem) and the loss of my initial video footage. The sources of inspiration for this poem were my own childhood memories of my relationality. My own sense of hope, freedom, and joy from that time are expressed in this poem. I acknowledge that my life has been, and continues to be, impacted by intergenerational trauma. My grandfather survived residential school despite the horrific things he encountered while he was there. His experience has impacted him and our entire family over many years and is present in our lives today. That is his story to tell – not mine. Those are their stories to tell.

I, too, have lived through events that feel too tragic to revisit. When I do revisit those experiences (for my own healing), I most often cannot stay long. The hurt that exists in those memories belongs to more than just me. It is the kind of hurting that no person ought to carry. Conversely, I had times growing up that were full of warmth and love. Bubble baths, the days my sisters were born, wildflower fields behind my home, puddle jumping, going to the zoo with my mom, fishing with my uncle and pops, putting on plays for the whole community, gardening with my grandmother – and great grandmother, feeding the birds, frequenting garage sales and looking for antiques, watching meteor showers from a picnic blanket in the backyard, baton twirling, basketball, berry picking, and baking strawberry pie are some examples of my

childhood joy. The hard, heavy, happy, and hopeful were all aspects of my life. As I witness people such as my grandfather, my grandmother, and my mother tell their own stories – in their own way – I am beginning to learn that I have my own story to tell. My story is linked to my family's story, and it is also wonderfully my own. I am starting to recognize the power that only I hold, which is the power to tell my own story in exactly my own voice. How you tell your own story – how you see your own life – is indisputable. Your story is something that nobody can ever take away from you. This lesson is giving me more courage every day.

Recall that *On Us As Berries* became a way for me to write myself back into the narrative. Throughout this research process, one thing I have recognized is my own inclination to write myself out of the story or remove my own voice in the conversation. As described by Maracle (2001, p. 8), “the result of being colonized is the internalization of the need to remain invisible.” The irony of that inclination is that this entire thesis started through me using my voice and sharing my story. Many times, while writing this thesis, I was directed by the storytellers, my supervisors, and those unofficially guiding my research process to write from my heart in this work. I was cautioned that oftentimes, as Indigenous scholars, we can experience or perceive that we are being silenced or that our voice is being subdued in some way. I was told that it is important to keep speaking up and using my voice, to keep sharing my story, even when it is most difficult.

My voice and story are found throughout *The Shape of Listening* poem, woven in with the voices and stories of others. However, writing *On Us As Berries* inspired me to write an additional segment in *The Shape of Listening* to represent my relationality in our collective story. I chose to bring the berries back into the story, because the berries represent the story I want to tell about myself. This story is not the story I feel I'm “supposed to” tell or feel pressured to tell.

It is not the story being told by others who are not me. It is not the most comfortable or safest story that I could tell. This story may result in more questions than answers, and I am choosing to be okay with that. I am choosing to trust that my story – our story – is enough. I am ready to tell my own story. I am ready to write myself back in again – medicine for this exhaustion.

The Shape of Listening (Expanded)

*Your story shaped my listening,
I heard you first through the anatomy of my ear,
But then I heard you with the ear of my own soul,
Something I was glad to do,
To hear you,
And to hear you now,
Telling me of your dreams that carry messages,
Of Elders who taught you to listen,
Of relationships with your great grandmothers,
And the happiest memories of your childhood trapline,
I hear you now,
The fear in your voice that mirrors mine,
That this might be the only time,
To share that the world is on fire,
And that you can feel it in your blood,
To tell stories of your hand beaded earrings,
Your grandfather speaking through salmon,
Your own efforts to “swim up river”,*

*And what it means to you,
Your mother remembers the day she was born,
And because of that you sit alone at lunch,
And in the cages where there was once slaughter,
You would like to plant a garden,
Pick berries and eat them as is,
Let the land heal us again,
Medicine for this exhaustion,
A braid of grass,
A bending willow,
Your story shaped my listening,
The hope of a hummingbird,
Who sees that this world is on fire,
And carries one drop of water in her mouth.*

Again, and Again

Another important principle of learning through storytelling is that since stories can be heard again and again, the meanings that one makes or doesn't make from them can happen at any time. One does not have to give a meaning right after hearing a story. (Archibald, 2008, p. 24–25)

I intentionally share the poems multiple times throughout this thesis document because I want to present you, the reader, with our stories in a way that best simulates the experience of sitting with a story over time and learning from it in the process. In this research process, I experienced that when we listen again, new things rise up. When we listen again, we hear new

perspectives we didn't hear at first. The longer we sit with the stories, the more they give to us, if we welcome the wisdom. In order to emulate this experience in a condensed time frame, I endeavoured to share the stories more than one time, using more than one modality. Next, I present one such modality: the filmed research conversations, which represent the experiential stories of the storytellers on the topic of Indigenous relationality.

A Moment to Honour the Storytellers

My relationships with the storytellers deepened within the context of the research conversations we had for the purpose of this thesis. I experienced each of our research conversations as a gift and a welcoming into their relationality – a sacred gift. Just as the berries in the patch beckoned us – as children – to nourish ourselves by the handfuls, these Indigenous women beckon us to nourish our souls with their stories; to listen and to learn. Gunalchéesh.

The Stories

In this section, I share the storyteller's personal stories of relationality. The stories are represented in the form of filmed research conversations. The stories were offered as gifts to honour the understanding of contemporary Indigenous relationality. There are three episodes, each named after the person with whom I had the research conversation. The research conversations were recorded on Zoom. The stories were kept as raw and unedited as possible. Some parts of the conversations were not included in order to respect the storyteller's requests. Each episode is 30-40 minutes in length and can be viewed at the links provided here.

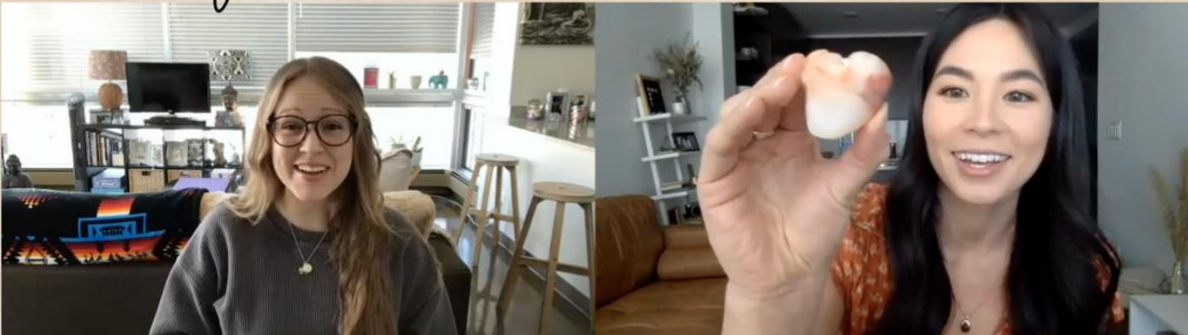
Pearl



Chantai

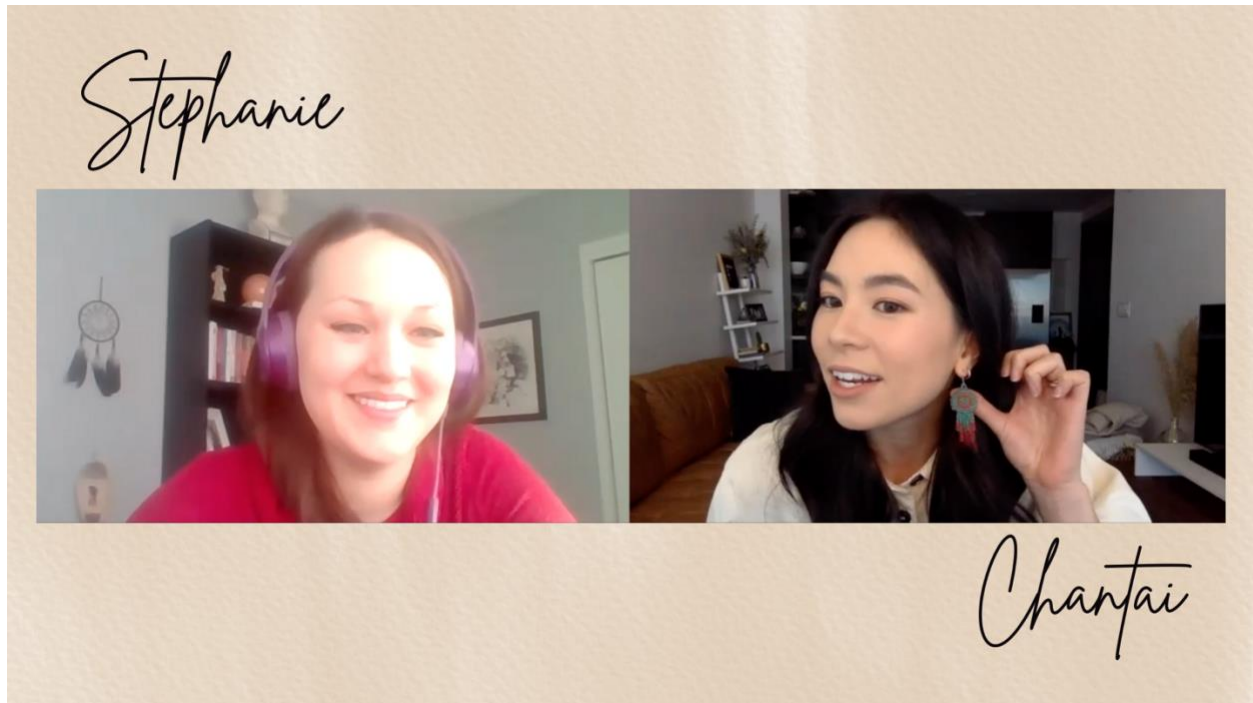
Pearl. [Pearl Yellow Old Woman-Healy](#)

Ashley



Chantai

Ashley. [Ashley Cornect-Benoit](#)



Stephanie. [Stephanie Tipple](#)

Thank you for watching and listening to our research conversations. These storytellers and their stories were my greatest teachers in this research and in learning how to trust the process. Originally, I thought that these filmed research conversations would be the main discovery in my research. However, I was guided by dreams, the storytellers, and my own intuition to believe that these stories were not the end, but a new beginning in my research discovery. These stories, and the storytellers, were an essential part of recognizing that the main purpose of my research was the process of creating and giving away reciprocity poems as an expressed form of relationality. Without the remarkable generosity of the storytellers, there would be no inspiration, energy, or guidance for the creation of the reciprocity poem. I received a gift through story, I gave it back in my own way through poetry, and then we (the storytellers and I) chose to do it again – together. I hope that through this research many will choose to adapt this process to their own lives and research.

Redirecting My Research

Next, I share an email I sent to the storytellers which describes this shift in my research and my insights as I was discovering them:

Hello to all of you wonderful souls,

I've reached out to each of you individually but wanted to send a collective update message as well – we are all in this together! I know this email is on the longer side; however, I want to sincerely ask each of you to take time to take it into your heart. What I share here feels like the biggest breakthrough I've had in this work thus far which I want to share and celebrate with you.

As I let you know, while I was up north in the Yukon with my family, I had some significant experiences. I believe these experiences were meant to happen and were lessons guiding my research trajectory. I'm convinced that sometimes "going home" is what it takes in order to see or hear what you are meant to. I am learning many lessons about trusting the process and I thank each of you for being open and supportive of this dynamic research journey.

I'd like to invite you all to consider and reflect on the happenings of my home visit that I have written about in the following passage:

In my conversations following the loss of my original footage, I shared my reciprocity poem with all of you – a poem that embodies our stories. Originally, I gifted the reciprocity poem solely to honour you in your sharing. But, in response to your feedback, I am beginning to believe that the reciprocity poem moves beyond that. Allow me to explain.

First, were your personal responses to the poem. Your responses to my sharing of the poem astounded me. When I shared the poem, it seemed to impact and stand out to each of you. You all responded uniquely and with immense gratitude. Some responded to the poem by saying that it touched you deeply and that it was a first and unique experience for you regarding reciprocity through poetry. Some smiled. Some cried. Some touched your hearts. Some said that it was something you won't ever forget.

Additionally, you all told me one thing the same. You told me that you thought Creator was redirecting my work and had a different plan for my work all along. I agreed in my heart at the time, but I didn't know what that "different plan" could be. Admittedly, I thought the purpose of losing the footage was for our second conversations. I thought that they would be founded on deeper relationships, rooted in more context, and be more focused and meaningful. All of that turned out to be the case but I still had a lingering sense that I wasn't quite on the "different path" you each had referred to for my research. Though I was on the logical path and it made sense (in my brain), it wasn't the "different path" (of my heart). As I think about it now, I am wondering if the purpose was to have those follow-up conversations, but it wasn't for the reasons my brain was telling me at the time.

Yesterday my mom sat beside me at our messy kitchen table, and I opened my heart to her about the pressure I've felt about my relationality. How shameful it can feel to be caught up in the expectations of both worlds. I cried and she didn't stop me. She said, "I know baby. But you know what? The perspective you have is more important than ever right now. YOU ARE a 'good Lingít.' You are good enough. And not because you do what others think you are supposed to. It's because you are YOU and you are

doing what YOU do.” Whoa. It was as if I’d been waiting to hear those words my whole life. Something in me was set free in that instant as she spoke those words to me. My mom means what she says. What she says opens new doors.

Then last night, following our conversation, I had a revelation through a powerful dream. I dreamt that my thesis work is reciprocity poetry. In my dream, I kept being shown the delivery of this first reciprocity poem to you all and I also saw it rippling out. I saw myself giving away many more poems and I saw others giving away reciprocity poems in their lives and work too. I saw myself showing people how important it is to listen and witness the story, to take it in and stay with it, to let it live in you, and then how to offer it back in poetry. I dreamt that the purpose of losing the footage was for the second conversations, but it wasn’t for what I thought, the way I thought it.

I’ve since realized that without those second conversations, I wouldn’t have been able to give you the reciprocity poem. I would have listened to, sat with, witnessed, learned from, and created meaning within the stories you all shared with me but I wouldn’t have been able to express them back in my own way. I wouldn’t have been able to, as my mom put it, “do what I do.” Ultimately, I wouldn’t have been practicing the Indigenous Storywork principles that my research is grounded in.

I’ve learned that within Indigenous Storywork, the role of the researcher is to actively listen to the storyteller and then to become a storyteller by sharing what they have witnessed, heard, and learned (Archibald, 2008, 2019).

Poetry. Poetry is my way of becoming the storyteller. It always has been. When I look back on my life, I see it in poetry. I’ve always heard my voice in the tone of poetry. I’ve always heard, and seen, and loved others through poetry. As far back as I can

remember, people have thanked me for offering them poems – both formally and informally. I once heard it said that the poet creates poetry not because they can, but because they must. And now, more than ever, I feel I must.

As of right now, I am trusting the process. This is what has been revealed to me and I want to share it with you to ask your thoughts, insights, and guidance on where to move next...

With kindness,

Chantai

The Storytellers' Response

The storytellers responded to my email, the invitation to trust the process and shift the path of this thesis, with support and wisdom. Ashley wrote that, “it is important to honour the stories shared, while doing it in a way that is honest to me and that I have the capacity to do” (Ashley Cornect-Benoit, personal communication, March 25, 2021). She proposed that perhaps I needed to talk to each of the storytellers in order to learn more about my own relationality and vice versa. I sensed she was correct about that. Ashley also mentioned that I could consider the stories as the references, similar to those used in academia, and that I might think of them as helpers – the helpers that got me to where I am and who will support me as I journey forward in this research. In their own words, each storyteller offered me the idea that we might co-create from this newfound place.

With the feedback and insight from the storytellers, I decided to host our meaning making circle from a renewed perspective. Instead of collectively reviewing the filmed research conversations with the intent of finding the meanings through themes (my original research plan), we would each come prepared to offer our own meanings of relationality through our

creative writing. After sharing with the group, we would weave our writing together to create what I called a *joined reciprocity poem*. In preparation for the meaning making circle, I asked this question: Considering everything we've shared in this process – filmed and un-filmed – what is the most important meaning that you would like to offer about who you are?

Telling Others, Relationality Through Reciprocity Poetry: Chapter 5

This chapter is dedicated to continuing a research conversation through the discussion that occurred during the virtual meaning making circle and the creation/sharing of our joined reciprocity poem. In this chapter, we offer our joined reciprocity poem as a gift to the readers and listeners. In addition, I consider the stories and reciprocity poems in relation to the literature, suggest implications of the study, and present recommendations for future research and practice. This final chapter – our offering of the reciprocity poem – is our closing ceremony in this research.

A Walk by the River: The Purpose of the Joined Reciprocity Poem Explained

One day in early April 2021, my husband and I were walking along the Bow River. He asked me to describe my research to him, and I did my best to express it. I talked to him about the personal relationship I have with my research and how I am connected to it personally and professionally. I described, from the heart, why it feels important that I do this research. Next, I told him all about Indigenous Storywork and the lessons I have learned from doing it. I described my discovery of the reciprocity poem, the power experienced within it, and the importance of passing that knowledge on. He was gripped with what I had shared, and he asked why the reciprocity poem was the chosen channel for my work. I responded to his inquiry by saying, “A reciprocity poem is a practical and artistic way to show people a means for weaving stories together and creating meaning without being someone who speaks for somebody else.” He stopped walking and said, “That, Chantai. You need to write that down.” And so, I did.

Collective Meaning Making: A Joined Reciprocity Poem

In this section, I explore and share our collective process of meaning making in the form of communally writing a joined reciprocity poem grounded in our stories and relationality.

Earlier on in my research journey when I recognized the power of the reciprocity poem, I knew that one day I would be sharing, teaching, and inviting the storytellers and others into the process, so that they could both use this knowledge and pass it on to others. As Archibald (2008) remarked:

If one comes to understand and appreciate the power of a particular knowledge, then one must be ready to share and teach it respectfully and responsibly to others in order for this knowledge, and its power to continue. (p. 3)

Therefore, I hosted our virtual meaning making circle. Each of us related what we most wanted to share about who we are. Then, we discussed our responses together. Following our discussion, we collectively created another reciprocity poem, each contributing elements from our own story. This poem creation was our own form of research ceremony. It was a way of telling our own stories from our own voices – together, a way of expressing our relationality, a way of weaving stories within stories, a way of thanking our Creator for our stories and relationality – a prayer, and a way for us to offer our relationality as a gift to the world, to give back – reciprocity. In Lingít culture, reciprocity requires that “a song or speech must be answered – not in competition, but that it be received and not wander aimlessly” (Dauenhauer, 1990 p. 13). In this research, the reciprocity poem is the means by which we respond. Through listening and learning, we receive the stories others tell us. Through reciprocity poetry, we create meaning and we respond by giving back. The following is the filmed reading and written form of our joined reciprocity poem, our way of giving back by offering our relationality (who we are):

Filmed Reading



Our Joined Reciprocity Poem

Written Form

*When you force people to abandon their ways of knowing, their ways of seeing the world,
you literally destroy their spirit and once that spirit is destroyed it is very, very difficult to
embrace anything...because that person is never complete.*

Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall

*The Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot people) word for the process of “coming to know” is
Kakyosin and, for me, coming to know who I am as an Indigenous woman in the modern
world is a process of reclamation that is still ongoing with so many unanswered
questions. Changing day by day as I walk and grow into the next phase in the circle of
life. What kind of Elder will I be in 20 years or so? It's important to know who you are*

and where you come from because it grounds you and helps you stay rooted, I am told. I was a floating weed drifting aimlessly, but no longer. I have recognized the importance of being rooted. I resist colonialism and assimilation so that my children and grandchildren can stand tall and proud as Indigenous people in this country. I didn't have that growing up. I thought the colour of my skin and the shape of my eyes were "less than". So, I remained a quiet and shy child around strangers. I thought white was better. Because when you were white, you had a voice and when you were white, you didn't have to keep your head down and eyes downcast. These were the observable behaviours that my grandparents, parents, and family members did when in the presence of white people. I always felt ashamed, less deserving, and so damn poor. I vowed that I would never allow my children to have these feelings of worthlessness and oppression. I chose to break this circle and create a new one. A healthy one, a sustainable and love filled circle. A circle without the intergenerational trauma passed down to me that my ancestors endured. I can't change the past, but it also doesn't have to define me as an Indigenous woman today. My journey begins today.

To know me is to know that I am strong, that I am resilient, and that I am brave. I am a proud Mi'kmaq woman, daughter, granddaughter, cousin, niece, partner, and student. Although I have not directly experienced the trauma my ancestors have endured, I have experienced the residual pain, loss, shame, and guilt of my community. I have experienced the loss of my voice, that had been stolen decades, even centuries ago. But I am here today to reclaim that voice. I am here to speak for the generations that have come before me and help clear the path for those who will come after. I may only now be

learning the language of my peoples, the songs of our nation, and the medicines of the land. My path may have been a bit smoother than others, but that doesn't mean I am any less Indigenous. I now have a voice, and I am not ashamed to shout to the sky that I am a proud Indigenous woman, native to this beautiful land we call Turtle Island.

What part do relationships play in identity?

I look at relationships as identities of who I was and who I might become. I base the description of each relationship in one of the Seven Grandfather teachings gifted to me by the community I work with in northern Ontario. My relationship with my family made me a daughter, a sister, a niece, a cousin, and a best friend. I termed this relationship as Love. This relationship also demonstrates that I may one day become a parent and that my identity will impact this little person to create an identity within their self one day. I then looked at my relationship with my ancestors, in particular my great-grandparents and that this relationship did not only affect me in the way of their shared wisdom, but it made my mama the person she is today. The relationships with my ancestors have in turn created numerous identities within myself. I termed this relationship as Wisdom. My relationship with where I was raised is next. Being born in the city gave me a unique identity due to the experiences I endured while growing up there. I was privileged to experience various cultures and traditions and to live in a diverse community. I believe it is through this experience and engagement that I developed my open mind and heart, and became receptive to all people, cultures, and religions. I termed this relationship as Respect. My relationship with my friends is an extremely important part of who I am today. My friends are all influential parts of my development in life, and I believe that it

is through their friendship that I have become the person I am today. I termed this relationship Honesty. My relationship with travel and Mother Earth has provided me with learning opportunities that I would not have achieved from any textbook or course in a degree. I learnt not only about the world and the vast amount of knowledge there is to obtain through travel, but I learnt about myself, and the importance of being self-sufficient. I termed this relationship as Truth. I then looked at my mentors and role models in life and what their teachings have given me. I believe that my role models gave me the correct teachings at the right time, which has led me to my current research project. I termed this relationship as Courage. Lastly, I reviewed my relationship with education and the pathways, experiences, knowledge, opportunities, privileges, and struggles it has provided me with in life thus far. I have learnt in working closely with Indigenous communities that with knowledge comes humility. The ability to be humble about the knowledge and achievements I have obtained in life are what make me accountable and respectful of others. I termed this relationship Humility.

I have big hands and long fingers,

Pick berries,

Braid hair,

Plant gardens,

Break bread,

Big hands and long fingers,

Catch rain,

Wipe tears,

*Do you know the meaning of a white knuckle grip,
A clenched tight fist,
Ready to fight for your life,
Because that is the story you have been told?
Do you know?
Not until your only option is to hang onto rope made out of water,
Called hope,
Hold on as she held on,
My mom,
And her mother,
And her mother before her,
In that sense,
These big hands have lived a thousand lives,*

*Smudge,
Fish,
Drum,
Dance,
My hands remember,
Do they not?
My fingers trace lines upon my skin,
Dividing me up into pieces,*

White and non-white

Where will I pitch my tent?

What will I tell my friends?

How far must my back bend,

To become the bridge I know I am?

My blood and my bone,

The bond between God and Dakee Aankaawu,

between God and Dakee Aankaawu,

*I do not know what else I might do but extend my big hands and long fingers out to you in
welcome,*

And as I do,

One meets the other in orbit,

Left and right,

Rendezvous and hold on tight,

They cradle my chin in celebration,

The courage of a thousand lives,

Squishing my cheeks all up,

“We will help you hold your head high,”

This is who you are.

Even though we were not physically in a circle (as we were on a video call), during our time in the virtual meaning making circle, we all felt we were, which is consistent with how

Archibald (2008) described her research chats. One of the ideas expressed during our circle was that this research and the creation of the reciprocity poetry was “authentic, real, and rigorous, because it is work that is done from the heart” (Pearl Yellow Old Woman-Healy, personal communication, May 4, 2021). Those words meant a great deal to me because within Pearl’s statement resounds the knowledge that though many things may be questioned, who we are is indisputable.

On Making Meaning

My hope, as a researcher and a storyteller in this research, is that careful time will be taken with our stories. I hope the listeners and readers visit and revisit these stories and our poetry. I hope they are able to build their own relationship with the stories and the storytellers – in their own way. I hope they will learn and grow from what they have witnessed in this research and that they will share it with others, in hopes that those others will do the same. Regularly returning to our stories and poetry will support learning and help learners make new meanings while on their own life journeys. As Archibald (2008) stated:

An important principle of storytelling is that since stories can be heard again and again, the meanings that one makes or doesn’t make from them can happen at any time. One does not have to give a meaning right after hearing a story. (pp. 24–25)

It is up to the storyteller to decide how much (if any) and which meaning to provide to the listener. There are storytellers who do not talk about meaning at all, while other storytellers may provide some sense of a moral of the story (Archibald, 2008). Archibald believed that the “storyteller’s need to explicate meanings depends on how good the listeners are at making their own understandings of the stories and the ability of the storyteller to determine this [the listener’s meaning making process]” (p. 77). From my view, each story told within this research holds a

significant meaning which is unique to the storyteller and to the listener. Additionally, when we gathered relationally, in circle, and wove our stories together in a poem, we were creating new, collective meaning.

A strength of poetry is that it does not tell the listener or reader everything directly. Poetry is an invitation, and it leaves room for the listener or reader to make their own meanings which is consistent with Indigenous Storywork. Within poetry, there is room to move around in story and interpret multiple meanings. Poetry also provides a means of understanding and expressing one's relationality in a creative way that does not limit the storyteller to the listener's capacity to make sense of it. As Archibald (2008) offered from her discussions on storytelling with Elders:

Don't tell them everything, give them enough to keep them curious at all times. This curiosity may make the listener wonder why a particular story was told, or something in the story may leave the listener in a perplexed or unsettled state. (p. 77)

For the purpose of my thesis, I have chosen not to provide specific meanings to listeners and readers. Due to this research choice, I anticipate considerable curiosity in response. I welcome the curiosity of each listener or reader and encourage them to lean into the ambiguity they may be experiencing. By remaining in conversation with these stories, poems, and people, the listener will continue to make meaning in their own lives.

My Own Meaning

The purpose of my thesis was always to explore and amplify Indigenous relationality. The ways in which the process and the relationships revealed the stories in this thesis were also inherently Indigenous, as they were done with, by, and for Indigenous people (Duran, 2006; Kovach, 2005, 2010a; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). My initial research question guided the

conversations until the conversations and the research took on a life of their own. The life my thesis took on ultimately guided us in a new and purposeful direction. This redirection is a common experience in Indigenous research. Pearl wisely wrote it this way:

In my story there were many tricksters, described in Indigenous cultural stories, as a character or force who may impede, cause trouble or confusion on achieving a goal or understanding. In the end, there is always a lesson to be learned and it is up to us to figure out the lesson.

The main lesson I learned happened in the process of this research. Sharing my own relationality and receiving the gift of other's stories led me to understand how reciprocity is a part of my own relationality. Being able to share, with the world, who we are is a part of what makes us who we are. Creating and sharing the reciprocity poetry was a means of honouring and giving back to the storytellers, our respective communities, the stories, the listeners, and ourselves. The storytellers reinforced, through their own sharing, the lesson I am learning which is that we cannot know ourselves in relation without reciprocity. For example, Stephanie wrote:

I am here to speak for the generations that have come before me, and help clear the path for those who will come after.... I now have a voice, and I am not ashamed to shout to the sky that I am a proud Indigenous woman, native to this beautiful land we call Turtle Island.

Within this statement Stephanie has proudly claimed her Indigenous voice which is a form of reciprocity to her ancestors who were silenced. Stephanie was also using her voice, by sharing her story, to invite the next generation into exploring their Indigenous relationality. In this way, Stephanie was engaging in reciprocity by giving back to her Mi'kmaq community.

Pearl's poetic understanding of reciprocity was expressed with a focus on voice and pride as well; however, Pearl spoke from a mother's perspective on how she would give her children a better life:

So, I remained a quiet and shy child around strangers. I thought white was better.

Because when you were white, you had a voice and when you were white, you didn't have to keep your head down and eyes downcast. These were the observable behaviours that my grandparents, parents, and family members did when in the presence of white people. I always felt ashamed, less deserving, and so damn poor. I vowed that I would never allow my children to have these feelings of worthlessness and oppression. I chose to break this cycle and create a new one.

Ashley's writing had a strong sense of reciprocity within it as well, only from a different perspective. Ashley wrote:

I then looked at my relationship with my ancestors, in particular my great-grandparents and that this relationship did not only affect me in the way of their shared wisdom, but it made my mama the person she is today. The relationships with my ancestors have in turn created numerous identities within myself.

From this perspective, Ashley was speaking retrospectively about the reciprocity of her ancestors who gave back to her family and made her mother who she is. Ashley alluded to her mother's reciprocity in passing on what their ancestors gave to her. This generational practice of reciprocity was what Ashley acknowledged as essential to who she is.

I have a similar experience of reciprocity as Ashley which I referenced in my part of the poem when I wrote:

*My mom,
And her mother,
And her mother before her,
In that sense,
These big hands have lived a thousand lives,*

*Smudge,
Fish,
Drum,
Dance,
My hands remember,*

Here, I am speaking to my mother's resiliency, my grandfather's survivance, and the strength of my grandmothers and great grandmothers in this passage. I am speaking to their reciprocity in giving back to my siblings and I, the gift of all their courage.

Each of us chose to write about and share parts of our story, and who we are, that included relationships and giving back in reciprocity. Do you recall the Lingít concept of at.óow, which refers to ownership and reciprocity? Through this research, I have experienced at.óow in a whole new way. In one sense, sharing who I am in the form of this thesis is giving back to my Lingít community and my family, because it further establishes the Lingít way of life in the literature; is an active effort in culture and language revitalization and preservation; and promotes socially just change for Indigenous people within the field of psychology and beyond, as advocated for in *Psychology's Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Report* (CPA & PFC, 2018). In another manner, this thesis is a generous act of

reciprocity towards the academic community. Traditionally, the Lingít people and my clan would own the rights to my stories, songs, and art (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994). Therefore, gifting my story to the academic world is an act of reciprocity by me and by my Lingít community.

Relationality in Reciprocity

On May 21, 2021, in my conversation with Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Johnston, 2021, 6:10), I remarked that:

Reciprocity, giving back, is not just something that we do as Indigenous people. It is who we are. It is essential to our relationality. In other words, when we share our stories, when we share our experiences with others, that is a gift. And it's actually a part of who we are to do so, it's not just an action that we take.

Relationality in reciprocity is both my meaning and my profound learning in this research.

Relationality in reciprocity, expressed in poetry, is the through line of this research story. Thus, I leave you with a poem to close this research ceremony.

Ask me who I am,

I will tell you,

A gift,

In telling,

In dwelling,

I am alive in my story,

My generosity,

Reciprocity,

Is me

Medicines for the Journey: Implications for Counselling Psychology

All peoples have medicine. That is a great truth too. Medicine refers to those things that return us to balance, to wellness, to our proper size and, in the end, to innocence, to the humility that is the root of all believing. Humility is another gift we share. Perhaps it is our greatest gift, because it is so difficult to return to and hold. There is medicine in great books. There is medicine in ritual. Medicine resides in prayers, petitions, songs, chants, incense, the elements of the Earth and, most powerfully, in solitude, when we take the time to get at ourselves and ponder, reflect and pray. In truth, we were given this planet to walk upon so that we might find the medicines that would return us to humility, and from there begin the great spiritual journey to the fullest expression of ourselves. This was not given solely to the Indigenous peoples of North America—it was given to all of us and we have all found our medicine ways.

We have also all forgotten them. (Wagamese, 2019, p. 19)

Traditionally, as Indigenous people walked the trails, they would collect medicines for their journey. Tobacco, sweetgrass, sage, cedar, and so much more. The land has always been generous to us, providing all we need and making space for us to live. The very essence of a trail is a nod to this reality; a place where things cease to grow in order to create space for us to be. As discussed with Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Yanyèdi clan, Yukon Territory, personal communication, May 13, 2021) it is our responsibility to respectfully use the medicines we collect and tend to the trail for those who will walk it after us. It is our responsibility to do so in order that the next generations are able to gather medicines too.

Consider, again, this research as a ceremonial journey. We have walked together. We have collected medicines along the way. These medicines came in the form of Indigenous

relationality. They came as stories, as poems, as films, and – most vitally – they came as relationships. Now, it is our responsibility to use these medicines respectfully and to tend the trail of counselling psychology so that, one day, many more may walk this trail and find an abundance of good medicine.

One way to responsibly and respectfully use these medicines we have been gifted is to continue learning from stories of Indigenous relationality and to pass that learning on in our lives, our communities, and our professional fields. This research serves as good medicine for counselling psychology. It is good medicine which actively decolonizes counselling psychology through honouring and de-essentializing Indigenous relationality. Additionally, this research creates equitable and honouring space for Indigenous peoples within the academy, within the field of counselling psychology, and beyond.

Next, I provide collections (lists) of the implications of this research in three key areas: academia, counselling, and my own family.

Implications in Academia

This research, this good medicine, may have many implications within the context of academia including the importance of:

1. Decolonizing the academy;
2. Indigenizing the academy through incorporating Indigenous relationality in all forms and on all levels;
3. Implementing transformative pedagogies in education wherein diverse Indigenous relationality is represented;

4. Addressing the equity issue of making space for Indigenous scholars who are “walking in two worlds” (working within an Indigenous paradigm as well as within the institution’s protocols);
5. Advocating for changes to the way the university ethics committee operates in cases of Indigenous research by having diverse Indigenous representation on Ethics Boards and/or having an Indigenous Ethics Board
6. Incorporating structural accountability that reflects an Indigenous paradigm;
7. Forming meaningful research relationships guided by Indigenous relationality and axiology;
8. Increasing diverse Indigenous representation within the academy;
9. Creating supportive and relational spaces to hear from Indigenous peoples;
10. Contributing more research from Indigenous research paradigms and methodologies;
11. Incorporating Indigenous relationality through multi-modal forms such as storytelling, film, writing, poetry, music, and art;
12. Embracing reciprocity in relationality within research; and
13. Advocating for social justice with Indigenous peoples.

For further examples in practice and ways of applying these implications see Fellner’s work (Fellner, 2016; Fellner et al., 2020).

Implications for Counsellors

This research, this good medicine, may have many implications for counsellors including the importance of:

1. Decolonizing the profession of counselling psychology;

2. Counsellors engaging in ongoing efforts to decolonize themselves and to work with clients in a decolonized way;
3. Counsellors building meaningful relationships with clients;
4. Counsellors attending to diverse Indigenous relationality in their work with clients;
5. Counsellors creating safe and inclusive spaces for clients' exploration of relationality;
6. Counsellors validating Indigenous relationality;
7. Counsellors attending to the meaningful role of stories in mental health;
8. Counsellors attending to the role of reciprocity in relationality;
9. Counsellors becoming competent and comfortable with reciprocity in their work with clients;
10. Counsellors facilitating the use of multimodal forms of communication such as storytelling, writing, poetry, and art in work with clients;
11. Counsellors acknowledging, honouring, and validating diverse Indigenous spirituality;
12. Counsellors honouring spiritual influences and experiences as meaningful guides their clients' healing process;
13. Counsellors creating opportunities for meaningful community through hosting collective gatherings, circles, and conversations for sharing; and
14. Counsellors advocating for social justice with Indigenous clients.

For further examples in practice and ways of applying these implications see Fellner's work (Fellner, 2016; Fellner et al., 2020).

Medicine for my Family and Me

In the process of this work, I have reclaimed my Indigenous relationality. This is an experience and implication that simply cannot be put into words. This re-emergence is not only for me; it is shared with my ancestors, my family, and the next generations. During this process, I have come, with a good heart, for everything that was taken from my people and my family before me. And I will keep coming.

I am a granddaughter, a daughter, an older sister, and an auntie. One day, I might be a mother. If I am, I dream I will feel peace sending my children to university and into the world. I dream I will send them, knowing that they will not have to face the same obstacles regarding their relationality that I have. I dream I will send them, confident that they will have every right and opportunity afforded to them that is afforded to their peers. One day, I will send them with the strength of our stories and the hope of our Spirit. I will send them with courage, with humility, and with love for humanity. I will send them with their heads held high, proud to be Indigenous, their relationality rippling out into the world.

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