A Different Kind of Canoe: The Circulation of Lushootseed Stories in the Contemporary World

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List of Abbreviations

IK	Indigenous Knowledge

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Abstract

This thesis presents a view of the adaptation of Indigenous storytelling practices to print and multimedia modes of transmission. A specific focus is taken on Lushootseed stories from the Pacific Northwest Coast. I argue that the circulation of Lushootseed stories through modern modes of transmission supports a continuation of Indigenous culture and resistance to colonization. In the first chapter, I compare two print collections of Lushootseed stories transcribed and translated by taqʷšəblu, Vi Hilbert, with regard to the effects of their differing approaches to the translation and presentation of Lushootseed stories. The second chapter spotlights the short story "Lady Louse," and considers the use of digital media for Indigenous storytelling. Lastly, a focus on contemporary storytelling is taken in the third chapter, which revolves on Sasha LaPointe's presentation of her experience as a Coast Salish woman and descendent of Lushootseed-speaking Indigenous leaders in her acclaimed autobiography *Red Paint*.

Introduction

Lushootseed is a Coast Salish Indigenous language traditionally spoken by the tribes of the modern-day Puget Sound region of western Washington. It faced near extinction in the 1960s, with only a handful of fluent speakers remaining, but has made an immense recovery thanks foremost to the work of the late Upper Skagit Elder and storyteller taqʷšəblu, Vi Hilbert, who, with the support and encouragement of her Elders, achieved significant documentation, preservation, and teaching of the language. This thesis concerns the modern circulation of Lushootseed stories. It reflects on examples of ways that Coast Salish storytelling practices have been adapted from oral contexts to print and, increasingly, multimedia modes of transmission for the purposes of cultural continuation.

I was first introduced to Coast Salish culture and stories, and the language Lushootseed, at the Si.Si.Wiss medicine circle gatherings led by SiSwinKlae, known also by her English name Laurel Boucher, at a little church in north Seattle called the Interfaith Community Sanctuary. My mother started to attend these gatherings shortly after our family moved to the city of Seattle from England. She went in search of community in a new city, and out of a keen interest to learn more about the first people of our new home, and she brought my sister, brother, and I along with her every week for a number of years. Over this time, SiSwinKlae became a close friend of my family; I fondly remember her delighting my siblings and me with her lively and laughter filled storytelling at the Si.Si.Wiss gatherings, amazing potlatch ceremonies for all sorts of occasions, which were unlike anything I had experienced before, and her taking our family out on memorable day trips. On one such trip to the swirling waters of Deception Pass, she told us stories of mermaids who would steal away handsome men never to be seen again, which terrified my little five-year-old brother! SiSwinKlae remains dedicated to sharing spiritual and cultural teachings, as well as the Indigenous languages and stories, as she directly received them from her Elders

and teachers over decades of immersive training in Coast Salish and Si.Si.Wiss spiritual practices. One of her teachers was her Aunt Vi Hilbert, whose work is central to this thesis. SiSwinKlae and I reconnected when I contacted her to express my interest in writing my undergraduate thesis on literature by Native authors of the Pacific Northwest. The ideas that grew into this thesis took seed from resulting conversations between the two of us, and the valuable knowledge and insights which she took the time to share with me. Since the Covid 19 pandemic, SiSwinKlae now holds the Si.Si.Wiss gatherings in virtual space over zoom conferences, and I have therefore been able to attend them from my own home in Portland. It has been a joy to reconnect with SiSwinKlae and the Si.Si.Wiss women's medicine circle while I have engaged in this research, and to listen regularly to the stories brought out by SiSwinKlae at the end of every meeting! This connection has been integral to my ability to write this thesis, which I hope can share something of the precious knowledge SiSwinKlae has shared with me.

With this thesis, I make the argument that the circulation of Lushootseed stories today symbolizes and enacts a crucial resistance to colonization while achieving important continuation for Coast Salish culture. This argument is complicated by the fact that many of the modes of transmission through which these stories currently circulate have fundamentally changed the Coast Salish people's traditional storytelling practices. The stories considered in this thesis have, for example, been stripped of the customs of their oral transmission and represented in the English language. These changes significantly reshape the stories since their orality, and the philosophies embedded in the Indigenous languages, are fundamental and irreplaceable facets of the traditional cultures of the Coast Salish people. When encountering Indigenous stories written or told in English, we might question whether they are too Westernized to be considered authentic representations of Indigenous culture, and therefore whether they may be valued as successful acts of resistance against colonial cultural annihilation and truly keep Indigenous culture alive.

The possibility of a hopeful perspective on this issue is suggested by the thoughtful words of the late Susie Sampson Peter, an incredible Elder, storyteller, memorizer, and medicine worker of the Skagit tribe, and Vi Hilbert's Aunt. Peter

was among the first Native people of her region to consent to being recorded. Her point of view on representing her culture through unfamiliar and non-traditional modes of transmission is represented anecdotally in a poem written by her descendent Sasha LaPointe, a contemporary Coast Salish writer whose autobiography is the focus of the third chapter of this thesis. LaPointe's poem, "The Canoe My Grandmother Gave Me" begins with the following story:

> *When my grandmother hit the record button on the cassette recorder, it startled my great-aunt. What is it? What does it do? It's going to capture the language, my grandmother said, to keep it. My great aunt thought about this a long while. As a child, she traveled by river, by inland waters to relatives, to bring them fish, to carry the news. She looked down at the cassette recorder and nodded. Ah, she said. This is just a different kind of canoe.* (LaPointe, *Rose Quartz*, 7)

When Susie Sampson Peter agreed to have her voice recorded telling stories and sharing cultural knowledge in her Lushootseed language, many of her contemporaries were uncomfortable with unfamiliar Western technologies like the tape recorder. They sought to protect the life of the oral culture and ways of living that had sustained the culture for countless generations. Peter, however, recognized that her culture might best be protected by adapting its traditions to fit a changing world. She destigmatized the tape-recorder, seeing that its essential function was one with which her culture was intimately familiar: it was a vessel with which to carry knowledge. Focusing on the similarity between the tape recorder and the canoe, which has been a defining aspect of Coast Salish culture since time immemorial, allowed the idea that, rather than making an unwelcome intrusion on Coast Salish culture, this technology was providing the culture's safe passage to the modern world. Peter saw in the tape-recorder culturally familiar practices and ways of being, she was not accepting a Westernizing influence on her culture and changing the culture unsuitably, she was indigenizing a practice considered untraditional by embracing a new way of doing what her people have always done. She saw that fewer and fewer people retained, and could safely pass down their cultural teachings because of the brutalization of colonization. She took the view that modern technology could be a viable conduit for ancient knowledge, mitigating this tragic cultural loss. Her focus in doing so was on the benefit for future generations.

Peter's hope for future generations is shown fruition and celebrated in the writing of her descendent Sasha LaPointe. She is the great-granddaughter of Vi Hilbert who followed in the example of her Aunt, using the tape recorder, the written word, and print form to extensively document and preserve the Lushootseed language and its stories. LaPointe honors her forebears in this poem, showing appreciation for their adoption of these new modes of transference which have both strengthened her connection to her cultural heritage and allowed her to find her own voice as a writer of Coast Salish poetry and creative nonfiction. In precontact times, before the arrival of settlers, Coast Salish people lived communally and close intergenerational relationships facilitated the oral transference of cultural information. With the loss of contexts that facilitate that kind of sharing on a daily basis, the use of different kinds of canoes for documentation, memory storage, and communication has served to strengthen intergenerational relationships and fostered cultural continuance.

With appreciation of the cultural continuity promoted by the circulation of Lushootseed stories, I consider the various ways Lushootseed stories are now circulated to have value to broader efforts in the recovery of Indigenous Knowledge (IK). In her introduction to a special issue of *American Indian Quarterly*, "Indigenous Knowledge recovery is Indigenous Empowerment," Waziyatawin, Angela Wilson asserts that "Indigenous knowledge recovery is an anticolonial project" and celebrates the special issue as a rare scholarly opportunity to validate Indigenous people, and other advocates of IK, that are typically excluded from "the academic power structures that legitimize such knowledge" (Wilson, 359). The issue was published in 2004, at a time when years of advocacy for the recovery and promotion of IK was beginning to elicit response as the Western academy started to show new interest in such forms of knowledge, particularly in relation to ecology. Wilson encourages this uptake in interest in her introduction, advocating for a shift in thinking from the colonially imposed narrative that Western knowledge would inevitably conquer and replace IK, in favor of understanding that IK does have relevance and value to modernity. She expresses that at any point in history, and still today, joint efforts could be made to retrieve and protect Indigenous ways of life and appreciate the knowledge that supports them. Many in fact would agree that today it is not only

possible to collaboratively work towards the recovery and implementation of Indigenous forms of knowledge but that this is a critical task, as we witness the demise of unsustainable systems upheld by colonialism even in the face of extreme socio-economic inequity and climate disaster. Wilson is encouraged that a growing number of Indigenous people and non-indigenous allies "go even so far as to suggest that eventually [Indigenous ways of life] may resolve some of the global crises facing all populations today" (Wilson, 361).

While Wilson celebrates increased attention to IK from the Western academy, she cautions against the perpetuation of colonial harm by the inappropriate representation and handling of IK. There exists in many Indigenous communities a mistrust of non-Indigenous academics due to a history of researchers approaching Indigenous communities in a disrespectful manner. Problems include misrepresenting the indigenous communities, neglecting to gain the permission of the people with whom they speak and learn from to publish literature about them, and using these communities' knowledge and practices exploitatively for their own interests and benefit. These problems are exacerbated when researchers fail to contribute meaningfully to the people they have benefitted off of, or implement the findings of their studies in any such way that uplifts the Indigenous communities they worked with. These historically typical interactions between Indigenous communities and the Western academy are appropriative and contribute to the objectification and dehumanization of Indigenous people, thus upholding harmful colonial domination. It is because of this context that Wilson emphasizes the point that "Indigenous knowledge is meaningless and actually harmful if its holders and practitioners are not simultaneously empowered and supported in our efforts to not only survive but also thrive" (Wilson, 360). She argues therefore that Indigenous people must first recover their traditional ways of being and interacting with the world among their own populations before sharing them broadly.

Leanne R Simpson's article "Anticolonial Strategies for the Recovery and Maintenance of Indigenous Knowledge recovery" is included in the special issue of *American Indian Quarterly*. Its content is in alignment with Wilson's comments about the need for IK to be utilized, above all, in uplifting Indigenous

communities. Leanne R. Simpson defines the goals of Indigenous Knowledge recovery with the following claim:

> Recovering and maintaining Indigenous worldviews, philosophies, and ways of knowing and applying those teachings in a contemporary context represents a web of liberation strategies Indigenous Peoples can employ to disentangle themselves from the oppressive control of colonizing state governments. (Simpson, 373)

Stories are therefore significant to the project of Indigenous Knowledge recovery insofar as the revival and continuation of Indigenous storytelling as a pedagogical practice can uplift Native communities. Stories represent Indigenous ways of knowing since they have served as a traditional means of holistic education from generation to generation.

Q'um Q'um Xiiem, Jo-ann Archibald is a leading scholar from the Stó:lō First Nation in British Columbia whose work is discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. She is the author of *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart Mind Body and Spirit* in which she shares her journey "to learn about the "core" of Indigenous stories from her Elders and to find a respectful place for stories and storytelling in education, especially in curricula" (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork,* ix). Over the course of this journey, Archibald worked with Coast Salish and Stó:lō Elders to learn about the nature of, and protocol for Indigenous stories, and their application to education. She terms this "Indigenous Storywork."

The incorporation of Indigenous Storywork in education can address the problems with formalized Western education for Indigenous children that Wilson raises in her discussion of the recovery of IK:

> Indigenous knowledge has rarely, if at all, impacted educational institutions responsible for teaching our children even today. Thus, rather than facilitating a liberatory educational experience, the schools are designed to indoctrinate new generations of children with the beliefs and values of the colonizing society, and Indigenous ways continue to be denigrated. (Wilson, 366)

The denigration of Indigenous ways in schools creates a painful experience for Indigenous children in educational systems. Archibald herself identifies with

having distressing memories of learning about Indigenous cultures through the public-school curriculum in ways that were inappropriate and insensitive. She suggests "perhaps this was why I was drawn to developing better curricula about First Nations through teacher education and later as a teacher. I didn't want other First Nations children to suffer the same humiliation that I had experienced" (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*, 86). Her promotion of Indigenous Storywork directs teaching and scholarship away from colonial attitudes inherent to academia and towards recognition and implementation of Indigenous forms of knowledge.

Since Archibald's book was published in 2008, various researchers and educators seeking guidance on how to responsibly and successfully implement IK in their teaching methods have drawn from the understanding it presents of Indigenous Storywork and its application to decolonizing educational curriculums. For example, MacMath and Hall's 2018 article "Indigenous Education: Using the Science of Storywork to teach *With* and *Within* instead of *About* Indigenous Peoples" promotes Indigenous Storywork as a way of implementing reconciliation through education. The article concludes in emphasizing the importance of inward transformation, saying that the next step for educators is working on personal decolonization.

> Personal work includes taking the time to develop authentic relationships with our local first nations communities and Elders, being willing to listen to hard truths, and beginning to culturally prepare ourselves to learn from First Nations stories, storywork, and ways of knowing. (MacMath and Hall, 103)

It is only with personal decolonization, that educators may become appropriately equipped to support efforts to recover IK for the improvement of the education, and the benefit of this to Indigenous communities, through the methodology of Indigenous Storywork.

Archibald's demonstration of the power of Indigenous stories, and her assertion of a place for Indigenous Storywork in the project of IK recovery, was fundamental in shaping the way I considered the kind of resistance to colonization enacted by the circulation of Lushootseed stories, and the limitations of it. It made me see that the stories had a way of imparting meaning,

to teach, that was linked to their original orality and difficult to capture in their modern modes of transmission. I sought to find instances where this had been achieved, as well as where it could not be.

I would hesitate to claim that the documentation of Lushootseed stories alone can be considered a good example of IK recovery. Leanne Simpson makes a strong case against this thinking:

> Documenting or digitizing Indigenous Knowledge is a seemingly benign way of appearing to recover Traditional Indigenous Knowledge while at the same time increasing access to the knowledge and vastly increasing the potential for its exploitation. Yet coercing our knowledge to conform to the rules of the colonial power structure serves only to further denigrate and attack the nature of Indigenous Knowledge. When knowledge is made into a text, it is translated from Indigenous languages into English, locking its interpretation in a cognitive box delineated by the structure of a language that evolved to communicate the worldview of the colonizers. It is also stripped of its dynamism and its fluidity and confined to a singular context. (Simpson, 380)

Indigenous stories are characteristically fluid and this is important to their nature as an Indigenous methodology of teaching and learning. Therefore, textualizing the stories must not be seen as a suitable replacement for oral Indigenous storytelling practices.

While the documentation of Indigenous stories does not itself represent the recovery of IK, it has been necessary to the stories' preservation in many cases. This preservation enables IK recovery to occur. Archibald inspiringly recounts that in spite of decades of brutal colonization that disrupted Indigenous people's intergenerational transmission of culture and memory,

> Elders and storytellers kept embers of original Indigenous stories alive in their hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits, waiting for the time to spark the return of these storied memories. (Archibald, *Memory*, 239)

Vi Hilbert is one such Elder who dearly appreciated the value of Indigenous storytelling and entrusted her Elders' stories to text to store the memory of them. The documentation of Lushootseed stories can be appreciated as a kind of canoe

transporting these story embers from which the practice of storytelling, and the knowledge it embodies and imparts, can be reawakened.

The first chapter of this thesis presents a brief overview of Vi Hilbert's life's work before examining in particular her documentation of traditional Lushootseed stories in *Haboo* and *Lushootseed Texts*, comparing the different approaches taken in each book to the task of presenting the stories in text format. The following two chapters explore two examples of Hilbert's extensive legacy. Her legacy is represented in the second chapter with a focus on her favorite story "Lady Louse," and the extensive lives this story has taken on. Many unique and wide-ranging versions of the story "Lady Louse" are compiled in a book by the same name. Additionally, the story is told by Jo-ann Archibald in a video on her website indigenousstorywork.com. Hilbert is one of the Elders from whom Archibald originally learned about how to work with Indigenous stories. She follows in Hilbert's example by using the story of Lady Louse to teach about how to make meaning with Indigenous stories, utilizing a multimedia format that combines video and text. The third chapter centers on *Red Paint,* the acclaimed autobiography of Vi Hilbert's great-granddaughter Sasha LaPointe. This is a contemporary Coast Salish life experience story that achieves strong recognition for the livelihood of Coast Salish culture in today's world. It draws from the cultural and storytelling tradition of LaPointe's Coast Salish speaking ancestors, including her great-grandmother Vi Hilbert, and great Aunt Susie Sampson Peter.

taqʷšəblu, *Haboo* and *Lushootseed Texts*

On a crucial day in 1962, taqʷšəblu Violet Hilbert of the Upper Skagit Tribe (1918-2008) met Linguist Thomas Hess. Vi Hilbert grew up an only child, moving with her parents up and down the Skagit river wherever they were able to find work. She grew up listening to the low sounds of her native language, Lushootseed, being spoken by her parents to each other and among their friends. She herself spoke English as a first language. In the early 1900s, Lushootseed speaking people were prohibited from speaking their language and practicing their culture, and over the course of her lifetime, Hilbert witnessed a rapid fading of the language her parents spoke, a language that had been spoken in the Skagit Valley since time immemorial. More and more, the last eloquent speakers of Lushootseed reached the end of their lives. Hilbert was a hard-working woman and took many jobs to support herself and her family. During the time that she worked as a hairdresser at her own salon, she received a call from Thomas Hess.

Hess had been advised to reach out to Hilbert by Nooksack Elder Louise George, with whom he'd been working on researching Lushootseed in her Seattle home for a number of years. They were working on transcribing and translating a tape recording of "Basket Ogress" a Lushootseed story told by Louise Anderson, Vi Hilbert's mother, when Louise George got the idea that the two would work wonderfully together and suggested that Hess invite Hilbert to listen in on their sessions. Vi Hilbert took a great interest in the work that they were doing, she found that she could assist Hess with translations more efficiently than Louise George was able to due to Hilbert's stronger fluency in English. Hilbert was also delighted to learn about the writing system Hess was using for Lushootseed, and quickly took it upon herself to learn the Lushootseed alphabet and how to read and write the language. With that began a collaboration between Vi Hilbert and Thomas Hess that would span decades. The pair worked together to publish the first Lushootseed dictionary, as well as the two collections of Lushootseed stories viewed in this chapter. Preserving,

documenting, and revitalizing her people's language and culture became Vi Hilbert's life's work. She proceeded to teach classes in both Lushootseed language and Lushootseed literature at the University of Washington in the 1980s.

The result of transcribing traditional Lushootseed stories to English text has allowed the stories to circulate widely outside of their cultural context, introducing them to an audience with little to no knowledge of the Coast Salish people that produced these stories. This has been done in the interest of cultural continuity and amplifying the voices of Indigenous people to educate others about those who have lived on and cared for the land of the Pacific Northwest for millennia until the arrival of white settlers, and who still reside on this land today. Keeping this in mind, I have centered the following questions as I have ventured into learning from and with Lushootseed stories: What are appropriate ways of engaging with these stories in a Western literary context? How should I and others in my position (as a non-Native outsider, and English student educated in Western forms of knowledge) approach and undertake analyses of Lushootseed stories that have been written in English? What does it look like to follow guiding principles that have been presented by Indigenous leaders who have paved the way for the responsible academic handling of Native cultural knowledge? How can I offer my attention to these texts in a way that supports Lushootseed cultural vitality and the resistance of colonial erasure that they seek to ensure, as well as with care not to mistakenly perpetuate colonial harm by engaging with the stories through a Eurocentric framework, or assuming a cultural understanding that I don't have and promoting any damaging misunderstandings? These questions have guided my approach to Lushootseed stories and have led me to consider a generational context and the anti-colonial intention of Indigenous leaders, such as Vi Hilbert, who have opted to adapt their culture to new formats so as to sustain and share it.

In this chapter, I will be discussing two print collections of Lushootseed stories: *Haboo* (1985) and *Lushootseed Texts* (1990). These two collections were transcribed and translated from the oral Lushootseed storytelling tradition and published by Vi Hilbert. The transcriptions had been made from recordings that Thomas Hess took during the time he spent with storytellers studying the

language. In a short text on "The documentation of Lushootseed Language and Literature" that precedes the stories in *Lushootseed Texts*, Hess explains:

> At the time, my only motivation for tape recording was my concern with the grammar and the vocabulary. For me the texts provided examples of natural flowing Lushootseed free of the distortions that result from speaking at dictation pace and that arise from responding to grammatical questions framed in English. It was only after the language began to become clear to me that the literary and cultural value of the stories slowly dawned. (Hess, *Lushootseed Texts*, 6)

These two collections of stories had not yet been conceived of, therefore, at the time that the recordings which the stories came from were made. Both collections present the stories in different and deliberate styles, engaging with and adapting the Lushootseed storytelling tradition in unique ways. I will be discussing these differences and comparing how the manner by which each text presents its stories engages the reader.

It is largely owed to Hilbert's sheer dedication and devoted work that Lushootseed is as widely taught and spoken as it is in the northwest today. Her determination not to let her Elder's stories and teachings be lost to the force of colonization, and her compassion for future generations whom she knew would benefit from having the ability to learn about Lushootseed, is remarkably admirable. Some of the stories she published are very old and capture features of this part of the world from long before foreign settlers came to know it. Significant cultural preservation is achieved in transcribing the stories to text. It means that the stories have not been lost with the last generation of Elders that remembered and told the old stories, along with the cultural teachings and values held in the stories. It is important to consider, however, what aspects fundamental to the traditional stories have unavoidably had to be changed so as to preserve the stories in a written format and share them to be available and accessible to a wide and diverse audience. Transcribing and publishing the stories removes, perhaps even alienates them from their cultural context. It involves packaging the stories into a book, a product to be sold, a source/artifact for academic study through a Western colonial lens. Furthermore, for this to be possible the stories have had to be transcribed from the oral tradition to written

text, and translated from Lushootseed into English. Much of the significance of the stories is closely linked to their orality and the philosophies expressed in their original language. While resisting cultural eradication is a vital objective of decolonization, care must be taken in the way cultural stories are preserved and continued toward such efforts, so as not to perpetuate the harm of colonization when the stories are changed to fit within a Western literary framework and analyzed as such.

Hilbert was not oblivious to these concerns attached to her work, she notes in her preface to *Haboo* that some Elders would prefer that the culture remain solely oral, but she herself took the long view, recognizing that times were changing quickly and the greatest chance her culture had at continuing for future generations of Coast Salish people was in adapting to the world they would inhabit. She published these two collections in an effort to preserve her culture's stories, which traditionally would be committed to memory and often repeated, but due to changing times and the force of colonization, she saw that fewer and fewer people remembered and retold the stories, necessitating that the stories take on a new life and new way of being remembered. She transferred them to a new canoe. These collections can be considered Hilbert's way of doing her due diligence to ensure the continuation of Lushootseed storytelling. They have also been published with the intention of the stories reaching a wide and diverse audience, for many people to have the chance to learn about and appreciate the literary tradition of the Coast Salish people. Rather than taking the view that, through literacy, Lushootseed has been Westernized in a culturally compromising and inauthentic way, which promotes a narrative of cultural erasure, we may recognize that Hilbert has taken advantage of the Western form of literature to serve the interests of her culture and people. This chapter recognizes the care and creative skill in Hilbert's methods of invoking the oral tradition in the print form, and celebrates the cultural resilience and continuity achieved in this.

Indigenous Storytelling: Principles of Reading

I am fortunate and grateful to benefit from the encouragement and guidance of SiSwinKlae, known also by her English name Laurel Boucher, a dear friend and teacher of Coast Salish culture, who was herself a student of Vi Hilbert. When I first shared my concerns about interpreting and writing about Lushootseed stories as a cultural outsider in an academic context, SiSwinKlae shared with me the teaching that, in Coast Salish culture, you never tell someone what a story is supposed to mean. The stories aren't believed to have a singular correct meaning, and it is seen as a discredit to the listener's intelligence and personal experience to rob them of the opportunity to make their own meaning from a story. As Vi Hilbert's own granddaughter said:

> Over the years I have personally found this to be true insofar as my own encounters with the stories have remained fluid, growing with me, teaching me something new about myself as life brings me new experiences. I have been perplexed by some stories for years, only to realize that the lessons within are unveiled over time, bit by bit in accordance with my own physical and spiritual location in life at any given time. (Jill La Pointe)

This teaching encouraged me in remembering that although I may not have the same understanding of the stories that a reader who shares a cultural background with the stories would have, my unfamiliarity with certain background knowledge would not prevent me from being able to meaningfully engage with the stories and come to a significant personal understanding of them. The teaching also helped me to realize I wanted to avoid taking a primarily analytical focus in this thesis. It would feel incompatible with the nature of Coast Salish stories, and perhaps culturally inappropriate, to take the same approach to these stories as I would to the stories or poetry of Western writers.

Instead, I seek to share what I have learned about the tradition of Indigenous storytelling in the Northwest Coast from the scholarship of Indigenous academics and culture bearers and demonstrate how this has guided my engagement with the stories I discuss in this thesis. Through my research, I found tremendous direction for studying Coast Salish stories in the book

Indigenous Storytelling: Educating the Mind, Body, And Spirit by Jo-ann Archibald (aka Q'um Q'um Xiiem) of the Stó:lō tribe in British Columbia. In this book, Archibald shares what she learned about storytelling as a system of Indigenous Knowledge from her Stó:lō and Coast Salish Elders. She identifies seven corresponding principles for working with Indigenous traditional and life experience stories for research and education. These principles are: Respect, Reverence, Responsibility, Reciprocity, Holism, Interrelatedness, and Synergy. The activation and interaction of these seven principles form a framework for engaging and making meaning with Indigenous Stories for an education benefitting the mind, heart, body, and spirit. Archibald terms this multifaceted framework "Indigenous Storywork."

In the remainder of this chapter, I will be taking a particular focus on the story "Mink and Changer" as told by Martha Lamont. This story uniquely features in both *Haboo* and the later *Lushootseed Texts*, therefore it is a useful frame of reference for discussing the different approaches each book takes to representing stories. "Mink and Changer" is the first episode in a longer story told by Martha Lamont; a series of encounters between Changer and other beings told in a continuous narrative ("Text 1" in *Lushootseed Texts*). It is a humorous story that expresses Coast Salish etiological beliefs.

In the story, Mink is walking along the waterfront of the Puget Sound. As necessitated by the topography of the coastline, his walking takes him sometimes along the shore, and sometimes up across hills. He comes upon the camp of an old man, asleep next to a fire on which a salmon is roasting. Mink sees that the salmon is ready to eat and he helps himself to the feast before continuing on his way. Having been made thirsty by the salmon, he drinks frequently where he has the chance. Eventually he reaches an abundant river where he catches himself a salmon and sets up camp. The salmon roasts slowly while he explores until deciding to take rest, Lamont specifies that he is alone, and not with his younger brother by whom he is usually accompanied in stories.

At this point Changer comes into the focus of the story. While Mink is sleeping, Changer too walks along the salt-water's edge, he is traveling around finding people and asking them what they are doing. Changer is a spirit thought to have come to Earth long ago during the "Myth-Age" time when all living

beings existed in their unfixed human/animal forms[1]. Changer had the power to transform people, confining them permanently to a form befitting their character. Conventionally, he asks the people that he encounters as he travels around what it is that they are doing. Usually, the people he questions feign innocence, intentionally portraying generally self-serving actions as entirely harmless/opportunistic. Changer sees through this and changes them into the form of some kind of animal with physical or behavioral features that correspond with whatever they were up to when encountered by Changer. The encounter between Mink and Changer does not exactly follow this formula, and the shrewd Mink proves almost a match to Changer through his intelligence and mischievous trickery, although Changer gets the better of him in the end.

When Changer comes to Mink's camp, where Mink lays asleep, he eats the salmon Mink is roasting and heads on his way. As soon as Mink wakes to see his salmon eaten, he is aware that it is Changer who has stolen from him. He has heard about Changer and knew he was about. Mink runs up atop a hill from which point he can see Changer walking, determinedly he picks up pace to get ahead of Changer and "makes water." He knows Changer will be very thirsty from eating the salmon. Indeed, when Changer reaches the small stream spilling down the hillside, he stops to take a long drink, causing Mink to laugh and humiliate him loudly: "Somebody just drank some other guy's piss" (Hilbert, *Lushootseed Texts*, p.76, l. 99). Mink makes a fool of Changer this way twice, and follows him tauntingly. Changer, outraged by this disrespect, declares "You had better become just a mink, / be nothing, / be scum, / be there at the sea" (Hilbert, *Lushootseed Texts*, p. 78, l. 125a). And so, for the rest of time, Mink swam and wandered on the snags of driftwood, where he can sometimes still be seen today.

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[1] Thomas Hess explains in his introduction to *Haboo*: "Many Lushootseed people divide their oral literature into two categories, history called lələ?uləb and Myth Age stories known as sxʷi?ab in the south and as syəyəhub (or simply syəhub) in the north." (Hess, *Haboo*, xviii) all of the stories in *Haboo* are "Myth Age" stories by Hess's use of the term, SiSwinKlae has shared with me that Coast Salish people know these ancient stories from the oral culture as the creation stories.

This story was told by Martha Lamont to Thom Hess in 1963 at Tulalip. A crucial component of honoring and continuing Lushootseed oral tradition in print format is in the care given to remembering and appreciating the storytellers who practiced the oral ways, and thanks to whom the stories may be written.

Introductory Material and Text

Both *Haboo* and *Lushootseed* texts include introductory material dedicated to introducing the storytellers and contextualizing the stories. In her preface to the first collection, Vi Hilbert shares that most contributors to *Haboo* were people that she knew personally; their voices were recorded sharing the stories on tape, these tape recordings were transcribed phonetically by herself and then translated to English. Hilbert introduces the various storytellers she knew who contributed to this collection at the end of her preface: "Now let me tell you a bit about the storytellers you are about to meet" (Hilbert, *Haboo*, xi). Hilbert's direct address to the reader here expresses a sense of familiarity that matches the warmth in tone of her introductions to the storytellers, through which readers feel as though they are indeed meeting each individual. Her introductions capture a real sense of the characters of each storyteller, beginning with Hilbert's own parents. She often shares a personal anecdote and memory of growing up in the company of these pillars of her community after explaining her relation to them, and shares examples of different ways that each storyteller practiced their culture. Her introductions express a sincere admiration and gratitude for the storytellers that effectively move a reader to behold the following stories as a lovingly shared gift, imbuing the readers' experience of the following stories with the Indigenous Storywork principles of Respect and Reverence. These pages, dedicated to introducing the contributors to *Haboo*, are more than just paratexts that provide contextual information about the stories, they enact the customs proper to oral storytelling. Anytime a story is brought out in an oral context, the storyteller is to share where the story came from. Hilbert tells as much in her preface, with an encouragement to those interested in Lushootseed

literature to become as familiar with cultural background as possible: "the storyteller and his or her community are always to be acknowledged and given credit." (Hilbert, *Lushootseed Texts*, xvi). By encouraging readers to familiarize themselves with cultural customs, and by sharing the correct protocol for storytelling, Hilbert additionally invokes the principle of Responsibility in her audience's readership of the stories told in *Haboo*.

Lushootseed Texts follows suit in educating its readers about the culture bearers whose stories constitute the volume. Preceding the stories themselves is a twelve-page section titled "Remembering The Storytellers" (*Lushootseed Texts*, 11-23) in which Vi Hilbert and linguist Thomas Hess individually share their personal relations to each one of the storytellers in answers to interview questions about each individual's time spent with the storytellers. While both contributors knew the storytellers in starkly different contexts (through familial relationships in Hilbert's case and through the regular sessions Hess spent time with them researching,) both accounts offer perceptive insights into the character and personalities of the storytellers, and the way that they told the stories. Hilbert and Hess also both express tender appreciation for the time they were fortunate to spend in the company of the storytellers, and their willingness to share. Both Hilbert and Hess note the eleven dogs living at Martha Lamont's house, which can be heard in the tape recordings of her storytelling sessions. Hilbert explains that she didn't know Martha Lamont well personally, but knew her husband Levi Lamont who she said was very happily married to her, "He appreciated her native intelligence, he appreciated her skills and her conversation, and he appreciated the fact that she was a good Shaker even though he himself did not belong to the Shaker church" (Hilbert, *Lushootseed Texts*, 13). Hess describes her as "a classic lady… She was always dignified yet humble. She was wise" (Hess, *Lushootseed Texts*, 20). In the case of both volumes, the written introductions of the storytellers invoke the multi-generational oral chain of transmission through which Lushootseed stories ensure their vitality.

As well as in introducing the storytellers, Hilbert's preface to *Haboo* is further valuable in offering a little explanation of the way that the traditional stories shared in *Haboo* express cultural values and teachings, she provides a list of core values reflected in the stories, and introductions to the trickster characters

Coyote, Mink (the subject of Lamont's changer story), and Raven, as well as how we are able to learn from them, she also briefly provides context on important cultural social conventions.

Haboo: Telling the Stories in English

The translations made by Hilbert for *Haboo* make numerous additions to the stories so as to adapt them to a written format from their oral telling. Hess uses the example of Martha LaMont's Changer story to explain Hilbert's approach to translation in his own introduction to *Haboo*. Here he provides an excerpt of the literal translation of the beginning of this story (*Haboo*, xxii), to which the reader may compare the beginning of the story as it appears later in the book. The excerpt provided in Hess's introduction is the same as the English text in *Lushootseed Texts* published years later. Hess lists some of the most noticeable differences between the literal translation and Hilbert's free translation including: "the added adjectives and modifying phrases … and the several details about how the Lushootseed people roast salmon" (Hess, *Lushootseed Texts*, xxii). He justifies the need of these additions as being to make up for the fact that the Western audience is unfamiliar with the characters in the stories with whom the Lushootseed speaking audience is intimately familiar. Additionally, cultural knowledge of geography etc. shared between the storyteller and Lushootseed speaking audience is not included in the stories, but has been included in the translations for this collection for purposes of accessibility.

Hilbert's free translation through which Martha Lamont's story is represented in *Haboo* includes a far greater deal of vivid description than the literal translation features, making it closer to the kind of story readers would be accustomed to encountering in a book. For example, she writes:

> Mink was out traveling around when he came upon a very beautiful sight: a nice hot salmon browning on skewers. The skewers were made of ironwood and leaned just the right distance from the heat. Oil from the salmon was beginning to

> drip, so Mink knew that this fish was just ready to eat. What a temptation! (Hilbert, *Haboo*, 57)

Salmon is a staple food for Coast Salish people, and highly culturally important for various reasons. Hilbert takes the opportunity of translating Lamont's story, in which Mink steals a salmon, to share knowledge about how salmon is traditionally roasted on skewers of ironwood and signals that it is cooked to perfection when its oil starts to drip. In referring to the roasting salmon Mink found as "a very beautiful sight," Hilbert incorporates an expression of how irresistible the salmon is when prepared this traditional way. Furthermore, the translation makes use of free indirect discourse to express Mink's individual perspective with the exclamation: "What a temptation!" This narrative structure draws on an English literary storytelling tradition, using it to vivify Mink as a character. These details are not included in the original words with which Lamont tells the story. The literal translation, which Hilbert embellishes for *Haboo*'s version of the story, simply recounts "[Mink] came upon someone. / As usual he stole the salmon / that the old man was roasting, that Mink" (Hilbert, *Lushootseed Texts*, 68). The plain wording of Lamont's story was likely enlivened by the expression with which she performed it orally, and the humor in presenting Mink's bad behavior as typical and predictable would likely be more appreciated by an insider audience familiar with the character than those who have not been brought up with Lushootseed stories in the oral tradition.

The additions Hilbert makes to the literal translation of LaMont's story result in the story being more descriptive and therefore exciting to read when confined to textual presentation. In her own preface to *Haboo*, Hilbert says: "I have published our literature because I want the world to know and appreciate this central part of our culture. It conveys much of our ancient richness and complexities" (Hilbert, *Haboo*, xvi). Evidently, the driving intention behind the publication of this collection of stories is to gain broad recognition of the Lushootseed stories, for them to reach and be received by as many people as possible. Considering this, it is understandable that the approach to translation prioritized the stories' approachability to an outside audience rather than proximity to the way they would be traditionally shared. But Hilbert's additional

detail is not only included for the sake of making the story more appealing to an unfamiliar audience. It is included to make explicit the cultural knowledge and tradition implicitly embedded in the story with the roasted salmon. In this sense, the changes made to the story in its adaptation to the print form are conducive to cultural continuity since the traditional story being shared has additionally become an informative record of traditional Coast Salish food preparation practices.

Although this style of translation takes the stories further from their oral communal context, the collection's title makes an appreciative acknowledgement of the oral origin of the stories included within it. One component of the oral tradition of Lushootseed storytelling is that when a storyteller is sharing a story, they will take occasional pauses. At these moments the listeners will say "Haboo" to vocalize their attentive listening and investment in the continuation of the story. The word may be considered equivalent to "I'm listening" or "And then what happened?" This custom cannot be followed in the written form of the storytelling, but having this word serve as the title of the collection expresses its importance to the stories, and references the traditional conventions of Lushootseed storytelling. The decision to title this collection of stories "*Haboo*" may also be viewed as a gesture of respect and appreciation to the Elders from whom Hilbert inherited her peoples' stories and teachings, such as for example her Aunt Susie. It serves as a way of expressing that Hilbert has taken the guidance of Lushootseed-speaking Elders and their stories to heart, and feels assured in her ability, and responsibility, to share these aspects of her culture in an uplifting and proper way. The titular "*Haboo*" acknowledges the importance of carrying forth cultural stories and teachings, as those before Hilbert have done, for the benefit of future generations.

Language Reclamation

Lushootseed Texts: An Introduction to Puget Salish Narrative Aesthetics is the fruition of Hilbert's wish expressed in her preface to *Haboo*, published eleven

years earlier, to "bring to the public a third collection of tales in the original Lushootseed with accompanying English translations." (Hilbert, *Haboo*, ix). In this latter collection, "Martha Lamont's Changer Story" is the first of seven stories. Though it is the same story, derived from the same audio recording of Lamont telling it, as that presented in *Haboo* under the title "Mink and Changer," in *Lushootseed Texts* its representation is remarkably different from *Haboo*'s version. Here, the text appears in the original Lushootseed language, with symbols unfamiliar to the English alphabet, on the right-side page. English translations accompany the Lushootseed story on the left-side. Unlike in *Haboo*, where the translation makes considerable additions to the original story, here the translation of LaMont's story is carefully chosen to be as faithfully equivalent to the Lushootseed words with which she told the story as possible. In *Lushootseed Texts*, primacy is given to the Indigenous language by the visual formatting. Editor Crisca Bierwert shares: "We hope to encourage readers to look at the Lushootseed language as the original—as a resource, rather than a relic—that which lies alongside the translation" (Bierwert, *Lushootseed Texts*, 2). The English supplied to the left of the Lushootseed story is included to support an understanding of the story on its own terms rather than to tell it differently. Whereas *Haboo*'s publication steered towards presenting the stories in a literary narrative storytelling style that invites the engagement of a wide audience, this collection seeks to circulate the stories in such a way that promotes them principally as products and representations of the language.

Centering the Lushootseed language in representing its stories is critical to the kind of cultural continuity that the collection *Lushootseed Texts* engages in. When it comes to encountering Indigenous stories in text, the complication of language differences subjects the stories to change when they are told in English. The revival of Indigenous languages is of paramount importance to the work of decolonization and the continuation of Indigenous culture. In conversation with SiSwinKlae, when I first reached out to her and shared my interest in writing my thesis on the Indigenous literature of the Pacific Northwest, she emphatically explained to me: "Many Native authors didn't write until Indigenous languages were revived. Even if an author wrote a book or other in English, the empowerment to write didn't come, it seems, until Indigenous language was

written for the first time."[2] This was followed up by her sending me a YouTube video of an interview with a Lushootseed speaker and educator Zalmai ʔəswəli Zahir. Watching Zahir's interview made clear to me the importance of the Lushootseed language to the original people of the land this language came from, as well as the vast differences between this language and English.

Zahir was a language student of Vi Hilbert and the interview is primarily about what she taught him about the language. He cites boarding schools as the primary reason for language loss, and shares that the language is understood to have come directly from the land, and it is important because it encompasses the philosophies of the people from thousands of years ago. Later in the video more detail is given on how these long-held philosophies are encompassed by the language. Zahir discusses how concepts of interconnectedness and the idea that all living beings have souls and are connected can be talked about in English and considered metaphorically. In Lushootseed however these ideas are not metaphorically but literally true, and this reality is upheld by the language. Zahir claims that knowledge of multiple languages allows one to travel between different realities. Reading the stories in English we might therefore imagine certain things are symbolic which in the original language are considered literally. Additionally, stories could potentially lose some of their power to impart cultural values when concepts of interconnectedness, which foster a sense of responsibility, aren't apparent in translation to English.

One example of a cultural misunderstanding stemming from representing a Lushootseed story in English is shown in the article "Reading Martha LaMont's

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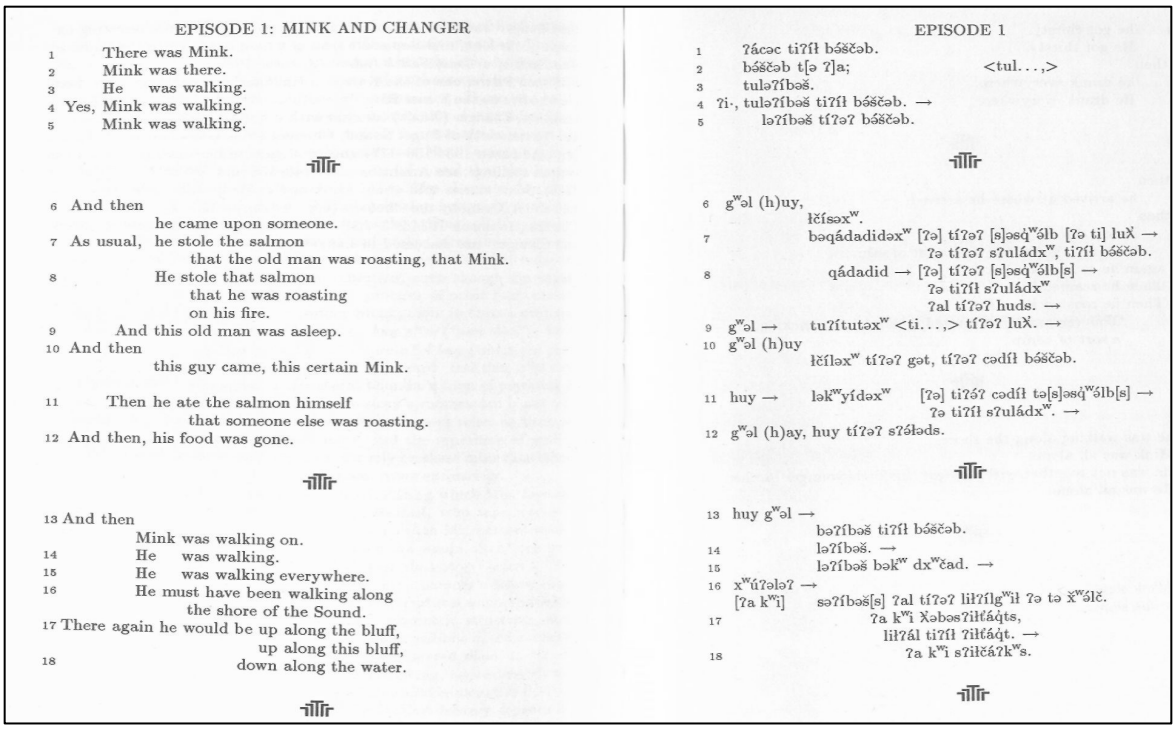
[2] I have encountered stories of experience in my research for this thesis that have led me toward a greater understanding of the significance of language revival in the project of decolonization, and given me a stronger idea of the reason behind this point that SiSwinKlae raised about the relation between language reclamation and storytelling. In one such article, a group of Indigenous individuals of varied backgrounds within the modern-day United States employ Archibald's concept of Indigenous Storywork as a methodology for demonstrating the centrality of language reclamation to projects of cultural continuity and social justice through first-hand narratives. The contributors to this article share: "we privilege what Stó:lō scholar Jo-ann Archibald calls storywork: experiential narratives that constitute epistemic, theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological lenses through which we can both study and practice language reclamation." (McCarty, Teresa L., et al., 161).

Crow Story Today." The writers of this article share that when presenting commentary on the story at a conference in 1993, a Lushootseed speaking Elder criticized their equation of a character's siʔab status to possession of wealth (Moses and Langen, 93). siʔab is often understood to mean upper-class, but whereas in English this is considered to primarily mean "rich," in Lushootseed culture being upper-class is associated with behavioral assets (wisdom, thoughtfulness, patience, and generosity). LaMont's Crow story, "The Marriage of Crow" is also featured in *Lushootseed Texts*, here the English translation of the story makes no changes to the word "siʔab." It remains untranslated every time it is used by Lamont as she tells the story in Lushootseed. In the annotator's introduction to "The Marriage of Crow" T. C. S. Langen clarifies: "it is the endowment with family—with knowledgeable and resourceful relatives—rather than with wealth alone—in which the Lushootseed concept of the *siʔab* resides" (Langen, *Lushootseed Texts, 103*). In refraining from making translations that risk misrepresenting facets of Lushootseed culture, the collection promotes the language and the culture embedded in it.

In *Lushootseed Texts*, the visual juxtaposition of the two languages allows readers to acquaint themselves with Lushootseed as they read the story (see fig. 1). Although the Lushootseed words may be unrecognizable, familiarity is fostered by the connection indicated between the Lushootseed words and their English equivalents where they correspond to each other from their adjacent pages. The Lushootseed language on the right page allows Native speakers to have a written record of the story in their own language, and encourages non-Lushootseed-speaking readers to get to know the language visually.



EPISODE 1: MINK AND CHANGER

There was Mink.
Mink was there.
He was walking.
Yes, Mink was walking.
Mink was walking.

And then
he came upon someone.
As usual, he stole the salmon
that the old man was roasting, that Mink.
He stole that salmon
that he was roasting
on his fire.
And this old man was asleep.
And then
this guy came, this certain Mink.

Then he ate the salmon himself
that someone else was roasting.
And then, his food was gone.

And then
Mink was walking on.
He was walking.
He was walking everywhere.
He must have been walking along
the shore of the Sound.
There again he would be up along the bluff,
up along this bluff,
down along the water.

EPISODE 1

ʔácac tiʔíɬ báščəb.
báščəb t[ə ʔ]a; <tul...,>
tuləʔíbəš.
ʔi-, tuləʔíbəš tiʔíɬ báščəb. →
ləʔíbəš tíʔəʔ báščəb.

gʷəl (h)uy,
łčísəxʷ.
bəqádadidəxʷ [ʔə] tíʔəʔ [s]əsqʷálb [ʔə ti] luX̌ →
ʔə tíʔəʔ sʔuládxʷ, tiʔíɬ báščəb.
qádadid → [ʔə] tíʔəʔ [s]əsqʷálb[s] →
ʔə tiʔíɬ sʔuládxʷ
ʔal tíʔəʔ huds. →
gʷəl → tuʔítutəxʷ <ti...,> tíʔəʔ luX̌. →
gʷəl (h)uy
łčíləxʷ tíʔəʔ gət, tíʔəʔ cədíɬ báščəb.

huy → ləkʷyídəxʷ [ʔə] tiʔáʔ cədíɬ tə[s]əsqʷálb[s] →
ʔə tiʔíɬ sʔuládxʷ. →
gʷəl (h)ay, huy tíʔəʔ sʔáɬəds.

huy gʷəl →
bəʔíbəš tiʔíɬ báščəb.
ləʔíbəš. →
ləʔíbəš bəkʷ dxʷčad. →
xʷúʔələʔ →
[ʔa kʷi] səʔíbəš[s] ʔal tíʔəʔ liɬʔílgʷiɬ ʔə tə x̌ʷálč.
ʔa kʷi X̌əbəsʔiɬčáqts,
liɬʔál tiʔíɬ ʔiɬčáqt. →
ʔa kʷi sʔiɬčáʔkʷs.

Figure 1: The First Page of Martha Lamont's Changer Story as it appears in *Lushootseed Texts.*

The presentation of the stories in Lushootseed Texts does not only visually introduce and familiarize readers with Lushootseed, a guide to reading Lushootseed orthography is additionally offered on page 41 which describes the unique sound values of every symbol used in the written Lushootseed. Readers can flip back and forth between this guide and the Lushootseed text with English translation to teach themselves both the meaning of Lushootseed words, and how they are said (or at least a close approximation of this, as the sounds of Lushootseed are quite different from those of English!)

To further support readers in learning Lushootseed, each line of the story is numbered, and the story is followed by abundant notes corresponding to the line numbers, often specifying specific word meanings. For example, the notes to line 75 of "Martha LaMont's Changer Story" explain: "qʷuʔ is freshwater, as opposed to salt water (x̌ʷəl č)" (Langen, *Lushootseed Texts*, 97). These annotations are an encouragement for readers to see that Lushootseed is a contemporary language, it has asserted a place in written expression. Furthermore, presenting

the stories in their original Lushootseed maintains their inseparability from their cultural context and makes recognizable to non-Native readers the privilege of getting to encounter the texts in English translation. In this instance of circulating Coast Salish stories, storytelling is used as a way of calling attention to and teaching the language, bolstering the process of Lushootseed language reclamation.

As well as giving primacy to the Lushootseed language, *Lushootseed Texts* differs from *Haboo* in making a conscious attempt to represent the orality of LaMont's story as best as can be done using a print format. In the editor's introduction, Crisca Bierwert explains that the visual layout of the text on the pages has been intentionally formatted to visually demonstrate the aural patterns of the oral storytelling, so as to keep some of the beauty of this storytelling despite the immediacy of it being lost in the act of writing the oral tradition (Bierwert, *Lushootseed Texts*, 2). This goal is additionally reflected in making tapes available alongside the book so that the audience can hear Lamont's storytelling as well as reading it. Hess notes "Certainly students in the Lushootseed language classes at the University of Washington and the University of Victoria have found that listening to the tapes greatly enhanced their pleasure in studying this literature" (Bierwert, *Lushootseed Texts*, 7). Regrettably, I was unable to track down the recordings that were intended to accompany the text. I am sure that following along the text in synchronization with listening to the tapes makes it easier to recognize and appreciate the considerate aspect of the text layout that aims to visually imitate the patterning of the story's aural reception. Regardless, this attention to formatting is still evident in the use, for example, of varying lengths of indentation and spacing between words: "Aurally, [Lamont's] stories are as dense with language as the texts are dense with structure" (Bierwert, *Lushootseed Texts,* 34). This editing choice, that visually emulates oral storytelling, is another example of how the text strives to vividly represent the cultural context to which the stories belong.

Limitations and Possibilities

Bierwert offers her thoughts on writing the oral traditions, sharing hers and her colleague's wish to make the texts more broadly accessible through publication and confronting questions as to the problems of accessibility. She touches on the tension between wanting the volume to reach many different kinds of audiences, and being careful to not risk straying from the core of the stories, asking: "How do we cross the borders of translation and writing simultaneously, and for the first time in print, without diminishing the texts in an effort to make them accessible?" (Bierwert, *Lushootseed Texts*, 1). Bierwert claims that she and her colleagues have taken the view that the apparent contradictions of giving broad access to the stories and preserving their integrity can be reconciled by understanding that diverse readings of the stories give them vitality. She expresses her faith that the publication of the texts can serve to enhance "the diversity and richness of the traditions, drawing critical and appreciative attention to Lushootseed imagination and thought" (Bierwert, *Lushootseed Texts,* 1). The stories have taken on a new existence in every individual instance of their being shared and listened to in the long history of their oral transmission. By publishing the stories in a fashion that gives them an entirely new presentation and reception, Bierwert argues, the creators of *Lushootseed Texts* are not alienating the stories from their rich tradition, but uniquely participating in it.

Bierwert's optimistic perspective on the ability of print media to enrich the value of Lushootseed's oral customs rather than detract from them can be better understood in consideration of the viewpoint taken by Hilbert, in her interpretation of cultural teachings that have been passed down to her. In her preface to *Haboo* she claims:

> Our legends are like gems with many facets. They need to be read, savored, and reread from many angles. My elders never said to me, "This story carries such and such a meaning." I was expected to listen carefully and learn why the story was being told. Though guided, I was allowed the dignity of finding my own interpretation. (Hilbert, *Haboo*, ix)

This sentiment is echoed in her own introduction to *Lushootseed Texts*: "We listen and learn as our experience and maturity enable us" (Hilbert, *Lushootseed Texts*, 4). A meaningful understanding of the stories is not reserved for those with cultural background, and lacking this perspective will not mean that the stories are unintelligible. In fact, the stories lend themselves to being viewed from various diverse perspectives. Therefore, non-indigenous people may make legitimate meaning from the Lushootseed stories, as the way that the stories hold meaning and impart knowledge work for any story listener. The stories are shared under the understanding that they will speak for themselves and reveal what the listener needs to gain from them. Extending Lushootseed stories into new forms of expression that invite increasingly unique and wide-ranging perspectives is seen as supportive to the stories and not detrimental.

The oral-literate contradiction Bierwert responds to is raised by Archibald's book *Indigenous Storywork* with a retelling of the story "Coyote's Eyes," told and written by Terry Tafoya: In this story, the trickster figure Coyote ignores his teacher's instruction resulting in the loss of his eyes. Thanks to the generosity of Mouse and later Buffalo, who each gift him one of their own eyes, he regains sight, but this sight is imbalanced. Archibald uses the example of this story to articulate her own position; living by the teachings shared with her by her elders, and representing these teachings for others to learn from in an appropriate, responsible, and respectful way:

> Imagine that I am now the Coyote with the mismatched eyes, wandering around, wondering how I will get out of the predicament where the oral and literate worlds are in conflict. Instead of being self-absorbed in pity, I am lucky and encounter others who have traveled on the pathways of the oral traditions and who have shaped their understandings through a literate medium that is shaped by the framework and message of the oral ways. (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*, 13)

This perspective sees a hopefulness in the possibility of an honorable way to acknowledge, appreciate, and share the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing while taking traditional literature over the threshold of orality into the written format, in the following pages of *Indigenous Storywork* Archibald makes examples of the Indigenous creators that have achieved this.

On the other hand, Archibald expresses some apprehension about the ability of non-indigenous people to achieve a full and holistic understanding of Indigenous storytelling through written text, no matter how much background reading they are able to do. She makes an example of the Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer's co-edited text "*Haa tuwunaaga yis, for healing our spirit: Tlingit Oratory*" as a text that has successfully achieved transforming an Indigenous oral language into printed text in both the original language and English while "ensuring the accuracy of content and meaning from one language to another [and also maintaining] the spirit of the oral tradition" (30). Archibald acknowledges:

> The introductory ethnographic information [in Tlingit Oratory] helps the cultural "outsider" gain some contextual background to understanding the meanings in the Elder's orality. If one does not know the cultural values and "codes," then an understanding of the oral tradition may not occur. (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork,* 31)

However, she claims that there are undeniable limitations to ethnographic information, bringing in the perspective of other Indigenous writers who express skepticism concerning non-Native people's ability to truly understand and appreciate Indigenous literature. Archibald expresses a deep connection with their point of view, saying:

> My criticism of ethnography's limitations is not aimed at the ethnographer. My point is that, at most, the reader can glean an introduction to Aboriginal culture and oral tradition through ethnography, even if presented as well as that of the Dauenhauers. If one wants to gain an understanding of the oral tradition, she/he cannot be a passive observer or armchair reader. (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*, 31)

Archibald's hesitancy towards efforts to invoke the oral tradition in print representations of Indigenous stories ought not to be taken as argument against print circulation of Indigenous stories. She herself has made textual representations of Indigenous stories told orally in her book. It is important, however, to appreciate written language's limitations in conveying the beauty and cultural importance of the oral tradition. Print representation of Indigenous stories cannot adequately imitate their orality.

Hilbert is accepting towards the limitations of print media's circulation of Lushootseed stories. She notes in her preface to *Haboo* that some Elders would not wish to see their culture depart from its orality, and says that when the culture was solely oral, legends and other information were often recited and repeated. While many of the cultural practices surrounding storytelling are missing when the stories are transcribed from the oral tradition to text, Hilbert asserts these changes can be accepted in celebrating the adaptability of Lushootseed tradition as that which ensures its vitality: "Lushootseed has joined the computer age…My farsighted elders would be delighted to know that their centuries-old memories will have a new life thanks to another kind of memory storage" (Hilbert, *Haboo*, xvii). While honoring and including the perspective of Elders unwilling to see Lushootseed depart from its orality, Hilbert delights in facilitating new changes and developments for Lushootseed that reflect changes in the world at large, keeping the language and its stories and culture current, sustainable, and alive.

As two examples of print circulation of Lushootseed stories, which mark a significant initiating step in the modern circulation of Lushootseed, *Haboo* and *Lushootseed Texts* exemplify two very different approaches to representing the stories in a written and translated format. These contrasting approaches engage different, but equally important, kinds of cultural continuation for Lushootseed speaking people. *Haboo* translates and retells the stories with added descriptive writing, giving them a form reminiscent of the creative expression of the Western literary storytelling tradition. In embracing the adaptation of Lushootseed stories to the Western narrative style of written stories, Hilbert extends the reach of the stories and diversifies their audience, achieving important visibility for her people and their rich cultural history. She also adds description that teaches cultural knowledge relevant to the stories to support the memory of this knowledge. *Lushootseed Texts,* on the other hand, presents the stories in a textual fashion that corresponds to and represents their fundamental orality, whilst promoting the use of Lushootseed language and striving for direct accuracy of translation. It seeks to retain as much of the stories' original contexts as possible in text. Both books function to store, carry, and transmit cultural knowledge via storytelling, a long-practiced means of sharing teachings.

Lady Louse Lived in a Website

While my first chapter weighed the extent to which literacy is a credit to the vitality of Coast Salish culture and tradition in the instance of Vi Hilbert's *Haboo* and *Lushootseed Texts*, this second chapter will take a focus on websites as a medium for the transmission of Lushootseed stories and promotion of the continuity of Lushootseed culture. I will compare what websites are able to achieve as far as their proximity to Lushootseed customs of orality where the print medium has shortcomings. I will be drawing examples from indigenousstorywork.com, a website created by Archibald, the author of *Indigenous Storywork*, to serve as a resource for educators. This chapter will discuss how the website functions in the act of storytelling through an example of the story: "Lady Louse" as shared by Jo-ann Archibald in a video recording on her website. Throughout I will be making reference to some of the seven principles of storywork, as they are engaged by the website as a medium for transmission of stories.

Reciprocity is one of the seven storywork principles that Archibald lists as creating a framework for working with Indigenous traditional and life-experience stories. It is this practice of reciprocity that ensures continuation of stories and their teachings. In the first chapter of *Indigenous Storywork*, Archibald emphasizes the cultural importance of sharing, relaying that it is the responsibility of an individual that has come into a strong understanding and appreciation of a certain kind of knowledge to share it with others for the power of this knowledge to continue. The vitality of stories and the cultural wisdom they impart occurs because of a reciprocal process upheld by teacher-learner relationships. Archibald further explains that the teacher role is usually taken by an Elder, not because of their age, but because: "What one does with knowledge and the insight gained from knowledge are the criteria for being called an "Elder"" (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*, 3). Archibald's book ought to be interpreted as an enactment of this process of reciprocity, she claims: "My

personal experiences of learning about the nature of Indigenous stories, especially those of the Stó:lō and Coast Salish, and about their application to education - storywork - are what I have to give back" (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*, 3).

It is in this spirit that Archibald additionally created her website indigenousstorywork.com, the purpose of which is stated on the opening page as "to help educators learn about Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing, predominantly through Indigenous traditional and life-experience stories." This intention is expressed under the header "An Invitation," where Archibald includes a cultural introduction to herself and her work, as well as a warm welcome to visitors of the website. By nature of its accessibility, the website is immensely effective in carrying out a responsibility of sharing. It is available to any person with internet access, therefore educators seeking support with efforts to incorporate an Indigenous worldview in classroom contexts are easily able to locate resources and direction for integrating storywork into their curricula. Those who visit the website with the intent to implement storywork educationally take on the role of learner in this teaching relationship. Should they act the part of respectful and responsible story-listener, they in turn would show reciprocity by making use of the resources provided by the website to responsibly share Indigenous knowledge with students. The website removes the personal aspect of the cultural teacher-learner relationship, but broadens the scope of recipients that may benefit from the sharing of this kind of knowledge, most crucially young children.

Context

Due to the still felt aftermath of residential schools in Canada and boarding schools in the United States, many Indigenous children don't have the opportunity to receive their own cultural knowledge personally from culture bearing Elders. This colonial problem is exacerbated by the failure of current

educational systems to provide Indigenous students with an empowering education.

Archibald's interest in improving the quality of Indigenous education in schools for young children and future generations is what fundamentally started her on a journey of learning about and participating in storywork. As per custom when speaking at gatherings, Archibald introduces her kinship and speaks from her experience in the first chapter of her book. Here she shares background on her career in education, and the experiences and aspirations that led her to appreciate the concept of storywork. She cites working in curriculum development with Elders in her home area, the Stó:lō Nation, between 1976 and 1983, as a time during which she began to appreciate "the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical teachings that were embedded in the [First Nations cultural stories]" (Archibald, 4). In 1989 she enrolled in a PhD program at Simon Fraser University, while teaching with the Native Indian Teacher Education Program at the University of British Columbia:

> One educational goal that I had for my doctoral work was to find a way to fully examine Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous ways of knowing within academe. I also wanted to demonstrate that Indigenous knowledge systems could be investigated from an indigenous perspective with rigor acceptable to the academy. Along the way, I decided to focus on the topic of Indigenous stories, even though at the time I did not have a full appreciation of their power. (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*, 5)

Archibald's ambitions toward improving the quality of Indigenous education in schools, and the academic handling of Indigenous knowledge systems like storytelling, are bolstered by the memory of her own experiences as a child in which her native culture was unfortunately depicted inappropriately at school, causing feelings of shame and alienation. She shares: "I was drawn to developing better curricula about First Nations through teacher education and later as a teacher. I didn't want other First Nations children to suffer the same humiliation that I had experienced" (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork,* 86). The desire to improve the quality of Indigenous education in schools, therefore, is both what motivated Archibald to embark on a journey of story learning and what provides

her an avenue of carrying out the cultural responsibility of reciprocity, which she came to understand as a fundamental aspect of storywork as an Indigenous methodology. The responsible sharing of Indigenous stories and their teachings in academic settings is not only critical to educators dedicated to the improvement of Indigenous education in schools, but it is also a way to enact the kind of sharing already embedded in the cultural tradition itself for its necessity to the continuation of the power in storytelling.

Conscious of this context, we may understand that the website indigenousstorywork.com is a tool by which Archibald does her part as a culture bearing person and educator in the decolonization and Indigenization of education through storywork. The website features video recordings of Archibald giving talks on Indigenous stories, their frameworks, and how they may be included in the teaching practices of website-visitors. It also features an extensive list of resources such as recorded presentations, books and articles for further reading, and examples of curricula that bring storywork into the classroom, as well as an annotated bibliography of literature related to Indigenous Storywork. These can be found under the headers: "For Educators," and "Resources." All of the information and guidance provided on the website is grounded in teachings that Archibald has received from her Stó:lō and Coast Salish Elders during her research into Indigenous stories.

A page headed "Elders Teachings" introduces two of these Elders, Vincent Stogan, and Vi Hilbert, and the valuable things that they shared with Archibald in her time learning from them. It is in this section of the website that Archibald shares Hilbert's story of Lady Louse. Before this though, Archibald retells a teaching of Elder Vincent Stogan: "Hands back… Hands forward." She shares that at gatherings, Stogan would have people join hands in a circle with their left palms facing up, representing reaching back to receive traditional knowledge and ways of being from those who have come before, and their right palms facing down, to show an extension forward, passing this inheritance to the future. The circle of joined hands symbolizes the value of these responsibilities in the strong connections that they form. In summary, this teaching encourages a practice to listen and learn faithfully from predecessors, to bring their knowledge into daily life, and then share that knowledge in turn with others, in particular

the younger generation. This practice is how the vitality of Coast Salish Indigenous culture is sustained. It is what has guided Vi Hilbert, and her students and descendants, to utilize the modes of transmission considered in this thesis for the circulation of Lushootseed stories today.

Becoming Story Ready

Below Vince Stogan's teaching is a video of Archibald reciting "The Story of Lady Louse," which she learned from Vi Hilbert. Having the video recording preceded by Stogan's teaching visually influences the website-visitor to listen to the story with awareness that it carries forth knowledge that Archibald received from Hilbert, her Elder and teacher, and is accordingly sharing to others in order for the power of the story and the teachings it carries to continue. The text above the video reads: "How better to think about Indigenous Storywork than by using a story" prompting listeners to attentively look out for what the story teaches about storywork.

"Lady Louse" is a very short 10-line story that comes firstly from Elizabeth Krise at Tulalip. Linguist Thomas Hess recorded Mrs. Krise telling this story in Lushootseed in 1962, during which time he was working with her to research the language. Hess later shared the recording with Vi Hilbert, who adopted the "Lady Louse" story as a favorite of her own. Hilbert told the story often, sharing it around the world, here is the story in her words in English:

Lady Louse lived there
In a great, big house
All by herself.
She had no friends or relatives.
So she took it,
And she swept it,
This great big house.
There was lots of dirt!
When she got to the very middle of the house, she got lost.

And that was the end of Lady Louse,
And that is the end of the ten-line story.[3]

During Hilbert's time teaching at the University of Washington, she used this story to teach her language as well as to assist her students in making meaning from Lushootseed stories. Hilbert had her students create their own Lady Louse stories to strengthen their understanding of, and engagement with the stories. She asked her family and friends to do so also, keeping a collection of all the many individual iterations of this story. In 1996, all the "Lady Louse" stories written under Hilbert's direction were published under the title "Lady Louse Lived There." The book contains versions such as

Lady Louse was a sponge.
One day she got self absorbed. (*Lady Louse Lived There*, 5)

and

Lady Louse was a college student.
Lady Louse had to tell a story in class.
She thought about ideas for this story.
She thought and thought.
Since the story would be heard by all the students,
She wanted to think of a good idea.
She thought so much about the story,
She became lost in the world of perfect ideas and perfect words.
That was the end of Lady Louse. (*Lady Louse Lived There*, 69)

I personally encountered the story of Lady Louse early in my research of Hilbert and Lushootseed stories for this thesis, but it was not until I later came upon Archibald's telling of the story, on the Indigenous Storywork website, that my curiosity about this particular story swelled. I understood that something about the tale of Lady Louse clearly lent it to being a useful story for teaching about Lushootseed stories, for it was seen both by Hilbert and Archibald to

[3] A video recording of Vi Hilbert telling the story of Lady Louse, first in the original Lushootseed and then in English, can be found in the Vi Hilbert Collections on the University of Washington Library website: ia902506.us.archive.org/4/items/wauem_vi-hilbert_voices-of-the-first-people-av/2005-1.1538LL.mp4

communicate an aspect of Coast Salish culture that was important for working with Indigenous stories. But apart from the briefness of the story and the open-ended ambiguity of it, I remained unclear on why it has been favored by both of these culture-bearing teachers. I spent much time perplexed by it.

I interpreted the story, at first, to be a kind of cautionary tale advising listeners against losing sense of their sense of self in the frenzy of life's activities and tasks. While I thought this a valuable reminder, I still felt that my sense of the story was incomplete. Eventually I bought the book *Lady Louse Lived There* and I flipped through her many iterations, some humorous, some dark. I was interested in all the many wildly different directions people had taken the assignment, for it demonstrated what I had learned about Lushootseed stories not having one correct meaning. Getting to see plainly the way people's own experience and personality created what they took from the story showed me the story's kaleidoscopic quality. But I felt compelled to find a thread through them. I felt that understanding what made all of them "Lady Louse" stories, would answer my questions regarding what was important about the story of Lady Louse to teaching, and help me to arrive at my own more compelling meaning of the story of Lady Louse.

I told the story to my roommate and invited him to help me in coming up with our own "Lady Louse" story. I was surprised by how difficult we found it to come up with one we liked. We were trying to work out what ought to stay true to the original story and what was up to our own creativity, finding ourselves stumped by the lack of boundaries. We didn't come up with our own story that day, but later as I was falling asleep, I wrote a response that resulted from my deliberation on the story and its recreations:

Lady Louse lived there
In that curious puzzled mind
Who knows about her friends or relatives.
And so she took what?
And she swept what?
In how many minds?
There's a lot of something
She's always in the middle

But there's no end of Lady Louse.

That's all.

This response encapsulates my intrigue and puzzlement with the story. At first, I experienced Lady Louse settling in my mind and creating a persistent itch as I tried to find the 'point' of her. All the different versions of her story, and my flimsy ideas about what connected them all, overwhelmed me into creating an ever more confusing muddle. I found myself impossibly far from pinning down the meaning I was searching for. I then began to see myself, in this seemingly futile occupation, as the same as Lady Louse sweeping up the dust. I considered that my individual approach to making meaning from the story was causing me to feel lost. I had taken a critical approach to try and understand the purpose of this story.

Reflecting on the confusion I had landed myself in allowed me to distance myself as a critic and a reader and begin to view myself as a subject of the story. The value in the story of Lady Louse then began to become apparent to me. In a talk given for the "Learning with Syeyutsus Speaker Series," of which a video recording can be found at the top of the website's list of resources, Archibald once again shares the Lady Louse story. Afterwards she says:

> Sometimes, some of our stories are like that. They just stop at a certain point, they may seem to end abruptly. But at that point, that's a signal for those who are listening to become part of the story, to start to think about, to maybe empathize with a character, maybe they'll think about some problem they might have that has come about because something in the story sparked that idea. (Archibald, "Learning with Syeyutsus Speaker Series")

She argues that this is a form of "inclusive, quality education." This account of how meaning can be derived from Indigenous Stories gave me confidence in my developing understanding of Lady Louse and what this particular story had to teach me about Lushootseed literature. As I broadened my perspective, I saw that my identification with Lady Louse invited me to look reflectively at the assumptions I held going into interpretation. I stopped looking at the story as a self-contained object of study, and instead considered what I could learn from the life that the story had taken on. I took delight in sharing this story with

anybody who was interested, and in finding it to inspire an array of different reactions. This practice shifted my relationship to the story from one of running around in circles to one of continually learning anew.

Having this experience of working with the story of Lady Louse deepened my appreciation of why Lushootseed storytellers refrain from explaining the meaning of a story, understanding that the listener's experience will determine and reveal what meaning that the story holds for them at that time. I was reminded of Vi Hilbert's introduction to *Haboo*, where she describes Indigenous stories as being "like gems with many facets," and appreciates having been "allowed the dignity of finding [her] own interpretation" (Hilbert, *Haboo*, ix). In this sense, stories have their own agency. Their power to draw out knowledge in the listener is continually re-established by repetition and retellings. Considering the collective engagement of a diverse audience with the story of Lady Louse taught me much more about Lushootseed storytelling than I could have learned from the story alone. These reflections elucidated to me why this short story was so favored by Hilbert, and why Archibald follows in her example, choosing this story as a demonstration for understanding Indigenous Storywork.

This kind of agency that belongs to Indigenous stories is articulated in Archibald's book in Chapter Four: The Power of Stories to Educate the Heart. In this chapter, Archibald shares her own life experience story about how she learned to become a beginning storyteller. A few pages are dedicated to her reflection on the memory of telling the story "The Bird in the Tree" to a small group of students during her time for the Native Indian Teacher Education Program at the University of British Columbia, she claims: "This session was my first powerful emotional healing experience with story, where the story took on a "life" and became the teacher" (Archibald, 95). Because of this experience's importance to Archibald, she asked the seminar's instructor Sheila TeHenneppe and two of the participants in that session, Floy Pepper and Shirley Sterling, for their reflections on the power of story, and their experience of that particular session. Two of these reflections include the view that what Archibald terms "the power of story" is the story having its own life. Shirley Sterling shared: "the story takes on a life of its own and it travels from person to person and it … takes a different shape, but there's something that's the same" (Archibald, *Indigenous*

Storywork, 97). This living nature of Indigenous stories is captured in the example of Lady Louse. All the iterations of the story held in the book "Lady Louse Lived There," and the version that Archibald shares on her website, have sprung from the same source, the ten-line story Vi Hilbert adopted from Elizabeth Krise. With this in common, they diverge, being born out of a blending of the original story, and something unique and individual to the listeners that the story brought out. Archibald claims that the "life" Shirley spoke of "derives from a story's core values, or teachings, which keep the story going and useful to people" (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork,* 97).

The "core" of a story is an important concept that Archibald learned about from her Elder Dr Ellen White. Ellen White expressed the importance of beginning with the core of a story as a starting point for learning via the example of a tree: "we might get stuck on how beautiful the tree is, or a flower, but we don't understand what makes that tree or that flower grow, what makes their stem or their trunk strong." Archibald suggests this core "can be the core values of the story, or it might be how the story is used in a particular context" (Archibald, "Learning with Syeyutsus Speaker Series"). The "core" of the story of Lady Louse pertains to the way that both Vi Hilbert and Jo-ann Archibald have shared it in an introductory teaching context. The story might be seen as a portal into Lushootseed thought and engaging with Indigenous stories. Hilbert was dedicated to the documentation and teaching of her people's language and stories. She wanted many people across the world to have the chance to learn about Lushootseed literature. That she was so fond of telling this story reflects its value to getting people to engage with stories differently from how they might be used to, and to gain practice in an approach that is more suited to Lushootseed stories. Archibald also uses the story in a context of getting people to think about how to think about Indigenous stories. It is a story that can help listeners to become "story-ready," a required prerequisite to working with Indigenous stories[4]. Additionally, the values of community, and patience can be

[4] The criteria for becoming "story-ready" is explained in video-recorded presentation given by Q'um Q'um Xiiem, Jo-ann Archibald on the page of her website titled "On Becoming Story Ready," which can be found under the the "For Educators" section of the website menu.

thought of as being at the core of this story, and part of what keeps it continually alive.

Situating the Story

In Archibald's telling of the story of Lady Louse, the knowledge and understanding conveyed by the story pertains not only to the story itself but also in large part to the way that the story is told. This does not refer only to Archibald's personal touch on the wording of the story, but to the online context her retelling is embedded in. Archibald claims that: "In Stó:lō and Coast Salish cultures, the power of storywork to make meaning derives from a synergy between the story, the context in which the story is used, the way that the story is told, and how one listens to the story" (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*, 84). In this case, the medium of the website interacts interestingly with the indigenous concept of synergy, a critical principle of storywork. Firstly, by preceding the story with Vince Stogan's "Hands forward hands back" teaching, the website situates the story in an Indigenous practice of reciprocity, and cultural continuity. In the video recording itself, Archibald attributes the story to her Elder Vi Hilbert from Upper Skagit, who she shares was her own teacher and was dedicated to the documentation of her culture's Lushootseed language and stories. In this way, the structuring of the website contributes to the website-visitors' preparedness to listen to the story of Lady Louse in a certain way. The listener is encouraged to consider themself, by action of their listening, the recipient of cultural knowledge. This prevents them from the possible presumption that the story itself is arbitrary, and encourages them to consider instead that the story conveys something of northwest Indigenous culture deemed valuable to the practice of storytelling, and worth sharing. This context elicits recognition of the value in the story, even if the sense in the story is not initially apparent. Because of this, the listener is more likely to engage with the story with the storywork principles of Respect and Reverence.

The website factors into both the way that the story is told and the way that the story is listened to. It is designed with careful consideration of the way that these things synergistically combine with the story to make meaning, as per the nature of storywork. The meaning that the story listeners arrive at is created synergistically between the story itself, and the context (the website itself, the video, Archibald's occasion of sharing it). For example, the way that website-visitors listen to the story is prompted and guided by suggestions made in the text of the website. In this regard the website as a medium of transmission contributes to synergy, a critical principle of indigenous storywork.

The context in which Archibald uses the story of Lady Louse is a context of teaching by example. She teaches with the story of Lady Louse to demonstrate to educators how they too can teach with story. A series of bullet-style notes positioned above the video explain that the video is composed of two parts, the storytelling takes up the first couple minutes of the video, and the remainder of the video provides an example of a possible interpretation of the story (with clarification given to the fact that this is one of many possible interpretations). In a teaching setting, Archibald would have stopped after the first part of the video, and had students engage their imaginations to think about and share their own ideas about what the story means, rather than listen only to the storyteller's interpretation. For this reason, the listener is invited to pause after the first part of the video and reflect on their own interpretation of the story, before resuming to watch the second part. A note below the video points out that there are two types of learning possible from the example of Indigenous Storywork shown in the video

> First, there are the lesson(s) suggested by the specific story. In this case the lessons we might learn from Lady Louse. And second, there are the lessons/skills being implied by the approach used by the storyteller. In this case the lessons about cultural practices that can be learned from the way Jo-Ann tells the story.

Archibald retells the story in significantly greater detail than featured in the original ten-line story. For example, the "great big house" Lady Louse finds herself in, in this version, is a Coast Salish Longhouse, of the kind that people

along the northwest coast lived in long ago. The Longhouse has gone many years without being cared for, and Lady Louse sets about sweeping it and fixing it up in preparation to bring back the cultural gatherings and ceremonies that were once held in the Longhouse. Some of the different types of gatherings that Lady Louse remembers being celebrated in the Longhouse are named in Archibald's retelling of the story, creating a lesson in Coast Salish history and culture.

Archibald's retelling of the story of Lady Louse reflects her own positionality. Similarly to how Lady Louse endeavors to restore her community's Longhouse, and the cultural vitality sustained by it, Archibald herself is taking part in an ongoing revitalization of Coast Salish stories and storytelling. In her interpretation of the story, the dust that Lady Louse cleans pertains metaphorically to the impact of colonization that covers Indigenous knowledge and stories, and may obscure steps to reestablish Indigenous ways of being.

At the bottom of the page "For Educators," there is another video, in which Archibald shares her perspective on the educational significance of Indigenous Storywork, and how educators might engage with the seven storywork principals. When elucidating what the principle of Responsibility could mean and look like, she suggests taking time to develop positive working relationships with Indigenous community members. She encourages understanding that working with Indigenous stories means working with local Indigenous people, and being open to learning about colonial history, and the impact that this has had on all people. In the northwest, the most fundamental aspects of Indigenous culture were prohibited by law, including speaking Indigenous languages. During this time, Archibald explains that the Elders gently phrased that the stories were "put to sleep" (Archibald, "Jo-ann Archibald on Indigenous Storytelling"). A thoughtful understanding of this colonial history leads to recognition of the context in which this history places the present day. Now, Indigenous culture is being revitalized, and the stories reawakened with the knowledge they transmit. This is a continual process that takes time and care. The stories that were once told in their original language have been translated into English, and have also been adapted from their oral origins to written and, increasingly, multimedia forms so as to be accessible today. As Archibald devotes her work to the revitalization of Indigenous culture through

demonstrating how Indigenous Storywork has application to education, she calls for educators to show responsibility by being mindful of this context, and appreciating the revitalization process occurring when Indigenous stories are used in the classroom. Practicing the storywork principals or Respect and Responsibility collectively is crucial to clearing this "colonial dust."

An important concern related to this process of cultural revitalization and reawakening of Indigenous stories is keeping the spirit of a story alive. The question of how to go about this is raised in *Indigenous Storywork*, and Archibald's approach to it reveals matters that she was conscious and considerate of in her creation of indigenousstorywork.com. Many feel that the life force of a story exists largely in the oral performance and aural reception of it, which rely on the interpersonal interaction between storyteller and story-listener. These aspects of storytelling are not transferable to print form, and are changed significantly in digital/video form. It is widely held, therefore, that transmitting a story in these ways diminishes its spirit. Archibald acknowledges that hearing stories told by Elders and storytellers develops reverence for the stories. She sees that "It is this reverence for Elders, for story, and for Aboriginal knowledge that creates the disappointment, but it also creates an opportunity to activate a story's life force" (Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*, 148). She acknowledges the trust her Elders placed in her with their knowledge of storytelling, and her responsibility as a contemporary Indigenous educator and storyteller. The placement of this kind of trust raises the stakes of Archibald's responsibility, but it also reflects that she has been deemed culturally worthy and capable of handling this kind of responsibility, by merit of the understanding and true respect that she has shown for cultural tradition and protocol. In affirmation of the ethos with which her Elders passed on their cultural knowledge to her, Archibald looks to the benefit of children and future generations as a guiding objective toward which to think about these concerns.

This kind of trust and approval given by Elders is good assurance that in cases where Archibald has made use of the print form or multimedia to represent a story she has likely done so in a culturally appropriate way and with sincere effort to keep the spirit of the story alive. Contemporary Indigenous culture bearers are tasked with balancing a responsibility to the children of today and

future generations navigating fast paced modern lives, and a responsibility to their Elders and ancestors to stay true to the teachings and the culture they practiced. The vitality of Indigenous storytelling and cultural knowledge lies importantly in the ability to assert a place for Indigenous Storywork in an increasingly technological world. Archibald's website promisingly exemplifies the possibility of this. Perhaps, as far as the story itself can be considered living and agentic, there is reason to feel optimistic that the spirit of a story is not entirely obsolete when these formats are utilized for storytelling, but naturally different and maybe more elusive and fickle. Today, Indigenous as stories are increasingly encountered in print form and digital/video form, it is vital to recognize that these representations of stories may save them from being lost to history, but they cannot replace oral storytelling. The best way for the spirit of stories to be kept alive remains in stories being recounted for listeners by a skilled storyteller

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Sasha taqʷšəblu LaPointe's Ancestral Autobiography

Early in the process of researching for this thesis, I went out for lunch in Seattle with SiSwinKlae. We ate at a restaurant near the train station before my departure back to Portland, and we discussed some of the ideas I had about how Indigenous stories and their preservation and transmission can enact a resistance to colonization. With her permission I recorded the conversation on my phone. We discussed the history of relationships between non-Native academics and Indigenous people that have, in some cases, perpetuated colonial harm and misunderstandings. We also talked about how some Indigenous leaders have embraced culturally untraditional tools to sustain their culture. I mentioned Susie Sampson Peter referring to the tape recorder as "a different canoe." SiSwinKlae shared with me that people now generally accept the internet and writing things down, but she has some Elders who would not change anything, mentioning for example her Grandma Ivy:

> The oral culture was within her and she wasn't changing it, she just simply wasn't gonna do it. But she did also support Auntie Vi in making that transition because of the future generations, you know, it had to be done. So I think one of the hopes would be that this is going to be a vessel or a canoe that takes [the culture] to the next generation, otherwise it'd be lost, or you know, go to sleep, but this will keep it alive and hopefully return to becoming much more oral tradition again. (SiSwinKlae)

I expressed my intention to engage with the texts I was researching for this thesis in a manner that was respectful to the culture-continuing goals of those who have embraced the print form. SiSwinKlae encouraged my thinking that part of this required refraining from handling the stories as objects of study, allowing the stories instead to shape my perspective and impart meaning on their own terms, rather than taking a critical perspective on them. Additionally, she emphasized that people need to discontinue associating Native people and

culture with the past. She advocated for a focus to be taken on the experience of Native people living today. As an example of storytelling that does this she mentioned the Hulu series Rez Dogz, a contemporary version of Indigenous storytelling: "Having lived on a reservation and [going] to the reservation often, it's very accurate in its depiction. It's a fictional story, but really accurate to what people go through and what life is like" (SiSwinKlae). Successful resistance to colonization requires visibility of the fact that Native people still exist, still practice their culture and still work for their rights.

With recognition of the importance of centering contemporary stories in a discussion of storytelling's role in resistance to the cultural annihilation of colonization, I am turning attention in this final chapter to Sasha taqʷšəblu LaPointe's accomplished *Red Paint: The Ancestral Autobiography of a Coast Salish Punk.* The author of this autobiography is the great granddaughter and namesake of Vi Hilbert. LaPointe's own contemporary storytelling pays homage to Hilbert's life's work of revitalizing Lushootseed and continues her documentation of her culture's stories. LaPointe's *Red Paint* tells the story of how a creative nonfiction class assignment instructing students to write a personal essay on their most traumatic memories led LaPointe to face a life changing head on confrontation with repressed traumas. She wrote her assignment on the memory of being assaulted by a trusted adult at a young age, after which she spent her teenage years running away from home. Her instructor took time to check in with LaPointe in response to the assignment, and also advised her to dig deeper into this memory, encouraging her that by using her creative skill with language to tell her own personal story, she would unlock her most powerful writing. The essay, which she calls "Little Boats" (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint,* 52) evolved to become LaPointe's MFA thesis as, "determined to wrestle her demons into art," (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 52) she chose to pursue a master's program with the Institute of American Indian Arts. This thesis furthermore became an idea for her first book. While the work unearthed a magnitude of distressing memories and feelings, it also propelled LaPointe into a thorough research of the lives of her ancestors, fostering a feeling of connectedness and solidarity with her forbearers that proved immensely strengthening and profoundly healing.

This chapter looks to LaPointe's autobiography as an example of the current generation of Indigenous cultural continuance and resistance to colonization through story. I argue that, in the autobiography, we are able to see how the "canoes" entrusted by LaPointe's ancestors have dutifully carried their culture forth to LaPointe's benefit. She comes into a stronger, happier, and more successful version of herself upon nurturing her connection to her heritage and practicing her culture, while referencing books and documents that have been fundamental to this. I also argue that LaPointe's cultural practice, as presented in her writing, is not by any means a performative imitation of her forbear's practices, but rather stands as proof that authentic Coast Salish traditions and culture are very much alive today and compatible with her millennial lifestyle. Following in the example of her forbearers, she claims typically "Western" practices for her own, seeing how they can be conducive to expressing her Coast Salish identity in a culturally uplifting and empowering way. These practices include, for example, performing as a punk musician in a ceremonial manner, and writing an autobiography that sensitively represents her culture. The very title of LaPointe's text: "*Red Paint: An Ancestral Autobiography of A Coast Salish Punk*" performs an impacting declaration of its content. Starting with "*Red Paint*," and then breaking down the subheading "*An Ancestral Autobiography of a Coast Salish Punk*," this chapter will examine LaPointe's wording of her title as points of entry for discussing the central themes and the importance of the text as a whole.

Red Paint

Out of respect, LaPointe remains purposefully vague throughout her narrative regarding the specifics of cultural teachings and spiritual beliefs pertaining to the Coast Salish wearing of red paint. What she does express, clearly and with delicacy, is that the practice is deeply sacred and important to healing. LaPointe's autobiography is foremost a story of healing. It convincingly illustrates that in order to experience the healing necessary in her own life, she

had to delve into a full understanding of what healing means and entails specifically within her familial and cultural context. The autobiography's prologue, "Winter Dances," provides a brief contextual history on the traditional ways of life of her Coast Salish ancestors. She describes how the spiritual ceremonies that were once openly practiced by Coast Salish people came to be very private after they were banned and forced underground. LaPointe explains that she will not be telling the story of what happens in the longhouse, as she has been taught by her mother the proper conduct for honoring the ceremonies and her elder's wishes. She expresses that, coming from a long line of Salish medicine workers, she respects this privacy, continuing to claim:

> What happens in the longhouse is not what this story is about, but this is a story about healing. This is a story about what I've learned from my ancestors. My ancestors participated in the winter dances. They wore red paint. (LaPointe, S., Red Paint, 8)

This shows an apt awareness on LaPointe's part for what should and should not be included in an Indigenous story written for the public domain. She finds an ability to express the ways in which young Coast Salish people are still learning and practicing their traditional spirituality to bring visibility to the liveliness of Coast Salish culture without changing the culture dishonorably by disclosing sacred details.

Not only does her autobiography narrate the journey through which LaPointe has drawn the strength to heal from traumas faced in her own life, the text is utilized to enact this very healing itself. In crafting and sharing this masterful story, that is at once incredibly personal and simultaneously collective, LaPointe conducts a healing ceremony of her own. She finds her voice and uses it to beautifully express the liveliness of her Coast Salish identity. The title's first two words "*Red Paint*" are therefore an apt indication of the spiritual importance and culturally anchored content of the text. The story is also about how LaPointe has learned how to connect with her culture in an authentic way.

The autobiography starts with the chapter "hədiw" (Lushootseed for "come in"), which marks the beginning of her pursuit for membership and belonging in her community. In this chapter, LaPointe visits the small old house in Tacoma that her parents live in and has been in her family for generations. It is

in this same house that Vi Hilbert's notable aunt Susie Sampson Peter once lived. In Hilbert's *Haboo,* Aunt Susie is introduced as one of the storytellers to have contributed to the collection. Here, Hilbert shares a poignant story from when her aunt was totally blind, and living in this house in Tacoma with her son:

> Susie's bedroom was next to the kitchen and every day Cecelia could hear her telling legends to herself, while sitting alone. One day, she began a story but stopped after a few sentences, saying "Oh no, I told that one yesterday." (Hilbert, *Haboo*, xiv)

LaPointe herself mentions having been told by her parents that, in her last days, Aunt Susie used to sit alone telling herself stories in Lushootseed, and remarks that "Some houses are haunted by ghosts. Our house hangs on to words and stories" (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint,* 11). She describes feeling the hairs on her arm stand up anytime she passes the part of the house that was once Aunt Susie's bedroom. LaPointe was visiting her parents' house with a careful purpose, to seek their permission to wear the red paint. She remembers: "I was cautious and slow in my asking. I knew that it was ceremony I was asking for, something sacred." (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint,* 11). The chapter closes ambiguously with the scene of her mother silently rising from the table and disappearing downstairs and her father sitting quietly across from her.

The narrative then picks up with an artful recount of the complex events which led up to this particular visit, and the momentous request that gave occasion for it. Whilst working on her undergraduate studies, and then her MFA, LaPointe details having had to navigate a short-lived marriage and relationship difficulties. After the dissolution of her marriage, she continues with her graduate studies, and with an intense journey of emotional recovery involving an investigation of both her family's history and her own personal past. Her attempts to reconnect with her younger self lead to a rekindling companionship with a dear friend she dated as a teenager, all whilst moving between temporary accommodation provided by friends. This is until an unexpected pregnancy ignites a brilliant ray of hope and joy in her life and prompts her to secure a permanent home for herself. She writes: "I still had not found my footing through the divorce, or finished my MFA, or had one single sliver of direction, but I knew this. I knew I was going to have this baby, and I dreamt she'd be a

girl" (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 142). With serendipitous timing, while in the midst of overwhelmed searching for a more suitable living situation, LaPointe learns surprisingly of a plot of land left to her by her great grandmother. She becomes aware of this inheritance only when contacted by a woman from the Lummi tribe that the tribe wished to buy the land back. She agrees to sell the land to Lummi, and with this money is able to purchase the house that her paternal grandmother was selling in Tacoma. With that, for the first time in her life, LaPointe had a permanent home and a place to raise her daughter. Sadly, not long after moving in, she suffers a devastating miscarriage that plummets her into a deep depression. The remainder of the autobiography concerns the steps she had to take to emotionally recuperate from the taxing emotional distress of unearthed memories, increased awareness of generational trauma that continues to affect her, the conflicted trickiness of two important relationships, and the loss of her unborn daughter.

We return to scene of the first chapter, in the small, old home of LaPointe's parents, in the autobiography's final chapter "hədiw II," now with a clear understanding of her important reason for being there. Upon her return to the table from downstairs, LaPointe's mother presents her with the gifts of a bag of cedar shavings and a small chunk of red clay and said, with gentle emotion, "I've been waiting a long time to give this to you" (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 208). We learn in the following epilogue that the red paint has come from the creek off the Skagit river where LaPointe's ancestors bathed in ritual, and where she too practiced ritual bathing to lift herself out of the depression brought on by her miscarriage. The cedar shavings are from a carved statue of Ko Kwal Alwoot, the Maiden of Deception Pass, which had been LaPointe's favorite Salish story as a child. These were originally gifted to her great-grandmother on the day of the statue's unveiling. Their symbolization of strength to LaPointe is three-fold; they embody the strength of her great-grandmother, the strength of cedar bark (which can bend without breaking), and the strength of Ko Kwal Alwoot, the heroic protagonist of her favorite story. These gifts mark an affirmation of LaPointe's connectedness to her ancestral strength and her cultural readiness to wear the red paint.

In "hədiw II," LaPointe admits to having made an insulting transgression years ago when she first asked her mother for permission to wear the red paint. She had asked to wear it at a pride parade where they marched with the Two Spirit flag; "Some of the other people who marched with us wore their regalia; I thought it might be appropriate. It wasn't" (208). Her mother scolded her, then, that the red paint was not an adornment. On this occasion, the difference in her mother's response to her daughter's request conveys her proud recognition that LaPointe has this time made herself culturally ready to receive such a gift and wear the red paint responsibly.

An Ancestral Autobiography

Beyond "*Red Paint*," LaPointe specifies that hers is "*An Ancestral Autobiography*." This statement invokes her familial heritage which lies at the heart of the story. It encourages readers to see that her autobiography is not only the story of her life, but is a written part of the much longer story of hers and her ancestors' interwoven lives and experiences. The words "*Ancestral Autobiography*" connote LaPointe's ancestors' legacy of resilience, their survival and resilience, the tradition of storytelling that they practiced, and from which her own writing is drawn, and ideas of home. Dispersed throughout the text, select chapters depart from the otherwise chronological narrative of LaPointe's own experiences. These chapters transport readers back to the early 1800s, narrating scenes in her ancestor Comptia's life. Here, she documents stories about Comptia that have been orally passed down to her by the women in her family. They narrate Comptia's view of the arrival of European ships on the shores of her land, and the record of her sole survival of the smallpox epidemic that afflicted her community and took the lives of her family. This structuring of the autobiography disturbs temporality, Comptia's life is not presented as wholly historical, her experience is instead portrayed as ongoing and embedded in that of her 21st century descendent.

LaPointe also threads details of her great grandmother Vi Hilbert's life into her storytelling. The entire narrative is preceded with a short teaching of Hilbert's, written both in her own Lushootseed words and in an English translation made by Zalmai ʔəswəli Zahir. The teaching advises that, so as not to break, one must learn to be flexible and pliable like cedar. It is a suitable teaching with which to introduce the narrative, that represents resilience in terms of LaPointe's personal life, the women in her family, and her culture as a whole. This adaptability is evident in the attitude Hilbert has taken toward ensuring the longevity of her culture, which, as I discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, increasingly meant reliance on the print medium as a new kind of memory storage. As readers learn more about some of the darker periods survived by Hilbert in her personal life through LaPointe's story, it is apparent that the ability to bend without breaking, like cedar, has also been critical to the strength of her character overall. LaPointe shares what her mother has told her about some of the most painful events in her great grandmother's life as they parallel her own difficult experiences. She expresses their shared grief. But the inclusion of these hardships is not for the sake of eliciting sympathy or to portray their story as a tragedy. LaPointe celebrates the strengths and achievements of this matriarch, and her authentic depiction of the heartbreaks Hilbert has suffered is included as testimony to her personal power. This personal power is one she sees as attributable to an innate gift for spiritual healing belonging to all the women in her family, that she has had to discover how to awaken in herself.

In documenting her ancestors' lives and legacies, and communicating the strengthening impact that their stories have had on her own life, LaPointe's autobiography evidences the fact that personal wellness and cultural vitality are related efforts. It is from their Coast Salish culture, its teachings, stories, and spiritual practices, that the women of LaPointe's family derive their ability to heal. LaPointe could not recognize this ability in herself until she turned to her forbears, and learned her culture from them. Reciprocally, the health and spiritedness of this family is a reinforcement that keeps the culture itself sustained. Hilbert's work in documenting Lushootseed language and stories, for example, was a major progression in bridging Coast Salish culture and the

literate tradition, largely paving the way for LaPointe to participate in both at once so organically. LaPointe's ancestors' stories are integral both to her identity, and to the text. She uses the word "*Ancestral*" to mark her work as a continuation of a family legacy of Lushootseed storytelling.

The word "*ancestral*" also conjures ideas of home. The northwest coast is a place to which LaPointe is forever tethered through her family's long history there. Home, and homelessness, are pervading themes throughout the text. It takes an exploration of what these terms have meant to LaPointe over the course of her life, as well as what they may have meant to her ancestors. In childhood LaPointe's family moved around a lot. Having her idea of home disrupted early in life resulted in a persistent search for permanence. On page 19, she shares about her great-grandmother's similarly nomadic childhood, remembering her smiling to talk about it, even when recalling nights spent in shacks and on dirt floors. She writes that Hilbert spoke warmly of her mother's traveling with a "rolled up piece of linoleum," (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 19) which she'd lay down and create home wherever they were. This uplifting anecdote is returned to several times over the course of the narrative. LaPointe uses "linoleum" as a metaphor representing anything permanent that can guarantee a sense of home wherever one finds oneself. She sees it, for example, in the relics with which she adorned the rooms she occupied as she grew into adulthood (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 25), in her marriage (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 26), and in furniture (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 155). "Linoleum" has become for LaPointe synonymous with safety and security. Her use of the term expresses how, in her life, these things derive their meaning from her ancestors' experiences and their adaptability and resilience.

LaPointe's fragile sense of home may seem ironic considering her ancestral connection to the mountains, forests, and waterways of the northwest coast. However, her upbringing having taken place on a reservation has caused her to directly correlate her own homelessness and her ancestors' dispossession by the US government. She tells *The Seattle Times*: "I saw similarities between the displacement of my Coast Salish ancestors, and the displacement of me" (LaPointe, S., *Seattle Times*). While readers see that she still lives, works, and plays on her ancestral lands, her experience of them is pervaded by the painful

knowledge that they have been stolen. In one chapter of *Red Paint*, she writes about the experience of revisiting her childhood home years later. This trailer on the Swinomish reservation was a scene of many distant memories, she found it fallen into neglect and consumed in plant life. On her drive back to Seattle she wonders what a permanent home would look like and whether she'd even recognize it, claiming:

> Reservations should not have been a permanent home. Like trailers, like campgrounds, like prisons or hospitals, they felt temporary, like some place you go between places. I realized I wasn't sure what permanence looked like, because we weren't meant to survive. My family, my tribe, my ancestors, we were something temporary to the settlers. Something that would eventually go away. Whether by disease or alcohol or poverty, our genocide was inevitable for them. (*LaPointe, S., Red Paint,* 84)

In the *Seattle Times* interview, she considers her ancestors' relationship to their land and resources, how they must have considered this a permanent thing, and how disrupted and drastically changed it was when they were relocated. LaPointe's writing is imbued with her haunting mindfulness of this history, and the disconcerting sense that her own presence, a Coast Salish woman of her time, had been unforeseen, even designed against.

By the end of the text, a persistent feeling of unsettlement that has followed LaPointe in life has begun to be soothed by ancestral connection. She finds herself at last in a permanent home, the house she buys from her grandmother. When far along enough in her recovery from her miscarriage to feel ready to celebrate, she throws a housewarming party. She shares a moment of reflection she has on this day, on the healing she is doing and how far she has already come from having once been "so evasive, so afraid," writing:

> I had spent my life until this point in search of a permanent home. I looked for it in abandoned buildings, in friends and lovers, I looked for it in pills and alcohol. I looked for it in a marriage neither Brandon nor I had been ready for. (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 186)

The fruitlessness of these prior attempts at securing the "permanent home" she felt she needed is indicative of the important distinction she makes between

healing and self-medicating. Healing was changing her life, but even in her celebration of her progress, she knew there was work to do yet. After her housewarming party, her somewhat estranged partner approaches her with the wish that they reattempt their marriage. She sadly declines the proposition, telling him she was not well and needed to get better. She writes that that night, she sat alone on the floor of her bedroom with books and paperwork spread out in front of her: "I needed to finish grad school and continue searching for something I had not found in a home or in a marriage" (189). She compares the information spread out in front of her to a map, listing Comptia, Aunt Susie, and her great grandmother as her guides.

> My great-grandmother had gifted me her name, and in doing so she gave me an identity and a purpose. Aunt Susie had guided my great-grandmother; perhaps she had given her the same purpose. Imbedded within us was the mapwork of how to heal. We had the tools to mend what had been broken, to replace what was taken. (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 190)

The significance of the title's inclusion of "*Ancestral*" preceding "*Autobiography*" pertains to the story's representation of how LaPointe's ancestral research guided her to feel that long last that she has a permanent home where her, and her ancestors', home has always been. Thus replacing what was taken. The title's wording conveys how integral LaPointe's ancestry is to her feeling of wholeness, her healing, and her sense of self that enabled her to write an autobiography.

Titling her work *An Ancestral Autobiography* furthermore follows in the example of her ancestors (Vi Hilbert, Susie Sampson Peter) who adapted the purpose/function of typically 'Western' technologies to serve their own Native culture's interests. There is an extensive history of Native American engagement with the Western genre "autobiography." A collection of resultant texts is contained in the 1994 anthology *Native American Autobiography* edited by Arnold Krupat. In his introduction to the anthology, Krupat claims that the genre "had no close parallel in the traditional cultures of the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas," (Krupat, 3) as both written language, and the notion of representing the whole of one individual's life, were foreign to Native cultures. He divides early examples of written life histories by Native people into two camps:

"autobiographies by Indians," referring to individually composed texts by Native authors that assimilated to white Christian culture, and "Indian autobiographies," being the result of a process by which an editor, with the aid of a translator/interpreter, fixed the orally presented life story of a Native "subject" to text form. Krupat suggests that both these kinds of early Native American autobiography can be viewed "as the textual equivalent of the "frontier,"" (Krupat, 4) where Indigenous and Western culture meet and interact. One section of his anthology, with the heading: "The Anthropologists' Indians," contains the results of anthropologists' efforts to document cultures presumed to disappear. He clarifies that his phrasing should not be read to imply that the Native people who consented to share their life stories with anthropologists did so in betrayal of themselves or their culture. Krupat claims instead that, according to recent study,

> it has become apparent that the Native subjects of the anthropologists' life histories had their own purposes for engaging in the autobiographical project; they "used" the anthropologists to the same or even greater extent than the anthropologists "used" them. (Krupat, 15)

Here Krupat presents an important distinction between seeing Indigenous participation in Western documentation/preservation projects overseen by non-Native people (whether anthropologists, linguists, or etcetera) as assimilation to the dominant culture by compliance with an outsider's wishes to serve an external purpose, and rather seeing it as taking advantage of opportunities to pursue Indigenous cultural benefit. Recognition of the agency and purposefulness of Native people who consented to unfamiliar representations of themselves and their cultures encourages consideration of how their choice to do so has had an enriching effect on the lives on Native people today.

LaPointe's ancestors knew well how to see opportunity in Western forms of documentation, and LaPointe's autobiography gives heartwarming testimony of how significantly their descendent has benefitted from their farsighted perspective and open mindedness. After writing her "Little Boats" essay and revisiting family's photographs, LaPointe had a vivid nightmare in which a mirror's reflection showed her the clear image of someone else's face. The face

was that of an old woman from another time. It took hours of the morning for LaPointe to recall where she had seen it before—on the cover of a book called *The Wisdom of a Skagit Elder*. She explains having seen the book growing up, it was a collection of transcriptions of conversations between Vi Hilbert and Susie Sampson Peter. Prompted by the intense dream and her rediscovery of the book, she pictures her ancestors "up together in the small room in the back of the house on the reservation in Tacoma, Washington. My great-grandmother with her tape recorder and Aunt Susie with her stories." (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 35). Later when paralyzed in the grip of grief caused by her miscarriage, LaPointe returns to this book again, called by an "unknown voice inside" (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 177), and vividly remembering the sensation of her past dream. What she reads convinces her of her need to go to the Skagit River, where she ritually submerges and suspends herself in the river's freezing, rushing water, clutching a root on the bank. She writes strongly of the healing she finds in this:

> I felt the water like hands as it tore things from me, things like darkness and grief. It took these things, and I let them go downriver. I felt like I did as a child in the longhouse, surrounded by people holding me up, unwilling to let me go. This river wouldn't let me disappear. (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 179)

She chose this place on the Skagit River because it was where her Aunt Susie trained, intensively, to become a medicine worker. The river connects her to her ancestors, who are meaningfully tied to the river through a long history. With its grip, it physically manifests her ancestors and their support to her. It is apparent from the autobiography that the detailed information LaPointe knows of her ancestor's spiritual prominence has come both from conversations with family, and from written material featuring her. LaPointe writes as if she were visited by the spirit of Susie Sampson Peter, whose guidance directed her to the book, through which, in words past spoken, she newly communicates to her descendent of her ancestral strength and how to invoke it.

Writing in the 1990s, Krupat claims the most noted Native American autobiographies of the late 19th century are "the self written texts of Native people who first came to public notice as artists, as writers of poetry and fiction"

(Krupat, 9). LaPointe herself, in the 21st century, has followed this trend. She said that before "Little Boats," which started her focus on writing creative non-fiction, she had been writing stories "about mermaids, selkies, and witches." (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 29) She wanted to pursue magical realism, and poetry. Her professor's encouragement to express her own story in writing directed her to the construction of an autobiography. She takes the form and utilizes it to engage in her own ancestor's and culture's storytelling practices. While the autobiographical narrative, as Krupat stated, has no equivalent in Indigenous oral storytelling, life-experience stories, and historical accounts have long been customary in oral Lushootseed storytelling as well as traditional "Myth Age" or creation stories. These stories have passed down information about genealogy, noteworthy people, and significant events. Typically, specific members of Coast Salish communities gifted with excellent memorization devoted their minds to storing their community's oral history, and knew many stories by heart, Susie Sampson Peter is an example of one such person. SiSwinKlae has taught me that the elders in Native communities are the "libraries", with their passing not only is the bereavement of a loved one felt, a great deal of culturally valuable generational knowledge is often tragically lost. These oral stories are how LaPointe knows of her relation to her ancestor Comptia: "The oral histories of who she was, where she came from, and that she was her family's sole survivor of the smallpox epidemic had been passed down by the women in my family" (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 101). Writing her autobiography is how LaPointe takes her place in this generational dialogue that enables self-knowledge. Though this oral transmission of history is not facilitated by the contemporary world, in which we have become used to the convenience of having all the knowledge we need at our fingertips, a google search away, LaPointe importantly engages cultural continuity by using the art of storytelling as a means of storing and transmitting her family's history going generations back. Particularly, she gives continuation to the history of the women in her lineage, and their strength and accomplishment, in which she has found her own strength and accomplishment, and in which young Native women who may see themselves in her story might find theirs too.

A Coast Salish Punk

Lastly in the title, Sasha LaPointe identifies herself as "*a Coast Salish punk*." Here, LaPointe juxtaposes two fundamental aspects to her identity that would not typically be thought of in association. To many, the words "Coast Salish" may bring to mind ideas of a once existing native culture, lost to time. They might be read as natural before the nouns "basket weaver," or even "storyteller," but "*Punk*," characteristically, arrives as unconventional and unanticipated. The merging of these two identities makes the text unmistakably contemporary and of the moment. Their unintuitive pairing seizes a reader's attention, engaging a curiosity that facilitates learning, and achieving important representation for the existence of Coast Salish people today.

These two identities may not be as unrelated as they seem, because they both are place based. As well as being the ancestral homeland of the Coast Salish people, the Northwest Coast is a significant location in music history. LaPointe credits Nirvana with "putting this rainy corner of the Pacific Northwest on the map" (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 17), and the Riot Grrrl movement has its roots in Olympia, Washington. To this day the northwest coast is the homeplace of a vibrant underground music scene. Punk is a music-based subculture founded upon a rejection of societal norms. LaPointe describes being drawn to its community from a young age; it has consistently been a source of empowerment and creative expression in her life.

Despite its importance to her, however, the punk scene has not always provided LaPointe with a true sense of belonging. In conversation with her peer from the Institute of American Indian Arts, she shares about her ex-partner's surprise at her inclusion of "punk" in the book title "because he remembered how I kind of hated the word. Because punk spaces have been so predominantly white" (LaPointe, S. *High Country News*). LaPointe's elaboration on the problems of participating in the punk scene as a Native person presents an unfortunate paradox. She fell in love with the Riot Grrrl movement because it helped her to feel less isolated, changing her life in a positive way, yet consistently being the only non-white face in a crowd gave rise to another sense of isolation. In the

autobiography, she talks about knowing she wanted to sing in a band from the first time she heard Bikini Kill's *Pussy Whipped* as a teenager:

> I had never heard a song about assault before, let alone one that seemed to mirror my own. To hear a singsong voice go into a shrieking, guttural scream felt like being in the presence of power, which I wanted so badly to possess. (LaPointe, S., *Red Paint*, 89)

But this crucial sense of solidarity, strength, and safety in numbers that attracted her to the world of punk fell short in a major way: "I never saw other Native punk kids at the shows. It made me feel isolated, even when I was standing in a crowded show, seeing a band I loved. There was a loneliness there" (LaPointe, S. *High Country News*) Today, the punk scene has evolved to increasingly belong to queer people of color. A 2021 article from *The Independent* showcases examples of a new more inclusive wave of pop-punk stars, and concludes in the hope that:

> the alternative music scene will become more accessible to artists that are women, POC and queer creatives. Hopefully, the next generation of punk fans will start going to shows and see more people who look like themselves and punk will finally get back to the ethos it was once so championed for: an anti-establishment community that is accepting and representative of all. (Raza-Sheikh).

LaPointe's inclusion of the label "Punk" marks a confident reclamation of the identity, and a declaration that punk has rebranded.

In her autobiography, we follow LaPointe's longing to be able to more fully participate in the punk community and lifestyle that she has always taken part in: "All my friends were in bands. The people I fell in love with were in bands. But never me. I'd help out at shows, sell merch, hang out. But it was never me onstage" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 89). This barrier to the musical presence she aspired to was reinforced in her own relationship. LaPointe had joined her partner on tour and supported him in his own occupation as a punk musician frequently, but when she expressed interest in collaborating with him, he held a firm boundary against including her in his music career. Despite imagining and hoping for it since adolescence, LaPointe does not have the opportunity of experiencing this possession of power for herself, until she is presented with it at

last in her 30s. She is approached by a group of friends, led by a woman she'd long admired, at her housewarming party. Her friends present her with a collection of beautiful gifts for her home, and the invitation to contribute her voice and lyricism to their new project Medusa Stare (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 186). Performing with the band Medusa Stare allows LaPointe to fully realize her identity and the personal power held in it.

LaPointe describes as much in the epilogue of the autobiography "Spirit Dancing," where she recounts a burning ceremony she held to honor and release the spirit of her daughter, the last rite she felt she had to perform for her healing before being ready to embark on a new journey, and then touring with her band. This epilogue presents how, through her music and stage presence, LaPointe makes a loving reply to her ancestors that participated in the winter dances, who she honors in the prologue to the text. The loneliness she describes having long felt within the punk scene feels to have been somewhat remedied by her time touring: "The van felt like family" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 214). She carries the red paint and cedar bark gifts her mother entrusted with her on tour as her "talismans" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 213). She keeps these items on her person, not for protection, but for the strength they represent. While performing onstage, LaPointe wears the red paint, having ensured her parents' blessing. She claims: "It was my own ceremony, my way to honor my ancestors and myself. I would never dance in the longhouse, but I would find my own ritual of healing" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 213). The red paint carried a healing power that had always lived within LaPointe. It reaffirms LaPointe's inseverable connection to her Coast Salish lineage. Her touring with Medusa Stare and including the words "*Coast Salish Punk*" in the title are empowering ways of celebrating pride in her heritage that feels both authentic to herself and honorable to her ancestors and culture.

LaPointe's self-introduction as a "*Coast Salish Punk,*" also represents her ability to take confidence in her Native identity. This can be difficult for Native youth today, many of whom have unique, complex identities and a difficult connection to their Indigenous heritage. LaPointe herself expresses challenges to feeling justified in taking pride in her heritage, and to believing in her own belonging to a distinctly strong family. She presents having suffered a kind of

imposter syndrome from a young age. Early in her autobiography, in the chapter "Naming Ceremony," LaPointe introduces her two namesakes. The first is "Sasha Doll," (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 14): when her mother was a child, her grandmother special ordered the doll from a Swiss doll maker, because she wanted her daughter to have a doll that resembled herself, with the same colored eyes, hair, and skin. LaPointe describes the doll as "The perfect Indian baby, one my mother could truly hold as her own" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 14). She retells that as a child she was obsessed with her mother's doll, and took great pride in it, even taking it to show and tell, but after dropping the Sasha Doll on the pavement and accidentally breaking it, she felt a weight of shame surrounding having "failed her." She remembers: "After she was fixed the doll and I became estranged" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 14). and that once her mother placed the doll back on the shelf, she never touched it again. This estrangement and anxiety about failing her Coast Salish heritage, represented by the doll, resurfaces in her close relationship to her second namesake, her great grandmother Violet taqʷšəblu Hilbert.

The name taqʷšəblu was given by Hilbert to LaPointe at her naming ceremony at the age of three. It is a significant gift as LaPointe expresses being in awe of, grateful for, and daunted by the name, when she writes: "To be a namesake is a great responsibility" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 15). LaPointe felt the enormity of this responsibility from hearing her great grandmother tell her "You're my namesake and you're going to do important things" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 15). These words were not to be taken lightly coming from a person who had been as instrumental to Lushootseed language revitalization, and as widely recognized and respected as Vi Hilbert. LaPointe felt the magnitude of the responsibility. When LaPointe first introduces her partner to her great grandmother, she asks "Is he a nice Indian boy?" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 39) starting laughter in the room. Once LaPointe explained that no, her boyfriend was white, her great grandmother responded: "Well, as long as he doesn't bore you" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 39). The humor in her conditional approval puts her partner at ease, but LaPointe admits to feeling a part of herself retreat. Among the laughter in the room, she heard her own disquietude voice itself:

> *Was I disappointing her? Because I'm part white? Because I'm dating a white man? Am I becoming less Indian? Would I lose my Indianness completely?* (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 40)

Her concerns extended to her future children with despair at the thought that they might not be able to enroll in her family's tribe, that they wouldn't meet her great grandmother, and wouldn't grow up hearing their stories in Lushootseed. The feelings echo a reaction LaPointe shares earlier in the text, to being shown a photograph of her great great grandmother, who she saw as "proud and sturdy and beautiful" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 15). As her mother showed her the image, LaPointe thought "In contrast to the woman in the photograph, I was a pale, distractible thing. Surely there had been a mistake" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 15). Though she was assured by her mother that she comes from a long line of strength, and carries it in her very name, it would take time for LaPointe to convince herself of these truths.

In an interview with *The Seattle Times*, LaPointe confesses to the hardship of not being fluent in Lushootseed as the namesake of a figure so central to the language's revitalization. She explains that growing up she and her siblings didn't speak Lushootseed, but were used to having it around them daily. Growing up in that world created a feeling of security that the language would always be around them, a security that faltered with the loss of her great grandmother. Though honest in her grief, LaPointe celebrates that now in adulthood she is picking up phrases, and incorporating Lushootseed words into her poetry, rejoicing: "It's been really empowering, it's been really beautiful" (LaPointe, S., *Seattle Times*). Her mother is currently the director of the Lushootseed Research Program, and LaPointe finds opportunities to engage with the work of revitalizing the language by helping her out with functions that this work entails, such as the yearly Lushootseed language conference. She shares excitement in getting to see that today, younger generations are learning the language thanks to her great grandmother's efforts, and that she has cousins, nieces, and nephews who are able to speak it fluently.

In the first few chapters of her autobiography, LaPointe poignantly conveys the doubts she has felt in her own capability of living up to the expected brilliance packaged in her name. paired with her partnership to a white person,

immersion in a predominantly white subculture, and her unfamiliarity with speaking Lushootseed, these doubts perpetuate a feeling of being severed from her Coast Salish roots. However, her autobiography also makes clear that the better part of her came to eventually understand that her great grandmother's words: "You're my namesake and you're going to do important things" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 15) did not present only a task to fulfill, but a dependable promise in which to trust. The chapter "Naming Ceremony" concludes with the thought that, on the day her great-grandmother gave her the name taqʷšəblu, "she knew the countercurse I would someday need" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 16). LaPointe feels the presence of a fairytale-like magic in her gifted name, comparing it to the princess in *Sleeping Beauty* being gifted by her fairy godmother with the only thing that gave her a chance of reawakening from her curse.

LaPointe's lack of confidence in feeling as though she belongs and connects with her cultural heritage can be seen as a product of settler colonial trauma. As well as this generational trauma, additional traumas experienced in her own life compiled in such a way that caused her to shut down, feeling sick and weak. Healing is a gritty and taxing but necessary process, and LaPointe's autobiography makes nothing light of the challenges she has had to face on her own healing journey. In a recount of a huge argument between herself and her partner, who frustratedly accused her of allowing trauma to dictate her life and not even trying to overcome it, LaPointe despaired: "You don't know what this is like! … Not knowing if you're just gonna drop to the floor, faint for no reason. The nightmares. The flashbacks. Seeing strangers on the train turn into my rapist. Seeing *you* turn into my rapist" (101) continuing to desperately insist "Every day that I faint, or black out, or have a flashback. I'm trying!" (102). Throughout these significant hardships, LaPointe's strength-imbued name empowered her to be able to recover her pride, sense of connection, and belief in herself as a Coast Salish woman. She describes the name as "an incantation," writes it phonetically, and acknowledges: "It comes from deep in me. Travels through parted lips out into the world and stays there" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 16). These words express that the Coast Salish culture her name comes from makes up the innermost core

of her being, and that through her life and her presence in the world the culture stands strong, inerasable.

By the end of the autobiography, it is clear LaPointe stands sure that the strength in her lineage lives on in herself. When she wears the red paint onstage it is to remind herself of this, and to invoke this power while she performs, enacting her own ceremony. Refusing to be defined "as a victim or a person whose trauma ruled them" she declares: "If the women of my family were sick, we knew how to heal. That's who we were, and medicine was in our blood" (LaPointe, S. *Red Paint,* 218). These potent words make an assertion of the living power in her Coast Salish heritage, that her ancestor's stories have helped her to recognize and harness.

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the ways that multiple generations of storytellers have adapted the traditional art of Lushootseed storytelling to their contemporary technologies and modes of transmission. This adaption of Lushootseed stories began with Susie Sampson Peter and the tape recorder, which she likened to a canoe in recognition of its ability to carry stories and traditional knowledge to future generations. Since Peter's time, her descendants, and others following in her example, have embraced further new vessels for carrying Indigenous stories. Peter's niece, Vi Hilbert, took her Elder's stories from audio recording to print form, giving them textual representation for the first time. Taking the torch from Hilbert, Jo-ann Archibald has recently made use of multimedia formatting for stories, advocating for the pedagogical value of Indigenous storytelling. Through video and text on her website she demonstrates how to teach with stories by her own model of teaching with "Lady Louse." Additionally, Hilbert's great-granddaughter Sasha LaPointe gives her and her Lushootseed-speaking ancestors' stories of lived experience expression through creative prose in her autobiography *Red Paint.*

In the oral tradition, stories and teachings are transmitted from generation to generation. Despite the fact that the circulation of Lushootseed Stories explored in this thesis mark Lushootseed stories' departure from orality, the traditional transfer of knowledge from Elder to rising generation is recognizable in the way that each storyteller has followed the leadership, and continued the legacy, of their Elders and teachers. Each chapter marks a new stage in a generational chain of transmission and a correspondingly new approach to storytelling. In every case, the new forms that the stories take on have been carefully utilized to support and sustain the vitality of the stories and Coast Salish culture.

The circulation of Lushootseed stories via print and digital media is very deserving of celebration. It has in many cases been critical to the preservation of the stories and can bring visibility and appreciative attention to the stories, Coast

Salish people, and their culture. These kinds of circulation can also support a beginning understanding of Coast Salish culture and Indigenous storytelling as a system of knowledge and teaching. It is vital to recognize however, that a true knowledge of the oral culture to which the stories belong cannot be gleaned from non-oral representations of the stories. These modes of circulating Lushootseed stories represent the memory of the stories, from which the cultural revitalization of the traditional art of storytelling may occur. They may facilitate but not themselves accomplish a recovery of the Indigenous Knowledge of traditional storytelling.

I have sought to represent how each form extended to Lushootseed stories uniquely engages with the oral tradition of Lushootseed storytelling to shape readers'/story listeners' reception of the stories. Hilbert's publication of print versions of Lushootseed stories in the collections *Haboo* and *Lushootseed Texts* has expanded their accessibility. In these collections, Hilbert took the opportunities of embellishing the stories with additional information about Coast Salish culture, and of promoting the Lushootseed language. Jo-ann's presentation of "Lady Louse" on her website uses the short story to convey an understanding of how meaning is made with Indigenous stories. LaPointe's *Red Paint* brings important awareness to today's generation of Coast Salish people. In each of these examples, the transmission of Lushootseed stories has served as a means of establishing to the unwavering presence of Coast Salish culture, and has supported future generations of Coast Salish people in their ability to connect with and continue their culture.

The traditional oral inter-generational transmission of Indigenous cultural knowledge has been disrupted by colonial domination over decades, through the abduction of Indigenous youth from their families and communities and placement of them in colonial boarding schools. This history has bereaved Indigenous people of their connection to their ancestral culture, and knowledge. The transmission of Indigenous stories has the potential to bridge the intergenerational gap created by colonization, reestablishing Indigenous peoples' connection to the culture of their forbears, so that they may claim it, revive it, and continue to heal the ongoing harms of colonization.

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