

CIS
CELEBRATES
5
YEARS

The Spa:ven

ISSUE NO.08
THE INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL
INDIGENOUS STUDIES' ANNUAL
PUBLICATION

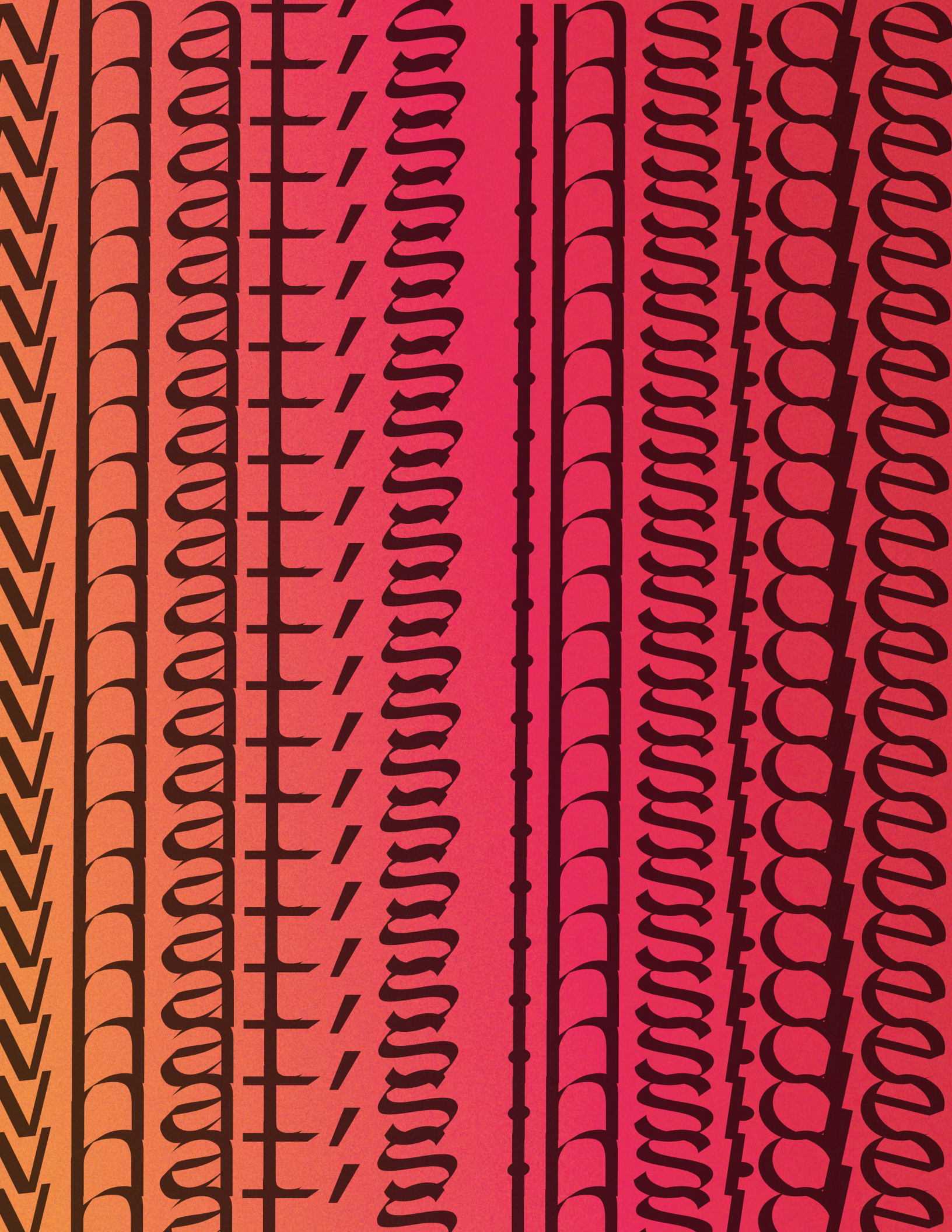
We acknowledge that the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies and the University of British Columbia-Vancouver are located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded homelands of the hə́n̓qə́m̓iṇə́m̓-speaking xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. We value our long-standing relationship with the Musqueam Nation and are grateful for the many ways in which they support and strengthen our unit.

The **spa:ven**

ISSUE NO.08

THE INSTITUTE FOR
CRITICAL INDIGENOUS
STUDIES' ANNUAL
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what's inside

Issue.08, 2019-20

Cover courtesy of
Alexa McPhee

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Editors

Sarah Ann Bednash, Tait Gamble

Designer

Ricky Castanedo Laredo

Thank you to the contributors of the 2019/2020 spa:l'/Raven for the great care, thought and time you put into your pieces.

LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

Hello spa:l'/the Raven readers! Thank you for taking the time to read the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies' (CIS) annual publication. My name is Sarah Ann (she/her) and I am a settler raised on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Semiahmoo people and I currently reside on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, səlilwətaʔɬ, and Skwxwú7mesh stelmexw (peoples). I graduated in May 2020 from the First Nations and Indigenous Studies program and I have been working with CIS for the past 11 months as the Communications and Outreach Assistant.

Editing spa:l'/the Raven was my first time editing such a substantial publication. I found it quite challenging at times, especially considering the state of the world and the barriers COVID-19 has put in place, but it has been rewarding due to the fact that I was able to connect and get to know many of the contributors and members of our community in ways I had not previously been able to. I am thankful to CIS for trusting me with this task and for allowing me this opportunity of growth. Thank you to all of the contributors for their patience with my consistent emails and for dedicating their time and energy in a world where time and energy seem scarce.

A special thank you to spa:l'/the Raven's graphic designer, Ricky Castanedo Laredo, who year after year produces beautiful work and whose commitment is unmatched, and thank you to Tait Gamble, for taking over the daunting job of editing spa:l'/the Raven when my position at CIS sadly came to an end.

I look forward to what this next year will bring for CIS!

*With kindness and care,
Sarah Ann Bednash*

Dear readers,

Thank you for taking the time to read the 2020 edition of spa:l'. My name is Tait Gamble. I am a settler of Irish and German descent. My pronouns are she/her. I have been a member of the CIS community as a student for the past 2 years. This past September, I joined CIS in a new capacity as the Communications and Outreach Assistant. It has been exciting to be part of the team to put this edition of the Raven together.

As you will read, for CIS, 2019/2020 was an eventful year. From speaker's visits and exciting research projects, to a global pandemic, this past year was one filled with passion, creativity and a renewed reliance on and appreciation for community. I hope you will find reading about the work of CIS faculty, associates, students and alumni as thought provoking and inspirational as I did. It is exciting to reflect on the work and growth of CIS over the past 5 years as we look ahead.

This edition would not have been possible without Sarah Ann's hard work, careful thought and organisation. Thank you to CIS staff Connie, Emily, Sarah and Tanya for assisting with locating art work and articles. Thank you to CIS Director Bernie for your support with communications. Thank you to Daniel for the expertise and care you brought to the project, and to Ricky for the creative and beautiful design. Finally, thank you to all the contributors for the time, effort and considerable heart they put into their pieces.

*Happy reading,
Tait*

S a r a h
A n n
B e d n a s h

T a i t
G a m b l e

CIS CELEBRATES 5 YEARS



We would like to thank Diamond Point of Musqueam, a former student of FNIS, for the creation of the CIS logo.

Five years ago, the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program (FNIS) and the First Nations and Endangered Languages Program (FNEL) were united through the creation of the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies (CIS) in the Faculty of Arts. These five years, filled with transition, new partnerships and community growth, have strengthened both programs and reaffirmed our commitments for inventive research, ethical community engagement, and the transformation of learning and relations.

CIS would like to give our sincerest thanks to the continual support from community, academic partners, faculty, staff, alumni, and particularly, our students. Our students, in their dedication and perseverance, continue to inspire CIS and our programs to achieve new goals and devote ourselves to the prosperity and growth of the Critical Indigenous Studies field.

As we begin a new year, we continue to raise our hands up to students, faculty and staff in their commitment to the success of all within the Institute. ●

DIRECTORS' REFLEC TIONS



OUTGOING DIRECTOR
DORY NASON

FOR THE 2019/2020 YEAR, DR. DORY NASON served as Acting Director with CIS. When offices and classrooms shifted online in the spring, Dory was a grounding force in a time of tumultuous change. In both virtual and non-virtual settings, Dory brought optimism, kindness, and constant joy to our community. She inspired staff, faculty, and students with her dedication in this role.

Following her time as Acting Director, Dory was elected as Vice President of the UBC Faculty Association. She continues to inspire students and foster community at CIS as an Associate Professor in FNIS.●

Ckuwapon. Waponahkew.

INCOMING DIRECTOR **BERNARD PERLEY**

As the incoming director for the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies I am sharing a couple of Maliseet words that reflect who I am and how these words inspire the work I have been doing as well as the work I will be doing on behalf of the communities that CIS serves and empowers.

Ckuwapon. (Dawn approaches.) To say this word is to evoke magic. I interpret this word **not** to mean ‘dawn’ as much as it evokes an awakening in the world. Imagine you are immersed in the quiet of night, the darkness faintly tinted by the soft glow of celestial light. You look eastward anticipating the first light of dawn. You wait and wait a bit longer. Then, at some point you realize that *ckuwapon* has already embraced you with growing warmth and light, immersed in *awakening* as a community process that extends to all our relations. My drawing attempts to capture that magic.

Waponahkew. (Dawn-land.) As a member of the Wabanaki Confederacy I celebrate my ancestral homeland every time I say or write *waponahkew*, the dawn-land. In the image above, the view looks toward the east as the sun rises along the Tobique River from *Kupskwik*, Tobique Point. Note the five rays of light reflected in the river. They represent the five nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy; Abenaki, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Mi’kmaq.



HAVING RESERVATIONS

by: Bernard C. Perley

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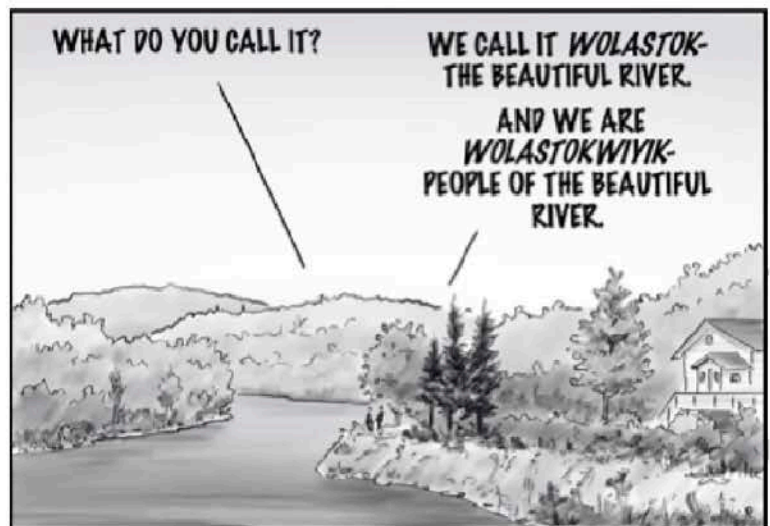
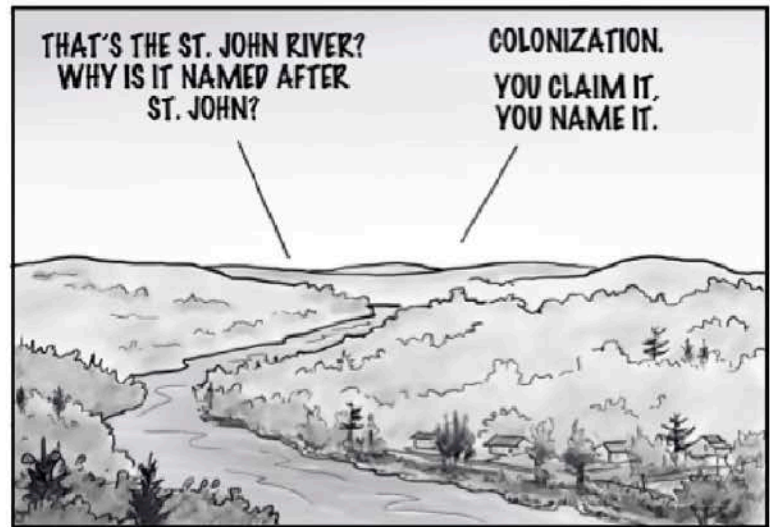
also use the term to refer a spiritual space where Maliseet worlds are made anew with a prayer of thanks to each new dawn by giving thanks for *kiso*hs; the sun. This drawing attempts to capture the quality of spiritual world of *waponahkew*, the dawn-land. The point of view is toward *ckuwapon* and is my representation of the prayer of thanks for the sun. The line of the prayer is—

Wəliwən ciw kisohs,
ktlahtwenmakon spətew naka
kwəlipəsokon.

**Thank you for the sun, it gives
us light and keeps us warm.**

This cartoon is another expression of ‘belonging’ to my traditional homeland.

All this to say — I am deeply appreciative of the history behind FNIS, FNEL, and how the two became the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies. Like *ckuwapon*, CIS represents a new beginning. Like *ckuwapon*, CIS is poised to bring our communities together to imagine possible futures for Indigenous peoples. I am excited about what we can accomplish in CIS as we all work together toward empowering one another and our extended relations. ●



Updates

Thoroughly
understand
community
culture
and
the
community

Candace Galla



Photo by Katherine Soutar

2019 BROUGHT ABOUT MANY WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITIES as it was declared by the United Nations the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL). I was invited to speak at various conferences locally, nationally, and internationally about revitalization, cultural practices, education and digital technology in an effort to raise the consciousness of Indigenous languages in our teaching, learning and practice. Additionally, I helped to organize IYIL gatherings with Indigenous scholars, community members, language speakers, language learners, and Allies. Some of my memorable experiences includes participating in a livestream Indigenous Media Zone Panel at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York City, presenting a TEDx at the Justice Institute of British Columbia, and sharing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Australia a hula (Hawaiian dance) that acknowledged our common struggle, yet persistence in continuing to fight for the protection of our respective lands and waters.

Candis Callison



I RETURNED TO UBC IN MID-2019 AFTER A YEAR VISITING PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, and became part of CIS as well as the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media. My coauthored book with JWAM colleague Mary Lynn Young, titled *Reckoning: Journalism's Limits and Possibilities* (Oxford U Press) came out at the beginning of 2020. I also got some articles and book chapters out this year, and I've done a lot of talks, conferences, panels, and media interviews (in addition to my regular contributions to the podcast *Media Indigena*). I'm really excited to have been a collaborator on *Our Ancestors' Trail*, an exhibit about Tahltan land-based education at the Liu Institute and Museum of Anthropology that we are planning to move online and up to Tahltan communities. I also got some pretty cool awards lately including most recently, The Bill Good Award from the Webster Foundation, recognizing my 25 years working in/on journalism (yep, I'm old now).

Daniel Heath Justice



Osiyo nigada! In addition to my teaching and service commitments and my ongoing Cherokee language lessons, I've been busy wrapping up two major research projects: the first, my long-gestating cultural history of raccoons for the Reaktion Books Animal Series, planned for publication in 2021, and the second, a collection of essays titled *Allotment Stories*, with contributions from across the world focusing on Indigenous responses to settler-colonial land and privatization policies, which I'm co-editing with historian Jean M. O'Brien (White Earth Ojibwe). Looking forward to once again working with Tanya Bob and our fantastic Practicum cohort this coming year. Here's a language teaching that helps me with these challenging times: detsadasaladihesdi—you all hold each other up!

Daisy Rosenblum

MUCH OF MY RESEARCH THIS YEAR has focused on the capacity-building development of new technologies to increase community access to legacy audio and text resources for language reclamation. I worked closely with Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw and Kwakgu'l community members and technical experts to begin to build a corpus of machine-readable text and audio in Kwak'wala for automatic speech-to-text transcription for Kwak'wala and other polysynthetic languages, and with computer scientists on developing Optical Character Recognition for early 20th century Kwak'wala texts. A SSHRC IDG supported my collaboration with the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Language Revitalization Program (Coordinator, FNIS graduate Lucy Hemphill) and the GNN Elementary School, including a 13-Moon Calendar for 'Nak'wala and Gwa'sala territory and a language and culture archive for the School. I also worked closely with colleagues Kari Chew and Wes Leonard to write about Decolonizing Indigenous Language Pedagogies, and with Trish Rosborough about Wakashan Languages, for a Handbook of Languages and Linguistics of North America aimed at community-based researchers.



David Gaertner

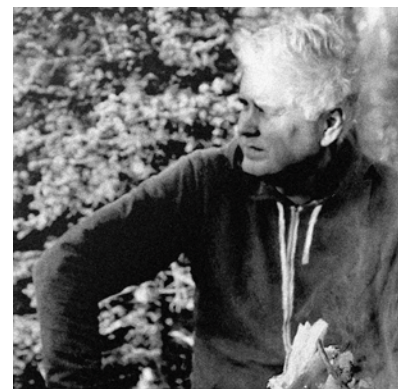
IT WAS ANOTHER BUSY YEAR FOR INDIGENOUS NEW MEDIA AT UBC. As part of Congress 2019, Daisy Rosenblum and I co-curated *Listening to the Land: A Community Engaged Sound Installation*, featuring four beautiful soundscapes from FNIS 454 students and a panel on land, language, and technology. In the fall term, I worked with the Emerging Media Lab to install Lisa Jackson's ground-breaking virtual reality piece, *Biidaaban: First Light* and I hosted FNIS alum (and former *Raven* editor) Maize Longboat to deliver a talk on debut first video game, *Terra Nova*. In March, I co-organized the second annual #HonouringIndigenousAuthors edit-athon, which featured readings by Billy-Ray Belcourt, Dallas Hunt, Jessica Johns, and Samantha Nock. That same month, I also brought the Dene speculative fiction author Kaitlyn Purcell to Green College to talk about her genre-bending debut book *?bédayine*. Throughout the term, Courteney Durand and I, in partnership with Jeffery Ansloos and the University of Toronto, have been researching a new project on digital surveillance and its effects on Indigenous communities—keep your eyes on CIS social media for more on that. As for now, look for my first book, *The Theatre of Regret: Art, Literature, and the Politics of Reconciliation*, published by UBC Press, in November.

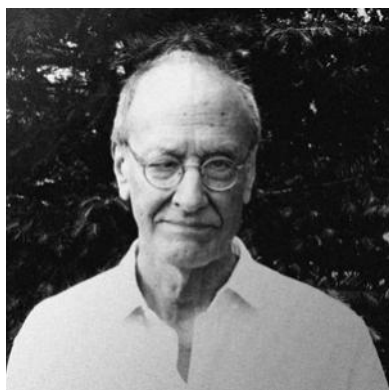


Glen Coulthard

THIS YEAR I CONTINUED TO PROGRAM, develop and deliver course for the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning. We offered two courses in the Mackenzie Mountains (INLB 210 and 220) in partnership with the Ross River Kaska Dena First Nation and the Sahtu Dene. I also taught FNIS 210 and POLI 449. Dechinta had intended to offer a 2-week program this spring on the Mackenzie River but that was postponed because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In March, Dechinta was also able to secure its contribution agreement with the Federal Government for 13 million dollars of core funding over the next five years.

In terms of scholarship, this year I finished expert interviews for my forthcoming book, *Once Were Maoists: Third World Current in Fourth World Anti-Colonialism* which I plan to submit to the University of Minnesota Press in September 2020. I also published a Special Issue for *Global Environmental Politics*, which I co-edited with Kate Neville of the University of Toronto. I have been busy disseminating research findings for my book through several keynote lectures and public talks, both domestically and internationally.





L i n c K e s l e r

I RETURNED IN JANUARY AFTER SOME TIME AWAY, and it was my first time back in FNIS/CIS since 2011, when I moved full-time to FNHL. It's good to be back! Since leaving FNHL in 2018, I've been catching up with my research fields and writing more about the interactions, both historical and present, of oral, written, and newer forms of conceiving, maintaining, and transmitting knowledge and information. I've also been keeping up with some strategic initiatives that got underway before I left. I'm looking forward to teaching again in the fall and thinking about how to adapt oral history interviewing to the online environment. Stay safe!



Photo by Silmara Emde

M a r k T u r i n

THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN SHAPED BY TWO NEW COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS which I am excited to be leading. The first, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), is entitled *Relational Lexicography: New Frameworks for Community-Informed Dictionary Work* and brings together CIS faculty, students, affiliates and community members to address the specific requirements and goals of community-informed dictionary-making. One of the goals of the research project is to fill a resource gap by offering a framework and toolkit for collaborative, community-informed dictionary work on and in Indigenous languages.

The second project, in partnership with colleagues at the New York-based Endangered Language Alliance, and funded by the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, takes a critical look at the complexities of language mapping which remains beset with challenges, whether in print or digital form. Techniques that locate languages as dots on a map are flawed (where would you locate the dot for Cree?), and polygons often don't accurately represent plurilingual realities. The *Mapping Linguistic Diversity* project is working to develop generalizable, interactive digital tools that support community-based language mapping anywhere in the world. ●

ARTS

INDIGENOUS
STUDENT
ADVISING

AND THE

INDIGENOUS
LEADERSHIP
COLLECTIVE
UPDATE

Arts Indigenous Student Advising

Arts Indigenous Student Advising (AISA) – formerly Aboriginal Student Affairs – in the Faculty of Arts encourages and supports the success of new and continuing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. As part of Arts Academic Advising, AISA provides students with academic and cultural supports and connections to achieve their personal and academic goals. Since March 2020, AISA has continued to work remotely in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by assisting students as they navigate their courses, graduation, and starting their degree journey at UBC almost entirely online.

I n d i g e n o u s Leadership Collective

The Indigenous Leadership Collective (ILC) has been active since 2017, and has been an important community group nurturing strong student connections and leadership skills for Indigenous students in the Faculty of Arts.

Tiana Bone worked as the Arts Indigenous Student Advising (previously Aboriginal Student Affairs) 2019/2020 student peer. Tiana is Anishinaabe from Treaty 2 Territory and recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts double-majoring in First Nations and Indigenous Studies, and English Literature. Her favorite part of being the student peer was witnessing students build connections, friendships and establish a community on campus.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic in Winter 2020, the ILC continued to operate over Summer 2020 by providing weekly opportunities for students to gather online, share their experiences, and remain connected to their peers as we navigated the new circumstances we found ourselves in.

CEDaR NEWS

This past year, Dave Gaertner and Daisy Rosenblum learned that their CFI proposal for a Community Engaged Documentation and Research space (CEDaR) within CIS has now been fully funded, and renovations on Buchanan 104A will begin soon.

CEDaR will facilitate community-directed documentation and stewardship of knowledges, languages and cultures, and supporting new approaches to storytelling using new media technologies such as 3D scanning and printing, podcasting, augmented and virtual reality development, and game creation. Dave and Daisy are working with Project Coordinator FNIS graduate and K̓w̓ik̓wasut'inuxw member Arynn King to reach out to community partners, assemble the advisory committee, and begin planning virtual and physical spaces for research collaborations with community partners.

In the context of new protocols of safety, and given the need for new modes of connection and communication resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is anticipated that CEDaR will be an important resource to further support ongoing community-directed research. Feel free to be in touch with Dave and Daisy to learn more about their plans for CEDaR. ●

Farewell, Dr. Sarah Hunt

Among the many gifts associated with faculty life in our Institute is the honour of being a part of a truly inspirational team of faculty, staff, and students. Our team is steadfastly committed to ensuring that the self-determination of Indigenous communities is at the center of our scholarship, teaching and activism. As Acting Director, it is with great admiration and gratitude (and of course, a little sadness), I write to wish Dr. Sarah Hunt safe travels as she crosses the waters she loves so much back to the Island to take on a new and exciting position at the University of Victoria's School of Environmental Studies. Dr. Hunt joined the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program and the Department of Geography in 2015, and for the last five years, she has gifted us with such generosity of mind and spirit.

Dr. Hunt has built into our unit key perspectives on issues that affect Indigenous youth, women and 2SQ people through the frameworks of decolonial love, accountable relationality, and most importantly, the Indigenous social, political and legal orders that are the foundation of our principles and philosophies as researchers, teachers and learners. As an instructor, Sarah was an invaluable mentor to our practicum students and those wanting to learn Indigenous ethics, methodologies, and critical geographies. The space she leaves in our team is a big one and yet, I am so thankful that she is not going too far from the faculty, students and staff who will miss her everyday presence at CIS. And so, I say with great enthusiasm, *chi miigwech*, to Dr. Hunt for your fierce commitment, advocacy and mentorship in your time here at UBC! ●

Dr. Dory Nason, Acting Director of the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies

Introducing Dr. Candis Callison

This past year, Candis Callison joined the CIS community as an Associate Professor. Candis is Tahltan. Her career in journalism began in documentary filmmaking before she transitioned to working as a reporter and producer for mainstream media, including CBC and CTV. She was the original host and co-creator of “First Story,” the first ever weekly current affairs TV show about Indigenous peoples and issues with a largely Indigenous production crew on CTV. Her interest in new media and technology led her to San Francisco, where she continued to work as a reporter, before arriving in Boston. There, the filmmaker and journalist became a Dr., as she completed a Masters and PhD at MIT.

One thing you might be surprised to learn about Candis is her tower cam expertise! When she started at Vancouver Television (now BC CTV) in the late 1990s, there were no stations with tower cams to track traffic. So, she scouted the tops of Vancouver’s tallest towers to select the optimum tower cam location!

Candis has been faculty at UBC’s School of Journalism, Writing, and Media for the last 10 years. After spending 2018-19 as a Distinguished Visitor in Canadian Studies at

Princeton University, she is happy to be back in her home region of BC. Candis is grateful for the strong presence of Musqueam Elders, leaders and community, as well as the sense of engagement with Indigenous peoples and community at UBC. Teaching FNIS 220 with CIS has been a particular joy as she has taught and gotten to know many Indigenous students in her classroom.

2020 brought on a lot of challenges for all of us. Mindful of wellness, Candis spent time going on long walks through Musqueam Park and along the Fraser river. Whether she was listening to meditative tunes or taking work calls, her walks were very grounding.

Two books Candis can’t recommend enough are *The Tao of Raven: An Alaska Native Memoir* by Ernestine Hayes and *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. You can listen to Candis on the podcast, *Media Indigena*, hosted by Rick Harp and featuring fellow Indigenous scholar roundtablers, Brock Pitawanakwat, Kenneth T. Williams and Kim TallBear. Other podcasts she recommends include *All My Relations* with Matika Wilbur and Adrienne Keene, *Code Switch* from NPR and *Medicine for the Resistance*.

Welcome to CIS, Candis! ●

Interview with DR. PATRICIA SHAW

On June 30th 2020, Dr. Patricia Shaw retired with an extensive and inspiring career at the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies. Dr. Shaw is the Founding Chair (1996-2014) of the FNEL program (known for many years as FNLG) and for several decades has worked in close collaboration with many communities through capacity-building in research skills, pedagogical practices, archiving methodologies, and more, in order to support their commitments to language reclamation. Of significant note is her partnership with Musqueam (1996-present), which began with the development of a formal Protocol Agreement governing UBC-Musqueam community research engagement for the documentation and revitalization of the hənqəmínəm (Central Coast Salish) language. This has laid the foundation for the unique UBC-Musqueam collaborative teaching and research relationship with the Musqueam community through the Musqueam Language Program (MLP), which offers UBC and Musqueam students the opportunity to learn hənqəmínəm with post-secondary credit.

CIS Communications and Outreach Assistant, Sarah Ann Bednash, sat down with Dr. Patricia Shaw (via Zoom) to discuss her career at UBC, her memories of working with Indigenous communities, and what language revitalization means to her.

Please give a brief introduction to yourself.

My appointment to UBC in 1979 brought me to the west coast from the east. I had graduated from U Toronto with my Ph.D. (Major in Linguistics,

Minor in Anthropology) in 1976, and had been teaching at York U from 1976-1979. Over those years, I had been privileged to have been welcomed into a diversity of First Nations communities in Canada, most especially by the Dakota and Stoney peoples who shared their

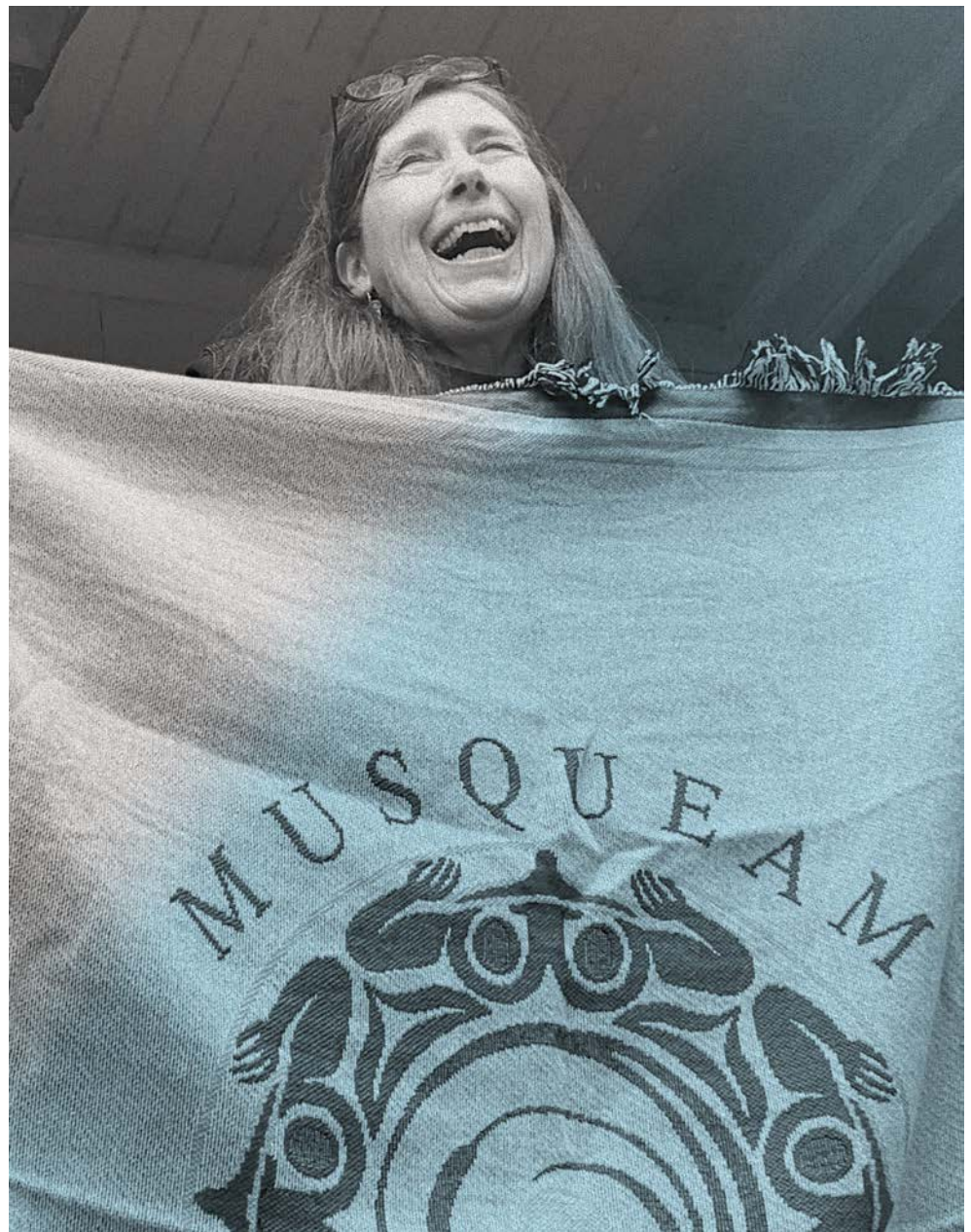
language with me in the context of my doctoral research, and the Sayisi Dene peoples, with whom I lived in Tadoule Lake, Manitoba, in 1974-75 when they moved back to their traditional territories from Churchill, where they had been forcibly relocated by the Canadian government in 1957. Witnessing their resilience and their deep knowledge of modes of living not merely sustainably, but joyfully in relationship with the "barren lands" of the sub-Arctic tundra was profoundly transformative for me. At UBC, my teaching and research has focused on the world-renowned diversity and polysynthetic complexity of the First Nations languages here, and on pedagogy for endangered language reclamation in collaboration with Indigenous communities.

What made you want to study linguistics?

Actually Linguistics was not at all part of my undergraduate degree. It wasn't even a field of study at the university where I did my B.A. But I've always been interested in languages and cultures. After my B.A., I taught English in France, and when I came back to Canada I was hired as the International Student Advisor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). OISE was a dynamic, newly established graduate school of Education, dedicated to innovative socially relevant scholarship. In addition to as diversely creative minds as Marshall McLuhan and Mr. Dressup, it attracted exceptional faculty and graduate students from all over the world. The international student cohort included many individuals who were already highly esteemed leaders from Commonwealth countries around

the globe that had just recently gained political independence. They came seeking skills and perspectives relevant to the multilingual, multicultural educational challenges in their emergent nations.

While it was my job to mentor these students in adjusting to academia and daily life in Canada, I found myself being educated daily and intimately in diverse cultures of generosity, reciprocity, creativity, spirituality, and worldviews that were not reflected in the epistemologies of the western academic institution where they now found themselves. The more I learned from my interactions with these international scholars, the more I myself had to question the elemental foundations of that same "western" educational system that had played a major role in shaping me. I became increasingly aware of intellectual, political, and cultural hegemonies. And I began to recognize the vital role of advocacy. Over the four years that I worked at OISE, this group of scholars shared with me not only their amazing foods and fabrics and music and laughter, but also their languages! Fascinating "tone" languages from Africa, like Yoruba, Igbo, and Akan, along with live demonstrations of how talking drums can carry the tonal melody of messages from one village to the next! A Xhosa speaker from Lesotho tutored me in pronouncing the different "clicks" in this extraordinary language (who knew then how it would be immortalized in the Black Panther 40 years later?). A student from war-ravaged Bangladesh told me how in 1953 people gave their lives in protest for the right to speak their mother tongue, Bengali. (This was a particularly meaningful memory when three decades later I, as Director



of FNLG, would co-organize UBC's first celebration of International Mother Language Day, UNESCO's commemoration of this very event). I came to realize how central language was to identity and to the political struggles of the post-colonial era, where diverse minoritized peoples who had been subjugated and marginalized for generations under colonial powers were now fighting for recognition and human rights within their newly independent nations. It was these students who introduced me to the Nigerian writer Achebe's notion of 'colonization of the mind'. All of this led me to question the

fundamental relationships between language and thought, language and culture, language and identity.

And this in turn is what led me to discover the fundamentally interdisciplinary field of Linguistics. Initially my goal was to work with African languages, but then I came to realize that there was a huge diversity of Indigenous languages in Canada for which there was a relative paucity of documentation.

At that point in time, these languages were not identified as "endangered." Most were still being spoken at home, at least by the older generations.

However, there was very little focus on documentation, particularly of different dialects. At the community level, there was much interest in literacy, and in Indigenous language education in the schools. So, this was by no means a linear trajectory. It was not a destination; it has been an extraordinary journey. There is, however, a profound coherence along the path in the 'ways of being in this world' that characterize both the international scholars and the Indigenous peoples I have worked with: I am deeply grateful for their generosity, humbled by their resilience, and inspired by their knowledge of and respect for the world around us.

What made you decide to found the FNEL program?

Prior to the founding of the FNEL program in 1996, there was no representation at UBC of courses dedicated to First Nations languages or their rich oral traditions, despite linguistic interest in the world renowned complexity of the languages of the Pacific northwest and ethnographic interest in the epic dimensions and literary value of their oral histories. In the '90s, British Columbia was politically engaged in land claim issues, and so it became really important that the general population become much more familiar with the histories of the Indigenous peoples in the province. Integral to their identities are their languages, particularly in the context of the diversity of First Nations languages in BC. That was 25 years ago - societal awareness of Indigenous history has changed considerably since then. Bringing the languages and their cultures into the UBC curriculum has contributed importantly to that shift, as well as to bringing Indigenous students to the university.

I think it's safe to say that both FNEL and FNIS had a tremendous impact on the other departments at UBC in forming and, like you said, creating that recognition. Would you say that FNEL inspired other institutions to pursue more recognition of Indigenous studies?

Absolutely, because we were, to my knowledge, the first to actually teach accredited Indigenous language courses at a major research university in Canada, UBC's model, as it evolved, served as a model for many other institutions. One particular feature was that the Musqueam Band, in their integrity, insisted on a Protocol Agreement governing the nature of the research, oversight of the language curriculum, and ownership of the language data. This really was groundbreaking, and very interesting both to negotiate and to encounter other academics' reactions to it. To contextualize, although the Musqueam Protocol Agreement predated the 1998 establishment of the principles of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession), it explicitly addressed all of these issues, ensuring that the Musqueam people would rightfully be the stewards of their traditional knowledge.

From my perspective as a researcher working on the documentation of a critically endangered language, for a First Nations community to commit to providing oversight, to prioritizing domains of relevance, and to ensuring accuracy of the data is an exceptional asset to the long-term goals of language reclamation. Many Indigenous languages for which there are no longer fluent speakers are represented in archival records exclusively by the speech of a single individual. But, the vibrancy of any language derives from

the diversity in its speech community - differences of age, gender, family lineage, life experience. The challenge for a language revitalization program like FNEL is capacity building on all levels. Ideally, it will not only build speaking/listening competencies, but will also provide the essential scaffolding skills for community members themselves to become the Indigenous research scholars who will nurture the language forward to younger generations.

Building off that, could you tell me more about the creation of the Musqueam Language Program (MLP) and the partnership you've had with Musqueam over the years?

The program was initially created in response to a major initiative of the President of UBC to promote "community engagement." It was an early era of corporatization of higher education, and I think the notion of "community" was primarily targeting the industrial sector, but I conceptualized a proposal focusing on the presence of a First Nations community a mere eight kilometers down the road from UBC and the fact that UBC is on unceded Musqueam territory. Surrounded by the urban dominance of Vancouver and repressed through the residential school system, the Musqueam language was critically endangered. The Band identified five people as fluent speakers at that point. Given that UBC had resources (including faculty with relevant expertise) and the community had a very time sensitive applied research need, I proposed a collaborative MIB-UBC language revitalization program. The initial arrangement was that the President's Office would fund the project for five years. If it were deemed successful at the end of that

time, then continued funding would be established within the Faculty of Arts. So that's how it initially started.

Then the community level work began. A lot of language documentation was needed and that I did in collaboration with training community members who wanted to come with me in the interviewing, in the documentation and the recording of the elders, which meant that there was always a community member and that community member was learning how to transcribe, learning how to ask questions, learning how to hear and identify things in the language. The initial premise of collaboration from the outset was really wonderful and it was really instrumental in establishing trust within the community and helping me learn about the history of the community and the language.

How has working with communities impacted you?

Most fundamentally, I'm deeply indebted to the elders from the several Indigenous communities that I've been privileged to work with. As I mentioned earlier, in 1974, I was invited to live and work in a Dene community that was part of a 'back to the land' movement in Northern Manitoba, Tadoule Lake. They had been relocated as one of the government relocation initiatives in the '50s and in 1957, they had been taken from their traditional territories to Churchill. A young fellow in that community graduated high school, trained as a pilot, and once he had earned enough money as a bush pilot to buy his own plane, he said to the community, "let's go back to live on our traditional territory." One of the conditions that they wanted for the first year being back there was that they wanted their kids to grow up bilingual. They wanted

a school so their kids did not have to go out of the community.

They wanted their families to be intact, and so they needed somebody to work in the community and it was amazing to live there from August through July. It was the wilderness in the mid '70s. Living here in isolation with COVID-19, it brings back a lot of memories of what isolation really can be... What does resilience mean and what does living on the land really mean? These elders, even though it had been 20 years since they had been relocated out of this environment, they still had the skills to live on the land and to live from the land and with the land. It was just extraordinary. To me, this was harsh territory from a Western frame of mind. What does that entail in terms of food, in terms of medical assistance? It was so challenging and so instructive to see the resilience and the deeply complex skills that the elders had in terms of being able to live a sustainable lifestyle. Our society talks about sustainability—these people were living a truly sustainable lifestyle with no help from amenities that we think of as helping us in our ways of sustainability. It was truly transformative for me. More than 30 years later, I was teaching *hə́nqəmíṇəm* at Musqueam and this student came into my office the day after the first day of classes and she asked: "Is *hə́nqəmíṇəm* an Athabascan language?" I said, "No, it's a Salish language," but for anyone to know that there was a category of languages called Athabascan languages was a really sophisticated question. And so then I said to her, "Do you speak an Athabascan language?" And she said yes! This was a young woman—it turned out she was 18 years old—so this in itself was astonishing! Then I said, "where are you from?" She said, "I'm from Manitoba." Now, there is only one

Athabascan community in Manitoba and that is Tadoule Lake! So I asked, "You're not from Tadoule Lake are you?" and she started to cry because I knew Tadoule lake and then I started to cry! This was 30 years after I had been in that community and she was the daughter of really close friends of mine in the community. It was so beautiful.

What is your favourite memory of your time with FNEL?

There are so many! I'll share just a couple. At Musqueam I worked with Adeline Point from 1998 to 2002 when she passed away. She was in her late eighties when I first met her and she had a mind and a wit that was just as sharp as tack. She had been designated as the last fully fluent speaker at Musqueam who had grown up with *hə́nqəmíṇəm* as her first language. Adeline was bedridden but eager to work together, so I was truly grateful to her family for welcoming me into their home. As time progressed, her family said that "it keeps her alive. She looks forward to your visits so much." It was such a wonderful relationship. I learned from her about the history of the Musqueam peoples and their lives, especially about Indigenous womens' lives throughout the 20th century. I learned about the systemic racism that they were confronted with in the urban society that surrounded the Musqueam reserve; about resilience and resistance and survival; about humor as a source of incredible strength and endurance and assertion of her fiercely independent integrity. She was formidable in this beautiful way. One of the particularly meaningful memories that impacted me greatly relates to what is often talked about as the fundamental relationship that Indigenous peoples have to the land. In 2000, my work with

Addie was interrupted for four months, as I had been offered a faculty position with Semester at Sea. When I told Addie that I would be travelling to 12 different countries around the world, I asked her, “Is there anything special that I can bring you from any of the special places on this journey?” She said that all she really wanted was maybe a little rock from a river or maybe some shells from a beach. She didn’t want anything else. She just wanted to experience the earth. And so when I brought back the special things I had collected for her and gave them to her one by one, she would hold that little pebble or shell in her hand as I told her where it was from. She would close her eyes and she would feel it. She was so connected to the land. It was just so meaningful to her. It was such an immediate, deep, ineffable connection. The second memory that I’ll share relates to the fundamental role of reciprocity in our relationships. One of the things that we emphasize in the Musqueam language classes is that we have important roles as guests on Musqueam territory. One of our responsibilities is reciprocity. The Musqueam are sharing their community, their territory, their culture, and the opportunity to learn their language. In gratitude, all the students at the end of every term host a feast for the community and create a project to contribute to the community language resources – a kid’s book, a song, a skit... A few years ago, one of our second year students who is a very gifted musician decided to share her talents with the community by holding an open “guitar night” for Musqueam youth every week throughout the year! She rounded up instruments for everyone who wanted to learn and together they played and sang, translating lyrics from their favourite songs into hənq̓əmin̓əm̓.

Together they shared much laughter and created deeper bonds of friendship and respect. But a further dimension of the cycles of reciprocity in this was that everyone involved managed to keep the project a secret from me the whole year long – because part of their plan was to surprise me at the end of the year with something they knew was going to be very meaningful to me: a hənq̓əmin̓əm̓ rendition of John Denver’s “Country Roads, Take Me Home... to the place I belong.” What was so beautiful was that they were bringing the language home, where it belonged.

In your mind, what kind of world can the work of Indigenous language revitalization create?

In a world ravaged by fear and hatred of difference – of difference framed and inflamed with reference to categories of race, religion, gender, politics, and language (think of the disparaging insults that silenced Indigenous Residential School kids: primitive, savage, ugly, stupid, possessed by the devil ... or the multiplicity of derogatory slurs imputing the substandard intelligence of certain dialects and accents), why would anyone commit to work in Indigenous language revitalization, where the explicit goal is the perpetration and the reclamation of linguistic difference? One response is to invoke the rationale attributed to Ruth Benedict with respect to the purpose of anthropology: “to make the world safe for human differences.” “Safe” is important. Our world unquestionably needs tolerance and inclusivity and compassion. But, I would argue, doing the work of language revitalization leads one beyond “safe.” Repeatedly one can find oneself in a state of sheer awe at the extraordinary patterns of language.

In the absence of insightful documentation of the world’s many endangered Indigenous languages that have persisted for millennia as strictly oral traditions, it is the threatened loss of these dimensions of linguistic diversity that has propelled the rapid development of language revitalization as a recognized and increasingly well-funded subdiscipline. In this context, the discoveries of Indigenous language revitalization hold promise of our climate threatened, war-torn, corruption-riddled world being illuminated by Indigenous wisdoms. Whereas the focus of this work is the strengthening and celebration of human differences, the process of doing the work relies on skills of community engagement and building collaboration, developing functional models of respectful interaction across whatever cultural, linguistic, educational, or other differences there may be. The work of Indigenous language revitalization is a commitment to social justice. It’s never easy. But the skills that are built through committed collaboration and community engagement bear witness to how the essential human capacities for compassion, generosity, and the resilience of humour can contribute to bending that arc of the moral universe.

Do you have any advice for young scholars entering the FNEL program and youth that want to dedicate their lives to language revitalization?

This is not an easy path, but it is heroic work! May you both lead and be met with compassion and respect. Go forward with an open mind, an open heart, and work towards social justice with love. ●

Mobilizing Indigenous Languages via New Media and Speculative Fiction

words by
Candace K.
Galla

In celebration of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages as declared by the United Nations, the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies (CIS) hosted a panel of University of British Columbia (UBC) scholars who shared how Indigenous languages are mobilized via new media and speculative fiction. The panelists comprised Drs. David Gaertner (CIS), Candace Galla (Kanaka Hawai'i; CIS and Language & Literacy Education), Dallas Hunt (Cree; English), with moderator Dr. Dory Nason (Anishinaabe; CIS and Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice Institute). During the week leading up to the panel, the UBC Emerging Media Lab provided the UBC community with an opportunity to view and experience the award-winning virtual reality (VR) *Biidaaban: First Light* directed by Lisa Jackson (Anishinaabe). The user is transported to “today” where nature is reclaiming the city and its infrastructure through flora, fauna, traditional modes of transportation, and languages of the place known as Tkaronto. *Biidaaban* illuminates how Indigenous languages – specifically Wendat, Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) and Anishinaabe (Ojibway) – provides “a framework for understanding our place in a reconciled version of Canada’s largest urban environment” (Jackson, n.d.).



* Dory Nason, David Gaertner, Candace Galla and Dallas Hunt are pictured left to right above.



Drawing upon *Biidaaban*, the panelists began to share how Jackson's VR Installation centres Indigenous futures and disrupts, complicates, and forecloses settler futurities, where Indigenous languages are envisaged as not just existing, but thriving on the lands in which it is kin to, and nourishing the well-being of its relations. Each scholar was asked follow-up questions specific to their discipline, scholarship, and research. Gaertner described the opening scene – a subway tunnel lined with newspapers – where if you look closely, you will notice “today’s” date and the “current” cover of the *Toronto Star*. He further considered why Jackson included “today’s” newspaper in this VR, and what effect this may have on the user’s understanding and experience. Next, Hunt discussed how he imagined future relations to be between Indigenous nations, groups, and communities. He continued to share if, how and what relationships, forms of governance, long-standing agreements, and inter-relations continue to exist in the future. Galla then concluded by discussing the second half of *Biidaaban*, where each of the three languages (as mentioned above) were represented in its written form, and expressed orally by language speakers. She extends Jackson’s embodiment of language to reflect on the roles that literacy and oral language have in new and emerging media.

In the discussion, we were reminded of Diné writer Lou Cornum (2015) who prompts us to ask, how can technology be (re)claimed “not for domination but for new organizations aimed at better worlds”? Jackson’s *Biidaaban* is one exemplar technology of how new media can mobilize and promote Indigenous languages in a space that allows users to be nourished by and immersed in language. Acknowledging that “Our culture is in our language” (Jackson, n.d.), we begin to (re)discover through our Indigenous languages details of our particular worldview that (re)connects us to our ancestors, our present, and our future generations in a conscious effort to nurture our wellbeing. ●

• Cornum, L. (2015). The space NDN’s star map. Retrieved from <https://thenewinquiry.com/the-space-ndns-star-map/>

• Jackson, Lisa (n.d.). *Biidaaban: First Light VR*. Retrieved from <http://lisajackson.ca/Biidaaban-First-Light-VR>



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DROWNING IN KNOWLEDGE YET STARVED FOR WISDOM:

Reflections on the
Academy inspired by
Leanne

Betasamosake
Simpson

words by
Pamela
Post



Pamela Post is an award-winning journalist and broadcaster of mixed Ts'msyen/European ancestry and an avid Sm'algyax learner. She recently studied Indigenous Research Methodologies with Dr. Dory Nason at UBC and has taught journalism at both Langara College and Kwantlen Polytechnic University. In 2021, she was awarded a \$10,000 arts grant from the First Peoples Cultural Council to create a screenplay for a short, animated film in the CBC/NFB tradition on Ts'msyen pre and post-contact history.

As I write this in the summer of 2020, as a journalist in the midst of a global pandemic, working on stories about the re-wilding and defacto decolonization of urban nature thanks to a viral pathogen; reflecting on an exhausting previous year spent at two universities as both an instructor and a student, interspersed with work up north with my traditional Ts'msyen village to work with youth on an LGBTQ+ podcast and my own transitioning Two-Spirit son in the midst of testosterone therapy – little did I know how much attending Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's workshop, sponsored by the Dechinta Centre for Research and the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies the previous fall, would now feel so portentous.

I am not a Leanne Simpson scholar, by any stretch, but I have been deeply moved by the stories, poetry, films, music and worldview this Anishinaabekwe knowledge keeper spins like a filigreed web. I jumped at a chance to hear her. At last October's workshop *Carrying the Land With Us*, I was surrounded by a small gathering of other Indigenous students at UBC's Buchanan C Building who had been caught in Simpson's web even longer than me, a few even a bit giddy when she entered our small meeting room; one whispering, within Simpson's earshot, "It's like meeting a rockstar!"

"For dorks," Simpson quipped dryly, eliciting a laugh and putting the group at ease.

Simpson was adamant that the workshop was about us, that she wanted to *hold space* for us as we pondered our own pathways and understandings; that Indigenous peoples hold very different perspectives and that "all our stories matter." She listened as we introduced ourselves, shared our experiences, frustrations, learnings and challenges.

Ours was a diverse gathering. Different ages, experiences, phenotypes, philosophies, gender expressions within an Indigenous context: many who shared feelings of disconnect within the settler-colonial academy. For me, as a mid-life, working journalist of Ts'msyen and German heritage, then embroiled in the midst of an intense year, enrolled as a student in a UBC graduate course in Indigenous Research Methodologies while also teaching journalism part-time at another university a 3-hour daily commute away, the disconnect I was feeling (not in the classroom) but from the relentless, impersonal, mechanical university administrative structures at both institutions was isolating, painful and dispiriting.

So when Simpson shared her own early experience with the academy, they resonated.

She spoke of the frustration and violence of the system she encountered in her early years at university. Getting away from the institution and doing biology fieldwork with a group of Anishinaabe elders on the land would prove to be the defining moment of her young life.

“The old ones, they thought in a way unlike anyone I had ever met,” she told our group. “They carried themselves in a way that was so beautiful.”

Simpson stuck with academia, despite it all, navigating and negotiating her way around its more soul-destroying waters, ultimately earning a PhD. Then found herself, as a 28-year-old newly minted academic and mother, seized with existential despair at a university job she hated and found “soul sucking.” In stark contrast, she had begun to experience profound joy, purpose and freedom on the land with elders who were, to her, the intellectuals of the Anishinabeg worldview, whose pedagogy she craved.

Back at the university, seasoned academic colleagues urged her to hang in till she could get tenure or take a sabbatical. But she couldn’t. She quit, though it meant financial hardship with a new baby.

In her essay *Land as Pedagogy*, Simpson writes: “We cannot bring about the kind of radical transformation we seek if we are solely reliant upon state-sanctioned and state-run education systems. We cannot carry out the kind of decolonization our Ancestors set in motion if we don’t create a generation of land-based, community-based intellectuals and cultural producers who are accountable to our nations and whose life work is concerned with the regeneration of these systems rather than meeting the overwhelming needs of the Western academic by bringing Indigenous Knowledge into the academy on the terms of the academy itself.”

Simpson populates her stories with queer, Two Spirit, gender fluid, non-binary characters. In our workshop she referenced Nanabush, a free spirited character and Spiritual Being within Nishnaabeg thought and stories. As Simpson has written, Nanabush is widely regarded “... as an important teacher because Nanabush mirrors human behavior and models how (and how not to) come to know.”

A couple of decades after Simpson re-defined her relationship to the western academy, she told our group of Indigenous learners that, “to this day, when I’m around elders on the land, I feel like things will be okay. It’s like breath, a necessity of life, like what I need to be alive.”

An overarching theme for me, as well, during the pandemic lockdown of 2020 has been a sense that feels like a DNA download from my own Ts’mSYen ancestors: that western culture is drowning in knowledge, yet starved for wisdom. That we shouldn’t rush through this time, but allow this great quieting and retreat to reveal what we need to know, with love, compassion and patience. To wait, while the land and the animals rest. To hear more clearly how to act with wisdom. *Hagwil yaan*, in the language of my grandmother, to *walk softly*.

Leanne Simpson’s teachings reaffirmed much of what I didn’t realize I already knew. ●

Haíłzaqv Highlights

A Directed Studies and Friendship

w o r d s b y B e n C h u n g

Collaboration is a core tenet at UBC's Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies (CIS) in principle and most importantly, in practice. FNIS majors complete a structured community-centred practicum in their last semester, and FNEL students have many opportunities to work closely with knowledge holders and Elders in language classes and, at times, through self-directed studies.

One such FNEL directed studies undertaking has become an ongoing relationship and educational experience for all those involved and continued informally even after completion of the course. During UBC's 2019 Winter Session, FNEL and Linguistics major Ben Chung partnered with Hereditary Chief and Haíłzaqv̓la (or 'Heiltsuk language') speaker, Chester Lawson in a unique directed studies to examine innovative strategies for learning Haíłzaqv̓la and to engage with the language in the Lower Mainland.

Haíłzaqv̓la is a Northern Wakashan language primarily spoken in the territory of the Haíłzaqv (or 'Heiltsuk') in Bella Bella or Wág̓l̓is̓la ('the place where the river spreads out/parts'). Chester is a lifelong speaker, residential school survivor, educator, and skilled artist, and Ben has been an undergraduate researcher in a partnership with the Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre, FNEL program, and Bella Bella

Community School since 2017. Through a mutual interest to work with and speak the language while in Vancouver, the partnership was born.

During their structured time together, Chester and Ben practiced pronunciation and worked through syntax-related exercises to progress past single phrases into how to express more complex thoughts in Haíłzaqv̓la. With over 40 different unique sounds (phonemes) in the language, Chester thinks it is crucial that learners are able to articulate and recognise these meaningful distinctions. Haíłzaqv̓la is also exceptional in the area where it is spoken and in its language family as it possesses a tonal distinction. This feature continues to be a challenge for Ben, but with Chester's help, the student hopes to not just be able to vocalise tone with ease, but better perceive it too.

However, Chester and Ben were not the only individuals benefiting from these weekly, hours long meetings. Bryan Burdick, Chester's grandson, was also a principal participant who simultaneously worked to hone his technical skills through recording his grandfather's stories and insights about their language and learn Haíłzaqv̓la through attendance in these lessons.



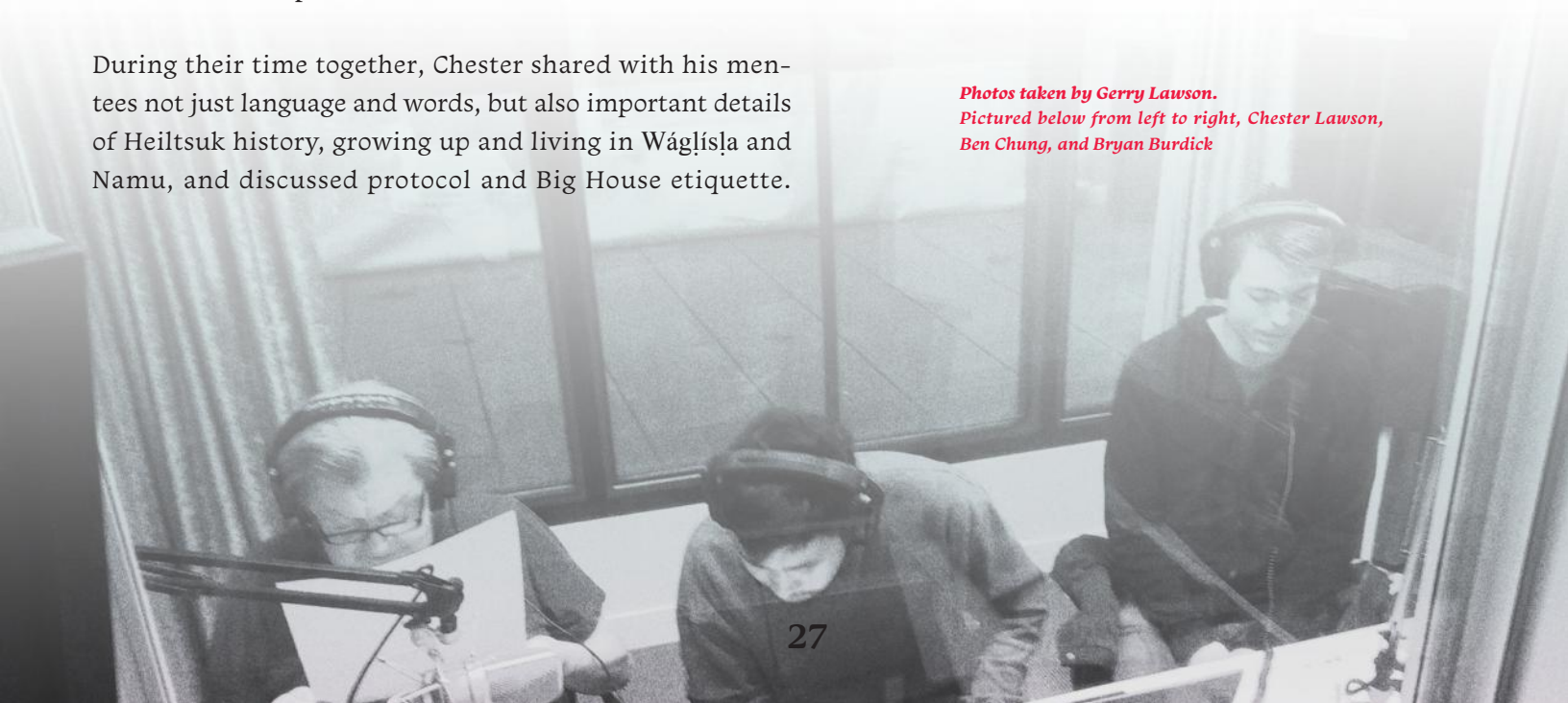
Practicing and speaking started with reading archival documents and working with pedagogical guides; however, the team quickly expanded into newer and more personalised activities and language tasks. The trio went on to translate popular memes at the time into Hałʔzaqvł̓a and use props as subjects (including Ben's dog that he would bring to some sessions). The group also was able to record at the Museum of Anthropology's Oral History and Language Laboratory with another family member, Gerry Lawson (Chester's son and Bryan's uncle), to tape sounds for an upcoming instalment of the Heiltsuk Alphabet Chart online.

These teachings would be practiced in situ at the opening of Gvúkva'áus Hałʔzaqv (or 'House of the Heiltsuk') in Bella Bella, which all three participants were able to attend in October 2019.

While COVID-19 has prevented the trio from working as closely for the last few months, the wiism̓ ('guys') hope to gather again when it is safe to continue learning from each other, translating hot topics in the language, and maybe even share some butter clams if they are lucky. ●

During their time together, Chester shared with his mentees not just language and words, but also important details of Heiltsuk history, growing up and living in Wágł̓isł̓a and Namu, and discussed protocol and Big House etiquette.

*Photos taken by Gerry Lawson.
Pictured below from left to right, Chester Lawson,
Ben Chung, and Bryan Burdick*





Settler Reflexion

EMMA
FELTES

On the first day of our seminar, *Indigenous Rights and the Settler State*, I asked the students their goals for the course. This was a pretty typical first-day question; they had probably done a similar go-around in each of their classes that day. “What do you know about the debate around Indigenous ‘rights’ in Canada, and what do you want to know?” I asked.

It’s not that I underestimated these students. It’s just that I thought we were still *easing in*. I did not anticipate the honesty, reflexivity, and ambition with which they would respond:

“Tools and ways to dismantle colonial structures”

“To think about why our communities sign deals with the state and why they refuse, because it’s not black and white”

“A deeper, intellectual understanding of my positionality as a settler, to strengthen the intuitive understanding that I already have”

And with that, I knew this was a formidable group of students, whose commitments to these topics lie well beyond academic curiosity.

We began the term as a siege of Wet’suwet’en territory was underway. The fierceness with which the class addressed what was taking place, and with the gentleness with which they treated each other through such challenging conversations, was remarkable to be a part of.

We ended the term isolated from one another, each differently impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and facing different anxieties. And still, students’ care, patience, and commitment could not be stifled, as they pressed on in their scholarship.

It was an honour to teach my first course with CIS, and get to learn from such sharp, engaged students as these. I look forward to witnessing all of the ways they will continue to dismantle colonial structures into the future. ●

Emma Feltes is a settler scholar and writer, based on Coast Salish territory. She is a PhD Candidate in Anthropology at UBC.

?bédayine

book review by Keirra Webb

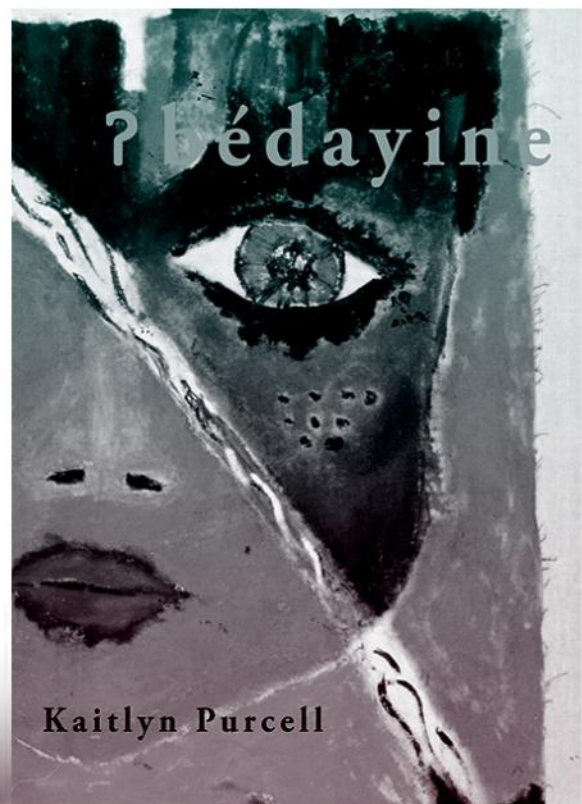
I was first introduced to Kaitlyn Purcell's work at the Indigenous Brilliance Spring Reading hosted by Massy Books, *Room Magazine*, and the Vancouver Art Gallery. We were about a month into the era of COVID-19 at this point, so the prospect of listening to a cyber-reading of Kaitlyn's debut collection, *?bédayine*, was still an anomaly but an exciting one. All of the distance between us—the hundreds of miles of physical space, the square boxes on the Zoom screen that distinguished guest from performer—dissolved as Kaitlyn invited us into that magical space where poetry resides.

?bédayine follows the life of an urban Dene woman fighting to stay embodied despite the legions of forces that seek to steal her from herself. A woman who turns to the dreamworld, the cosmos,

the land, and the waters to seek solace from a reality strangled by settler colonialism. Kaitlyn's poems are very much concerned with the everyday—work, friendships, sex, drugs—spliced with moments of absolute transcendence. They test the limits of what it means to shatter and to live in a world fracturing from climate change and generations of gendered colonial violence.

Looking back at my notes from Kaitlyn's reading, I see a phrase circled and underlined that jumps out at me: "melancholic splendour." That's it. These poems articulate that which is painfully beautiful and dance that

cosmic dance between destruction and exultation, chaos and ecstasy. Colonialism may be the underlying ache throughout *?bédayine*, but Kaitlyn asserts that resistance will always live in the connection between Indigenous bodies and the land. An even stronger through line than violence, however, is the bond the protagonist holds with her best friend, Thana. Their relationship illustrates the power of "Indigenous women's love and resistance," to quote from Dr. Dory Nason's pivotal work, as they laugh, cry, dance, and rage in the face of a world that threatens to tear them apart. ●



?bédayne

event highlight

by David Gaertner



Photo courtesy of Kaitlyn Purcell

On February 25, 2020 CIS welcomed Dene writer Kaitlyn Purcell, award-winning author of *?bédayne*, to Green College for a reading and conversation with the UBC community. Kaitlyn's book found its way onto the FNIS 220 reading list, alongside Billy-Ray Belcourt and Eden Robinson, after acclaim from social media brought it my attention and we were absolutely thrilled to book her for an event on Musqueam territory – away from Edmonton, where she is working on a PhD in Indigenous literatures, Creative Writing, And Community-Based Learning.

The striking complexity of *?bédayne*'s form, which blurs the boundaries between poetry, short fiction, and the novel, coupled with its unique take on Indigenous futurisms and the ongoing apocalypse of settler colonialism, makes it clear that Purcell is a rising literary star. After my first read of the book, I immediately began looking for ways to bring her to UBC to meet with our students and to share her work with our community. With the support of Interim chair Dory Nason, the CIS admin team, and the students of FNIS 220, we whisked Kaitlyn out of her TA position at the University of Calgary, where she works with the amazing Larissa Lai (author of *Salt Fish Girl* and *The Tiger Flu*), to join us for a breakfast reading and Q&A at the Green College Coach House.

Jessica Johns, nehiyaw poet and editor of *Room Magazine*, was our MC for the event, introducing Kaitlyn and conducting a provocative question and answer period, which emphasized the poetics of Kaitlyn's prose and provided a productive glimpse into her writing process. Audience members also had the opportunity to ask questions and Kaitlyn finished the event off signing books and chatting with students of FNIS 300: Writing First Nations.

Thanks to Kaitlyn, Jessica, and everyone who helped to make this event a success. Look for more CIS readings with Indigenous authors soon! ●

COMMUNITY

art



Karlene Harvey

When I was asked to create an illustration to honour Dr. Sarah Hunt, I noted a byline that she used online which read: “You can find me at the shoreline talking to the whales.”

This phrase is filled with such a beautifully poetic and literal meaning so I began thinking about her Kwakwaka'wakw ancestry – a Nation that respects their kinship to water, sea animals and the health of the land. Sarah has an extensive research practice that focuses on Indigenous geographies and so I wished to reflect on how whales have migratory routes which are necessary for hunting, giving birth and navigating the oceanscape for their survival. There is something beautiful about how whales travel in order for their families to thrive while still returning to their “homelands” periodically or annually throughout their lifetime. This seemed to operate as a fitting metaphor for the legacy Sarah has left with the community at UBC and in Vancouver while also recognizing her return to the island. Furthermore, I thought about how the University of British Columbia is located on Musqueam territory which resides on a tip of land that meets the ocean as does the University of Victoria,

separated by the passage of the Salish Sea. There is a rich history within these territories of travelling along waterways to meet, learn, and connect with Nations that exist amongst these oceanscapes and riverways. Finally, the fire in this image is going strong, it is a space for gathering, finding warmth, and telling stories – may we all try and hold space (in our various institutions) like we do amidst our kinship around a fire.

In conversation with Sarah, I was delighted to learn that her traditional name references a connection to whales and that fire has a deep connection to her work in law, as traditional governance occurs in the centre of the house where the fire is. I hope this image continues to reveal layers to both Sarah and to anyone who has been impacted by her work.

Nanexweneghul'in (There is no word for goodbye in my Tsilhqot'in language, instead we say that one day we will meet again). ●







Portrait of the Sun Dance Opera

Portrait of the Sun Dance Opera depicts a mirrored portrait of Zitkála-Ša. This piece draws from both Zitkála-Ša's composition of the Sun Dance Opera and the quote ***"I was not wholly conscious of myself, but was more keenly alive to the fire within"*** from her book *American Indian Stories*. This piece is inspired by the aesthetics of a South Dakota sunset and the transformative powers of turning our gaze back towards ourselves.

Alexa McPhee is a mixed-Japanese, Mi'kmaq and white artist located on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations. Alexa is a mixed media artist but focuses her work on portraits and digital paintings. Alexa is a 2019 CIS alumna, and graduated with a double major in First Nations and Indigenous Studies and Political Science. When not busy creating, she spends her time finishing up her master's degree in community and regional planning, working as an affordable housing planner and searching for the best dumplings in Metro Vancouver. ●



A L U M N I

When I joined what was then the First Nations Studies Program in 2005, I knew I wanted to study Indigenous media. Canada is the site of one of the largest bodies of Indigenous media in the world, and I was fascinated with its history, scope, and creativity. I knew FNSP would help me to develop the critical and ethical frameworks for understanding this work, but at the time I didn't realize the extent to which it would help me build friendships and networks in the Indigenous film and media arts world that have guided me ever since. It was at FNSP that I decided to dedicate myself to Indigenous media studies: I completed my MA in Cinema Studies at the University of Toronto in 2011, followed by my PhD in Cinema and Media Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles in 2016.

Dr. Karrmen Crey
Cheam First Nation, Stó:lō
Assistant Professor at Simon Fraser
University's School of Communication

The year I graduated from UCLA, I was incredibly lucky that the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University was searching for an assistant professor in Indigenous communication and media studies. I'd always hoped to come back home to teach and continue my research, and received that opportunity at SFU. My transition from student to assistant professor happened during a unique time, as many post-secondary institutions are building capacity to support Indigenous students, faculty, and staff, and develop better relationships with Indigenous communities. Much of this direction and leadership for this work falls to Indigenous faculty, placing extraordinary demands on their time and energy. I've been fortunate to have wonderful colleagues in the School of Communication who are committed to decolonization and Indigenous capacity-building, and who have been instrumental to moving this work forward. I am also incredibly grateful to have networks of Indigenous artists, friends, and academics who continually build my energy, commitment, and knowledge. This is what I want to share most with FNIS students: whatever your work and path you choose, your systems of support will not only sustain you, but also inspire and drive you. Thank you, FNIS, for helping me find my path. *yu:wqwhla a' syo:yselep!* ●

REFLECTIONS

Since I graduated with my BA from UBC in 2008, I started on a journey towards a career in Academia. Ten years after my convocation at UBC, I started a job in 2018 as an Assistant Professor focusing on Indigenous Business at the Beedie School of Business at Simon Fraser University. When I studied at UBC, business was not something I ever imagined I would be interested in as my focus was First Nations Studies and Sociology. However, it was course readings and mentorship at UBC that peaked my interest in research by Māori scholars and that brought me to Aotearoa-New Zealand. Having completed a Master's degree and a PhD at the University of Auckland Business School, I became fascinated with a discipline that was largely vacant of Indigenous perspectives and could see the potential for my career to shape that knowledge over the next 30 years.

The transition from being a university student (14 years!) to a professor has been full of contradictions. On the one hand, I was relieved that after having put in my time to become a 'subject area expert', I was awarded with institutional standing and able to share knowledge right away through teaching and research. On the other hand, the reality of joining a large institution like SFU is that the bar raised again to publish in academic journals and meet business school criteria to get tenure. It is a marathon in the sense that after every milestone achievement, there is a new goal that requires you to reset, find the energy again and develop a new strategy. It is exhausting, but I am always reminded that in so many ways, for me, it is the greatest job on earth because I have incredible freedom to determine my own projects and I truly love research and writing. I feel that I am free when I write, and that has always been my guiding star—intellectual freedom. ●



Dr. Dara Kelly
Leq'á:mel First Nation, Stó:lō
*Assistant Professor at Simon Fraser
University's Beedie School of Business*



FNEL First Graduate Reflection

words by Jade LaFontaine

I was incredibly privileged to have the opportunity I did at UBC to learn and take courses in FNEL. There are very few universities that offer a program like FNEL, so when I discovered it was something I could major in, I immediately became invested in the program. At the time I was taking courses, the Major/Minor program had not been approved yet, but I chose to pursue it all the way to the end despite that. I wanted to demonstrate that there were people who wanted a program like this to exist and to receive university credits for it. I was very lucky that only months before my graduation the program was finally approved! Every course I took was inspiring, and I learned such valuable interdisciplinary skills that I have already been

able to apply to my on-going Masters degree. Through the FNEL practicum I was able to do a research project with my ancestral language *nle?kepmxcin*, which is considered critically endangered. It was empowering to have the opportunity to study something so important to me, and that I am so passionate about, but also to have the pressing need many communities have for language reclamation recognized by an institution like UBC. I believe my peers feel the same way from how they reflect on their time in the program, and I continue to credit the program for the new understandings I have for all the work that goes into the revitalization of our endangered languages. ●

Celebrating the FNEL Major/Minor Degree & the Inaugural Graduating Class!

words by Dr. Patricia Shaw

The Global Endangered Languages Crisis

Although early rallying cries in the academic domain that foregrounded concerns about “the global endangered languages crisis” were the paradigm-shifting papers of Ken Hale (1992) and Michael Krauss (1992) in the Linguistics journal *Language*, it is important to recognize that Indigenous peoples in Canada were already active in mobilizing awareness of the urgency to protect their languages. One prominent earlier landmark was the 1990 report entitled *Towards Linguistic Justice for First Nations*, wherein the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Education Secretariat set forth a set of “Principles for Revitalization of First Nations Languages” based on the fundamental principle that “Without our languages, our cultures cannot survive.”

Over the subsequent three decades, these convergent concerns led to the evolution of a new interdisciplinary field of Endangered Language documentation and applied research in academia, paralleled by the significant growth of Indigenous community-led initiatives fuelled by the passionate

commitment of First Nations language reclamation advocates. The major challenge over this period of time has been bringing the potentially powerful synergies of “academia” and “community” together, given deeply entrenched legacies of distrust on the part of Indigenous peoples.

Not only were the post-colonial educational institutions themselves historically complicit in the suppression of Indigenous languages, cultures, and knowledge systems, but the track records of many individual academic researchers were ethically and intellectually offensive. Critiques ranged from the scholarship being culturally biased, myopic, and/or grievously misinterpreted through a non-Indigenous lens, to fundamental concerns about methodologies being non-transparent and exploitative, entailing the appropriation and non-consensual use of Indigenous knowledge acquired through extractive research activity without consideration of community-defined goals, let alone respect for proprietary rights to documented oral traditions or sensitivity to appropriate cultural protocols to govern the curation and use of the acquired “data.” Moreover, the resultant research

“products” were often framed by narrowly focussed theoretical goals that were defined within highly abstract research models of academic disciplines. As a consequence, the unfamiliar modes of presentation and theoretical jargon often constituted a serious - frequently impenetrable - barrier to community members outside of the academy being able to access potentially relevant and pedagogically useful insights about their linguistic and cultural heritage. Furthermore, the decontextualization of crucial “data” - where individual words or sentences are cited in isolation from the semantic cohesion and cultural embeddedness of oral communication - is seriously disconcerting and alienating both to someone who is a fluent speaker of the language (“Why are they always *taking the language apart?*”) or to someone whose major goal is to *learn to speak* the language.

In short, the deep-seated legacies of alienation and distrust on the part of Indigenous peoples to academic institutions and researchers are undeniably deserved. On the one hand, it’s commonly said that reparation and reconciliation take *time*. On the other hand, the *time* pressures are truly urgent. It’s an incontrovertible reality that

Indigenous peoples across BC are witnessing the inexorable and irreplaceable loss the last generation of fluent first-language speakers of their First Nations languages.

UBC's role through this period of time

It is significant that more than two decades ago UBC had taken a major step - unprecedented at any other university in Canada - in officially recognizing its institutional responsibilities to redress the multiple consequences of its historical complicity in the suppression of Indigenous languages. Specifically, in 1996 UBC initiated negotiations directly with the Musqueam Indian Band to engage in collaborative research, curriculum development, and fully accredited university classes geared towards revitalization of the critically endangered hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ language. In 1997, the "Protocol Agreement for Teaching a Musqueam Language Course" at UBC was formally ratified by the MIB Chief and Council and by the UBC President's Office. Two points about this Protocol Agreement are of particular relevance. First is the fact that UBC's Point Grey campus is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people: this official recognition by UBC of its territorial provenance and concomitant responsibilities transpired over twenty years ago, long before other post-secondary institutions publicly acknowledged their presence on Indigenous land, let alone considered issues of accountability. Second is the fact that this initiative to support Indigenous language reclamation was proposed by an individual faculty member at UBC, but importantly was conducted under

the aegis of the UBC President's Office. These two points by no means eradicate the long history of systemic institutional repression, but they do provide a valuable retrospective lens on the ground-breaking leadership roles that the UBC President's Office committed to in acknowledging its responsibility to the Indigenous peoples of this place, to their linguistic and cultural heritage, and to their ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory.

In the years subsequent to the inaugural community partnership with Musqueam, the FNLG program in UBC's Faculty of Arts grew in direct response to student and community requests to mount accredited classes in a number of other First Nations languages, including n̓eʔkepmxcin (Thompson River Salish), Cree, Dakelh/Carrier, Kwak'waka, as well as offering individualized Directed Studies courses for other languages including Nuuchahnulth, Sliammon, Haida - all taught in collaboration with fluent Elders who brought not only their languages, but also their cultures - their teachings, their oral traditions, their personal life histories, their laughter, and their resilience - into our UBC classrooms and into our students' lives.

The UBC BA Major/Minor in First Nations and Endangered Languages

The sheer diversity, complexity, and critically endangered status of the multiple Indigenous languages of BC (34 different languages; belonging to 7 genetically distinct language families) constitute immense challenges for restoration. Beyond offering accredited courses to learn about particular First

Nations languages, what does the UBC Major/Minor Degree aim to contribute? Many Indigenous students have not had opportunities to be immersed in or even exposed to their cultural heritage; consequently, such students often face intense pressures - internal and external - related to not knowing their language. For an individual to take that initial step to language learning often entails crossing deeply challenging and fraught thresholds of their connection to family, community, and history. In providing a welcoming and safe classroom context for students to succeed in taking those extremely difficult first steps and to be nurtured with the skills and confidence to continue a life-long language/culture journey, the UBC FNEL program is contributing in profoundly positive ways not only to long-term language reclamation, but even more fundamentally to an individual and collective process of reconciliation and healing. At the same time, the FNEL classes constitute a uniquely informative and deeply transformative intercultural experience for non-Indigenous students who seek to understand the complex colonial legacies of our society and to identify their personal roles and responsibilities in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action.

Beyond language skills and the deepened insights into Indigenous epistemologies and ways of being that derive from language study, the FNEL Major/Minor program offers a diversity of interdisciplinary methodology classes that develop research expertise relevant to successful endangered language reclamation. These courses build skills in collaborative documentation; applied linguistics for curriculum development; language acquisition at

different age levels and in bi-/multilingual contexts; perspectives on orality and literacy; critical assessment of principles of orthographic design in relation to multilingual language learning; experience in lexicography, dictionary-making, and app development; interpreting archival material in the context of language change and the impacts of colonial contact, along with diverse other opportunities to help address the challenges facing endangered language communities.

Building on the core premise that potential success of academic initiatives in endangered language reclamation entails the creation of more empowering models that recognize “the vital importance of community-centered self-determination and control over their language, their heritage, and their linguistic future” (Shaw 2004), a fundamental principle of the UBC FNEL Major/Minor BA Degree is capacity-building in close collaboration with Indigenous communities. A central goal is that Indigenous scholars will become well equipped not only to study their own languages with the research tools that academic linguists, anthropologists, and educators have developed, but also to assume leadership roles to determine research needs, set program objectives, develop sophisticated curriculum, and guide collaborative initiatives. As partners, non-Indigenous students will acquire extensive firsthand experience in cultural and linguistic research collaborations that are integrally consultative, participatory, reciprocal, and informed by Indigenous community protocols and respectful dialogue.

The FNEL program faculty, staff, students, and community partners

gratefully acknowledge the University of British Columbia and the Faculty of Arts for their institutional support of this BA degree. This is a truly significant milestone: the *first* post-secondary BA Degree program in Canada dedicated explicitly to providing a comprehensive educational foundation in collaboration with Indigenous communities - on reserve and in diaspora - for endangered language reclamation, resurgence, and long-term stabilization.

The Inaugural Graduating Class: 2019-2020 BA Major/Minor in First Nations and Endangered Languages (FNEL)

It is particularly heart-warming to honour and celebrate the inaugural class of UBC students graduating with an FNEL Major or Minor Bachelor of Arts degree. Your outstanding scholarship, hard work, creativity, and passionate dedication to advancing the linguistic and cultural rights of Indigenous peoples have contributed immeasurably to transformative understandings and active change not only in the context of your classrooms, but across the university, and with the Indigenous communities that you have engaged with. It is truly significant that this year of the first graduates of the UBC FNEL Major/Minor program coincided with the culmination of the United Nations/UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL 2019), and with the unprecedented announcement (18 Dec. 2019) by the UN General Assembly that the critical challenges of the global Endangered Language Crisis merit a further *decade* (2022-2032) “to draw attention to the critical loss of Indigenous languages and the urgent

need to preserve, revitalize, and promote Indigenous language”!

What greater affirmation - on the *world* stage - could there be of *your* choice to have pursued this FNEL degree? The knowledge and experience that you have acquired - and the depth of human compassion, visionary thinking, and positive energy that have guided you along this path - are truly highly valued and vitally important on a global scale. May the ethically grounded teachings and collaborative leadership skills that you have gained from your time in the UBC FNEL program carry you forward with courage and confidence to take up the immense challenges and unparalleled opportunities that lie ahead!

čəyətələ cən! hay cə:p qə! ●

References

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- Krauss, Michael. 1992. The world's languages in crisis. *Language. Journal of the LSA*.
- Shaw, Patricia A. 2004. Negotiating Against Loss: Responsibility, Reciprocity, and Respect in Endangered Language Research. In *Lectures on Endangered Languages 4*. (Sakiyama, Endo, Watanabe, & Sasama, eds.) Osaka: Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim (ELPR) Series C004. 181-194.

Graduation CLASSES

From all of us at the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, we would like to wish all of our 2020 Graduates congratulations on completing their undergraduate degrees. We are so proud of all that you have achieved and we look forward to the incredible work you will continue to do in the future.

In lieu of an in-person graduation, CIS organized a Virtual Celebration for our CIS 2020 Graduates! Hosted by Dr. Dory Nason, our Acting Director at the time, we celebrated with song, kind words, and a graduation video compiled of personal messages of congratulations by faculty, staff, and community members.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

What made you decide to major in FNIS/FNEL?

"I chose to major in FNIS after hearing about the research practicum. I was super excited to have the opportunity to work with an Indigenous organization, on a topic that interested me. The experience was unlike anything other programs offered and I knew then that it was the right choice for me. Additionally, leading up to hearing about the research practicum, I had begun to gain a sense of community within my FNIS classes, they provided me a supportive space to be myself and the expand upon my thoughts and ideas."

— Memegwāns Johnson-Owl, FNIS

Is there a particular instructor that inspired you during your undergraduate degree?

"Patricia Shaw has been an absolute angel to me, she has been so incredibly helpful, inspiring and insightful for me every step of the way. I don't think I would be where I am if she had not supported me the way she did."

— Jade LaFontaine, FNEL

Do you have a favourite course that you have taken in FNIS/FNEL?

"My favourite FNEL courses were hənqəminəm. By the end of the third year, I felt so comfortable with the setting. It allowed me to learn a completely foreign language (in the beginning) in such a positive setting. I really missed that class when it was over." — Vanessa Derenzio, FNEL ●



2 0 2 0

G r a d u a t e s

Sarah Ann Bednash, Major in English and Minor in FNIS

Tiana Bone, Major in FNIS and Major in English

Kimyah Bridges, Major in FNIS

Julia Burnham, Major in Canadian Studies and Minor in FNIS

Natalie Cappe, Major in FNIS

Benjamin Chung, Major in FNEL and Major in Linguistics

Vanessa Derenzio, Major in FNIS and Anthropology

Andrea Dsouza, Major in FNIS

Laura Griffin, Major in Linguistics and Minor in FNEL

Annie Guerin, Major in FNEL

Kate Hodgson, Major in FNIS

Memegwāns Johnson-Owl, Major in FNIS and Minor in Political Science

Jade LaFontaine, Major in FNEL

Beverly Ma, Major in FNIS and Major in Geography

Russell Nesbit, Major in Psychology and Minor in FNIS (Not Pictured)

F N I S

Term 1

FNIS 100
Indigenous Foundations

FNIS 220
***Representation and
Indigenous Cultural Politics***

FNIS 310
***Critical Indigenous
Theory Seminar***

Term 2

FNIS 210
***Indigenous Politics
and Self-Determination***

FNIS 320
***Critical Indigenous
Methodologies and Ethics***

FNIS 401C
***Indigenous Oral
History Interviewing:
Theory, Method, and Practice***

FNIS 452
Indigenous Social Movements

FNIS 454
Indigenous New Media

Term 1 and 2

FNIS 400
***Practicum/Advanced
Research Seminar***

FNIS 501A
***Indigenous Theory and
Methods Seminar***

F N E L

Term 1

FNEL 180
***Introduction to Endangered
Language Documentation
and Revitalization***

FNEL 381
***Biocultural Diversity:
Language, Community, and Environment***

FNEL 382
***Lexicography for
Endangered Languages***

Term 2

FNEL 282
***Structures of
Endangered Languages:
Conservation and Revitalization***

FNEL 481
***Heritage Resources in
Endangered First Nations
Language Revitalization***

20S Course Offerings

***FNIS 100
Indigenous Foundations***

***FNIS 401E
Decolonizing Documentaries***

CIS Course Offerings