UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education.

Learn, Teach, Heal:

Articulations of Indigeneity and Spirituality in Indigenous Tourism in British Columbia, Canada.

Helen Jennings

A dissertation for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor – June 2021

Roy Henry Vickers – 'Kitasoo Dawn' – 1998.

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Abstract

'Learn, Teach, Heal' encapsulates what seems to be occurring in Indigenous Tourism on Vancouver Island and the Haida Gwaii in British Columbia, Canada. Operating as a 'Tourist-researcher' in 2017 and 2018, I was there at a time when Indigenous Tourism was booming, partly facilitated by the political movement of Truth & Reconciliation. Tourism is often seen as a shallow, commercial and artificial activity, yet such a view risks speaking over the various reasons why hosts choose to engage in the industry. This dissertation offers a case study based on tours, performances and interviews with six people. The research foregrounds the voices and experiences of: Andy Everson, Tana Thomas, Roy Henry Vickers, Tsimka Martin, K'odi Nelson and Alix Goetzinger. In listening to how they present their work, I study how indigeneity and spirituality were being articulated in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation. Whilst they were all engaged in tourism for their own different reasons, a common theme that emerged was the goal to use tourism to learn, teach and heal, both for themselves and for their guests. Learning how to be guides and performers, their languages, traditional practices, histories and politics, they were able to explore with tourists aspects of their indigeneity and spirituality, illustrate diversity of peoples and practices, and teach about their values and hopes for the future. Healing is gained through having a space to learn and to teach, and to restore pride to the communities by taking control of the narratives. It is my contention that Indigenous Tourism is offering these six people sites of 'becoming' and 'reclaiming' in ways that put decolonisation into practice.

Key terms: Indigenous peoples, indigeneity, spirituality, Indigenous Tourism, tourism, decolonisation, British Columbia, Canada, articulation theory.

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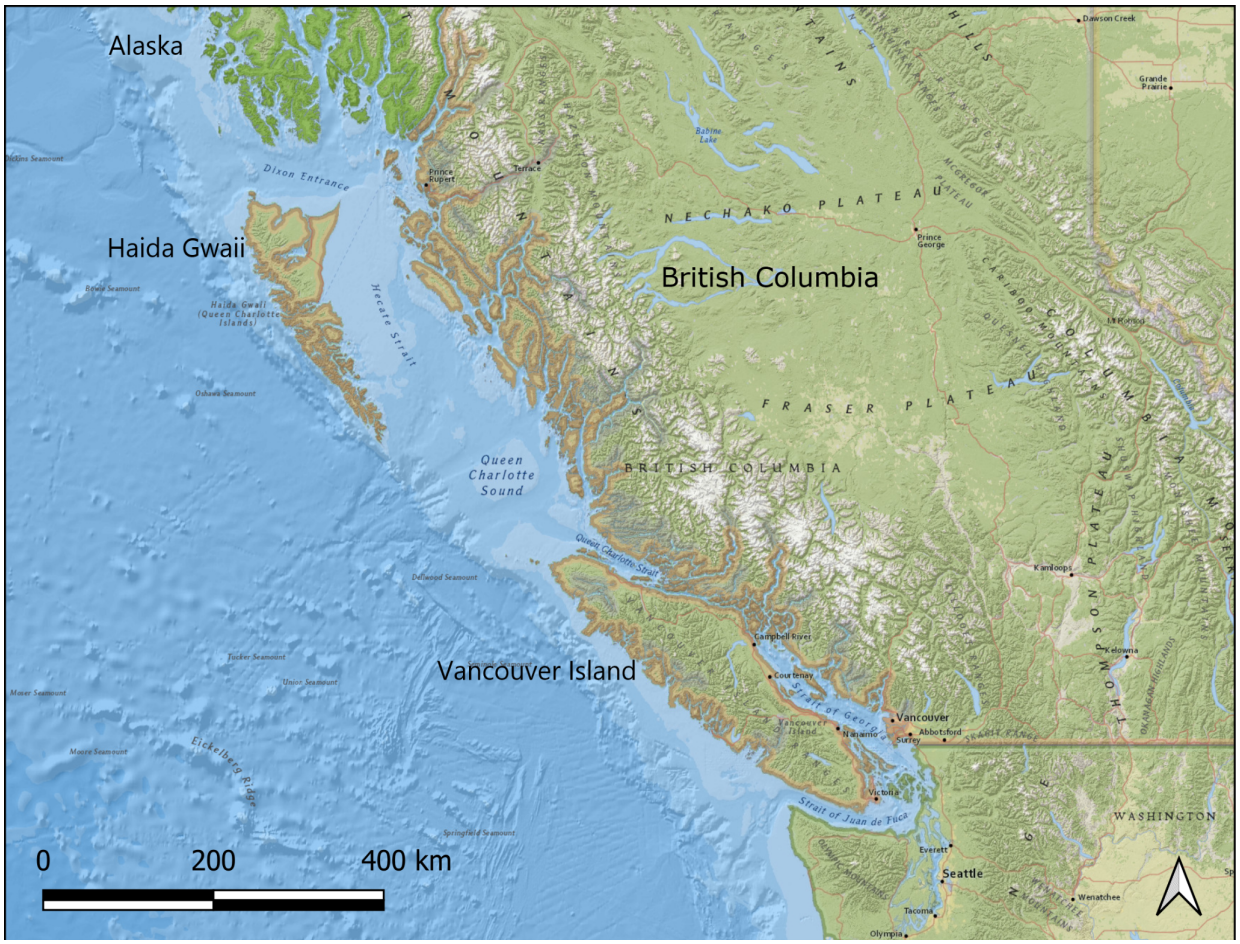

Image 1: Map of British Columbia with Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii highlighted.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study grew out of an interest in how indigeneity and spirituality were being articulated in Indigenous Tourism, and later came to explore connections with processes of decolonisation. It is based on tours, performances, and interviews with six Indigenous people working in Indigenous Tourism in Vancouver Island and the Haida Gwaii (British Columbia, Canada) in 2017 and 2018. I have been interested in how they present their work, and, with the help of articulation theory, I investigate how indigeneity and spirituality were being presented. Tourism is often dismissed as a shallow, commercial and artificial activity, yet such an attitude risks speaking over the various reasons why hosts choose to engage in the industry, something which this research seeks to highlight.

The six people central to this study are: Andy Everson, a member of the K'ómox First Nation, a Northwest coast artist and performer; Tana Thomas, a member of the Ahousaht First Nations working as a cultural canoe guide; Roy Henry Vickers, a First Nations artist, storyteller and author; Tsimka Martin a member of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and owner of *Tashii Paddle School*; K'odi Nelson from the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation, tour guide for *Sea Wolf Adventures* and Executive Director of the *Nawalakw Society*; Alix Goetzinger (Sgaana Gaahlandaay) a member of the Haida Nation, working as a cultural interpreter for *Haida Style Expeditions.* I met each of them first as a tourist – as they were involved in leading a tour or performance. Tana, Tsimka, K'odi and Alix were working full time as tour guides, while Andy and Roy are both professional artists who engage with tourism for selected events. Roy regularly offers storytelling sessions and Andy performs and guides at Indigenous festivals. Tana, Alix and Tsimka are women in their twenties and thirties, Andy and K'odi are in their late forties, and Roy is in his seventies.

My research questions became:

- How did the six people present their involvement in Indigenous Tourism?
- How is indigeneity and spirituality articulated in these presentations?
- How are these articulations related to processes of decolonisation?

The first question relates to what I asked each person in the interviews and aims to address a gap in research by listening to the perspectives of people who choose to engage in the Indigenous Tourism industry. The second and third question speaks to my theoretical framework and the analytical observations and conversations that have been opened as a result, such as the theme of decolonisation. Before proceeding to situate the study, I will outline my approach to the central concepts at work in this dissertation – indigeneity, spirituality, and decolonisation – as they all carry histories, tensions, and limitations, and mean different things to different peoples.

Each of the six people were working as artists or guides in Indigenous Tourism and presented themselves in these contexts as Indigenous or by some connected appellation.[1] I am not attempting to define indigeneity or spirituality, but instead listen to how these terms are used and given meanings. Indigenous peoples is a relatively recent term which emerged in the 1970s, primarily, it is claimed, by the Māori anthropologist Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999:7) related to the struggles and work done by the American Indian Movement (AIM), and the Native Brotherhood in Canada.[2] Smith argues that the term has enabled the collective voices of colonized people to be expressed strategically in the international arena such as the United Nations, which offers criteria for who can be included as 'Indigenous', which many Institutions, nation states, scholars, and people around the world use as a starting point.[3] Indigeneity and spirituality are often assembled together, and spirituality is marketed as a central aspect of

[1] In Canada the term Indigenous is often employed by, and used, to describe people who belong to different First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities. I write Indigenous with a capital 'I' to signal respect in speaking of a group of people, distinguishing that usage from discussion of flora and fauna – as indigenous to a particular place. This term is widely considered more inclusive and relevant than other contested appellations operating in Canada today, such as First Nation, Indian, Aboriginal, and Native. In my ethnographic chapters I try to use whichever terms were used in the settings I am describing, which includes personal and specific designations. There is not always agreement on how different names of peoples and places are demarcated and spelt; I have taken my lead from the people interviewed.

[2] For American Indian Movement see: http://www.aimovement.org/AIM For Native Brotherhood in Canada see: https://nativebrotherhood.ca/ (accessed April 2021).

[3] Their list includes self-identification as Indigenous people at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member; historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies, and an emphasis on relationships to specific lands. See: United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. "Who are Indigenous peoples?" https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/publications/2014/09/martinez-cobo-study/ (accessed April 2021).

Indigenous Tourism in the province. Religion was a key tool in the colonisation of the region. Spirituality is often spoken of in opposition to religion and/or the church. It was the preferred term in use by all the six participants in this study, and was basic to the learning, teaching, and healing that they practice and perform through tourism, in response to the wider effects of decolonisation in the region. As Smith (2012:20-22) states, decolonisation:

> …describes material practices that have arisen in response to the myriad forms imperialism and colonisation have taken over five centuries. It includes but is not limited to the processes and practices of resistance, refusal and dismantling of the political, economic, social, and spiritual structures constricted by colonisers.[4]

I did not set out with the intention of studying processes of decolonisation, but it became apparent to me during the interviews that much of what I was being told was directed towards exposing or dismantling past and present colonial attitudes. As Denise Nadeau (2016:166) puts it, her goal is to 'disrupt... stereotypical and colonial understandings of Indigenous peoples and their traditions.' Decolonisation is a huge topic, and as historian James Clifford (2013:56) notes, it is not 'an all-or-nothing, once-and-for-all transition'. This study offers practical examples of how six people are engaging with this process**.**

Situating the study geographically, historically & politically

British Columbia is home to approximately 270,585 Indigenous people, making up 5.9% of the province's population.[5] The province is home to 203 distinct Indigenous Nations which account for one third of all the Indigenous Nations in Canada today, speaking more than 30 different distinct languages and close to 60 dialects.[6] Vancouver Island is the largest island on the west-coast of North America and sits parallel to the British Columbia mainland. There are 50 Indigenous Nations of Vancouver Island which are located in three distinct regions – Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw – with some regional overlap.[7] The Haida are one nation comprising two moieties, which are then divided into 'clans'. Along with Haida

[4] Imperialism refers to a policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonisation, use of military force, or other means.
[5] For The Government of Canada population statistics see: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/infoline/infoline-2017/17-138-2016-census-indigenous-people-canada (accessed May 2020).
[6] For a guide to terminology see Bob Joseph's work at https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-terminology-guidelines-for-usage (accessed May 2020).
[7] For various maps and information on First Nations in British Columbia see: https://viea.ca/business-living-on-vancouver-island/first-nations/ (accessed May 2020).

Gwaii, Vancouver Island forms part of a partially submerged chain of the western Cordillera and is a continuation of the US coastal mountains. Vancouver Island has a population of 870,297 and nearly half of the population live in Greater Victoria, the provincial capital on the south-easterly tip of the Island.[8]

The Haida Gwaii or Xaayda Gwaay in Haida, meaning the 'Islands of the Haida people', is an archipelago off the northern Pacific coast of Canada, with Vancouver Island to the south and Alaska to the north. The islands were formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands, but on 3 June 2010, the Haida Gwaii Reconciliation Act formally renamed the archipelago as part of the 'Kunst'aa guu-kunst'aayah' reconciliation protocol' between British Columbia and the Haida people.[9] The population of the Haida Gwaii is about 4,500 and the Haida people currently make up half of that population.[10] They have an acting government 'The Council of the Haida Nation' (Xaayda Waadluxan Naay) which among other things aspires to independence.[11]

The history of Canada as a settler, colonial state is important because since the 1800s state sanctioned assimilation policies have controlled who does and does not count as Indigenous, contributed to a dramatic decline in fluent language speakers, restricted Indigenous people to reserves, imposed colonial governance on these areas, and prohibited traditional land-use practices.[12] From the mid-nineteenth century until almost the end of the twentieth century many Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and placed in residential schools.[2] These schools were often far away from their own communities, where they were forced to speak English and prohibited from speaking their mother tongues; such policies were designed to alienate children from their languages and therefore cultures and assimilate them into the Canadian Nation. The Indian Act, established

[8] For geographic information on British Columbia :https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/british-columbia (accessed May 2020).
[9] For more on the Haida Reconciliation Act: https://www.leg.bc.ca/pages/bclass-legacy.aspx#/content/legacy/web/39th2nd/1st_read/gov18-1.htm (accessed May 2020).
[10] Government of Canada Population statistics: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/ (accessed May 2020).
[11] Council of the Haida Nation webpage: http://www.haidanation.ca/?page_id=24 (accessed May 2020).
[12] Settler colonialism a particular form of colonisation that describes the process by which settlers came, stayed, and formed new governmental structures. (Aikau & Gonzalez 2019:4)

in 1876, sought to regulate indigenous governance, education, economy, and religion, and included a ban on a variety of spiritual practices; in British Columbia this most notably included a legal ban on Potlatch ceremonies.[3] Christianity has played a central role in this. European and Christian discourses of superiority were used to legitimate conquest and control of lands and peoples.[4] Christian missionaries saw themselves as having a duty to convert and civilize 'heathens', and it was missionaries who ran the residential schools which worked to eliminate native religions/traditions and impose Christian doctrines.[5] The impact of the policies, attitudes and the ongoing colonial realities have, and continue to have, major effects on the health and wellbeing of indigenous peoples and communities.

The Act is significant because it defined who might be considered 'Indian' in legal terms. The number considered to carry this status was restricted and excluded all Metis and Inuit peoples, who were consequently referred to as non-status Indians. It affected enfranchisement, but only for men who could read and write. Until 1982 the eligibility of women to receive status was affected by who they married, and status could be lost by marrying a non-status man, and any children denied 'status'. Under the *Indian Act* women were also banned from voting and running in elections. These policies worked to reinforce the idea that women were the property of men.[13] The Indian Act is still in existence today, albeit in new forms.

My first field trip was in the summer of 2017, the year Canada was celebrating 150 years of confederation, with the federal government putting over half a billion Canadian dollars towards celebrating the anniversary.[14] Many Indigenous people criticised the 'Canada 150' celebrations for ignoring Indigenous histories and downplaying the contemporary hardships that they face today, as well as for money spent on the celebrations. British Columbia - to respond to these criticisms, and to acknowledge the Indigenous populations in the province

[13] For example, scholars have written about the impact of legislation like the *Indian Act* in Canada. See: Garroutte (2003) Simpson (2007) Lawrence (2004, 2011). Discourses on religion played an important legitimising role in the establishment of Canada. As historian J. R. Miller (2018) has stated, Europeans operated with the idea that their God had directed them to bring 'civilization, education and religion' to Indigenous peoples. Indigenous practices were seen to be inferior to those of the European Christians and were thus considered a barrier to the civilising efforts of both church and state. Ronald Niezen (2000) writes about the various campaigns that were launched in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century against certain Indigenous practices, with leaders being fined or arrested for conducting ceremonies, which had been deemed as destructive.

[14] Confederation means the joining of a sovereign group for states for a common purpose.

that lived on the land prior to colonisation - amended the slogan to 150+ and added "moving forward together".[15] Alongside this they established a funding programme to celebrate all British Columbian Communities and invested $8 million into museums and heritage sites. Vancouver also hosted signature events in partnership with 'Reconciliation Canada', including a festival, a canoe gathering, and a walk for reconciliation.[16] This year of celebrations sparked reflection on the country's history and collective engagement with how to move forward, including a government report on: 'Reconciliation in Action: A National Engagement Strategy.'[17]

The concept of 'reconciliation' was impossible to avoid in my fieldwork undertaken in 2017 and 2018. A host of Indigenous artworks greeted travellers on arrival by plane or boat. Museums all over the province had huge exhibitions dedicated to Indigenous populations; the living languages exhibition at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, for example, worked in partnership with the *First Peoples' Cultural Council to* create a three year language exhibition showcasing 34 contemporary First Nations languages in British Columbia.[18] Street names honouring particular colonial politicians were removed, while new buildings like the city library in Victoria were named by local Indigenous Nations.[19] Formal gatherings at universities as well as other formal settings would begin proceedings with land acknowledgements, and discussions regarding repatriation processes occurred regularly.[20] In 2018, the University of

[15] For critique on 'Canada 150' see the following website: https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/how-indigenous-people-are-rebranding-canada-150/ (accessed April 2020).
https://origins.osu.edu/article/canada-s-dark-side-indigenous-peoples-and-canada-s-150th-celebration (accessed April 2020) See; Neylan (2018) Monkman (2017).
[16] For Reconciliation Canada see: https://reconciliationcanada.ca/ (accessed April 2021).
[17] Government of Canada website for a Reconciliation engagement strategy: https://reconciliationcanada.ca/programs-initiatives/reconciliation-in-action-a-national-engagement-strategy/ (accessed April 2020).
[18] Webpage for the *Living languages exhibit* at the Royal BC museum: https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/visit/exhibitions/our-living-languages-first-peoples-voices-bc (accessed April 2020).
[19] There are 45 distinct nations within the borders of Canada: https://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc (accessed April 2020).
[20] The land acknowledgement used by the University of Victoria goes as follows: 'We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.' (2018).

Victoria initiated an Indigenous Law programme, the first of its kind in the world.[21] Throughout my year as a guest at the university, talks, dialogues, plays and performances in and around the city of Victoria were hosted on the theme of reconciliation. This move towards reconciliation stemmed partly from a government report published in 2008 as part of the 'Indian Schools Settlement Agreement', which officially launched 'The Truth and Reconciliation Commission' (TRC).[22] The final report was published in 2015, entitled, 'Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future' (TRC). The purpose of the TRC was to document the history and impact of residential schools. It included '94 calls to action' to the government regarding reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples.

The development of Indigenous Tourism in British Columbia has been related to many of the 'calls to action' for a space to learn and engage with different Indigenous languages and cultures, as well as the ability to partake effectively in the economy. *The Indigenous Tourism Association* proclaimed that 'Indigenous Tourism has the power to change perspectives, preserve culture, language and community and provide our relatives with a platform to be the leading voice in reclaiming our space in history – both ancient and modern.'[23] Indigenous Tourism in British Columbia is growing at a rapid rate, with over 400 businesses represented. These have generated an estimated $705 million in direct gross domestic output and created about 7,400 direct full time jobs.[24] A regulatory and marketing body called *Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia* was established in 1996, now called *Indigenous Tourism British Columbia;* the name change occurred in 2018.[25] The organisation works to aid the growth and promotion of a 'sustainable and culturally rich Indigenous tourism industry'.[26] It works closely with business entrepreneurs and government organisations to ensure 'quality experiences', and promote tourism that is under the ownership and control of the Indigenous communities themselves. This is an important contextual point, as there are many cases around the world where Indigenous people have little or no control as to what is on offer for tourists. In British

[21] Indigenous Law programme https://www.uvic.ca/news/topics/2019+federal-funds-indigenous-law-centre+backgrounder (accessed April 2020).
[22] Truth and Reconciliation commission report http://www.trc.ca/ (accessed April 2020).
[23] https://www.indigenoustourismconference.com/2018/ (accessed in April 2020).
[24] Statistics found on this website: https://www.destinationbc.ca/who-we-are/regional-community-industry-partners/indigenous-tourism/ (accessed in April 2020).
[25] The change in name reflects a national and global trend toward using the term Indigenous.
[26] Quotation on website: https://www.indigenousbc.com/corporate (accessed April 2020).

Columbia, it seems at least, that engagement in tourism is an active choice. 'Where Spirits Connect' is the heading of the *Indigenous Tourism British Columbia* website where visitors are encouraged to:

> Immerse yourself in traditions: Indigenous travel experiences have the power to move you. To help you feel connected to something bigger than yourself. To leave you changed forever, through cultural exploration and learning. Let your true nature run free and be forever transformed by the stories and songs from the world's most diverse assembly of living Indigenous cultures.[27]

The website uses a broad range of registers to connect the people, places, and experiences on offer: words like legends, ancestors, transformations, authentic, and images of drums, people dressed in regalia, dramatic landscapes and close shots of wildlife are displayed to capture attention and inspire you to visit. Almost all the experiences for sale use vocabularies related to the categories of spirituality and indigeneity. The focus on spirituality suggests that it is an important part of the lives and cultures of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia.

The focus of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was the residential school system, which is just one aspect of the many colonizing forces that has led to the current movement towards reconciliation in Canada.[28] To quote the final TRC report, 'the urgent need for reconciliation runs deep in Canada, expanding public dialogue and action on reconciliation beyond residential schools will be critical in the coming years.'[29] (2015:8). Other factors include the expropriation of land and resources, the colonial regulation of Indigenous identities, stolen property and the laws prohibiting certain spiritual practices.[30]

There is much debate about the efficacy and intention behind the discourses of reconciliation and decolonisation.[31] Scholars such as Alfred and Corntassel (2005) and Pete (2015) have

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[27] Front page of *Indigenous Tourism British Columbia* https://www.indigenousbc.com/ (accessed May 2018).
[28] See L'Hirondelle Hill & McCall (2015:7).
[29] TRC report: https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525#chp2 (accessed August 2022).
[30] The potlatch was banned from 1884-1951. Other ceremonies across Canada included the Sun dance and the Ghost dance. See: Wenger (2009), Hallowell (2010) Neale (2011) Stover (2001).
[31] Kanien'keha:ka scholar Taiaiake Alfred (2008) for example, has commented that reconciliation is a top down 'pacifying discourse' which can obscure the fight for Indigenous rights and reparations. Canadian artist David Garneau, (2016) argues for the term conciliation over reconciliation and draws his readers' attention to the religious nuance in the word reconciliation. Other commentators, such as

shown that although these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they should be separated. Reconciliation works with the stated intention of addressing past wrongs, making amends, and improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.[32] Decolonisation refers to a broader project of deconstructing colonial ideologies and structures, challenging dominant discourses, addressing power imbalances, and valuing Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.[33] Each of the six people in this dissertation bring up different topics related to the ongoing processes of reconciliation and decolonisation.

In 2019, British Columbia became the first province in Canada and the Commonwealth to pass legislation – Bill 41 – to implement the *United Nations declaration on Indigenous peoples* (UNDRIP). This Declaration sets out the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and the obligations of governments to honour, protect and fulfil those rights.[34] The implementation of the UN declaration was central to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action.[35] This implementation provides a framework for the province to coordinate an action plan to achieve the declaration's objectives and requirements. An important historical aspect of this new provincial Bill is that it was co-developed by the Government, The B.C Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit, and the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs.[36]

Leanne Simpson (2013), however, have noted how healing it has been for the people who worked hard for many years to shed light on the experiences people had of residential schools, and that the many events done in the name of reconciliation has taught and politicized many non-indigenous Canadians about this aspect of colonization. For research about reconciliation in British Columbia and Canada more widely see: Regan (2010) Stanton (2011) Fee (2012) Robinson and Martin (2016) Shrubsole (2019) L'Hirondelle Hill & McCall (2015), Coulthard (2007 & 2014).

[32] For reconciliation see: https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/chapter/pathways-toward-reconciliation/ (accessed August 2022).

[33] For decolonisation see: https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/chapter/decolonization-and-indigenization/ (accessed August 2022).

[34] For reporting on the implementation of this Bill see: https://globalnews.ca/news/6222331/british-columbia-passes-undrip/ (accessed May 2020).

[35] For TRC 'Calls to action' see: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf (accessed May 2020).

[36] For more on this see reporting from the assembly of First Nations https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/20-12-03-NC-Bulletin-on-Tabling-of-UN-Declaration-Legislation-and-Attachment-1-Comparison4.pdf (accessed May 2020) and reporting from the United Nations https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html (accessed May 2020).

The main tagline of the tourist site 'HelloBC' is 'Super, Natural British Columbia'. The beauty of the province certainly contributes to the interest and success of its tourism, as nature facilitates many of the experiences on offer. There is a widely held perception that Indigenous people have a deep connection to the land and nature, and that narrative fits well into the province's tourism story.

Situating the study in academic research

My academic training has been in Social Anthropology and Indigenous Studies, and I am currently situated in a department of Religious Studies which has a focus on Indigenous religion(s).[37] The dissertation draws on these academic fields as well as Tourism Studies.[38] In this brief literature review, I present relevant research about British Columbia and highlight specific debates relating to indigeneity, spirituality and Indigenous Tourism with reference to how they feature in discussions of decolonisation. Smith's book *Decolonising Methodologies* (1999) has demonstrated the inextricable link between colonisation and research.

Research on indigeneity

Research on indigeneity in British Columbia has been largely preoccupied with histories of encounters between Indigenous people and European settlers.[39] Much of this work has taken the viewpoint of the settlers, often placing Indigenous people as passive victims; the work has focused not on what Indigenous people were doing at the time of the encounters, but what they had done, made or thought *before* the arrival of Europeans.[40] This has perpetuated an idea that Indigenous people were somehow suspended in time or lost.[41] More recently, thanks to the work of historians like J.R Miller, John Lutz and Wilson Duff, studies have demonstrated how Indigenous people have always been 'active assertive contributors to the unfolding of Canadian history.' (Miller 2018:x).[42] Some scholars have argued for a shift in focus to writing

[37] For INREL see:https://en.uit.no/forskning/forskningsgrupper/gruppe?p_document_id=383890 (accessed April 2021).
[38] Tourism studies is commonly found within a business framework, Indigenous studies tends to fall within anthropology, and religious studies has typically not had much to say about the former two
[39] For research on Indigenous/Settler histories see: Nichols (2013) Davis (2010) Davis *et al* (2017) Regan (2010) Smith (2009) Wolfe (2006) Culhane (1998) Lutz (2007) Miller (2009).
[40] For research, that discusses this trend see: Miller (2018) Menzies (2001) Coates (2004) Wolfe, (1999).
[41] See: Smith (1999).
[42] For examples of histories of Canada that represent Indigenous agencies see: Miller, (2018 4th ed) Anderson & Peters (2013) Lutz (2008) Raibmon (2007, 2006 & 2004).

instead about how, for example, Canadian national history has mapped onto Indigenous histories.[43] I align my work with this approach and the very development of Indigenous Tourism in British Columbia is testimony to the active participation of Indigenous people in Canadian politics, the economy and history making.

Recent historical work has highlighted some particularities of histories and policies affecting Indigenous peoples in British Columbia – in relation to the rest of Canada, or in comparison with the United States – and other nation states in the Pacific region.[44] Within British Columbia, the First Nations known as Haida, Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw, Tsimshan, Bella Coola and Coast Salish, are all maritime communities. Abundant natural resources ensured a degree of wealth for these communities, while the climate encouraged housing settlements. It has been argued that these conditions have facilitated extensive artistic practices and social and political systems including ceremonies such as the potlatch.[45] Recent studies have also highlighted the diversity of Indigenous peoples, cultures and languages within British Columbia, something which has been previously ignored or deliberately obscured.[46] Another unique feature of the province relates to the imposition of the policy of *Terra Nullius* [Nobody's land], which ignored the land rights of the Indigenous peoples of the region.[47] The comparative lack of land treaties has arguably afforded Indigenous peoples the opportunity to negotiate within the Canadian legal system on acknowledging their rights.[48] The six people in this dissertation all emphasised their distinct identities, languages, histories and cultures, whilst acknowledging shared experiences and values; equally, most of them raised the issue of land rights.

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[43] Nick Estes (2019).

[44] For example, the legal historian Stuart Banner, in *Possessing the Pacific* (2007), has written about how British Columbia was the only part of Canada where the policy of Terra Nullius [Nobody's land] was established and imposed. For comparative studies see: *BC Studies Journal*.

[45] See: J. R Miller (2018).

[46] Recent scholarship acknowledges greater diversity amongst Indigenous peoples living in British Columbia, highlighting cultural, spiritual, political and linguistic differences. For research on First Nations see: Dickason (1992) Cairns (2001), Ray (2016). For Haida see: Gill (2010). Weiss (2018). For Nuu-chah-nulth see: Atleo (2004) Hoover (2002). For Kwakwaka'wakw see: Goodfellow, (2005) Robertson (2012), Reid & Sewid-Smith (2004). For Coast Salish see: Thom (2005) Menzies (2001 & 2013).

[47] For more information on the policy of Terra Nullius see: https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/18-01-22-Dismantling-the-Doctrine-of-Discovery-EN.pdf (accessed April 2020).

[48] For more information on treaty-making in Canada see: Vowel (2016) Hunt & Stevenson (2016).

Increased awareness of the importance of oral narratives, focusing on a range of experiences, has helped to challenge academic orthodoxies.[49] Audra Simpson, in her book *Mohawk Interruptus* (2014), enquires about the politics of identity on the Kahnawá:ke reserve in Quebec, and reminds scholars to be careful of how we include or exclude past and contemporary colonial research. She argues that we need to challenge narrow conceptions of 'tradition', which have come about partly because of the erasure of Indigenous voices and experiences.[50] She urges scholars to ask themselves: 'would they feel comfortable returning to the community after what they have produced?' I have tried to follow this advice, both in terms of how I recount my experiences in text, as well as in choosing the concepts and theories that set the parameters of my study. After a long period of oral histories being discounted, Indigenous scholars, artists, teachers, lawyers, curators, storytellers, protestors, social commentators and tourist guides have helped to expand how we might speak about, understand, research and challenge ideas and perceptions around indigeneity in its various articulations in British Columbia and across Canada.[51] This growing appreciation of the importance of oral testimonies and the call for multi-voice, contextually situated perspectives, has strongly influenced my research.

As both Andy and Roy are artists, and 'Northwest Coast Art' is a huge topic of interest in British Columbia, I have engaged with research that explores the relationships between indigeneity and art. Recent studies are now grappling with definitions, histories, borders and the cultural encounters that have informed its formation.[52] I have found that approaching art as a verb rather than an object offers interesting insights into the contesting forces that go into the production, consumption, recognition and circulation of art, as well as the dialogue that art brings into being.[53] Of particular interest to my research is the emerging body of literature on

[49] For research that centres oral narratives see: Cruikshank (1998, 2005), McCall (2012) Sangster (1998, 2011) & Vowel (2016) Vizenor (2009 & 2019).
[50] See chapter 8.
[51] For research on Indigenous resistance see: The Kino-Nda-niimi Collective (2014), Saul (2014) Coates (2004) Harkin (2004) Menzies (2013).
[52] For more information on Northwest coast art see: Native Art on the Northwest Coast: A history of changing ideas, edited by Townsend-Gault, Kramer and Ki-Ke-in (2013) Bunn- Marcuse & Jonaitis (2020) Lemire, Peers & Whitelaw (2021).
[53]Cruikshank (1998); Gell (1998); Halpin (1994) Jonaitis and Inglis (1994); McLennon and Duffek (2000).

the connection between art and the politics of reconciliation.[54] Jennifer Kramer in her book *Switchbacks,* for example*,* explores the circulation of objects and the production of value from the Nuxalk community in British Columbia.[55] She challenges notions that commodification equates to 'selling out', recognizing that to be a successful artist, one's work needs to be valued by insiders and outsiders and focusing on how art is transformed and rearticulated in this relational process. Kramer (2003:159) writes about 'figurative repatriation,' which refers to how the community decides what objects to withdraw from public view, and which are allowed to be seen. This connects to what Aihwa Ong (2004:70) called 'variegated sovereignties', which involves the practice of sharing while keeping, a process she sees as essential for performance of culture in different contexts on different scales.

The emergence of a globalising discourse of Indigenous identity is gaining attention across a range of disciplines with research exploring intersecting power relations, identity politics and globalized networks in its various formulations and processes, and how this might contribute to the formation of rights and resources.[56] This process has also entailed an increasing awareness that 'spirituality' and 'religion' should be included when discussing the category of 'indigeneity' as it is acknowledged to be one of the registers that connects indigenous peoples around the world**.**[57] Claims to indigeneity are in some cases being expressed through transnational contact zones like tourist ventures, and in performances, and can work to reinforce or challenge the category of indigeneity.[58] Johnson and Kraft (2017: 2) explain that some communities may 'draw upon and enhance their...identities when translating their core values and traits for Indigenous others in global forums; the common ground they find in doing so is then articulated back into the local spaces from which it emerged'.

The contributors to the book *Indigenous Experience Today* (2007) highlight the importance of seeing indigeneity as a relational concept always in dialogue, reject romanticised stereotypes

[54] For art and reconciliation see: L'Hirondelle Hill & McCall (2015), Robinson & Martin (2016) Kramer (2007).
[55] For more information on the Nuxalk Nation see: https://nuxalknation.ca/ (accessed December 2020).
[56] Povinelli (2002) Johnson, (2007) De La Cadena and Starn (2007), Niezen (2004, 2008 & 2009) Clifford (2013) Lightfoot (2008) Graham and Penny (2014) De La Cadena, (2015) li (2000) Coulthard (2014).
[57] Johnson & Kraft (2017) Kraft *et al* (2020) Longkumer (2021).
[58] See Ruhanen & Whitford (2016, 2019) Bunten & Graburn (2018).

regarding a timeless culture or idealised past, yet acknowledge that such themes might be invoked by Indigenous peoples for particular reasons. (De La Cadena and Starn, 2007a: 3–7)

Canadian anthropologist Ronald Niezen *(2000: 119)* wrote about the complexities, contradictions, and tensions in the processes of people forging a collective and global Indigenous identity.[59] He used the term *Indigenism* to describe the political and cultural movement which he argues relies upon the discourse and practice of post war international human rights law. Niezen (2003: 8) wrote about a *politics of Indigenism,* referring to the strategies Indigenous people have had to employ and engage with, towards the aim of activating compassion and political action particularly within the middle-class public of mainly 'western nation states'. Niezen (2009) referred to what he termed *therapeutic history,* which I understand to mean how people appropriate narratives about the past to define the moral anchorage of peoples, be a source of self-esteem, and to recover from the traumas of cultural genocide and prejudice. Niezen (2009: 150) elaborated that the practice of *therapeutic history* emphasizes emotionally positive aspects of the past, such as spiritual enlightenment and harmony with nature, and excoriates that which is inconsistent with today's accepted standards of environmental and political responsibility. I have found this approach useful in my research.

Research on spirituality

Scholarship concerning religious and spiritual beliefs and practices of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia has taken a similar path to work about indigeneity. It has moved away from being dominated by historical and contemporary accounts of missionary work, the roles of churches, and Indigenous – Christian relations – usually from an outsider's perspective – placing Indigenous people as victims or as 'saved' and often depicting Christianity and Indigenous religions as mutually exclusive categories.[60] Anthropological work on indigeneity and spirituality in the region tends to cover specific traditions, practices, ceremonies and sacred materiality, including 'myths', origin stories, artworks, potlatch ceremonies, totem

[59] Niezen (2005:534) gives examples of some paradoxes of the Indigenous movement for example. Newness vs ancient heritage, subsistence vs high tech, dependency on both oral narratives and international law.

[60] As pointed out by Neylan (2003). For recent scholarship on Indigenous peoples and Christianity see: Bradford & Horton (2016) Robertson and the Kwagu'l Gixsam Clan (2012) Brock (2011 & 2005) Martin & Nicholas (2010) McNally (2000) Irwin (2000, 2008).

poles and longhouses.[61] The focus has been largely on what they represented in the past, rather than how they are used and practised today.[62] Indigenous peoples and scholars have raised concerns over the appetite for Indigenous spiritualities and ceremonies that the new age movement has spawned.[63]

An important contextual point is that British Columbia is apparently the most secular province in the country. Historical and contemporary studies have explored this phenomenon. Lynne Marks, an historian at the University of Victoria, argues in *Infidels and the Damn Churches: Irreligion and Religion in Settler British Columbia* (2017), that this phenomenon is deeply rooted in the province's history, noting how even in the early twentieth century people in British Columbia were ten times more likely to adhere to 'no religion' than their counterparts elsewhere in Canada. Professor Paul Bramadat, Director of the *Centre for Studies in Religion and Society* at the University of Victoria is currently leading a multidisciplinary project about the Cascadia region, which includes British Columbia. He is investigating the apparent low levels of religiosity which he puts down to the fact that Christian churches never achieved a strong foothold in the region as they did elsewhere in Canada. He argues for what he calls 'reverential naturalism' which he describes as 'the sense that being out in nature is not just a place where one does spirituality, but it is a medium through which it is done.' The natural beauty of the region he claims has animated reverential naturalism in its residents. [64] He confirms the view of Lynne Marks noted above, that British Columbia is a very particular region regarding religion.

Research by or with Indigenous people in the Canadian context has helped to illustrate both the shared spiritual connections nationally and globally, as well as the very distinctive, personal, or place-based spiritualties that are taught and practiced.[65] Richard Atleo in *Principles of Tsawalk* (2012) provides an example of a distinctive Nuu-chah-nulth philosophy

[61] For an anthropological overview of anthropological work in British Columbia see: Muckle (2014)
[62] As pointed out by Pels (2008).
[63] For research on the New Age Movement and appropriation see: Garroutte (2003) Brown (2009) Jenkins (2004) Tuttle (2001).
[64] For the Cascadia Project see: https://www.mmg.mpg.de/540568/wp-20-02 (accessed January 2021).
[65] For research on Indigenous spiritualities in British Columbia see: Horton (2012) Episkenew (2009)

which is both place and people based. [66] In the past few years, I have noticed how gender has become a topic in these discussions, as recent research on Indigenous female spiritualties and healing illustrates.[67] Religious Studies scholar Suzanne Crawford O'Brien (2008) explores the intersection of religion and healing, looking at how practices described as religious or spiritual can frame healing experiences. She approaches healing as a practice of meaning-making, identity formation and reflects on how for Native American communities, healing can be seen as an act of colonial resistance.[68] In British Columbia a large body of research on spirituality has focused on how it is understood and practised in the Canadian legal systems, for example, protection of sacred spaces, repatriations of material objects, as well as the uneven biases or disconnections that exist in the Canadian legal system.[69] Similarly, there is growing interest in how Indigenous spiritualties connect to politics and can assist in the contemporary fight for rights, reclamation of land and resources, and recognition.[70]

Graham Harvey (2016:131) theorizes the distinction people make between spirituality and religion and considers what such distinctions do for those who make them, suggesting that spirituality regularly gets directed towards 'the non-institutional and non-political realms.' Drane (2005: 10) argues that 'religion tends to be used to describe some externally imposed worldview and set of practices, requiring conformity on the part of those who engage in it, backed up by narrow minded attitudes...enforced by hierarchical structures that are riddled with hypocrisy.' In contrast, he suggests 'spirituality has emerged as the preferred term to describe the opposite of these things: to be considered spiritual an idea or attitude needs to come across as promoting wholeness and healing - of ourselves, of society and ultimately of the entire cosmos.' Scholars such as Tacey (2004:4) argue that spirituality can offer a way to

[66] Indigenous philosophers Vine Deloria Jr (1969, 1973, 1998 & 1999), Cordova, (2007) Turner (2007), whilst acknowledging their own unique cultural traditions, contend that there is an underlying worldview discernible among Indigenous peoples and draw a general distinction from European perspectives. The relationship to the land is highlighted as a common feature of this distinct Indigenous perspective.

[67] For research on Indigenous female spiritualties see: Suzack *et al* (2012 & 2015) Kermoal & Altamirano-Jimenez (2016) Barker (2006).

[68] Crawford O'Brien (2008) writes about healing as an act of resistance. If the illness stems from colonialism, choosing Indigenous lifeways is an affirmation of identities and cultures and a rejection of Euro/American dominance; choosing to be 'well' can be framed as an active stance against assimilation and colonial control.

[69] For research on Indigenous spirituality and Law in British Columbia see; Borrows (2019) Napoleon (2009) Coates (2004) Barker (1998) Shrubsole (2019).

[70] For research on spirituality and politics in Canadian context: Niezen (2000 & 2009) Chan (2019).

challenge religious norms, refuse to be told what to think or believe, and give individuals a chance to take authority into their own hands – to allow for the 'sacred' to be found anywhere. Different meanings get ascribed to spirituality (and cognates) in different contexts by different actors and do different work for the people employing or claiming them; research that explores these themes has influenced my thinking.[71] When indigeneity and spirituality are assembled together, a range of registers get associated, most notably that of tradition.[72] Religious studies scholar Greg Johnson (2007) writes about how tradition is articulated and enacted for different purposes in different places. His work in Hawaii explores how performances of tradition can be critical for the maintenance of and fight for sovereignty. Tradition appears as an important concept in this dissertation and interpreting how the term is variously described and used, rather than being preoccupied with meanings or authenticities, has been liberating.

Scholars of Religious Studies have been encouraged to reconsider fundamental definitions like 'religion' and 'spirituality' and review best methods by which to hear the voices of indigenous peoples. As Kathryn Lofton (2012: 384) states:

> Religion as a description of human behaviour was created through colonialism and its governments, its sciences, and its theologies. To be trained as a scholar of religious studies is then to practice a postcolonial methodology of a profoundly colonial subject.

The process of decolonisation has facilitated a review of all academic disciplines and challenged definitions, concepts, and approaches. It is within this context that this thesis discusses articulations of indigeneity and spirituality.

[71] Historian of religion, Tafjord, (2016) for example, is interested in the process of how concepts and categories get defined, particularly the theoretical contexts in which they are situated and constructed, noting that scholars often use the same words to mean different things. Religious studies scholar Kraft (2017) researches Indigenous and religious discourses at work in the United Nations, highlighting the range of vocabularies and connections in use. See also: Hartney & Tower (2017), Johnson & Kraft (2017) Kraft *et al* (2020).

[72] For example, Harvey (2016) notes how Indigenous peoples often use the term tradition when speaking of belief or practices others might identify as religious or spiritual.

Research on Indigenous Tourism

There has been a growing interest in Indigenous Tourism. Much academic research on the topic in British Columbia, remains concentrated on business, with articles on sustainable development, policy, products, market trends and visitor experiences.[73] Anthropological research tends to be pessimistic about the social impact of tourism, concerning issues of authenticity and the negative effects of tourism on the guides and their cultures. [74] Although several studies on the region do focus on representations of culture in Indigenous tourism, they give little or no reference to the voices and perspectives of Indigenous people.[75] Nielsen and Wilson (2012:67) noted that although 'Indigenous tourism has been a topic of academic interest for over three decades and it is still predominantly driven by the needs and priorities of non-Indigenous people. Ultimately, it appears that Indigenous voices and presence as researchers within the Indigenous tourism literature remain elusive'. An exception to this is the special issue edited by Anna Carr, Lisa Ruhanen and Michelle Whitford on Indigenous Tourism in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (2016), with several essays based on Canada. Tourism scholar Whitney-Squire's contribution was a collaborative study with people from the Haida Nation, in which she discussed the significance of tourism for assisting in language learning initiatives, a point of relevance for this study.

Anthropologist Nelson Graburn (2009:37), recently stated that tourism is 'most productively viewed not as an entity in its own right, but instead as a social field in which many actors engage in complex interactions across time and space both physical and virtual.' Anthropologist Edward Bruner (2005:17) discusses 'touristic borderzones': 'the theatrical creation of a cultural imaginary performed in actual places where tourists meet locals and both act their part.' Tourism is inevitably a 'contact zone' but is rarely approached in this way.[76] Yet I have found this approach to be helpful. Anthropological contributions to the study

[73] For tourism research in British Columbia see: Colton (2005) Nepal (2008) McCool & Moisey (2009) Kutzner & Wright (2010) Dodds (2012).

[74] For examples of scholars who are pessimistic about the social impact of tourism see: Bruner (1991) Harrison (2003).

[75] For research on Indigenous tourism see: Johnston (1995) Clifford (1997 & 2013) McNally (2000) Zeppel (2002, 2006) Braun (2002) Bunn-Marcuse (2005, 2011, 2017) Mason (2015).

[76] The literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt (1992: 6-7) in specific relation to travel writing, offered a concept of the contact zone – a space and perspective that considers interactions between diverse

of tourism continue to grow with a wide range of interests, including but not limited to: identity, politics, power, materiality, globalisation, religion, lived experience and representations of cultures.[77] For example, anthropologist Karen Stocker's (2018:77-95) analysis of stereotypical images produced about the Chorotega in Costa Rica, shows how insiders and outsiders alike build on and reinvent images and practises as they perform them for tourists. She argues for how valuable this is for community and nation building as well as for making connections with Indigenous groups worldwide. As the field of tourism studies grows and new influences emerge, the vast topic continues to open new paths. One of the more recent routes has been to explore how tourism contributes to the production of identities, alterities, and imaginaries.[78] Ann Laura Stoler (2016:13) for example, invites scholars working in tourism studies to 'reconsider today's imperial continuities and to identify existing colonial dynamics shaping nowadays multiple spaces, practices and imaginaries.'[79]

Tourism is becoming increasingly recognised as an important space to help understand power relations and historical complexities embedded and active in place.[80] I have found two books particularly innovative in this regard: *Detours: A decolonial guide to Hawai'i* (2019) and *Touring Pacific Cultures* (2016) both of which offer collections of essays that explore colonial histories and present-day realities, including tourist imaginaries. Comparatively recently, Theodossopoulos (2018:99) has argued that Indigenous tourism is a transformative process and should thus be treated as a special subfield of tourism studies owing to its distinctive dynamic, relating to the peripherality of many Indigenous groups, that sets it apart from other tourism encounters. Indigenous Tourism, he argues, provides new avenues for Indigenous people 'to reach out to the world, in search of new allies and supportive connections.' As a result, 'Indigenous tourism can enhance global visibility of local cultural difference – and swiftly change its status from liability to asset – encouraging small, significant, or even

peoples, 'not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power'.

[77] Graburn & Bunten (2018) Leite (2014), Picard & Robinson (2016) Hendry (2005).

[78] As pointed out by Boukhris & Peyvel (2019).

[79] This is particularly the case in former colonies where tourism has been encouraged by international organisations like the UN as a form of development: Cousin (2008), Boukhris and Peyvel, (2019).

[80] For work that explores power relations in tourism see: Bruner (2005) Babb (2012) Selwyn (2007) Li (2000).

dramatic transformations'. In comparison with other types of tourism, 'Indigenous tourism more closely addresses issues of Indigenous representations, with indigeneity being simultaneously an attraction and a vehicle for escaping economic and political peripheralization.' (Theodossopoulos 2018:99).

I have been drawn to research that approaches tourism as active and processual, with potential to subvert and challenge orthodoxies. Anthropologist Alexis Bunten (2010: 285) writing about Indigenous Tourism in Alaska, argues that tourism is a strategy for Indigenous people to participate in the global economy ethically and appropriately, which she refers to as 'Indigenous Capitalism'. Bunten (2008, 2010, 2011) shows the potential of tourism to increase political power and provide cultural and educational reinvestment into communities. Bunten also wrote that Indigenous tourism workers, through the encounters with their guests, work to dispel negative stereotypes and address historical inaccuracies whilst building understanding across cultural divides. Likewise, Laura Peers (2007) argues that historical sites can be arenas in which guides challenge stories, myths, histories, and stereotypes.[81]

James Clifford (1997:214) has suggested that tourism can replace narratives of cultural disappearance and salvage stories of revival, remembrance, and struggle. A recent article by Britt Kramvig and Anniken Førde, (2020) researching Sami-tourism in Norway, explores how reconciliation can be played out in tourism, particularly in the stories and moments shared in those contexts. A. J. B Johnston (1995:7) interviewed Indigenous scholars about how *Parks Canada* had portrayed their histories and cultures; he concluded that language, customs, and values are the stuff of Indigenous histories, and that the guides he spoke with were more interested in talking about their 'worldview' and less about what their cultures had been reduced to. [82] I have become interested in how cultural performances can be used to open spaces for challenging and redefining identities, histories and asserting and resisting claims to authority. Canadian scholar Kaley Mason (2004), researching Indigenous tourist sites in Ottawa claims that guides constitute their role as educators rather than entertainers and that

[81] Deutschlander & Miller (2008:42) writing about tourist sites in Southern Alberta in Canada have said 'these sites have made openings for new ways of thinking'.

[82] Tourism experiences are more recently being interrogated as a means for positive change. Butler & Hinch (2007) Du Cros & McKercher (2014), Spiller (2010), Spiller, Erakovic, Henare, & Pio (2010).

performers create a sense of authority which they used to successfully challenge and recode stereotypes.[83]

Tourism studies has been criticised for being Eurocentric and for ignoring and obscuring knowledge from non-European peoples and cultures as well as marginalised groups; as Chambers & Buzinde (2015) note, when the work and ideas of such groups is presented, it tends to be treated as local. Pritchard and Morgan (2007) wrote 'if we are to create new tourism knowledge, we must be willing to learn from every knowledge tradition, from Africa from Asia and from indigenous peoples around the world.[84] Bianchi (2009) argued that tourism studies have neglected to engage with the structural analysis of power and inequality in tourism, which they argue operates under global and neoliberal capital structures. Many scholars call for greater consideration of the impact of decolonisation on Tourism studies.[85]

Put simply, this dissertation could be seen as a response to three different calls for research. First, James Clifford in his book *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the 21st century (2013)* requested research that explores 'the conspicuous roles of religious articulations' in what he describes as 'the ongoing process of becoming Indigenous.'[86] Secondly, in 2016, Carr, Ruhanen, & Whitford (2016:1080) stated that 'academic researchers gain a more comprehensive understanding of Indigenous tourism from the perspective of Indigenous stakeholders'. They recommend that 'Indigenous tourism should ideally be approached in an iterative, adaptive and flexible style, and affected stakeholders need to be part of the research process, knowledge creation and outcomes.' Thirdly, as recently as 2018, Alexis Bunten and Nelson Graburn (2018: xi), in their edited collection entitled *Indigenous Tourism Movements*, requested that 'future work in this area question current definitions of indigeneity, examine who can define it and further explore ways that this label affects representation, identity and economic possibilities.'

These calls for research speak to current gaps, limitations and numerous problematic discourses and imaginaries that cut across much of the scholarship about indigeneity and

[83] See: Adams (2003) Stronza (2001).
[84] Hollinshead (1992 & 2007) Teo and Leong (2006) Tribe (2006 & 2007).
[85] Chambers & Buzinde (2015) Wijesinghe, Mura & Culala (2019).
[86] For research, that has followed this request see: Kraft *et al* (2020). Wenger (2009).

spirituality.[87] These include questions about authenticity, who is considered Indigenous, and within that, are there 'right ways' to be Indigenous? Biases, hierarchies, and distinctions are sometimes drawn and claimed regarding what constitutes indigeneities and religions, and binaries – such as tradition versus modern, nature versus capitalism, sacred versus profane, private versus public, genuine versus staged, we versus them – work to feed and maintain these narratives. Embedded within this thinking are common assumptions that Indigenous people are victims, passive onlookers to dominant forces like capitalism, that they all think and experience the world in the same way, and when they do engage in 'modern economies', they somehow cease to be Indigenous. I have endeavoured to stay clear of such debates and listen to how individuals engage with them – or not.

Methodology

I was first introduced to questions around indigeneity and spirituality when I began my studies in Social Anthropology in 2008. As part of my degree, I spent a year abroad in Finland, during which time I learnt about the Sami largely through tourism. I became curious about representations and the role tourism can play in cultural revitalization and I wrote my BA dissertation on this topic.[88] I pursued this theme when I enrolled at The Arctic University of Norway in 2012 to undertake an MA in Indigenous Studies at the Sami Centre. This taught me about Indigenous histories and politics, and I was given the opportunity to do fieldwork in British Columbia, Canada in 2013. I chose British Columbia because English is the primary language and Indigenous Tourism was growing rapidly. I focused my research on a heritage site found through the website of 'Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia'. One of the key points in my MA dissertation was to challenge concerns about 'authenticity', which I had come to see as more of a worry for academics than the hosts and visitors to these sites. The heritage site offered a sweat lodge ceremony on special request, and through this I became interested in the spiritual aspects of this kind of tourism.[89]

[87] The study of Indigenous identity is charged. In the Pacific region, for example, literature on the 'invention of tradition' has been widely criticised and academics have been accused of attempting to adjudicate authenticity. See Clifford (2013:480). In contrast, for research that highlights the processes and construction of tradition see: Harkin (1997: 97-111). Raibmon (2004) Chandler & Reid (2019) Johnson (2007).

[88] BA thesis 'The revitalisation of the Sami culture through tourism', University of Kent, 2010.

[89] MA thesis *X'atsull Heritage Village: a case study in Indigenous Tourism*. 2014.

My interest in Canada grew and I was fortunate enough to be given a place on an EU study programme entitled 'Thinking Canada' in 2014. I learnt about 'Aboriginal title rights', reconciliation agreements and proposals, and met with Indigenous chiefs, activists, and Government workers. On my return to the UK, I began working as a Campaigner for a Charity called Tourism Concern, a small organisation that campaigned against abuses in tourism. My time with this charity got me questioning what is meant by 'ethical tourism', notions of authenticity, of ownership, and it highlighted the importance of regulatory bodies. In February 2017, I was enticed back to The Arctic University of Norway to join the project on 'Indigenous Religions: Local grounds, Global Networks (INREL)' and to begin a PhD. From my experience with Indigenous tourism, I thought that this arena could offer useful contributions to the wider INREL project and that I had gained a useful academic and practical grounding to pursue this research.

My background, interests and training have all informed the way I conduct my research. As Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach (2009:26) writes 'because qualitative research is interpretive, the stories of both the researcher and the research participants are reflected in the meanings being made.' My long-standing interest in tourism has convinced me that it can be a productive site for research, my MA fieldwork experience first suggested that tourism could be used by indigenous peoples in BC, Canada in positive ways, and my time with Tourism Concern alerted me to the many ethical issues that can arise in such settings. Thanks to this varied background, I am aware of a range of abuses committed in the name of research in indigenous communities. One further strength of this background is that it highlights the benefits of multidisciplinary research.

Many Indigenous scholars now advocate collaborative research as well as 'insider' investigations as the ethical standard.[90] In Religious Studies, 'outsider' analysis is often given more authority, although new discussions in the field acknowledge the spaces between and beyond these binaries.[91] This is not an insider or a collaborative project, although the interviews were collaborative acts of knowledge creation the analysis and presentation is my

[90] Foley (2003) Hart (2010).
[91] For research on insider outside dynamics see: McCutcheon (1999) Gill (1994) Innes (2009).

own.[92] Decolonizing methodologies have informed my thinking and my choices; I have tried to educate myself on the varied ways colonial thinking is practiced in the academy and in research, and be mindful of the potential outcomes, paying attention to the language I use, the scholarship I reference, the debates I enter and the theories I employ.[93] I consider myself to be a 'careful partial participant' (Brattland, Kramvig & Verran 2018:92) a role which acknowledges the limits of what I can know, recognizes the author of the text as a learner, as well as the ethics and care involved in research design and practices.

I find Harvey's idea of 'Guesthood' describes my position well, when he suggests that guest-researchers:

> Recognise the powerful priority, sovereignty and intellectual property rights of hosts, especially as they wait to know whether they will be made guest or enemy by hosts/locals. They recognise that knowledge is gained in relationships, performance, negotiation and that these require active presence and a fuller participation than that available even to those who deem themselves participant observers. The recognition that the act of observation changes things, including the observer, requires an acknowledgement that researchers change that in which they research (however they do it) as well as themselves. (2003:142)

For me this has also meant striving not to take categories for granted and be open to complexities and contradictions. Being a tourist-researcher has helped me in this regard, as has my choice in theories to analyse my findings. Tourism is public and performative in its format and has provided entry points to engage with people. It has also helped position me as a guest, there to learn like any tourist, and not there as an expert.

This research uses ethnographic and qualitative research methods, namely fieldwork and semi-structured interviews. I consider myself a tourist-researcher, noting the similarities in the two roles, particularly in the way they both create value from curated encounters, be that with people, places, stories, art, and objects.[94] In my fieldwork, I visited a large number of Indigenous Tourism sites, spoke with many people, interviewed several, and decided to focus

[92] For research on collaborative research see McCall (2011) Archibald (2008).
[93] Tafjord (2016) Haraway (1991) Evjen (2009).
[94] I was inspired to think about the usefulness of this term tourist-researcher on reading Peter Phipps' chapter in the book *Touring Pacific Cultures*, (2020: 246), Harvey's article on 'Guesthood' (2003) and James Clifford's book *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997).

on the experiences of and interviews with these six persons.[95] I wanted to have a gender balance and a range of ages, including people who lived in different places, and who were engaged in tourism in a variety of ways, and for different reasons. On Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC) – the main marketing website – the activities on offer appear under three headings: culture (art and cultural centres), nature, (guided tours on land and sea) and celebrations (festivals). Together, the six people engage with all three categories.

I went about obtaining interviews as follows: I would first sign up and pay as a tourist for a particular experience, event, or workshop, and enjoy it in that capacity. At the end of a session, I introduced myself, explained my research interests, and asked if I could email with more information about my project.[96] Typically, an interview would begin after or over a meal so we could re-acquaint ourselves and relax. I would then reiterate what my project was about, go over ethical considerations that I had laid out on a consent form, and with their permission, I would record the interview. I asked each person to introduce themselves, describe their role in tourism, and why they had become involved in such work, and how being involved in tourism was working for them. All my interviewees gave consent to be recorded and be named in the research. Before completing, I sent each person their respective chapters to check if they were happy with how I had represented our encounters. All replied positively and kindly offered important corrections.[97]

My main fieldwork took place throughout 2018, following a preliminary field trip in July 2017. I began my journey on Vancouver Island, and because there are so many Indigenous Tourism businesses and 53 distinct 'nations' on the Island, I was not short of people to meet, places to see, and tours to experience. I added a visit to the Haida Gwaii because I was encouraged by so many people to go there as it offered a contrast to Vancouver Island, in that Haida people make up almost half the population in the archipelago.[98]

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[95] Of the 36 businesses advertised by ITBC on Vancouver Island and the Haida Gwaii in 2017 & 2018, I visited 23; I also visited the few Indigenous owned and operated companies not marketed by ITBC.

[96] For other literature on methods which have informed my thinking see: Simpson (2007), Kovach (2009) Smith, (1999) Sangster (2011).

[97] Smith (2012:136) writes about how gaining informed consent is not a static decision but can take a long time to gain and that trust needs to be reciprocated and constantly negotiated.

[98] According to statistics published on the website British Columbia Assembly of First Nations, First Nations' populations make up 5.18% of the population of Vancouver Island. https://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/vancouver-island-coast (accessed December 15, 2020)

On my return to Vancouver Island in January 2018, I was fortunate to gain a base at the 'Centre of Studies for Religion and Society' (CSRS) at the University of Victoria. The Centre provided me with practical resources such as an office and access to the library, and a network of fellow scholars, which thanks to its daily coffee hour led to many stimulating discussions. One programme of relevance to me was a sustained dialogue on 'Reflections on Reconciliation and Relationship' led by Michelle Brown, a Cree poet and retired federal treaty negotiator, and Chelsea Horton, a settler Canadian historian. This dialogue occurred every second week and the purpose was to 'deepen our understanding of current relationships between Indigenous and settlers in Canada.'[99] Being based at the university and attending these types of programmes helped me understand the context, frameworks, and landscapes in which I was situated.[100]

When not at the university, I was a tourist-researcher exploring the city of Victoria and Vancouver Island. I would research Indigenous Tourism companies, travel to their sites, and attend the tours or experiences on offer.[101] I started out searching for tourist enterprises that explicitly advertised spiritual ceremonies and practices, but soon came to realise that it might be better to attend a variety of tours, locations, and events. When visiting different places around the Island, I tried to stay in accommodation that was Indigenous owned and operated; thereby supporting these economies. Doing so opened doors and helped me build connections. I quickly learned the value of making notes each day, be they regarding discussions at coffee hour at the *Centre*, or reflections on an exhibition I had attended, after a walk in the city, interesting conversations, or just thoughts and feelings. Much of what I have written in these notebooks has not been used directly for this thesis, but on many occasions upon flipping through these books, thoughts and memories have sparked new lines of thinking and given me pause to rethink. One strategy I employed in my fieldwork was to use my recording device to record my own thoughts and reflections. The opportunity to reconnoitre tourist sites in 2017 helped me to acclimatize, make connections, build trust, and prepare for

[99] For more information on this programme see 'CSRS 2018-2019 annual report': https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/csrs/assets/docs/newsletters_annual-reports/csrs-2018-19-newsletter_3.4_web.pdf (accessed May 2020)
[100] University of Victoria webpage: https://www.uvic.ca/ (accessed May 2020)
[101] These included: Guided walks, nature watching tours, festivals and performances, cultural centres, museums, and art galleries as well as hotels and restaurants.

my return in 2018. During my year in Victoria, I tried to read as much local literature as I could, in particular, novels, films and plays by Indigenous authors, which all helped to further develop my understanding of Vancouver Island and the Haida Gwaii.[102]

Guidance on ethical considerations came from the people I interviewed. Tsimka Martin told me about a 'prayer of intent' her Uncle Levi had taught her, which was about acknowledging where you stand, stating that you come with good intentions, and that you will do your best.[103] I have thought of this often in the field. I thought of it while writing this thesis, and I will continue to reflect on it. Tsimka and Tana told me about the Nuu-chah-nulth philosophy of 'Heshook-ish Tsawalk' which means 'all is one.'[104] This reminds me to enjoy the dynamics and interactions present in any encounter and to be aware and considered in my contribution. Roy Henry Vickers taught me three lessons that he learnt from his mother: 'You have not because you ask not. To whom much is given much is required. You are responsible for the knowledge you carry.' Reflecting on these lessons, I agree that researchers should not be afraid to ask, but with that to accept and respect whatever access and boundaries they may face. The second, fits very much into some essential aspects of Indigenous methodologies.[105] As Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith requests, scholars should reflect on the design and framing and dissemination of their work and always question who is benefiting, bearing in mind *sharing* is the responsibility of research.[106] The third lesson is a reminder to be active, to speak up and use your voice. Lastly, Tsimka requested that I write in a way that everyone can understand, to not tell these stories just for my fellow academics; I wholeheartedly agree and have done my best.

[102] Several books influenced me, such as the work of the Haisla and Heiltsuk novelist Eden Robinson, author of *Monkey Beach.* The books of the Ojibway author Richard Wagamese, and a play called *Salt Baby* written by a Six Nations playwright called Falen Johnson, which I saw at the Belfry Theatre in Victoria. What I enjoyed most about these works was how the writers incorporated so many layers, themes, and historical and social contexts into compelling personal narratives, which helped make these contexts more real and reflections more urgent.

[103] Tsimka Martin: Chapter 5.

[104] On the Nuu-chah-nulth concept of Heshook-ish-Tsawalk, which is about the 'unity of existence' see Atleo - T*sawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* (2004: 117).

[105] See: Smith (2011) Sangster (2011) Simpson (2007), Kovach (2009).

[106] Smith (1999).

My research has been conducted in compliance with both The Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in Science and Technology and the Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.[107]

Theoretical Framework

I have employed articulation theory (Hall 1986, Clifford 2003) to investigate how indigeneity and spirituality are related to processes of decolonisation. In British Columbia, Canada, these processes are not simply linear or reactive, but may be seen as part of a more complex process of negotiations and accommodations with hegemonic forces (Clifford 2013). Articulation theory looks for connections and considers how certain concepts, ideas and discourses are practised, challenged, made, and sustained.[108] I use this perspective to unpack how indigeneity and spirituality are used, claimed, and filled with content**.** I pay close attention to how the expressed views of the six participants are grounded firmly in time and place, and are employed to highlight contexts, agency, negotiations, and strategies in use when communicating identities.[109] Articulation theory allows for the messiness, complexities and contradictions found in empirical research, and can generate new questions and insights.

My aim with using articulation theory is to move away from constraining and static definitions, false standards of purity, colonial narratives of progress, romantic expectations, invention of traditions, and instead situate scholarship on 'more concrete, because more dynamic, historical grounds.' (Clifford 2001:480). This shift from invention to articulation helps to undo what anthropologists Marisol De La Cadena and Orin Starn (2007:9) call the 'spurious calculus' of authenticity, as what is borrowed, lost or rediscovered in new situations, can all be discussed as 'normal political cultural activity.' As Johnson and Kraft (2017:11) state: 'indigeneity is a discursive and performative repertoire that has myriad authors (Indigenous

[107] Ethical boards case numbers: NSD Vår ref: *58353 / 3 / HIT* & UVIC Protocol number: *18-092.*

[108] For commentary on, and uses of, articulation theory see: Johnson & Kraft (2017) Hirsch (2015) Clarke (2015) Mandelman (2014) Li (2000) Nikanorova (2019).

[109] Stuart Hall's prominent work on articulation theory can be read in relation to Marxist and Gramscian understandings of articulated social formations. Hall explains articulation theory as a dialectic relationship between social forces and ideology in which specific linkages are made and remade. 'We all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture' (Hall 1996a: 447) and that each individual is 'differently placed or positioned by different discourses and practices' (Hall 1996c: 226).

and not), stratum upon stratum of multiple source sediment, unpredictable sympathisers and antagonists, uneven histories and starkly consequential if widely diverse legal ramifications.' This choice of theory has been informed by the research I conducted for my MA, my time spent in British Columbia then and since, and the 'Indigenous Religion(s): Local Grounds, Global Networks' (INREL) project of which I have been a part. The INREL project commenced in 2016 and was headed by my supervisors, Siv Ellen Kraft and Bjørn Ola Tafjord. The aim of the project was to explore translations between a globalising discourse of 'Indigenous religion' (in the singular) and distinct local traditions 'indigenous religions' (in the plural). A major theme of INREL was to explore how 'indigenous peoples appeal to the traditions of their ancestors as a means to open up new cultural, economic and political horizons in a rapidly changing and increasingly networked world.' (Johnson and Kraft 2017:1).[110] Religion is a prime vehicle for enabling traffic between local and global indigeneities. Indigenous Tourism is a 'contact zone' that is both local and global in its dynamic – marketed around specific localities and peoples – while at the same time opening globalising discourses on indigeneity. I pay attention to these potential dynamics in this research and, in line with the INREL project, I approach indigeneity and spirituality as discourses and consider the different ways in which these concepts are articulated.

I have been influenced by historian James Clifford and his book *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century,* in which he describes indigeneity as 'work in progress' and refers to different ways in which this identity is articulated, performed, and translated. This involves struggles against dominant regimes and powers, and the making of new connections with traditions, practices, places, networks, and peoples. Clifford's (2013:7) stated aim is to better understand the 'survival, struggle and renewal' that Indigenous peoples have been through, and how they have become increasingly more visible in local to global networks. In *Routes: Travel and Translation in the late Twentieth Century* (1997), Clifford uses the idea of 'dwelling-in-travel' to describe the different sites where articulations of indigeneity are shared, and tourism is one such dwelling place. In his argument for ethnographic realism, Clifford

[110] Members of the INREL project have over the past five years collectively produced several articles, two special issue journals and two books: *The Handbook of Indigenous Religion(s)* (2017) edited by Kraft & Johnson, and *Indigenous Religions: Local Grounds, Global Networks* (2020) by Kraft, Tafjord, Longkumer, Alles & Johnson.

(2013:34) talks about how spaces are created and 'opened' from above (economy, market demand, policy, place) and from below (performances, practices, and shared encounters).[111] I find this to be a useful way of thinking about tourism and my research. I understand how both Indigenous Tourism, and the concepts employed within this dissertation, are created by individuals actively engaged in these spaces. These articulations then feed back into how and why these spaces are created or opened from above – with forces circulating and relational. I employ Clifford's formula, which looks at articulations, performances, and translations, as a 'toolkit' to explore my material in a grounded way. (Clifford 2013:45)

Articulation

By articulations I mean words, concepts, ideas, connected topics and shared themes in the material. Likewise, I am interested if contrasts are drawn, opposites claimed, and certain terms rejected. I look for how indigeneity and spirituality get assembled. Who and what gets included into these concepts and for what purposes? Each person represented in this thesis is an individual who could be making claims about themselves, for their community, and/or for a broader range of Indigenous peoples, regionally, nationally, or globally. This relates to 'self-other', as to who gets included in the 'self', and who is rendered as 'other'; on what grounds and for what purposes are these contrasts claimed? The 'self-other' binary can also function as an antagonist-catalyst. Are comparisons drawn with other Indigenous peoples, if so, on what grounds and for what purposes? Indigeneity is a manifestly comparative phenomenon (Johnson & Kraft 2017:3); 'to be indigenous is to compare, across scales and relative to context. It implies recognition of that which 'we' have in common, which makes us a 'we' and distinct from others.' (Johnson & Kraft 2017:13) By paying attention to how these concepts get filled, given meanings, and used, attention is refocused away from definitions and towards the person choosing to employ them, and the contexts in which they are employed. Thus, as Grossberg (1986:143) puts it, 'a theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together

[111]Clifford (2013) explains ethnographic realism as 'an attitude of critical openness' and as a way to engage with 'complex historical transformations (13) and 'attuned to what is emerging" (29) He calls for "partial histories," "big-enough, more-than-local, narratives" (41). By doing so the result "is a more *realistic*, because multiscaled, dialogical and unfinished, understanding of contemporary sociocultural worlds' (177) 'listening-for-histories is now more important than telling-it-like-it-is.' (23).

within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects.'

Performance

I see performances to be reflexive, deliberate, strategic, intended for an audience and as one of the ways in which identities are articulated. These could be highly aestheticized acts which have been rehearsed and used for effect and purpose, or more informal, low-key and improvised actions.[112] As stated by Graham and Penny (2014:2):

> Participants' reflexivity, their accountability to themselves and their audiences enables performers to calibrate and recalibrate, to adjust to contexts, including memories of past performances, their immediate situation, and their expectations for the future.

As Clifford (2013:47) stated, 'attention to performance keeps us attuned to the specificity of acts and the role of discrepant audiences in sustaining identities.' In the context of this thesis, tourists are audiences who are met with a range of performances employing a variety of methods. This can include the way in which something is communicated through rehearsed storytelling, guided tours and singing, the use of props, visual aids and signals, the clothes or adornments people wear, and the surroundings, settings and environments in which performances occur.[113] People play themselves for multiple audiences be they tourists, nation States, or family, ancestors, gods, and nature.

The six people in this study chose what to do and say, and what not to do and say, with particular audiences in different settings. As Clifford (2013:48) notes, 'cultural knowledge is always both revealed and held back, shared and kept secret through specific roles and protocols.' He argues that performances 'can be essential parts of claiming power and resources' and that 'public manifestations can make us forget the more private celebrations.' For Graham and Penny (2014:8), 'there is no question that self-conscious performances of indigeneity allow some groups to embrace a shift from essential, substantial, and positivist definitions of their culture that depend on territorial precedence to constructivist, structural,

[112] Kraft *et al* (2020).

[113] Judith Butler (1993: 74-5) suggests that performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate act, but rather as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effect that it names. I find this a useful way to think about performances.

and relational definitions that are based on self-identification and distinct livelihood strategies.'

Translation

Bjørn Ola Tafjord (2017a, 2017b) describes translations as directional processes towards and away from domains. I reflect on how the seven people in this dissertation, including myself, translate certain words, concepts, discourses, and ideas towards the domains of indigeneity and spirituality.[114] For example, words like beliefs, ceremonies, traditions, ancestors, healing, values, Creator, colonisation, nature, and land can be seen as translations towards such domains. I am interested in what ways words related to indigeneity and spirituality get assembled. Translations are never neutral; they depend on historical and political contexts and Tafjord encourages scholars to pay attention to what work and what power such translations afford those who make them. I ask on what grounds are some translations accepted or contested? And what gets lost or gained in these translations? For example, how and in what ways is the term spirituality used? Do other words or practices signal spirituality, and if so, how and on what grounds? I also pay attention to how things are referenced: do certain ideas, practices or things get located in the past, are some pointed towards the future, or both? Clifford (2013:48) suggests that attention to translations keeps researchers focused on 'cultural truths that are continuously carried across and reinvented in practice.' Translations are 'creative, productive, tuned towards particular audiences, entangled in history and politics, and always in a process of becoming.' (Clifford 2001:480).

This dissertation supports the view that many different notions of indigeneity and spirituality can coexist. Indigeneity and spirituality are ongoing creations, concepts and categories that have real implications, applications, and significance in the lives of people. In the Mohawk anthropologist Audra Simpson's words, Indigenous identity is a category with 'teeth and teeth that bite through time.' (2007:69).

[114] For research that explores concepts, domains and directionality see: Tafjord (2016) Blaser & De la Cadena (2017).

Dissertation structure

The dissertation is organised into nine chapters: this introduction is followed by six chapters offering tourist case studies focused on a tour or performance and interview with each of the guides. Chapter 8 offers context and more detailed analysis of how indigeneity and spirituality get connected with the processes of reconciliation and decolonisation**.** The final chapter offers concluding remarks**.** I chose this structure after careful consideration of other options, such as an approach based on themes or locations.[115] I wanted to provide space for the complexity, diversity, and rich detail that each of these encounters provided. I sought a transparent approach that gives space to the voices and perspectives of each individual, before moving to a conclusion where I consider shared themes. Each chapter begins with an explanation of how I met the person and some of the key themes that arose in those encounters. This is followed by an account of the tour/performance and the interview that followed, and I end with some reflections centred on my research questions. These reflections assemble key concepts, ideas and strategies employed in relation to processes of decolonisation. My intention with this structure is both to respect the contributions made by each individual, whilst drawing out common themes, discourses and performances, which I then discuss in chapter 8.

The order of the chapters plots my journey from south to north. Chapter 2 starts in Victoria with Andy Everson demonstrating that his 'culture is alive and relevant.' Through his tour of the totem poles in Thunderbird Park, and descriptions of his role as an artist, Andy challenges colonial ideas of ownership and traditional practices. Chapter 3, centres on Tana Thomas and tourism as an opportunity to learn and connect with her family, community, cultural practices, and place. In building her own canoe, Tana challenges gender norms, and asserts her right to take part in practices like Tribal journeys. In Chapter 4, Roy Henry Vickers, the elder of the group, shares his worldview based on vast teaching experience and speaks about the need for healing owing to the damage done by colonisation. In Chapter 5, Tsimka Martin, owner of Tashii Paddle School, talks about training guides in the importance of local history, and is passionate about demonstrating Tla-o-qui-aht claims to the land. In Chapter 6, K'odi Nelson,

[115] For example, I initially wrote about art. The chapter was more ethnographic with extracts from interviews included. In the end, the topic was too big and I thought the interviews got lost. I also tried by location, but I was concerned that the interviews came across as representative of a place or a whole nation of peoples.

also emphasizes the importance of land and nature and sees Indigenous Tourism helping to restore community pride and economic independence. Lastly, in Chapter 7, Alix Goetzinger speaks about how she is keen to learn and teach more about Haida practices, confront tourist stereotypes, and proudly proclaim Haida values. Chapter 8 is where I consider my research questions on a broader level. I show how reconciliation is linked to indigenous tourism in the region and argue, through a series of shared registers that colonialism frames much of what is articulated by the guides towards the aim of decolonising in a process I have characterised as 'learn, teach and heal.' In my conclusion, I offer some reflections on my research journey and discuss how this contributes to debates in Religious Studies.

Chapter 2: Andy Everson

Image 2: Andy Everson - Thunderbird park on his totem pole tour, 2018.

My name is Andy Everson, I belong to the K'ómoks First Nation on Vancouver Island, but that's only part of my identity. My grandmother is from a small community called Fort Rupert, our people are called Kwagu'ł, my great grandmother was from the northern end of Vancouver island and her grandmother was from the Tlingit First Nation from Alaska, she was a chilkat weaver and she bought that tradition down to the Kwagu'ł people. I have a whole list of titles: I hold a Chiefdom for the people of Alert Bay - name of Ḵ̓wa̱mxa̱laga̱lis I'nis. I am also a dancer for different groups; for example, I am a Hamatsa dancer with the name Tsanis. They are just a couple of the roles I carry. I have an MA in Anthropology and have been a professional artist at some level for over 20 years, and that's how I make my living, as an artist. Yeah that's a good start….

K'ómoks is a name of a language, a town (Comox), and refers to people who consider themselves, and are considered by others to be K'ómoks.[116] This grouping is a consolidation of different groups that have changed over time. K'ómoks is an anglicisation of the Kwak'wala word Ku'umuxws.[117] The Comox valley is located on the Central east coast of Vancouver Island. The current K'ómoks territory is bordered by Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw regions.

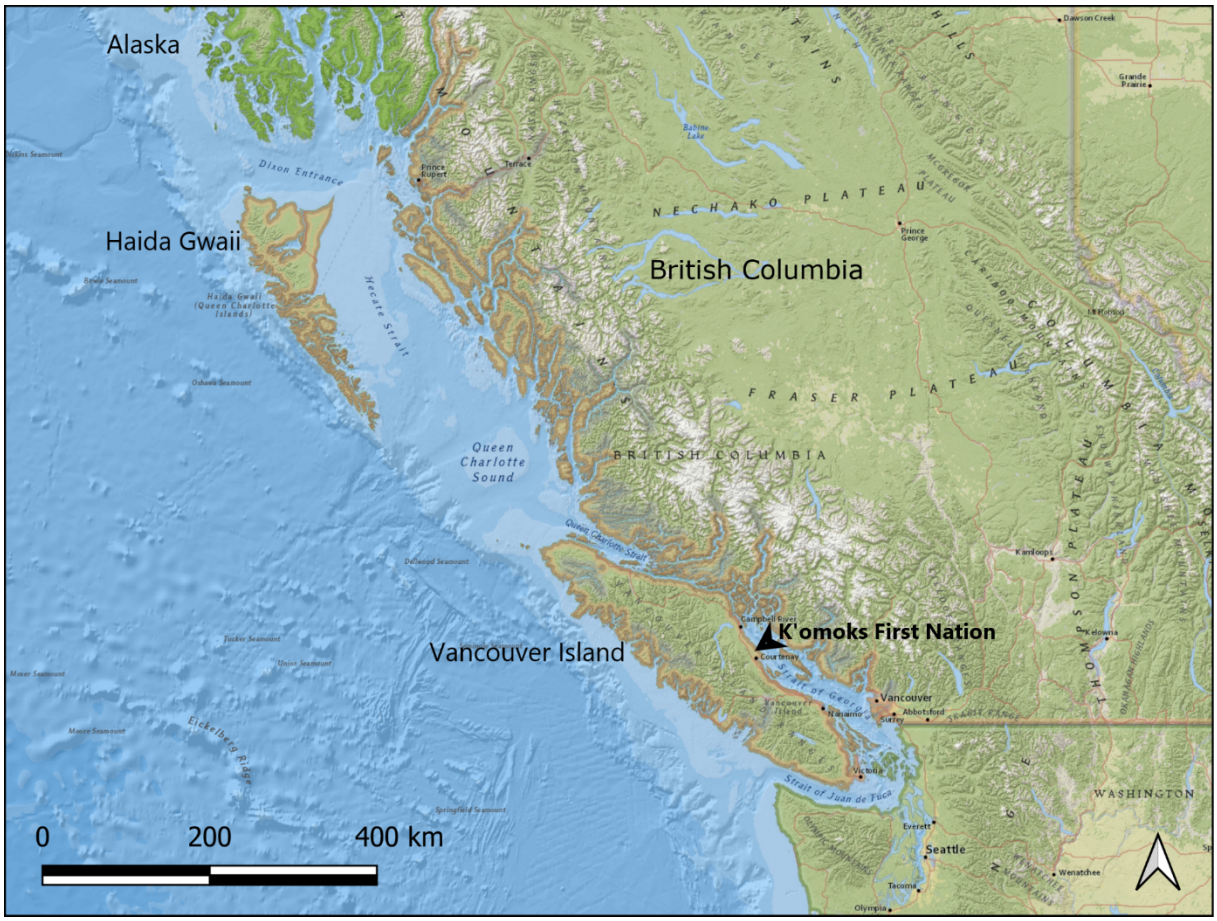

Image 3 : This is an approximate illustration of the K'ómoks First Nation.

[116] For more information on K'ómoks see: https://www.komoks.ca/ (accessed May 2021).
[117] Kwak'wala refers to a language spoken by some Kwakwaka'wakw peoples.

Introduction

This chapter is built around my experience and interview with Andy Everson. I first met Andy on 21 June 2018 on *National Indigenous Peoples Day* in Canada, at the 'Indigenous cultural festival' In Victoria. Andy closed the opening ceremony and announced that he would be offering a tour of the totem poles in *Thunderbird Park* just to the side of the *Royal British Columbia Museum* where the festival was being hosted. After the totem pole tour, I asked Andy if I could get in touch regarding my research and a potential interview. After a few emails back and forth and due to schedules and long distances we conducted an interview over skype. In this chapter, I first present my account of Andy's totem pole tour and the interview that followed. What stands out for me is how Andy sees his art as a 'gateway drug' for people to learn more about art, history and politics, how he describes 'mediating between two worlds', navigating what he sells and what he reserves for community and ceremony, and how he describes using tourism to convey the message that his culture is alive and relevant. I then offer some reflections about the ways in which I see Andy articulating his indigeneity and spirituality, and how he uses his art to disturb colonial imaginaries.

Tour

I walked over to join the roughly 30 people already congregated for the tour. Andy Everson was adorned in cedar, paint on his face and wearing a top in the design of a chilkat blanket.[118] He introduced himself with the words noted above, first in a Kwak'wala language and then again in English, before adding that he was an artist, not a Carver, and not really an expert in totem poles.

[118] Chilkat refers to a type of weaving. Chilkat blankets are often warn by Chiefs at ceremonial events. For more see: https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chilkat-blanket (accessed March 2021).

Image 4. View of totem poles & longhouse in Thunderbird Park at The Royal British Columbia Museum.

'I guess some people enjoy what I have to say, so here I am', he added modestly. Some people take the tour every year and for that reason he always tries to share something new and different. However, he confessed to often feeling reluctant to do these tours, because a lot of the stories that the different poles illustrate, he does not feel he has the right to tell. He is not Haida and therefore cannot tell Haida stories. What he can do is explain the different types of poles, their different purposes and point out some of the images represented. He told us that it is really important to talk about culture, and that culture is what informs monumental art like totem poles. His main aim with the tours is to convey a little bit about his culture, and to affirm that it is not just images or poles, but a working-living culture. Andy's attention to what he does, and does not have a right to say - was a practice I saw being upheld by Indigenous people across the province. Articulating it at the festival might both reinforce its importance and be something of a warning or guidance to tourists and to the museum.

Andy walked us through the museum gardens where the totem poles stand. He explained that some of these poles are re-creations, owing to the deterioration of old ones. The totem poles are carved by different artists from different nations. Several were carved by the famous Carver Mungo Martin of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation, an artist widely revered for his carving skills. We learnt that there are different types of totem poles. There are mortuary poles, which you can discern because at the top of the pole there is a flat extension, which is meant to represent a bentwood box – which Andy claimed was culturally very significant. In the bentwood boxes could be stored ceremonial regalia, and traditionally people would be buried in one. So, in the past, these boxes at the top of the mortuary poles would have contained human remains. Andy gave us a few more reasons for having totem poles, including memorial poles, welcome poles and house poles. As we stood by a series of Haida poles, he pointed out the depiction of three watchmen. Watchmen are people who serve as sentries to protect remote villages and typically these poles would face the ocean, for these are our 'highways' and where our people come from. Seeing watchmen on a pole is one indication that the pole is Haida.

Standing in front of one totem pole, Andy pointed out some figures carved around the middle of the pole. For a long time, people were not sure what these figures represented, he said. Then one day, an Indigenous student suggested that the figures were people playing the game 'Lahal.' This is a gambling game played with sticks and involves distracting opponents; I was introduced to this game on 'Tribal Journeys'.[119] Andy told the story as an example of how important it is that Indigenous people partake in deciphering or positing potential meanings of these carvings. The pole we were all looking at was a Kwakwaka'wakw pole, represented by the outstretched wings of the thunderbird. The thunderbird on the pole has a human face on its chest. Andy explained that 'long ago in myth times, ancestors' spirits would be able to transform themselves into different animals or into other humans.' In the story of the thunderbird, which is told commonly by the Namgis people from Alert Bay, 'the thunderbird first helps the community by lifting up the beams for the long house and then takes off its mask and reveals himself in human form.'

Positioned near the totem poles is a longhouse built by master Carver Mungo Martin on the grounds of the museum to illustrate how people used to live. Andy explained that in the 1880s

[119] Tribal Journeys is an annual canoe gathering. for more information see: Chapter 3 – Tana Thomas.

the government of Canada made it illegal for his people to potlatch. He described the potlatch as a ceremony where people from other villages were brought together to witness and share in celebrations such as, marriages, baptisms, raising of poles, new chiefs; it also served as a kind of banking system. He said, 'The potlatch was an essential part of our society', at a potlatch you would give almost everything you owned away, and by doing so, you were symbolising your wealth, and that this was the most important thing a Chief could do. Andy commented that the government had very different values; Victorian values, he claimed, were about accumulating wealth, so they made it illegal; people could be arrested for hosting or attending a potlatch. Andy told us that such laws served no real purpose, for people did not stop, and if anything the potlatches grew larger and more extravagant. He spoke about a particular potlatch that took place and in response many chiefs and noble people had been arrested.[120] It was not until 1951 that the government removed the ban from the *Indian Act,* and it was then that the Carver Mungo Martin decided to build the long house to represent one of the traditional ways of living, and to have a place to be able to perform the ceremonies. The houses, like this one, were made from cedar planks, had fire pits in the middle and were big enough to house several families. Whilst no one lives in these houses anymore, Andy said that they are used today for ceremonies and that he hopes one day people might live in them again. In a typical village, the chief's house would be the most grand with crests and paintings adorning it; typically depicting the lineage of chiefs, their ancestors, and significant stories and events. He pointed to the illustrations on Mungo Martin's house.

[120] In 1921 Dan Cranmer held the largest potlatch recorded on the coast of British Columbia at the village of 'Mimkwa̱mlis' (Village Island). Federal authorities arrested forty-five people. The participants were given a choice of either surrendering their potlatch regalia or going to jail. Twenty-two people went to jail. See Douglas & Chaikin (1990) U'mista Cultural Society http://umistapotlatch.ca/nos_masques_come_home-our_masks_come_home-eng.php (accessed February 2020).

Image 5: The Mungo Martin house built in 1953 that stands in Thunderbird Park in Victoria.

We moved through the grounds stopping at the different poles, learning about the different images we could see and why they were important, or what they represented and to which communities or peoples they belonged. Most of the images have important *mythological* stories behind them, as Andy said. Andy used the poles as prompts to speak about elements of history, politics and culture that he felt we, the audience, should know about and which he felt passionate about. We arrived at a pole where there was a depiction of a human holding a piece of copper, once considered an important part of the economy. Communities would buy and sell pieces of copper to one another, which was always done publicly. Your wealth was stored in that bit of copper. When settling disputes, you might have had to break a piece off from your copper and offer it as an apology. One would also give a piece of copper to a rival chief to show one's wealth, which would then place the responsibility on that rival chief, to one day return an equal piece or bigger, so as not to lose face. Copper was often used to fund potlatches and people would borrow copper from one another, but if you borrowed for more than a year the interest rate would be 100%, so if it was a long-term loan you would owe back twice as much. Many of Andy's art pieces depict or make use of copper.

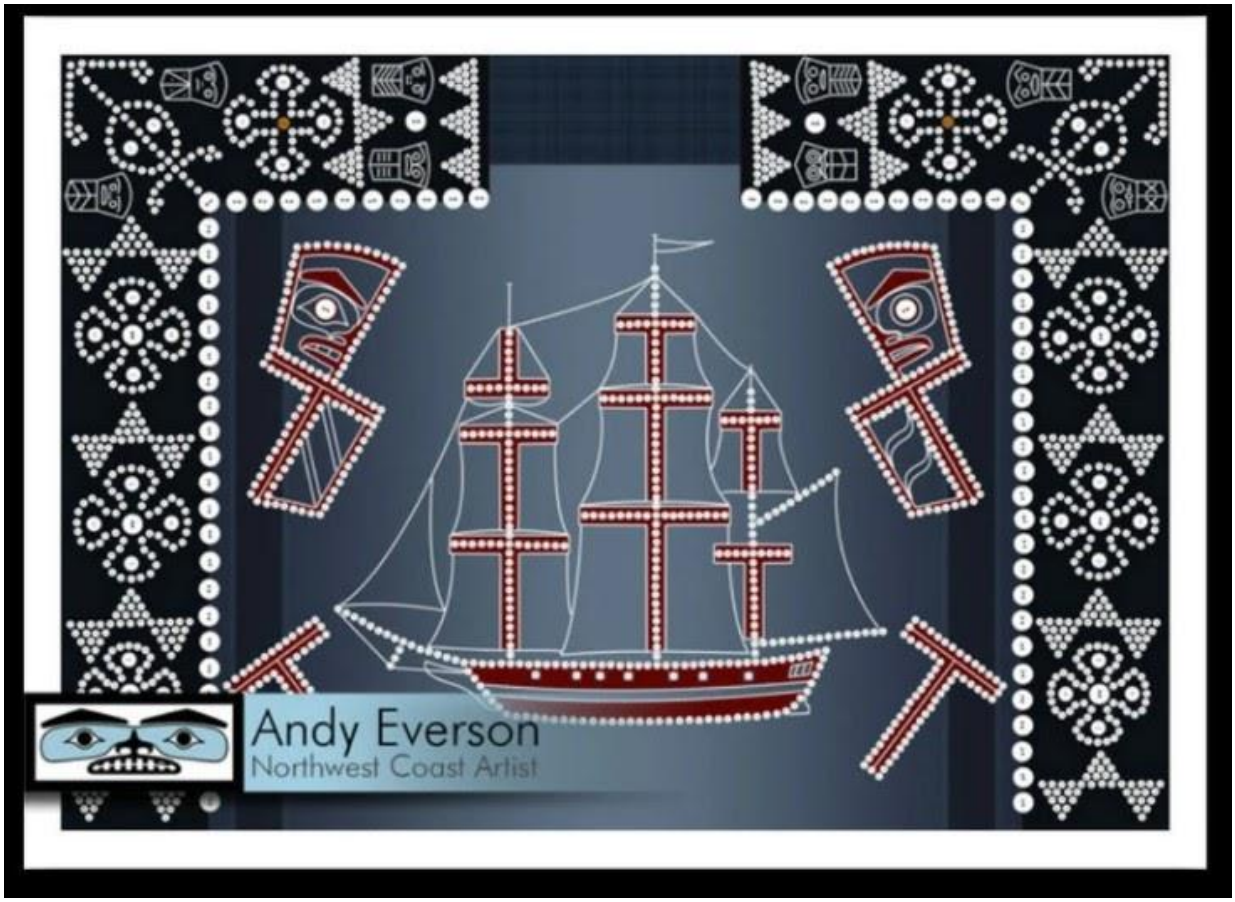

Image 6: Andy Everson 'Oceans of Wealth.' 2011.

Woollen blankets were also currency in the past, some households would have hundreds of blankets, and families would lend them out. When it came to hosting a potlatch you would pull in all your loans and debts, and in order for those people to be able to pay those debts, they would have to then borrow from others. This circulated and became part of a collective memory. When the potlatch ban was put in place, some families decided this was beneficial because that then meant that they did not owe anything, which resulted in other families being left short. Andy said this caused havoc, but added that, in his opinion, the most important things we own are our songs, dances and names, and they get handed down and passed to different family members in the potlatch ceremony. Some communities are matrilineal where it all gets passed down through the women; for some it's patrilineal and for many it is different things from either side. Apparently, it becomes more patrilineal the more south you go, but these distinctions are important, he argued, since different cultures are valuable in their own different ways.

We walked to the last totem pole, and Andy told us how Mungo Martin, when carving this pole, was speaking to George Taylor – who in that moment had appeared out of nowhere and was now standing next to Andy. He said the Carver Mungo Martin had decided that he wanted a bit of George on the pole. George then pointed to the carving of a hand with one finger missing on the pole, he pointed with his hand which also had a finger missing, there was an audible gasp. This marked the end of the tour and helped to demonstrate that some of the totem poles are very contemporary.

Totem poles are something of a tourist symbol of indigeneity on the Northwest coast. Andy's explanations ranged over the nuances, uses and protocols involved in the production of these carvings. His explanation of the potlatch, and its significance historically and currently, showed how the totem poles offered different attitudes to wealth and governance. Andy has performed this tour many times: it comes across as authoritative, confident, proud, educational and informative.

Interview

In an Interview that followed half a year later, I asked Andy to talk about his work as an artist: he explained that he mostly does two-dimensional art, and sometimes 'traditional work', which he reserves for ceremonies.[121] Andy is most known for his contemporary art and more recently he enjoys working with pop culture figures and feels that is a useful tool to attract people to traditional art forms.

He noted that he 'likes to make things people want to hang on their walls.' Partly for that reason, he does not do a lot of carving: 'in our culture and our teachings we don't hang our carved art like masks on our walls.' These, he said, are carefully stored away ready to be used in ceremonies. Carving is for traditional use, flat designs are for sale. This is how he 'mediates between those worlds.' Andy explained that he was uncomfortable with the colonial notions of some tourists who buy masks to display on their walls like trophies. Making and selling limited edition prints feels like a more honest encounter. Andy is probably best known for his *Star Wars* prints, which depict the white mask of a storm trooper with his design work on top.

[121] The interview took place over skype on 19 February 2019.

Image 7. Andy Everson Giclée Print entitled 'Resistance.' 2016.

I asked about this picture and his interest in pop culture figures. He told me that it is no secret that he is a huge, longstanding *Star Wars* fan. He explained:

> What I find fascinating about using iconic pop culture things, items and images is that the viewer comes into it with a preloaded set of values and notions – about what and whom these characters are, and I really like to play with that. Because when I'm using symbols of evil empire and rendering them with Indigenous art forms from my culture, for the viewer pauses and thinks here, like who's the good guys, who's the bad guys etc. What is happening?

He said that most people buying artwork are tourists who want pieces that they can hang on their walls. Art is often depicting traditional stories that can be hard to understand and because of that tourists can feel intimidated, but with pop culture iconography Andy asserts that the viewer is already halfway there. Andy feels that his images help to bridge the gap for people approaching his art:

> So, they might see a *Star Wars* image in the window and be drawn to it, maybe purchase it. And as they start to feel more comfortable with it, they may become more interested in Indigenous art and this might move them to look at more of

> my work and other Indigenous artworks – I think it prompts people to explore further and deeper. Kind of like a gateway drug!

He continued…

> That is part of it – another part of it is that traditionally our artwork, is really in many respects, a mnemonic device, it triggers memory etc. About different stories and events because as we are an oral based tradition, we did not write down our histories and legends in the past. Instead our people grow up surrounded by these stories both through oral retelling, and also literally surrounded by them as visual representations. It is fun to use our art forms then to explore other worldly art.

And at the same time, he says that his art

> ...gives me space to talk about colonisation, treaties, my concerns, negotiations, settlements and the current relationship between Indigenous peoples and the colonial government. So, it's loaded with so many different things, not only does it draw people in visually, but it also enables me to hack it with way more meaning than I could, if I just drew a thunderbird for example.

As an artist and a 'cultural representative/leader' with a platform, Andy navigates his responsibilities partly by distinguishing between what he creates as an artist to sell, and what he owns and produces for ceremonies.

I asked Andy about how being a member of the K'ómoks First Nation influenced his art. To explain, he told me about his grandmother, how influential she had been in shaping his sense of the world and the roles he should take within it. He said that one of the key values she instilled in him was that wherever he was and whatever he did, he represented her, which he took as a great responsibility. Andy is named after her husband, his grandfather, who died just before he was born; he thinks that is perhaps partly the reason he was spoiled by her, and he did spend a lot of time with her. He would bring back books from the library and sit around the table and ask questions about the past. Andy explained that the responsibility he felt towards her has affected his whole life. He told me how much he enjoys conveying the message that his people are still here and their culture is still relevant. He uses his art for social movements like 'Idle No More.' His picture of a feather quickly became one of the symbols for the movement.

Image 8. Andy Everson Print entitled 'Idle No More!' 2016.

He stated: 'I created that image the day before, just sort of whipped it up and it got huge and travelled so far and wide, it really speaks to the power of social media.' He likes making art pieces for things he believes in because, '...it can draw people in, open up a dialogue and offer me a platform to speak about the things I believe in and want to fight for.' He always does a 'write up' with any image he produces, because it's important to him that the buyer understands where he has come from and the meaning he is hoping to convey.

> ...And for art, not everyone is an artist, but for me I can create artwork that the community can feel proud of. A number of years ago the Vancouver Canucks made it to the Stanley cup final, and I made the Canucks logo in Kwakwaka'wakw style and everyone started using that as a profile image on Facebook, up and down the coast. The image showed that they were Canucks fans and Indigenous. It gave people a sense of place and identity as both Indigenous and as Canucks fans. When I see my people using art like that, enjoying it, displaying it proudly, to me it shows it doing its job as an art piece.

Image 9. Andy Everson Canucks Print. 2011.

The *Idle No Mor*e movement began in the winter of 2012 with four women; Sylvia McAdam, Jess Gordon, Nina Wilson and Shelah Mclean, who in the province of Saskatchewan held a meeting of the same name, to educate communities on the impacts of the federal government's proposed Bill C-45. This new piece of legislation was to make changes to the various acts including the *Indian Act* and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.* This meeting sparked a nationwide movement of demonstrations and protests which coalesced around three objectives: first, to repeal significant parts of the new bill, particularly the parts that were seen as exploitative of the environment, water and First Nation territories; secondly, a call for an immediate response to some situations in Indigenous communities deemed an emergency; and thirdly, a commitment towards a more mutually beneficial nation -to-nation relationships with all Indigenous communities across the country. The movement brought these issues to public attention and before long became a global movement; building on a response to historical and contemporary colonial legacies and built on decades of Indigenous resistance.[122]

[122] For information on the *Idle No More* movement see: Saul (2014) The Kino-Nda-niimi Collective (2014).

Just like the totem poles, Andy's art not only potentially works as a 'gateway drug' to engage people further, but the images themselves open up and enable spaces for new communication and connection. The *Star Wars* prints, as Andy said, challenge perceptions including ideas of what art produced by an Indigenous person should look like, and how contemporary, relevant and relatable these images can be.

In response to his comments on the 'Idle No More' movement, I asked Andy for his thoughts on the global Indigenous movement and his use and understanding of the term Indigenous. He replied:

> When I was a kid we only said Indian, then it was Native, then it became First Nations and now it's Indigenous. What I like about the name Indigenous is that it seems driven more by Indigenous people rather than from the outside, it is terminology used by us. With the term Indian etc. There are barriers on what that means and who is included, and the same with Native American, you're reducing it to North America. What I like with Indigenous is a sense of a global shared connection, for people who have been affected by colonisation. All Indigenous peoples around the world, for better or worse colonisation has affected who they are there now! ...I see it as a way of unifying people so that international borders don't matter….When I say Indigenous, all my Māori friends have a sense of what I am talking about, as they are Indigenous too, and they know what it's like to be colonised etc. So yeah, I use that term more often.

I asked Andy about his route into art and his academic background. He told me that his original plan was to get a doctorate in Anthropology, but during his Master's thesis he got distracted and started playing around with art and making prints. What had begun as procrastination soon came to dominate his time and energy. I remarked that this might be the most successful procrastination story I had ever heard.

He continued by telling me that although he completed his MA, he became disillusioned with academia, and how uneasy he felt about 'academics becoming 'experts in our culture and how historically their voices can be given more weight than our own.' Andy said he still dabbles in academia and is currently working on a project that involves Franz Boas's book: *The social organisation and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl Indians*. The plan is to re-release the book with the corrections that were made by Andy's great uncle, George Hunt. George Hunt

worked closely with Boas and produced thousands of words for him, many of which were corrections. The project is about figuring out what to include or not in the printed version, and also to create a digital volume which can contain everything. Andy said that although the work is exhausting and hard, he views it as a 'legacy.' Some people resist accepting Hunt's words over those of Boas, he said 'because it hasn't come from the book, because it's not yet published, it is somehow seen as less legitimate'. Andy noted that so much material is held in museums, some of which are very far away, that people from his community have no access to it. This he considers a big problem which he want to help resolve. Andy reflected that working predominantly as an artist, whilst doing some academic work on the side, is the perfect mix for him. This project that Andy described highlights the shifting nature of scholarship; what can be valued in one generation can be re-evaluated very differently in the next, and old projects take on new life and new meanings, spark new debates and have unanticipated implications. Andy mentioned, for example, how this project is being used in support for repatriation claims. I wondered how many other people – including women – might have been involved with Chief George Hunt in making his revisions.

We returned to discussing different influences in his work. Andy mentioned that his parents were Christianised, so he had grown up with Christianity, but there are many parts about organised religion that does not suit him, and that he chooses to spend more of his time and energy on 'traditional beliefs and customs.' I asked Andy how he viewed the relationship between the two. He told me about the dangers of Christianity how it is the driving force behind the assimilation policies that took children away from their homes and into residential schools, and in doing so destroyed the fabric of the communities. Given this history and impact, he is surprised that so many people in his community are still Christians. He told me about the differing experiences people and communities had with missionaries up and down the west coast. In the Haida Gwaii, where his partner is from, he said they were heavily missionised and lost so much as a result. People up there had bought into it and were asking for more missionaries to come; they saw Christianity as this grand thing to aspire to. In his territory, however, although there were missionaries and residential schools, the old people had more scope to find a balance between Christianity and traditional values. Andy told me that his grandparents accepted both and did not view the two as in opposition to each other; as a result so much had been passed down and he was grateful for that.

We concluded the conversation with a discussion about home and a sense of place and how that influences Andy's many roles.

> ...There's a reason why I moved back here after I finished my degree or whilst I was finishing my degree. Any of us can move away and go find work, but it's more important maybe to leave, get an education or experience and then come back and contribute back to your community. Growing up I definitely had a sense of identity and grounding in where I was from, which was really important and that's what brought me back here. It has also helped me be more inventive and creative in making a living from this little town and for ways to contribute back to the community. I know for instance that growing up here in K'ómoks we had no singers, literally, there were no traditional singers in our community. I was part of helping to bring that back in our community later on. From my university days and beyond, bringing back that song and dance has been really important. I recognize the impact I've had and if I hadn't come back to our community, it would be different. I am so very happy I came back and I'm very happy that I can contribute in that way.

Andy emphasised the power of dance, saying that when people are sad, or when people return home to their community, especially after living in urban areas that as soon as they are on the dance floor it has a profound impact:

> When you dance, it changes you, and connects you to ancestors in a way nothing else does...You can tell people that you're native and what your traditional name is, but until you are in a big house with your community, dancing – there's nothing that comes close.

Reflections

What follows are some reflections related to my central questions: What did Andy say about why he was involved in Indigenous tourism? How was indigeneity and spirituality articulated in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation? Tourism is a space Andy purposefully mediates and navigates. It is an opportunity to reach new audiences and consumers, reclaim narratives, teach and showcase the importance and relevance of his culture. He hopes tourists will learn more and engage further, aware that this will not always be the case. In using recognisably Indigenous symbols, such as the totem poles, and art which draws on imagery such as the feather, Andy attracts an audience and creates a space in which he is able to teach, challenge, and reclaim. He sees the art he sells to tourists and the tours he hosts, as opportunities to challenge ideas and perceptions about Indigenous people, past and present, and to inform people about the values he upholds.

Andy was introduced as Indigenous at the festival, described himself as a Northwest coast artist, and presented himself as a member of the K'ómoks First Nation. He highlighted his lineage and his grandmother, to whom he felt particularly responsible. At the festival where Andy was a key speaker, dressed in regalia, it was his task to talk about the totem poles that now stand outside the Royal BC Museum. He was clear that he could speak more about some totem poles than others because, for example, he was 'not Haida and therefore cannot tell Haida stories'; he did this as a clear mark of respect. He used the totem poles to illustrate their 'traditional' function as, not only impressive works of art, but also as mnemonic devices. In this festival setting, with tourists being the main audience, Andy chose to share particular events, stories, values and histories prompted by the totem poles. These totem poles once stood as artefacts 'owned and preserved' by the museum as evidence of cultures seen to be vanishing. Andy's tour re-conceptualises and reclaims the narratives of the totem poles and the place they now occupy.

The tour provides Andy with an opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of the totem poles and raise questions about the histories they reveal, particularly how they came to be 'property' of the Museum. This tour could spark a process in which the city – festival–museum – Andy – totem poles – and audience, test, revitalise, negotiate and create new meanings. I

see these totem poles as 'acting back,' opening up conversations and making the spaces they stand in, both physically and conceptually, more visible. New meanings are being negotiated by a variety of people and on a variety of scales. For example, the museum can perhaps divert attention away from disputed claims of ownership and instead recast the gaze towards the host and facilitator, which could provide evidence for their stated aim towards reconciliation. This works well in that very space, as well as on more national and global levels when it comes to reputations and commitments of museums, cities, governments, and as the name of the museum points to, the 'crown.'

Amongst the key messages that Andy presented in his tour of the totem poles was the idea that the potlatch was an 'essential part of our society.' The potlatch incorporated a range of practices and governance: they marked important life events, such as births, death and marriages. This ceremony was so important that the colonial government attempted to suppress it until as late as 1951, when this aspect of the *Indian Act* was repealed. Andy used the topic of the potlatch to highlight many different things: to demonstrate alternative values, particularly about attitudes to wealth, to signal the resistance that Indigenous people have had to show in the face of colonial repression, and to note that ceremonies that were once stigmatised now serve as a source of pride. The potlatch today seems to be mostly used as a celebration of cultures and a way to connect to place, community and ancestors, and to uphold traditions. Andy's description of the potlatch moves towards and away from the domain of spirituality; both moves work to show the importance of the practice, moving towards indicating reverence for something spiritual, moving away indicating more wide-ranging practical applications. Andy drew a contrast between the potlatch, which worked in part to *give away* wealth, and 'Victorian values' which were mostly about accumulating wealth. If indigeneity as a concept is a comparative project, then assertions like this help to build and maintain identities.[123] This point was reinforced when he posited that wealth in itself is conceptualised very differently by Indigenous people; for 'them' on the coast, wealth is about knowledge and materiality that can be utilised in ceremony.

[123] Johnson & Kraft (2017).

As with his totem pole tours, Andy uses his art as a 'gateway drug' through which to encourage people to learn and engage. The Star Wars prints, for example, might for some be recognisable as Kwakwaka'wakw, for others they might relate them to the Northwest coast, while others might see it as Indigenous, or just some new and different representation of the storm trooper. The print works to disrupt, as well as offer a bridge, for identities and labels to be negotiated in relation to others, the borders of which are regularly being constructed, dissembled and constructed again in a never-ending mediation. This prompts the important questions of when, by whom, and on what grounds, does something become recognisable as Indigenous? (Tafjord 2020) Andy's art facilitates encounters where new, shared and competing interpretations are invoked and translated on a variety of scales. Andy's prints move as 'boundary objects' in that they are at once recognisable, maintaining and retaining a common identity and certain meanings, whilst flexible enough to be seen and used in different contexts by different people for different purposes. (Star and Griesemer 1989) These images can work as 'communication bridges' linking people, places and matters, as the *Idle No More* image demonstrated.

The importance of traditions is one of the key messages that I have taken from my encounter with Andy. In his own Master's thesis (2000) Andy argues for the importance of traditional practices in expressing and constituting a K'ómoks identity. Andy plays with traditions, both to attract and subvert attention, whilst also maintaining boundaries between private and sacred and what is public for tourists. In this regard he described navigating between two worlds, enforcing boundaries between what is for sale and what is reserved for ceremonies, and in doing so reinforces the value of those items used in ceremony. He was adamant that he disliked the sale of ceremonial regalia for 'trophy hunters.' Greg Johnson (2007) argues that the invocation of tradition is utilised as a discursive strategy. In this context, referring to practices as traditional might give them more legitimacy. Traditions make practices, whether they are new or not, sound rooted in the past or in specific knowledge and are something tourists have come to expect.

Andy regularly made reference to the past, to ancestors, and to supernatural figures and myths. He spoke about the importance of traditions and the power of dance in its ability to connect you to place, community and ancestors. He made a pointed distinction between what

he calls traditional beliefs and customs and the organised religion of Christianity, which he saw as having damaged the fabric of his community. Andy emphasised from the outset that he should not be identified with just one label or nation. At a later point in the interview, when commenting directly on the term indigeneity, he acknowledged the usefulness of this label in the global connection it permitted, unrestrained by national borders. He described this term as a positive progression from earlier terminologies such as Indian, native and aboriginal. He drew one linking, globalising theme, that the term had arisen out of the impact and shared experience of colonialism, as well as one more regional link, based on shared traditions and a long-standing connection to the Pacific Ocean.

Chapter 3: Tana and her canoe 'Šaahyačistup'

Image 10. Tana Thomas on Meares Island. Taken by Siv Ellen Kraft, July 2017.

My name is Tana Thomas, I come from Ahousaht. A big part of introducing myself is to introduce my canoe, its name Šaahyačistup means it'll bring healing wherever it goes…my canoe is a big part of who I am and what I represent, we come as one!

The Ahousaht First Nation is based on the west-coast of Vancouver Island and is part of the Nuu-chah-nulth language group. In Nuu-chah-nulth, the word Ahousaht means 'facing opposite from the ocean' or 'people living with their backs to the land and mountains' It's administrative centre is in the village of Maaqtusiis, located on Flores Island, near Tofino, where many members of Ahousaht Nation live.[124]

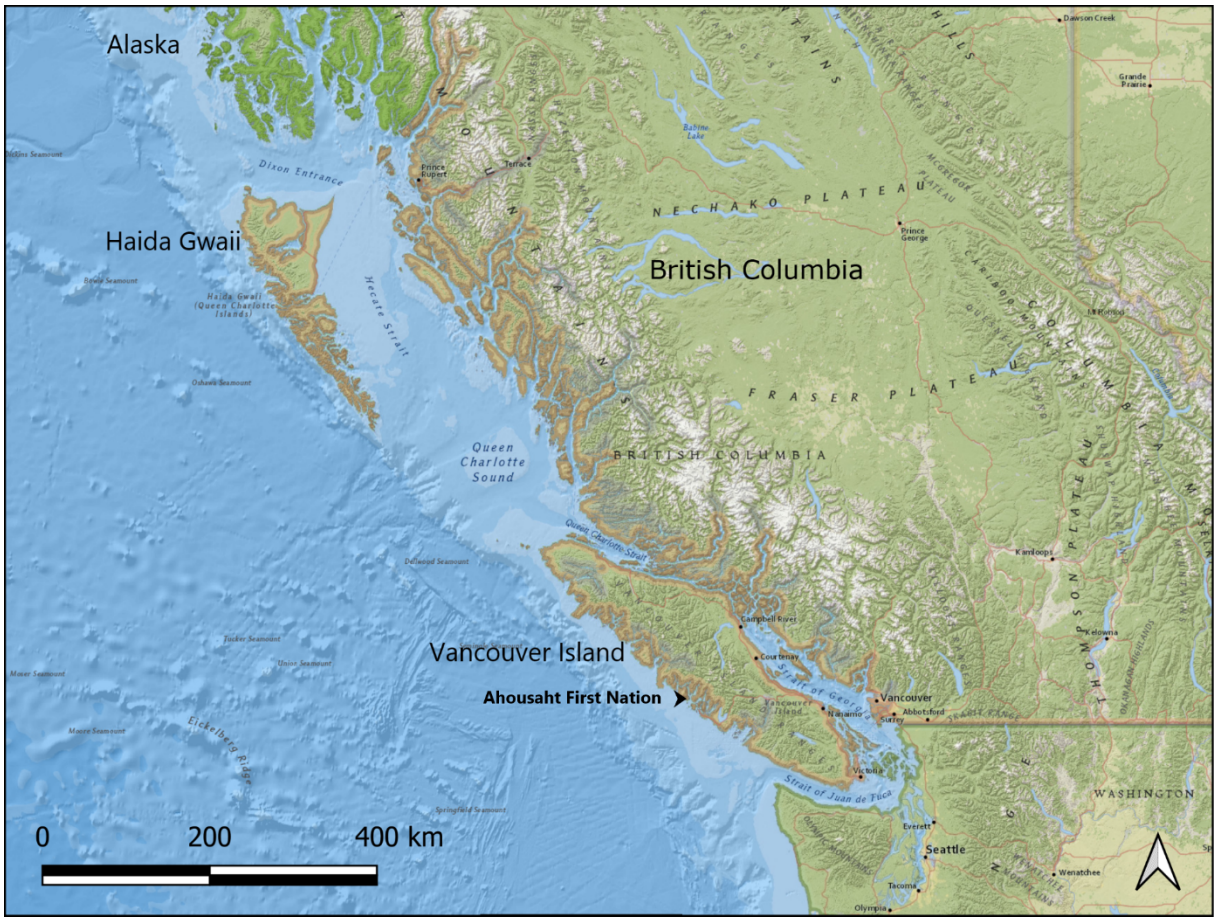

Image 11. Illustration of the approximate location of Ahousaht Nation.

[124] For an Ahousaht Territory map: https://www.ahousaht.ca/maps.html (accessed January 2021). First Nations Territory Map of Vancouver Island from Vancouver Island Economic Alliance webpage. https://viea.ca/business-living-on-vancouver-island/first-nations/ (accessed January 2021).

Introduction

This chapter is built around my experiences and Interview with Tana Thomas, a cultural tour guide for a 'First Nations owned-and-operated company' called *Tashii Paddle School* in Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks.[125] Tana is 25 and a member of the Ahousaht First Nations.[126] We first met when she guided a tour of Meares Island that I took in July 2017 which was advertised as:

> One of the most unique experiences in Tofino, join a Nuu-chah-nulth guide for a paddle and guided walk on the Big Tree Trail.[127] Paddle as a group in our traditional-style canoe to experience being among 1000-year-old cedar trees in the ancient rainforest on Meares Island. Learn about First Nations culture, history, and environment.

The tour lasted half a day, and I interviewed Tana a year later having met up several times before. Our interview ranged widely as I asked questions prompted by the tour and why she was engaged in tourism. What stands out is that Tana is on a very personal journey of discovering her Indigenous identity, and in the process reconnecting with her family, place, community, history and traditions. The canoe which Tana described as an inseparable part of her identity offers a very literal way of doing this. I provide a description of the tour and our interview, which I have run together, and then offer some reflections about the ways in which Tana articulates indigeneity and spirituality in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation.

Tour and Interview

Tana introduced herself, and immediately said that she was in the process of building her own canoe. She explained that it was quite rare for a woman to do this, and that the process is long and strenuous. First, you have to find your tree, which involves certain rituals and prayers for guidance, which in the past could have taken months, meant camping out in the forest, and might have been quite dangerous with wolves and other wildlife. This was probably why it

[125] For a link to *Tashii Paddle School*: https://tashiipaddle.com/ (accessed March 2020). For more on Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks: see Chapter 5.
[126] For more information on the Ahousaht First Nation: https://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/vancouver-island-coast/ahousaht (accessed March 2020).
[127] See link to Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council: https://nuuchahnulth.org/ (accessed March 2020).

was considered a task for a man. Many men, including those in her family had warned her that she would not be able to carve her own canoe – the tools are too heavy and too hard to use. She had worried about this, yet sounded thrilled to be proving them all wrong. Tana acknowledged however, that she had underestimated the scale of the task and how it would unsettle people. She had received money for the canoe project from North Island College where she had recently completed a course in Ecotourism.[128] She later received funding from the 'Nature Conservancy', an environmental group from the United States, after representatives attending the tour pooled together and gave her the 14,000 dollars needed to complete her canoe. Their generosity had made her determined to finish. She hoped to do so in time for this year's *Tribal Journeys*. Tana explained that because she lived away from her territory, *Tribal Journeys* was her main connection to her culture growing up. In the interview, Tana told me more about building that canoe:

> It was definitely harder than I thought it would be, my muscles ached every morning and night. Joe Martin would tell me to bath in the creek afterwards to help with relief but it was so cold. At the start, I was commuting from Ladysmith, which was tiring, but eventually I managed to move down here so it became more day-to-day work. This meant I could start working with *Tashii Paddle*. I was learning a lot from Tsimka, Joe Martin's daughter, who runs *Tashii Paddle.*[129]

Tana explained that building the canoe, 'was mostly silent learning, you watch and then you do, and that is really the only way to learn, Joe would guide and correct me if needed, you really have to pay attention.' She admitted to being 'very worried at the start that those people who doubted me would be proven right, I did not know how to use these tools, but Joe was patient and I managed.' Fortunately for her, 'most of my family were encouraging, but they knew this was my journey and for that reason they left me to it.' She noted that 'in some ways it was a lonely journey but one that became very empowering too and not just for me, it kind of started to spread to others – to the people I shared my journey with.'

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[128] The programme is called 'Aboriginal Ecotourism Training Program' and it is offered through a partnership forged between Vancouver Island University, Heiltsuk Tribal Council and North Island College. It receives funding provided by the Government of Canada - through the Canada Job Fund - and the Province of British Columbia, and interestingly by *Indigenous Tourism British Columbia*. The course is eleven months long and is 'designed to give certified skills for employment within British Columbia's rapidly growing Aboriginal Tourism sector'.
See: https://www.nccie.ca/story/aboriginal-ecotourism-training-program/ (accessed March 2020).

[129] Tsimka Martin: see chapter 5.

Image 12. Tana Thomas and Joe Martin carving the canoe in 2017. Taken by Stephanie Charleson.

Tana began the tour by introducing herself first in Nuu-chah-nulth and then in English; she informed us that she did not grow up learning the language and that she had only recently learnt how to introduce herself that way, but she believed that learning the language is important and is keen to learn more.[130] After a brief lesson on how to paddle, we all got into the canoe. We were told that these were 'dugout canoes', traditional to the area, and predominantly used for fishing and for whale hunting, which was economically and socially very significant for the Nuu-chah-nulth people. The two white stripes at the bow of the canoe are a symbol to others that the canoe comes in peace; this was important back when communities traded with each other, as there was a lot of warfare and competition in the past. The canoe we were in was built by Joe Martin, the local master Carver who was at that time teaching Tana how to build her canoe. Once we were all seated and the canoe was balanced, Tana asked the Creator for safe passage and we then embarked towards Meares Island. Hearing about the historical importance of canoes to the area and peoples, while being

[130] For more information on Nuu-chah-nulth language: https://www.firstvoices.com/explore/FV/sections/Data/Nuu-chah-nulth/Nuu%C4%8Daan%CC%93u%C9%AB/Nuu-chah-nulth%20(Barkley) (accessed March 2020).

in a canoe myself, helped to bring Tana's story to life. The cedar canoe stood out in a busy tourist harbour and represented a recognisable feature of Indigenous cultures on the Pacific west coast.

As we paddled, Tana told us about the area and about the protests that had happened on Meares Island in the 1980's & '90's which were aimed at protecting the land from a logging company that had acquired the land rights from the provincial government.[131] Tana pointed to the old growth forest on the Island, noting that it would not be there today, if it were not for those who had protested. She added that this was considered one of the largest protests in Canadian history, and that it forced the country to stop and to think about the different Indigenous peoples. Different people collaborated on that protest, people who had never met before, and that kind of collaboration, Tana argued, is necessary to be effective. The protest got a lot of media attention and put Tofino on the map, but Tana said that the protests are still a divisive issue because for some people it came down to jobs and the economy, while for others it was about respect for the land and its protection and preservation. Tana explained that there are no original treaties in this province, which she thought was both a good and a bad thing.[132] Good, because the government cannot just pretend that it is their land to do with what they like, but it is difficult because not everyone can agree on how to move forward; we need money, she commented, but we also need to protect our land and that, she stated, does not always feel like a real choice.

As we continued to paddle through the still waters in Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks, Tana offered to sing us a song. She told us that she had always loved singing, but for a long time was too frightened to sing in public. That was, until an Elder, a relative, had advised her to just: 'look up to the sky and sing to your ancestors, you are giving them a gift and they are singing with you, you are never alone when you sing!' Tana then took a deep breath, looked up and began to sing and play her drum. The song had been gifted to her by her cousin. Next, she asked if anyone in the canoe would share one in return, but no one did, probably because we were all

[131] For more information on the so-called 'War of the Woods': Chapter 3 & 5. https://thenarwhal.ca/25-years-after-clayoquot-sound-blockades-the-war-in-the-woods-never-ended-and-its-heating-back-up/ (accessed March 2020).
[132] For more information about treaties in the region: http://www.bctreaty.ca/nuu-chah-nulth-tribal-council (accessed March 2020).

too embarrassed. She told us that she finds it easier to sing for tourists than within her community, because in this setting, she said, she is much less afraid of getting something wrong.

I was surprised by the remark at the time, so I asked Tana to comment on this in an interview that took place the following year, to which she said:

> I don't always sing, it has to be the right setting; it needs to be quiet and to feel right. Typically, men sing in circles and in ceremonies. When you ask why, the answer tends to be, because that is the way it is, or has always been, this is tradition. Women traditionally do the dancing. It is always hard in these settings, to break those traditions and norms, even just getting other women to join you is hard. We are all scared…You have to let yourself be very vulnerable when you sing, it is as if you know just how sacred the song is, and if your spirit is not strong enough, it will break. I think many women are afraid of this, of the power, they know they will just cry if they try.

She continued by telling me about the medicine wheel, she acknowledged that people think differently but she has learned that there are four parts: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.

> Women had historically been more in charge of the emotional and spiritual side and men the mental and physical, but due to colonialism this had all become off balance. Our people have been through so much wreckage. Our women have been protecting this whole other side. I think because spirituality is a bit more under the surface, it was easier to protect and keep alive. Women can connect to the moon through their cycles and maybe because of this, they can better connect to the memory of these songs.

Tana emphasised the power she has as a woman and noted: 'how sacred these songs are and the importance of being able to gather the strength to share them.[133] It is healing to hear other women sing, it is like a lullaby for all the sorrows we all have.' She looked forward to a time when 'we will see more women singing in circles and in ceremonies. We need to encourage the youth and tell them and show them, that it is an open space and how beautiful their song is, and to let them know that it's ok if their voice cracks or they feel too weak, to remind them, like I was, that they are not alone.'

[133] For scholarship on Indigenous sacred songs in British Columbia: Palmer (2007), Bell & Napoleon (2009).

I remarked that it must take a lot of strength to push against traditions, as she frames them, and to encourage others to do the same. I asked her where she thinks this strength comes from. She replied:

> I suppose my family, the Thomas family, none of them know how amazing they are, they are so kind. I've never seen any of them shame each other for trying to learn, and you can feel the power and healing that is present in their voices. I don't know where it is coming from. I do not know how they are such gentle teachers but I think it must be deep rooted in me.

Tana paused and then recalled a memory of an aunt who had inspired her to sing:

> I remember my Aunty Cathy, asking me one time, why I was not dancing. I told her it is because I want to sing. I remember looking at everyone's mouths trying desperately to learn how. I knew women were not supposed to, but I didn't really understand why, maybe it is something to do with the moon. My Aunty Cathy told me to go stand by the men and sing alongside them. So I tried, but one man told me that I should not be there, that I should go be with the women, that it is just tradition. I went back to my aunty and she encouraged me to try again. This time, she said, I should stand by my cousin Noah. So I did. I stood by him and told him I want to learn. He let me stand there, next to him and he taught me the song. From that moment on I sang the song constantly – I loved it.

Tana described the emotional moment when she was formally gifted the song. Her cousin Noah formally gifted her the song at his graduation ceremony when he invited Tana to come on stage and told her that now she has a song to sing, she must never stop singing. She explained that having your own song and rights to sing a song is a very important and not having one can be a barrier:

> There is a lot of protocol around songs, and it is part of our law.[134] Songs can only ever be gifted, and you must share the origins and meanings of songs. It is very bad if you don't, I think many people are scared that they will get it wrong. I have my song now and I have been singing it on whatever platform I have. I shared that song with you on the canoe that day. I find courage to sing when I think about who is listening and whom it might help. It would be amazing if my singing helped someone and I have come to think maybe my voice is one of my instruments to help others heal, if so, then I should not be greedy with it, I should share it!

I thought it was interesting that Tana describes her singing in a similar way to the canoe – as a potential tool for healing and as something she has to offer. Tana articulated a connection between song and spirituality and sees both of these things as belonging more to the female

[134] Protocol is an umbrella term used by Indigenous peoples on The Northwest Coast to refer to the laws of their Nations; for research on Indigenous protocols on The Northwest Coast: Dangeli (2015) Bell & Napoleon (2009).

domain. She posited that it was colonialism that disrupted the system, that shifted the domains and created the tradition that now excludes her. This view permits her to challenge and break with the current Ahousaht traditions in a way that positions her in an even more traditional place, prior to colonialism. Tana appeals to her ancestors to further legitimise her claims, to reinforce connections and as a reminder that she is not alone.

By singing to tourists, Tana gets to practice using her voice in a public setting without disruption. I had not thought of tourism offering that kind of space before, that it could be perceived as a space free from rules and traditions and hierarchies. So much literature on tourism speaks to the contrary. Tana here was our host, she seemed to have control of the narrative, and the guests, including myself, were interested but unaware of particular Ahousaht customs and traditions. I imagine most tourists would not know if something was done or said that broke the laws or customs of the people or person hosting.

This was the first introduction to the law and protocol around songs, something that I later heard and saw a lot during my time on Vancouver Island. The notion of shared law, particularly when applied to songs, challenged me to think about how law is conceptualised, conceived and employed. Tana uses the term, 'our law', which I think extends to Indigenous peoples up and down the west coast who practise and uphold this protocol. I think using the term 'law' signals, maintains and reinforces its importance as a practice. Tana states that there are consequences for not following this law, to the extent that people are afraid of getting it wrong, and speaks of the honour she feels for having her own song to sing.

We landed on Meares Island, parked the canoe and located the boardwalk. The boardwalk was built to illustrate to the Canadian Government and other relevant authorities that this land has, and is, still being cared for. Tana told us that this is not a wilderness, which she said is a word often used to describe islands like this. 'Wilderness' implies that this land is just naturally this way. Instead, she informed us, she prefers to say that she practices 'abountability'– this land looks like this and is flourishing because it has, and continues to be, cared for. This island is home to some of the oldest trees in Canada, including an ancient cedar tree that is thought to be around 2,000 years old. As we walked through the forest, Tana told us about the flora and fauna. She showed how the trees have been harvested, and that with

this information scientists can now estimate how long people have been living here and this knowledge she tells us, is now being used as evidence for 'Indigenous land claims.'[135]

As we walked along the boardwalk, everyone seemed to be contemplating the history and depth of the forest that surrounded us. Tana occasionally stopped us to talk about the different plants and how they are used and understood. Many of the big trees had huge burls, which led Tana to tell us a story of 'Tzu-ne-kwa', also known as the wild women of the forest. When children wandered alone into the forest, against their parents' wishes, they would come across – 'Tzu-ne-kwa' – who would first blind the children she captured, throw them into her cedar basket that was lined with urchins, and then take them deep into the forest and stuff them into the trees, where they would remain stuck forever. The tree burls were the proof of the children who were trapped inside. This story, Tana explained, was told to prevent children from wandering alone into the forest. We all laughed at how terrifying that story must be for children and agreed that it would definitely work as prevention. Tana grinned and said that she looked forward to telling this story to her children one day.

We continued walking through the forest, rich with old growth and tall ancient trees. Tana tries to learn as much as possible about this area, mostly she said, because it helps to keep the job interesting and fulfilling. After about forty minutes, the boardwalk ended and we arrived at what she presented as a garden, one that hosts a huge ancient cedar tree, that is estimated to be between 1,000 and 1,500 years old and has a girth of about 60 feet. This tree and others in the area are some of the oldest and largest living life forms on earth. After a short lunch, we returned to the canoe and paddled back to shore. As we paddled, I recall Tana commenting that as a child, she was very quiet and shy, and that, she thinks, was good for her, because she could just take everything in. This job as a tour guide is helping her find her voice. Land was an important topic, as she spent a large portion of the tour speaking about the various plants, traditions, stories and protests pertaining to the area. By reinforcing the importance of the land for herself, for her community and for First Nations peoples more

[135] For more information on culturally modified trees see: https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/magazine/entry/the_fingerprints_of_our_ancestors/ (accessed March 2020).

widely, Tana connected to a wider discourse about reclamation of land and resources and a sense of belonging.

Image 13. Old cedar tree on Meares Island taken in July 2017.

I asked Tana if she was religious, for I had noted that she had asked the Creator for a safe passage before we left and had heard her express the connections she felt to her ancestors, so I was intrigued to know more. Tana replied that she was 'not religious, but spiritual and that is true for most people I know.' She added that her people are on a journey to reconnect with the spirit world. She made a point that she tries not to label stuff, but she added that she has been to a few Baha'i meetings and is interested to know more.[136]

On the paddle back, Tana spoke a lot about her relationship with her mother, who had left the community and raised Tana and her siblings away from Ahousaht territory. She told us this was because of the social problems, like sexual and alcohol abuse, and how her mother had not wanted to raise her children in that environment. Tana said that this had been a big issue between her and her mother, for she had grown up not feeling at home in the city, and always wanting to go 'home.' She now appreciates that her mother was just trying to protect her and her siblings. Her mother had been to a residential school and had become an active participant in the Truth and Reconciliation process. Tana spoke about how hard and emotionally draining it must have been for her, but that her mother believed that the process was worth it, she believed in the importance of people being able to heal, and part of that healing is about confronting these stories and memories from the past. Her mother was doing a Master's degree on *Indigenous trauma and healing* and works in a rehabilitation centre. Tana recalled a story with pride, of how her mother had asked her to come and speak to some of the elders about what she was doing with her canoe project and with this tour, as well as her hopes for the future. She said that the old people were really touched, moved and grateful, and how she felt the same for having their support. She commented that many people from the generation who went to residential school are quite broken and have grown up ashamed; and so, to see young people like me, wanting to learn and feeling proud and strong about who we are, can be quite moving. "We all cried," she told us.

The interview the following year started on request, with Tana telling me more about her now completed canoe, and the journeys and ambitions she has for it: "I finished my canoe that same summer. We had a ceremony on 'Long beach.'[137] I said some kind words to the canoe

[136] Horton's (2012) thesis explores Indigenous becoming through the Baha'i faith in this region.
[137] The interview took place on November 2nd 2018 in Victoria.

as the sun rose. I cried thinking that this day had finally come. The canoe and I are bonded for life. I spoke about what this canoe meant to me and why I had wanted it to be born."

Image 14. Tana's canoe ceremony at Long beach in Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks. Taken by Deanna Dean.

As Tana had mentioned earlier a big motivation for carving the canoe was to take it on *Tribal Journeys*:

> The day after the launching ceremony, I set sail on *Tribal Journeys*. I was not too scared to do the journey in the canoe, because I had learnt so much about the currents and the sea, how the canoe moves and reacts to the water. I parked Šaahyačistup next to the other canoes and skippers, thinking about how my canoe had JUST been born, and then I realised, I had nothing I needed; no paddles and no pullers, almost nothing but the canoe, so then I got scared! I called my mum and she came with life jackets and paddles. I met her at 2am, she crawled into my tent and then the next day my cousin Jessie 'canoe hopped' and paddled with us. It was the longest day, it was such a hard day, but we sort of didn't notice until we stepped on the ground, we were exhausted and hungry but also very aware of what we had just achieved. That was the first time that I had asked to come ashore, I told them the canoe had only been born yesterday and everyone appreciated the creativity and strength it took for us to be there. We arrived on Quadra Island, we were the last canoe in. My Uncle Frank and Aunty Cathy were on the shores dancing and celebrating our arrival, I was shaking. I felt like everything and everyone was connected. My cousin Jessie looked at me and was crying, we were all on the shore crying and hugging, it was a moment I had been waiting for, for so long.

Tana's ambition for the canoe to offer support and to make connections was being fulfilled. She continued, however, to tell me about a challenge she faced later on when she arrived at the final landing place:

> All the Nuu-chah-nulth speakers were lined up, I was representing Ahousaht, and the man asking permission for the Nuu-chah-nulth boats to come ashore, said everyone's name but mine, he introduced each canoe and he just skipped mine. It was so awkward he looked at me and I stared back. He knew who I was but he did not acknowledge me. I was hurt, I was stunned, but my cousin Jessie was furious and she confronted him and said, "This is so classic, we live in such a patriarchal society. Whenever there is a strong woman, doing something that you feel threatened by, you don't acknowledge her. You should be proud she is representing you, representing Ahousaht. Don't push her to the side, you hurt her!"
>
> I think the guy felt bad because he came up to me and apologised. He told me I should introduce myself at the skipper meeting that evening. He told me to take the time on the floor. I did, but I was scared, all the men were behind me but I also realised at that moment, how important that platform is, and how important it is to acknowledge people. I made sure I acknowledged and thanked the communities and the people who had helped get me there. I thanked Joe Martin for sharing his ancestral knowledge with me, and everyone who paddled with me and alongside me. I felt like I was taking my power back, I needed to not fall back into the patriarchal system. I had come too far; I knew I needed to stand in front of it.

Tana continued by speaking about the responsibility she feels as a woman to get up and speak when she is given the opportunity because so many women do not get that chance:

> Women have been oppressed and put down for so long. Men have been speaking for so long. There's so many empty words now. Sometimes they don't even know what they are saying, they simply speak because they can. It's especially hard to see, when you know that some of the men that are 'platformed', are abusers. You know that they have or are still taking advantage of women and girls, it makes you sick. You cannot respect him, but he's up there speaking. So many women get triggered by this. They want to see women up there instead. Some people want women like me to take that space and disrupt that system. I want to be up to that challenge, but of course I am afraid. I want to be sure what I say comes from the heart and that I never speak empty words – just to say them. I want my words to be meaningful but I am not always sure what my message is. On that day at Tribal Journeys, Jessie was really pushing me. I could not have done it without her. I want to speak because so many women do not have voices but sometimes I feel overwhelmed, like, am I meant to speak for all Nuu-chah-nulth women? Ahhhhhhh! I pray for the right words, and sometimes when I speak, it does not feel like me, it's as if it's coming from somewhere else. Where is it coming from?

> Some people say that the Creator is speaking for me. It is important to stay grounded and focused, not to worry too much.

Similar to Tana's reflections around singing, she seeks the strength to speak from outside of herself, be it through the Creator or the needs of other women and perhaps in an effort to soften the power and responsibility she is cautious to embrace. It is commonly reported by scholars that people in marginal positions, when given the opportunity to speak and be heard, feel the weight of all those who don't get to. If they do or say something wrong, they are left feeling as if they have let their whole side down.[138] The feeling is because you have a platform, you then become a representative for all those associated with you or your cause.

We spoke for a while about the abuse and the sexism she mentioned and the different reasons she thinks are behind it, some of these reflections were as follows:

> I have been thinking a lot about healing, about holistic healing, I have been speaking to people, like my Uncle Frank. We think there is so much work to do in the communities. To start with, we need to know about what our parents went through. They need to heal and we need to understand. We need to understand where all the hurt and pain comes from. [...] Tourism is a good start for this, to have work that is relevant and that engages the community, in our culture and in the surroundings, and for it to be multidisciplinary, so everyone can find their space within it. We need the opportunity to work and get to know these different spaces. I think tourism can provide that opportunity for the new generation.

Having experienced the tour and what it gives Tana, such as continuing to learn more about her culture, practising using her voice – be that by claiming the narrative or subverting traditions with her singing – all the while commanding and steering her canoe, suggests that for her tourism was engaging, useful and relevant. She commented however that:

> We cannot thrive at it if we are not healthy people. We need to be learning from our elders and teaching the youth. We, my generation, need to be good mentors and role models so then we can share our culture in tourism. We need a culture that we know well and that we are proud to share. I am not sure our communities have found that balance yet. Communities have been so broken and displaced. Not all families were able to hold on to so many teachings so those that can, now need to search for them.

She reflected that:

> The older generations went through the residential school system. They learnt not to talk about their ceremonies, or they would get into trouble and that is deep rooted in them. They were taught to be ashamed, and some people do not realise

[138] See for example, Smith (1999) Mignolo & Walsh (2018).

> that they are passing that sense of shame on by keeping it all so hidden. We need a change; I think we need to share; we need to stop keeping things secret.

I think about the stark contrast of experiences by different generations, and the short amount of time that has passed, from elements of a culture being outlawed to those same elements being harnessed and celebrated as an essential part of a booming Indigenous tourism economy. Tana explains further, why she feels these ceremonies should be shared:

> These ceremonies and rituals are all just tools that we use to connect to the Creator, they do not belong to anyone. I believe the Creator provides us with loads of different ways to make connections and all around the world, these may look different, but as long as you stay humble and do not be selfish with it, they all work. I was told this story recently that goes something like this…
>
> A young man is trying to decolonise himself, trying to rid himself of the pollution that Christianity brought into our communities. So he goes for a spiritual bath. After the bath he felt so good and he went home to his father and told how much better the bath was than going to church. His father said to him: go back and bathe again because you did not learn your lesson.

Tana then explained that she felt the point of this story was that no one ritual is better than another and thinking otherwise is the colonial way to approach something. She then commented that:

> I am still wrapping my head around that story though, working out how to word it right and tell it well. I think it is an important lesson though. We need a balance, the confidence to create new rituals and ceremonies alongside the knowledge of our ancestors. We have the tools but we do not always know how to use them properly or we do not know the meaning behind it, and we need to figure this out.

This comment speaks to the process of tradition making, to be able to fill, negotiate and redefine what fits and resonates for the community or for the individual. Tana continued to share her outlook on spirituality. She told me that she tried to remain open hearted and accepting of the fact that she will not understand everything, but that ultimately she believes that everything happens for a reason, and also that there is so much to learn: 'You have to be in the right mind-set, to be open to being taught. My granny always said to not put down another religion, like saying that's 'baloney' as long as you are true to what you believe, that is what matters.' Although she does not know much about other religions, she thinks many of the values and messages behind them are similar, with different words and practises being used. Tana then spoke about her hopes to achieve a more pure place which she described as:

> A pure light that shines. Children often have it, because they are closer to the other side. Sometimes and for some people, it dims, but at the end of your life you can get closer to it again. Some elders show it, and you can really feel that power. That is why it is often elders that brush you off in prayers. However, there are lots more children holding that power and our attention needs to be on them. They need to be protected as they deserve to be, but more than that, we need to be open to learn from them, just as we do from our elders, and our elders too need to learn from them.

Tana then elucidated that this idea was part of a prophecy that her mother spoke about:

> The seventh generation that I am a part of will restore the culture to the people. My mum believes we are living in a time where the knowledge has switched – that the teachings, instead of being passed down from generation to generation, teachings instead will come from our youth. The youth are bold and curious; we won't let things be lost. The love they have for the trees, the oceans, the animals, that unconditional love they have, that's what needs to be learned.

Spirituality as Tana speaks about it, appears to be a very important and guiding aspect of her life and one that she reflects on a lot. She paused in retrospection before she told me:

> I'm trying to think about spirituality more as a lifestyle and not put it into a box, see it more as a way to live, and to live it with focus. I think this all fits in as a healing stage, like, after you've dealt with trauma, then culture can come back in and then comes ceremony. My mum and I have gotten into arguments about this. She says culture is not going to heal and people are wrong about that. First, you do the intensive work; you need to figure out what your brain is doing. I agree with her to an extent, but I also think that we are cultural people, and we need cultural practises to make sense of everything else.

Tana presents culture as an entity, one that has agency in the sense that it can do things – it can heal for example. I found this argument over the power and potential limitations of culture particularly interesting. The idea of a prophecy, where the young restore the culture to the people, points to hope for the future, and that hope rests largely on the engagement with culture and connection to place. Tana's comments above, where she remarks that no practises are better than another and that such an approach is very colonial, might work to reinforce that spirituality, unlike religion, is very open.[139] This ethos allows Tana space to listen and

[139] Julie Cruikshank (1998) working in the Yukon Territory, writes about how prophecies function as a way to make sense of complex changes. She argues for more attention to be placed on the narratives about prophets and prophecies, and the discourses in which they are operating. In the Yukon, Cruickshank sees prophecy serving as a routine explanation for contemporary events.

learn, and by so doing fill and forge an approach to life, traditions and spirituality that rests with her and builds on her sense of belonging.

I ask Tana to elaborate on her intentions, ambitions and engagement in tourism for the future:

> My goal with tourism is for it to be a sustainable business for the area but one that is holistic and healing. Like the canoe tour you came on, but bigger. I want everyone to really connect with the land. I want it to be comfortable but not glamorous. Carving my canoe was about Tribal Journeys but it was also so I can one day fulfil this plan. I want a business where people can come on the tours, camp, and get some healing time. To be away from other people, away from colonisation and instead take time for themselves. Surrounded by the cedar trees, being able to harvest and berry pick, being with people who want the same things. I want that for my people and I want to open up that space for tourists.

In elaborating, she said:

> My mum and I have this idea that I should have it as a place to work with the youth. She can do intensive therapy and I can offer the release and the cultural connection, the time with the environment, a positive space to learn and reflect. I think it goes hand in hand, caring for yourself and caring for the environment. This vision and plan that I have, it also ties into what my dad wanted, he believed that the community needed a youth camp. My mum tells me some of the plans that he had. He wanted a centre in the design of a 'big house.' He wanted girls and boys separated and that the older women could take the girls and the older men would take the boys and they would teach them our ceremonies and protocols. He hoped people would then have more of a sense of purpose. The vision is there and it is possible. I just need to do it. My father saw that vision. My mother is working on that vision. I want to achieve it. Our people need this!

Tana articulated the importance and potential she placed on the land and culture and its ability to heal, her hopes for healing and connecting, the centrality of her canoe, the focus on the youth and her desire to fulfil visions and prophecies. I asked Tana if she foresees any potential challenges or obstacles in achieving her vision. She replied:

> I fear being successful when community members are still suffering. I do not think it will be rewarding for me unless everyone benefits. I want to do my project well, so there is an opportunity for training and for youth work and to show our elders that we are proud and they should be proud too. I think it is up to individuals what they want to share in that space. I think guides enjoy having that space to figure that out. Being a tour guide gives you the time to do that kind of cultural work, to dig into the past and dig up those teachings and to share them. I think tourism is a great platform for that, and one that everyone can benefit from.

Tana's involvement in tourism enables her to work towards a family goal of creating a positive space for the community, especially the youth, in which they can connect to the land, themselves, to traditions and protocols, in the hope that they will find a strong sense of purpose. Tana ties her success not only to her own health, but to the health of the entire community.

Moving on Tana reflected upon possible drawbacks and limitations to tourism, noting that:

> I have seen some communities get lost in tourism. They have too many tourists and start to just entertain with their culture and that's when it becomes inauthentic. There's a fine balance. It can be repetitive and strange, sharing your story time and again, you can get bored of yourself. I want a business where there is room for people to do different things, so if one day you are tired and bored of a particular job, you have the space to do something else.

She added that:

> ...tourists can sometimes dehumanise their guides. They can think of them just as an entertainer, and lose sight of the fact that they have a story, it's not just someone on a stage. I think the space needs to be safe and it should be reciprocal. If it is too one-sided, it can be draining for both the guide and the tourist. Tourism should be about an exchange and a connection, and then, it is all worth it.

Tana's point here, really cuts through a lot of academic arguments about tourism, which often focus on commodification and consumption and upholds rigid binaries concerning the roles played by hosts and guests. Whilst highlighting the problems that can arise in tourism, Tana reveals a different vision: her plan includes the whole community, including guests, and will work as a space for mutual learning and reciprocal connections. I ask Tana why she thinks tourists are interested and she replied:

> I think most people want to learn and connect to people and places […] and maybe to escape...I have always believed in the potential of the canoe as a learning platform. It is such a good metaphor for life. It carries so much. You really feel that when you are out there on the water. You keep paddling and you know you will get to wherever you want to go. If you are weak, you can stop, and although you feel the weight, it holds you. Everyone is working together in the canoe and you keep going – that is life! It's also about connection. Everyone wants to connect to people and to places.

In reflecting upon the importance of connection, Tana told me about how strong that feeling is on *Tribal Journeys*:

> The first *Tribal Journey* I went on was when I was nine. I remember the strength it took, the endurance, but at the same time it wasn't hard. Teachings about

> canoes come at a very young age, I remember this elder from Cowichan telling me to say good morning to the canoe. Back then, I thought that was very strange, but he told me the canoe is alive and that it has a spirit, so you should greet it. I really feel that spirit now. You have to be so careful about what energy you bring into the canoe. It is the same as a big house or any sacred place. You have to be very mindful about what you are thinking when you're in the canoe. You need to be present, sensitive, you need to have a sense of purpose and be aware of history; whose territory are you in? You should reflect on the people and energies that have come before you. It is all so connected. Just like the canoe, it was a tree living as part of the forest and it provided so much for its people, and it all comes full circle!

The canoe is invoked as a living being that needs to be respected, and more than that, revered. The way you interact with it matters because it affects the canoe as it will affect you. I joined Tana on *Tribal Journeys* in 2018; I attended as an interested friend and my intentions were more for support than to carry out research. I do not feel it would be appropriate therefore to go into detail about my experiences on 'Tribal Journeys', but I will say that the feeling of connection that Tana speaks about was impossible to miss. I recall an early morning on a misty beach in Washington State, full of people preparing canoes for a long day of paddling, people of all ages working together and helping each other, joining in circles, burning sage, cleansing themselves and the canoes, and asking the Creator for a 'safe passage' before they took to the water, thanking their hosts and requesting permission to leave their shores.

Image 15. Tribal journeys 2018 preparing to leave the shores of Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. 2018.

I learnt a very important lesson on *Tribal Journeys* which was to never refer to a canoe as a boat. If you are caught doing this, as I was, many people will threaten to throw you in the very cold sea. I was careful not to repeat my mistake. This distinction articulates the sacredness of what the canoe can represent, as for many the canoe is not just a means of transportation as a boat could be; it is, a living thing. The name and theme of the 2018 Tribal Journeys, was ləhigʷalikʷ čəł ʔə tiił stʼulǰəxʷčəł, in English 'Honouring Our Medicine.'[140] Medicine was used in broad terms encompassing cultural and spiritual practises. On 28 July 2018, I watched from the beach at Puyallup as the canoes arrived at their final landing point. There was a stand set up in the sea, close to the shore where the canoes would pause to ask for permission to come ashore. I waited eagerly to hear the familiar voice of Tana, following protocol and asking for permission. Dozens of canoes came in, one after the other, and then I heard Tana and I recorded her request to come ashore as she said:

> Kakweet itakshuk Ahousaht, uqua Hesquiaht, my name is kakwe. My English name is Tana Thomas and I have come from Ahousaht. The canoe we are travelling in today is called Šaahyačistup, I spent months carving it within the Clayoquot territories with master Carver Joe Martin. The name Šaahyačistup means it will bring healing wherever it goes, stemming from the word 'to be healthy.' We honour the call and kindly and humbly ask your permission to come ashore, to share a meal, a song and a dance. Λeekoo!

Tana Thomas asking permission to come ashore in Puyallup, 2018.

Image 16. Canoe families lined up to ask permission to come ashore on 28th July 2018 at Puyallup.

[140] For more information on the 2018 Tribal Journeys: https://www.smokesignals.org/articles/2018/08/14/canoe-journey-brings-tribes-together-in-puyallup/ (accessed March 2020).

It was an emotional moment, watching Tana come ashore, with her friends and family paddling alongside her, and the atmosphere of hundreds of people standing on the shore cheering their achievement.

On concluding our interview in downtown Victoria, I asked Tana if and how she related to other Indigenous peoples around the world? She said:

> First, I need to connect to my roots...but then...I do have a connection to First Nations people in general. Whenever I walk past someone random who is First Nations, you always make eye contact or smile and it's just like that with other Indigenous peoples, like the Māori. I am in awe when there is that connection and support, we do call each other brother and sister. So many of our teachings are similar, even though we are so far away from each other. For example, joining in a circle. We do that so often on *Tribal Journeys* and when I was in the Cook Islands, before we went out on the boats, we came together in a circle, held hands and prayed. I was so confused at first, I felt like I was right back at home with my people. They acknowledged me and said I should tell my relatives back home that they have relatives over here too. It was so special. We are both Pacific people and there are connections there, which have existed for centuries. Although there aren't many people who can speak about those ties and connections, it is there, and it is special!

Reflections

What follows are some reflections related to my research questions: What did Tana say about why she was involved in Indigenous Tourism? How, in the tour and interview, was indigeneity and spirituality articulated in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation? Whilst there are so many potential themes to discuss from this quite personal tour and interview what comes across most strongly to me is how Tana is using tourism as an opportunity to learn and connect with Ahousaht and Nuu-chah-nulth, territory, language, values and traditions and the wider Indigenous community. In this process, she negotiates what resonates, what to reject and challenge, what to change, what to uphold, and what to share with tourists. The importance of her canoe and her gender appear central to this journey of becoming.[141]

In the recent book *The Politics of the Canoe* edited by Erickson and Krotz (2021) conversations are opened up by viewing the canoe as a political agent. The various authors of this book tell stories that situate the canoe as a vehicle for history, not only for the various roles the canoe has played in the histories of North America, but also in the way the canoe shapes how we tell these histories. The authors demonstrate that 'a historiography informed by the canoe allows us to see how our canoeing stories are shaped not just by colonialism but also by religious doctrine, class, gender and environmental politics (Erickson & Krotz 2021:19). By viewing the canoe as a political agent, the authors argue that the conflict and disjuncture that have shaped the continent are drawn to light. The canoe has been used as a national unifying symbol of the state of Canada, it is represented on the back of many twenty-dollar bills, and it evokes nationalist myths of wilderness. Yet the canoe is also used as a symbol of Indigenous cultural resurgence, acting as 'agents of embodied sovereignty, decolonisation and healing by nurturing ancestral connections between communities and land.' (Erickson & Krotz: 2021:14) The historian Jon. D. Daehnke (2021:14) suggests that Indigenous canoe culture in British Columbia works outside the framework of the nation state, and thus functions as a fundamental act of decolonisation and healing by nurturing ancestral connections between

[141] Anthropologists Joao Biehl and Peter Locke (2017) speak about a notion of 'becoming', that 'occupies its own kind of temporality that unfolds in the present'; I think this resonates well with Tana, particularly in the way she describes the making of her canoe and the traditions associated with that task.

communities and land. In writing about Tribal Journeys, Frank Brown, Hillary Beattie, Vina Brown, and Ian Mauro (2021) argue that the practice has helped reconnect people with their cultural traditions and heal from intergenerational trauma caused by residential schools, the potlatch ban and other assimilation policies.[142] As Cushman, Daehnke and Johnson (2021:52) claim, the protocols and ceremonies that govern canoe practices are living practices that solidify links to the past and create, 'paths to decolonization that are active, forward looking and resilient.'

The canoe through Tribal Journeys was, as Tana put it, 'the main connection to my culture growing up.' The hard work of building the canoe – listening, learning, observing, and carrying it all through to completion – demonstrates Tana's dedication to reconnecting with the community. The canoe being carved from a local hand-picked cedar tree directly connects Tana to the land. Following the traditions and protocols associated with building a canoe – yet breaking with the established idea that this task is only for men – demonstrates Tana's ability to connect and uphold traditions and practises that fit her value system. The canoe both establishes a sense of continuity, whilst also demonstrating creativity and the potential for change. *Šaahyačistu*p is rooted in the past and points to the future; it will carry her, take her places, build, forge and sustain relationships, be that to places or people, and give her opportunities, a platform even, with which to use her voice. The canoe, which Tana sees as a metaphor for life, is all about connection, be that to the land, traditions, her family, people in her community, tourists or the canoe families on *Tribal Journeys*.[143] The canoe is important not only to Tana's sense of history, but for the Nuu-chah-nulth speaking peoples, for Indigenous communities up and down the West Coast of North America and across the Pacific Ocean, as it has been used in hunting, transportation and trade and more recently in Tribal Journeys. The canoe and its associated practices and protocols is an established marker of indigeneity in the region, and therefore works well as a method to engage with tourists.

[142] Misao Deans' *Inheriting a Canoe Paddle (2013)* also writes about the canoe as a symbol of settler colonial history and argues that Indigenous peoples are reclaiming the symbol in order to represent their own journeys towards both healing and justice. Bruce Erikson's *Canoe Nation: Nature, Race and the making of a Canadian Icon. (2013)* analyses how the canoe supports a certain construct of Canada; he focuses on the idea of wilderness, arguing that this concept is essential to defining settler understandings of Canada. Both Dean and Erikson assert that although canoes have lost economic value they have also acquired greater symbolic and cultural power. (Dean 2013:17; Erickson 2013:6-8)

[143] For scholarship about the canoe as metaphor for life see: Johansen (2012), Erickson (2021).

Healing is a central theme for Tana. She sees and names her canoe with that intention and uses her voice – be it singing or public speaking – as a healing tool. She claims that this is a role particularly suitable for women and asserts that healing can be found in land and in the revival of her cultural practices. The need for healing – both personal and collective – is attributed to the generational impact of colonialism. On both the tour and in the interview, Tana provides a history of the area with a focus on her own personal history, illustrating the impact of colonial policies, residential schools, and disputes around territories. Tana spoke about the shame, silencing, abuse and trauma that so many people have experienced in her community as a result of these colonial policies, but with hope for the future, to feel pride, to share and celebrate and to heal. Speaking about the prospects for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada, American Indian Studies Professor, Ward Churchill (2008) made the point that healing does not mean Indigenous people are sick: 'we are wounded, colonialism is sick', hence being wounded requires healing and colonialism requires a cure.

Gender was articulated as an important part of Tana's journey and motivation for her work. She was frustrated by the barriers and inequalities she faced due to her gender and was motivated to help remedy this imbalance for others.[144] She spoke about women being protectors of spirituality and natural healers. Singing was described as an important tool for healing, but singing in ceremony was typically reserved for men, something Tana is hoping to change. Through tourism, Tana is finding the confidence to challenge gender stereotypes; she commented on an eagerness within her community to see women in these roles, but worries sometimes when she does engage in public speaking that she is required or heard as speaking for all women.[145] One way Tana negotiates this is to look to her ancestors for guidance, and in this manner she is moving forward through a series of negotiated 'returns' balanced by the seizing of new opportunities.

[144] Cree feminist and legal scholar Val Napoleon (2009: 325-36) asks why is it so difficult to write and speak as an Indigenous woman, explicitly from an Indigenous women's perspective, about the broader political issues of self-determination, Indigenous legal orders and law, self-government, or aboriginal rights? Kuokkanen in *Restructuring Relations: Indigenous Self-Determination, Governance and Gender (2019)* draws on fieldwork in Canada, Greenland and Sápmi, to answer some of these questions. She argues that one way to address these issues is for more recognition of the diverse and informal channels of participation in Indigenous nation building and self-determination endeavours; Tourism could be seen as one such endeavour. (Sápmi is the Sámi people's name for their traditional territory).
[145] For scholarship about gender and Indigenous tourism in Canada see: Whitford & Ruhanen (2016) Nielsen & Wilson (2012) Cassel & Maureira (2017).

Learning and demonstrating knowledge about the land came across as important in Tana's journey to reconnect. Tana described using the tours to learn more about the area, whether that be about different plants and trees, or related practices and histories. The 'war of the woods' protest is an important part of that history and helps to show the commitment local nations have to the protection of the land; it sets up a contrast with the government that permits industrial logging. In her tour, Tana rejected the notion of wilderness in favour of the term ancestral garden. The idea of a wilderness is tied to colonial narratives of discovery.[146] The environmental movement has for a long time seen this concept as a fundamental tenet and it is often used in tourism to promote a place, especially in advertisements for Indigenous tourism. Perhaps this is beginning to change? I noted that I should pay attention to if, when, where, how, and by whom this concept is employed**.** The idea of a 'wilderness' served colonial governments when claiming ownership of land. Rejecting the term in favour of words that are seen to better illustrate the ongoing relationship to the land is, as Tana said, serving current Indigenous land right claims.[147] The boardwalk is a physical claim to sovereignty, just as these cultural tours are, and just as Tana is presenting this argument to tourists. In this way, Tana responds to an established discourse about indigeneity and rejects it for a term that better speaks to the Nuu-chah-nulth speaking peoples.

Tana contrasts spirituality to 'religion', which she ties closely to colonialism, sees as rule bound, and something imposed on individuals and communities. She makes a distinction between spirituality and religion. No single way of connecting to the Creator is better than another, such thinking is a colonial approach**.** For her, spirituality is about seeking and finding tools to connect with the Creator, and such tools can come from anywhere. She claims that women are protectors of spirituality, noting the power they have to heal others. This power comes partly through singing and sharing each other's journeys. Tana references important women in her own life, like her mother, her Aunty Cathy, and her cousin Jessica, all of whom have helped her find her voice.

[146] For research on the concept of wilderness in British Columbia see: See Holstein & Head (2018) Thorpe (2012) Braun (2002).
[147] For more on this see chapter 5: Tsimka Martin.

Tourism is one setting in which Tana gets to demonstrate her role in the seventh–generation prophecy of restoring culture to the people. Anthropologist Julie Cruikshank (1998), working in the Yukon territory, writes about how prophecies function as a way to make sense of complex changes and can serve as routine explanations for contemporary events. The seventh generation prophecy, 'where the young will restore its culture to its people', could work as a way of coping with the ruptures that have occurred and as a way to encourage new methods, like tourism, where the youth can learn and uphold cultural practices. Through tourism, Tana is showing her community that she is a proud member of the Ahousaht Nation, and in the process, she gets to educate tourists about the disconnections and traumas that exist for herself and for many people like her. If connection is an important part of healing, tourism is providing Tana with a host of connections for herself and for others. This seems doubly important for Tana who described how sad she felt about growing up away from home; in working in this territory now she feels happily at home.

Chapter 4: Roy Henry Vickers

Image 17. Portrait of Roy Henry Vickers in front of his Eagle Aerie gallery in Tofino.

Introduction

This chapter is built around my time spent with Roy Henry Vickers. I first met Roy at his art gallery in March 2018 having seen an advertisement for his storytelling session, which read as follows:

> Storytelling with Roy Henry Vickers is an elevating experience that transcends all cultural boundaries and brings a sense of peace and wonder to all who are fortunate enough to enjoy his many tales of life. Roy will walk through selected works, share stories of inspiration and give people a glimpse into the life lessons that he has learned and his ancestors have passed on to him. He also enjoys getting everyone involved in a sing-a-long or traditional chant to boost spirits and have some fun. All who are lucky enough to take in this special event, leave with a newfound sense of appreciation for friends, family, nature, and all the little things that inspire us from day to day.[148]

[148] For the online advertisement see: https://royhenryvickers.com/pages/storytelling-with-roy (accessed March 2020).

I knew of Roy's artwork as I had bought a small print of his on my first ever trip to Vancouver Island back in 2013, and I was intrigued by this advertisement. During his storytelling session, Roy mentioned that he had worked with a few anthropologists. This gave me the confidence to approach him after the session in the hope that he would agree to meet with me. After a few emails back and forth, Roy generously did. We met in June 2018 at The Delta Ocean Point Hotel in Victoria, where we first enjoyed a brunch together before the recorded interview began.

Image 18. 'Skeena Crossing' by Roy Henry Vickers. The picture I bought in 2013.

Our meeting lasted several hours and covered many interrelated topics. Perhaps because Roy is a storyteller and knew what he wanted to tell me, this interview needed little explicit questioning or prompting. What I present in this chapter relates to my questions about why Roy was involved in Indigenous Tourism and how indigeneity and spirituality are articulated in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation? Roy's storytelling session and interview offered a personal account of the journey he has taken to realise his gifts as an artist and as a teacher. He describes himself as a 'spiritualist' and says that all people are children of mother earth and the heavenly father, that we are connected, and that we all have a responsibility to one another and to the environment in which we live.[149] Roy is passionate about education

[149] I do not think that Roy was referencing the Spiritualist movement: https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/spiritualism-movement (accessed March 2020).

and tourism is providing him with an opportunity to teach himself and others about colonial legacies and ways of seeing and being in the world.

Tour

The storytelling session was held at Roy's Gallery. The lighting was warm and low and the mood was solemn. Thirty or so people, mostly tourists from what I could tell, sat in the centre of the room waiting for Roy to begin. Roy entered by playing his drum, singing a 'journey song'; and inviting us all to take a journey with him. He taught us a part of the song and we all sang together. Roy then told us about his journey to becoming a storyteller. Back in the 1990s, on one beautiful day while out fishing with his son, an eagle came down and began circling him. Roy made a noise, like a birdcall, and the eagle spun off to fly away; as it did, the eagle released a feather and with some nifty manoeuvring of the boat, Roy caught it. This was a profound moment for him. On the same evening, whilst putting his son to bed, he had become overwhelmed with emotion and had a conversation with God about what it all meant. Through that conversation he realised two things. First, relief for becoming the father he had always hoped he could be, and second, that it was time for him to use his voice and his story and to become a teacher.

Roy then told us about an art teacher in school who had become his saving grace. Roy had been desperate to learn traditional art styles and figures from his community, but there was no one that could teach him. He realised he should become an artist himself, and now, a teacher. Roy spent an hour sharing his life lessons and worldviews, emphasising that we have a responsibility for each other and should all engage in teaching for 'if you receive you should share.' Roy is a skilled performer and storyteller. There was a great sense of anticipation when he entered the room. Its decor and lighting signalled that the space was special and should be respected.[150] His gallery is a focal point in the town; Roy has become famous for what he does and a major tourist attraction in his own right. In this session, the story of local Indigenous people was put centre stage.

[150] Julie Cruikshank (1998) writes about storytelling and performance as social action.

Image 19. Roy Henry Vickers storytelling session 2018. Photo copyrights to West Coast N-E-ST.

Interview

Several months later Roy and I met at the Delta Ocean Point Hotel for brunch.[151] We spoke for a while before I began recording. Our conversation eventually lasted several hours; touching on many issues, related to both personal experiences and his line of work. Roy began by telling me that 'All our education prior to colonisation was through storytelling, stories in songs, dances, in art, and storytellers like myself tell the same stories over and over again, why, to teach people?' Just the day before, he had met with representatives of the Anglican Diocese of Vancouver Island to give a speech. He saw this as an opportunity to speak to colonisers – to the Church which had systematically broken down the culture of his ancestors, to show and tell them what they had done, not to guilt them, but so that they could understand the legacy of abuse. He was not angry, for he no longer sees the point. He was emotional when he spoke, and that was powerful and effective. Roy was baptised in an Anglican Church and grew up as a Christian, but the more he learnt, the more he hated the Church, to the point where he said that it was destroying him. On realising that, he said: 'Ok, I need to begin a healing journey.' That journey has moved from a personal one to include his teaching of others – emphasizing the responsibility people hold for one another.

[151] The interview took place on the 24 November 2018.

Roy told me about 'the four-fold way which he described as a philosophy and a methodology':

> **I look to the east** – the direction of the teacher and I ask that my ears, eyes and heart be open to the lessons available to me today, as a teacher. Without lessons, I am empty. I will have nothing to teach. So please help me to learn continuously, as without that I am nothing! East is where I ask for knowledge; yellow is the colour like the sun that brings light every day. East has the face of a child, to remind us to keep that excitement for learning and if we do we will become great teachers. Looking to the east is a way of mentoring that passion.
>
> **I look to the south** – the way of the healer. All the lessons I learn and all the intelligence in my mind will show the areas of my life that need healing, and it's my responsibility to ask for healing. 'You have not, because you ask not', so ask for healing and you will receive healing!
>
> **I look to the west** – where the sun goes down and where darkness comes to the world, and I realise I can still see. I can see you. I can see my grandmother and all these people who are not alive anymore. We all have this vision, and I ask for my vision to be clear for healing and see me on my journey, to keep me on my path. It's easy to fall off the path. It's narrow and there's lots of distractions. So yeah, I look to the west to help me listen and see.
>
> **I look to the north** – the way of the warrior – so that my vision and healing and teaching will enable me to be a leader that I am meant to be. We are all leaders, so someone is following us. Let my path be light and truth...that's the four-fold way.

Roy had done this before we met to ground himself in truth and knowledge and to open himself to learn. This is his method of checking in with himself, to listen to his emotions, and this is what he feels makes him a good leader. He told me that he likes a particular teaching about a young boy in the temple who is teaching Pharisees and intellectuals; because the boy spoke the truth, people listened to him. Roy links his creativity to his emotions, at the back of his head, which he described as:

> I feel it, it's like I am an eagle, so the feathers of my head start lifting up and move towards the front of my head and it feels thick, the space between my head is because that is the part of your brain that is integrating knowledge, that is inspiration, it's the breath of God, it enables you to bring the knowledge of life to other people. If we can do that then we become the healers, because we are walking in healing.

He explained that often people will carry out this practice with the help of a pipe, and then move in each of these directions, east, south, west and north, placing different herbs and

tobacco in the pipe as they turn. When facing north, you smoke the pipe and let the smoke carry the prayers to the birds, which in turn carry the prayers to the Creator. When this practice is repeated, 'you will continuously get truth and knowledge because you are open and you are asking for it. Which means you will recognise it when it comes.' Roy used the term, 'my big father in the sky', noting that this term was pre-church. He acknowledged that there are a lot of similarities between his traditional stories and the stories from Christianity and used the book he wrote called *The Raven brings the Light* to illustrate this. This book tells of a daughter of the chief of the sky, who brings light to the North coast people.[152] He compared this to Christ being born of a virgin and of God. The story of the daughter, he explained, was around for 10,000 years or so before the story of Christ. Roy claimed that many traditional ceremonies are saying similar things: he referred to a song he learnt in Sunday School, 'red, yellow, black and white, all are precious in his sight'; these are the same colours as for the medicine wheel and the sweat lodge. He explained that it does not matter if it is Christ, Mohammed, or the Raven – they are all bringing light to the world. Such views stand in contrast with his contention that the Christian Churches tend to separate people and set up hierarchies.[153]

Roy spoke about the process of acknowledging ancestors, explaining that they continue on in us, and that this is part of his motivation, so that people will learn from him long after he is gone. He asserted that the scriptures also speak about this, as when noting that the spirit of Elijah rested on Moses. Roy brought this back to his ideas about emotion, when he said that Moses felt Elijah's emotion and how that is true for all of us. Like you and me, he said 'we are learning each other's stories.' Roy explained that for him spirituality is about bringing people together and he spoke of spirituality in contrast to organised religions, which he felt separated people and have become more like businesses. Roy said:

> If we are together, communicating, feeling and listening to each other, I don't need to define myself. You can just experience it for yourself, people who unite in spirit, walk together, that's why I am a spiritualist. That's not to say I would not go to church. There is truth in those places. Truth is everywhere, but it's up to us to find those places.

[152] See: https://royhenryvickers.com/products/raven-brings-the-light (Accessed March 2020).
[153] See: Harvey (2016).

Roy said that much of what he has learnt regarding spirituality came from the cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien, who had told him her ancestors were Basque sheepherders, who were close to the earth and would say:[154]

> You are the centre of your family. What you do everyday affects your family. Your brother and sister are also the centre too, but it's important that you know what you do makes a difference. You are the centre and you make a difference. Your family is the centre of your community. What you do as your family makes a difference in your community. Your community is the centre of your country. it makes a difference to your country and your country is the centre of the world – you are the centre of the world, your actions everyday make a difference around the world, whether you believe that or not doesn't make it not true. Me, I understand that – that's a healthy ego not egotistical – egotistical is someone who tries to impress their own opinion on people. But someone with a healthy ego comes into a room and you can feel them come into that room. There's no trumpets etc. There is a centredness that is so strong that even ignorant people know some presence has come into their space, and that's how we begin walking in truth. We affect people to the truth, just by our/your presence, if you walk in healing, you help others heal. Being the centre of the world is a big responsibility, but it does not scare me, because my father, and his father, and all of my grandparents are part of my life helping me. Ancestors are with me, helping me, and I will ask for the help I need to be responsible to the world around me.

Roy regularly recalls the words of Chief Dan George: 'Roy, you must speak from your heart, if you do, their hearts will hear you. Your head forgets but your heart does not.'[155] Whilst he acknowledges the influence of the anthropologist Angeles Arrien, he grounds his outlook with the advice of Chief Dan George.

Roy loved doing art in school and was heavily influenced by his teacher, an Englishman. Roy was the only 'brown kid' in the class while everyone else was a white Protestant. His teacher had spotted Roy's gift for art, but Roy did not enjoy learning the European work; he was more interested in learning the art from Haida, Tsimshian, etc. Whilst his teacher was unable to teach Roy these styles, he encouraged him to first find out who he was, and then to express himself from that place. By doing so he would be doing something only he could do. This, his art teacher explained, would allow other people to see what he sees. As an artist, 'I have now

[154] For more information on the Four-Fold way. See Angeles Arrien (1993) The Four-Fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary.
[155] For more Information on Chief Dan George see: http://www.newfederation.org/Native_Leaders/Bios/George.htm (accessed March 2020).

heard that many times; when out walking, people have said that they have seen my sunsets, my water, my clouds etc.' That same teacher attended Roy's first show and:

> He nudged me and said, "hey Roy how is it going?" I was like yeah, it's going really good Mr West. I'm really enjoying my art. He said "yeah, I can see that, it's obvious, I have a question for you though – that canoe in 'digging clams', whatever possessed you to put the canoe so boldly in the foreground, it's genius." Well, I told him, it's not genius, it's just what I saw. You see I was there, I was looking after the canoe when my aunties and uncles were digging for clams, and I could see it. So I just painted what I could see, I was being honest and truthful to the image I could see. He nudged me again and asked. "Do you remember what I said to you?" I replied, you told me that when I can find myself and can create from the uniqueness I have, that I will be able to create an impression on others that will be so strong that they will be able to see the world in a whole new way. Mr West replied: "So you did listen, and you know that you've arrived!" I said, no, but I guess I do now and I told him that I am glad he was here…we remained friends until he died.

The teacher spotted Roy's gift, encouraged him to follow his instincts and helped build his confidence about feeling different. Roy sees these messages as important for his healing journey and for the values he holds.

I asked Roy if he had imagined becoming such a successful artist? He responded that he had not and that it is a big shock sometimes when people introduce him in a formal way. He often feels embarrassed, and would rather people discover who he is when he speaks. I mentioned an art piece of his that I bought from his gallery saying that one of the reasons I bought it was in a time when I was feeling quite uncomfortable, the picture had transported me into a safe place. I likewise found his gallery to be a calm retreat in a tourist-filled, bustling place. He humbly remarked that this was for others to say, not him, but he could share a story about when and how that place changed for him – from an incredible longhouse style building to a sacred place. He described this as happening in a matter of minutes.

> It was the day before we were going to open. It was my 30th birthday. My mother was still alive and a friend of mine who used to work for Sony Canada had just put in the sound system in the gallery. I wanted Mum to experience the space, so she sat in the pit in the middle and I put on 'Handel's Messiah – Hallelujah Chorus', and I sat beside her. Before it was over we both began weeping and my Mum said it felt like this whole building had been transported into the past. At that moment, I witnessed, and I continued to witness, the truth of what she said. People are so

> excited as they enter, and then they come through the door and their noise turns to a whisper, and I watch them and they don't know what's happened.

Roy shared this memory with tears and laughter and then continued:

> All my work is made from inspiration. Inspiration is a Latin term from a word meaning breath of God. It comes to us, when we create, write. What we are doing is greater than the sum of its parts. When you write from inspiration it's beyond you. It's greater than all of your teachers, all of your ancestors, because it comes from the infinite. It's a contribution from everyone. That's probably the reason my art is so popular.

I took this moment to ask Roy about his Mum and how she had influenced him?
He responded that his mum was a powerful woman and so was his dad, as it takes a strong man to be with a strong woman, similar attracts not opposites. Anyway, mum always had three lessons:

> **You have not because you ask not**. So if you want something, ask. All they can say is yes or no. If they say no then maybe, you're not meant to have it right now, and try not to take that personally if you don't get what you asked for.
>
> **To whom much is given, much is required**. I would sometimes go to her with an accomplishment, like the Order of Canada for example, and she would say. "That's wonderful son, but remember –
>
> **You are responsible for the knowledge you carry**. And I would go away sometimes feeling a bit deflated, but as I grew up, I realised what beautiful lessons they are and how they've carried me so far.

Roy told me more about his mother and his home, saying, 'this is another beautiful story about inclusivity and spirituality that is inclusive not exclusive.' He said that in the village he grew up in, people carried all kinds of spirituality. The story was about his Mum who was 'not native' being accepted into the community. When his Mum became pregnant, the community first thought she had sinned because of ideas from the Church, but she married his father and worked hard with the community that he said she loved so much, and as a result they 'opened their homes and hearts to her.' The Chief of eagles adopted her into the community. He knew that all of her children would be ancestors from the village and the system in the village was matrilineal: knowledge, wealth, stories, etc., were passed down through the mother. When his mother became an eagle, they knew that he and his many siblings would all become eagles. He knew and felt this very early on in life: 'I knew I was an eagle.' He told me that now people sometimes ask does that mean your guardian spirit is an eagle? To which I tell them no, the

eagle is my teacher. 'It's the eagle that teaches us how to look at the world, it's the symbol of vision, it has the keenest eyesight, my ancestors and my god are my guardian spirits.' Roy told me that the people were so inclusive of his mum that in 1945 they elected her Chief; such elections took place every four years. He stated very proudly that she was the first non-native to become a chief of a council in the whole country. That, he said, was how beautiful she was. He then told me a story that helped me to understand what it meant for him to be an eagle. The story is very personal and comes from when he was recovering from addiction. Let me quote it at length, as he shared it:

> I have to tell you this…I'm sitting in the group, my counsellor is a woman and all the other people in my group are women. There was a point not long before I was finishing in my recovery, I can't remember what happened, but I was afraid and I didn't want to go back to the world I had been living in, but I knew I had to go back. Maggie, my counsellor, asked if I was ok and I started crying, and she asked whose turn it was that day to share in 'group.' One lady said it was her turn, but Maggie asked if she wouldn't mind if I shared that day instead.
>
> I had only known these people for the forty days that we had been recovering together. But in that meeting we all held hands and Maggie said: 'Right, Roy, you are an eagle, and you've lost your spirit. We are getting it back right now. I want you to be the eagle.' It was instant, I was an eagle, I was flying above my village. The sun was peeking through the clouds and I could see the ocean. I told her it's like I am the eagle, but I am not. What's happening, she asked? I want to die, I told her and then I screamed out loud, I scared everyone and then as the eagle, I dove straight into the water, and I could see this fish and then I came out of the water back into the sky but I didn't have the fish. I wanted to scream and then I dove again and then back to the sky and I was flying and Maggie asked me, what do you want to do? Again, I said, I want to dive again. So she said, go again, and I screamed as I went to dive and I saw myself with my brothers and my cousins. We were in a herring punt and were shovelling out and clearing it, the herring were floating on the tide. Then I saw another eagle. It was young, not bald yet, and it was in the water, wings outstretched and ...gradually it came out of the water with a herring in its claws and all of a sudden this warrior who was me was levitating. I had a breast plate attached to my breast armour and two big eagle wings attached. I had a visor on and a cedar helmet and I am the warrior holding in my hands a bright light. The bright light is me as a baby and I'm just going up into the sky and I'm crying and crying. And finally I stopped, and Maggie said, Roy, can you describe what is happening? So I told them what I was seeing. Everyone was crying, the woman whose turn it was to share said, 'my work today was going to be about spirituality and I just did my work, listening to Roy, I did it.' Maggie told me you know Roy you have to paint that image, So, I said yeah, I know!

It took 6 years of trying to create that image, what I saw was a spirit. I had images of the warrior and I could see the baby. I had many sketches but I just couldn't complete it. But then one day, I was in the gallery and this lady was looking at a picture, and I didn't want to bother her, so I went to get a glass of water. But then I saw her crying and so I walked over to her and she acknowledged my presence. She knew it was me and said, 'I don't know how to explain this to you but this moves me deeply.' I said thank you, I can see that. She then said why are you thanking me, and I said, well you're verifying that I am creating from my truth. She said, ''ooh I can see why you would be thankful, I don't get to experience this very often but tell me have you considered trying to paint the human body covered in feathers' and I said, oh my goodness you were meant to be here and to ask me that question.

Image 20. Roy Henry Vickers 'getting my spirit back,' 1997

She asked why? So I told her that I've been working on this image for 6 years and I haven't been able to figure out how to paint the warrior in himself and his beauty and when you just asked me – I saw it, I saw the body covered in feathers. Three days later I finished the picture.

Roy explained that different animals are chosen for families to teach important lessons. For the orcas and the wolves it's the female who is in charge. 'It's a powerful way to think,' he said.

As an artist, Roy says he is always conscious of his art teacher's advice to create from his 'true self.' Because his mother was 'white with mixed European heritage', it was important to

acknowledge that side of him or he would not be able to create his whole self. In response, he decided to push the boundaries and move away from the rigid iconography of his ancestors. He told me how worried he had been about what people would think, but in the end he knew he had to be true to himself. In fact, he said, 'all of a sudden more people were interested in my culture and my life in the north, more than ever before. I think because they identified with my contemporary style I got to incorporate my traditions from the Northwest coast.'[156]

According to Roy, two of his greatest achievements in life occurred this year, at the age of 72. One was that he had created and raised a totem pole for the Chief of the House of Walkus.[157] This was a big project that involved many people and was his gift to the Chief. It was raised in a two-day traditional ceremony and 'the totem now stands there and fulfils that traditionalist in me.'

Image 21. Grateful dead box designed by Roy Henry Vickers.

The other great achievement was creating the artwork for an album for the band 'The Grateful Dead.'[158] The boxset he described is in the form of a bentwood box and has an eagle, whale, raven and wolf on the four sides. On the lid, he has depicted the raven people – which he said are the people of the world. Roy was excited because there are over two million 'deadheads' around the world – all these new people who, through his art, will now be encouraged to learn

[156] Andy Everson (Chapter 2) describes a similar experience that by opening up his own sense of tradition his art became more widely recognised and relatable.
[157] Read more on this at: https://www.outsideonline.com/2344866/soul-new-pole (accessed March 2020).
[158] Roy Henry Vickers and the Grateful dead https://www.dead.net/features/all-family/all-family-roy-henry-vickers (accessed March 2020).

about his culture. He said the project had served his role as a teacher. I asked Roy how this project came about. He told me how he had met a man through one of his storytelling sessions who then came to work with him both on his storybooks and now also on a biography. Roy had initially been hesitant saying that he was resistant to creating books, he was saw himself as a 'storyteller' not a writer. The biographer, however, convinced Roy that he could reach so many more people through print than he could through his storytelling sessions. Together they worked with the archives to produce the books. The archivist at the Royal BC Museum was friends with the archivist for 'The Grateful Dead.' They met for brunch in Victoria and the man told Roy that he had been waiting to meet him, that he had music from the '70s and he had been trying to figure out which artist should package it, once they met, this man knew it should be Roy! Roy said that it took a long time after that to get moving but told me about an encounter he had with 'The Grateful Dead's' record label, 'Rhino Records.'[159]

> They were all women and they said to me, 'Roy, can you tell us who you think the Grateful Dead are and why you're interested in them?' I was honest and said actually I've never bought their album, as I only buy CDs from live shows I go to, and I've never been to one of their live shows. And so then they asked, well who are the Grateful Dead to you? And I thought about it for a minute and I said…ohhh when we are called to stand in the strength and truth and the beauty of who we are, acknowledging all of our ancestors. When we speak from that place of being centered on who we are, the ancestors are on the other side, whispering excitedly to each other thinking 'maybe this is the one – the one who brings forth the strength and truth of his lineage.' When I am doing that creating from that place – the ancestors, they are – the grateful dead. And then there was total silence ... and I was like 'um err hello', and one lady said, yeah we are here Roy… but everyone is crying. So I said, ok, well are you happy? Ohh, it's beyond that, we are overwhelmed and we understand why Dave said there is only one person for this project! So this whole other vehicle came along, and it's about music, dance, inspiration, story. And the other thing about the Grateful Dead is that they weren't afraid to break down barriers and that's why they've done so well.

For Roy, storytelling is all about images; when people speak and hear each other, images are formed and those images are all unique.

> In storytelling, I accomplish more than I ever could hope to do as a visual artist. If I am speaking to a room with 300 people, they are all seeing thousands of images that are theirs, so my words become life, it's their life, not mine, and all those

[159] Rhino Records homepage: https://www.rhino.com/ (accessed March 2020).

> images are theirs, not mine. All my job is to stay in the centeredness of truth that is moving me to communicate. It's a big one. It's beautiful, it's powerful!

He describes this as very spiritual, because 'truth is spirit.' Roy said that twelve million people have been through his gallery and read his books. One of the reasons he thinks so many people are attracted to his art, is to do with the uniqueness and from what he sees as the spirit of truth**.** 'When Chief Dan George told me to speak from my heart, he was speaking of my voice as an artist.' Roy then shared with me another story:

> A Master gave a woman one talent and gave a man four or five talents. The man took his talents and buried them. He did this so when he would be asked what he did with his talents he could show that he had kept them all safe. The woman was asked what she did with her one talent, she revealed a whole treasure box of all of the talents she had made from the one she was given. She had worked hard with it and had multiplied it!

Roy's story of success resonates with the woman in the story. He does not feel too talented, but he has worked hard. He said, '...that's an important thing to realise, to know the talent we have and to water it and work with it.' He used to see his art as a life ring, but came to realise that actually it's himself that he needs to sustain him, and for his art to just be a part of that. Once a perfectionist he is now satisfied with just doing his best.

> I sign pictures because I have the knowledge that I am the eagle, I saw and let it go and moved on to the next. I'm not confined and I am not defined. When people call me 'Chief Roy Henry Vickers, I'm not THE chief, I carry a chieftainship with the name copperman, but when 'Roy's' gone, the chief will live on. We are all responsible [...] and as my Mum would say, if we are true to Christ we will go to heaven.

Roy and I spoke for a while about responsibility and the importance of listening, and something we said prompted him to share another story:

> There again, now you put me back in my village. Everyone has gone to canneries to work for the summer. My mum is with the few old people that are too old to travel. She has the dispensary – like a field nurse, and I am lonely because all the kids are gone. And I go to this one house. The door is always open and it's my Granny. We called everyone Granny, when I was a kid. I would hear her, and I would go to the door; she was in the darkness. She would call for me. My eyes would become accustomed and I would see her sitting, weaving cedar bark and I would look at her and hear her say, 'come over.' And I would go over there slowly. She couldn't speak English, but she was singing and weaving away, and I am completely enveloped in a work ethic and a love and an acceptance, and I have enough sense to know from my emotions that this old lady loves me. [...] And as the years went by, very few words were spoken and so much was communicated

> with no words. We put so much on words filling a void between, when sometimes it should be filled with just a persona, and it's hard to find people who will listen and not do other things. Sometimes you'll be speaking and they've already moved on, but when you listen...see you say one thing – it transports me somewhere else, it's a beautiful thing. So thank you. Helen I'm glad you tracked me down. And another thing, when you ask me questions, you're asking things only you can ask, and there is a force that happened when only you and I are together. There is no one like you and no one like me, and so, our communication can only bring about something that can happen now in this moment.

Our interview concluded with Roy putting another layer to his success, namely that it all comes down to love:

> We all have strength, truth and beauty and it's about accepting that. If we accept it that's when we can see it and can love ourselves. Love is an act of volition. It's not an emotion. We don't fall in love, we fall into lust into attraction, we decide and grow into love. The sad thing is we can also decide not to love. So in the realm of life, our purpose is to love. And we don't have to say it. We can say: we live for love, love heals, love accepts, love respects, love honours, love doesn't differentiate between male and female, love is just love. And yet we have this world that writes things up in different ways, hierarchy and men and women pretending not to feel and trying to impress each other. I don't need to lie or deny how I work my butt off, that I don't have much talent, and that I know people that are far more talented than me. But they haven't acknowledged the gift that's been given. I just have to communicate with you. My work – I do it for life, love, truth and when I do that, the money comes and with that money I can do good things.

Roy and I spoke for several hours and I came away feeling very emotional. I was touched by the time and care he gave to our conversation, sharing with me the stories and lessons he has learned and experienced. His comment, that our conversation was unique and could only have occurred in this encounter between the two of us, serves me well as a reminder of both the value and limits of this research. The value lies in the moment and the relationship formed between two people. The limits relate to what can be drawn from this version of the encounter.

Reflections

What follows are some reflections related to my research questions: what did Roy say about why he was involved in Indigenous Tourism? How was indigeneity and spirituality articulated in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation? Roy is an experienced teacher, artist and storyteller, well used to performing his indigeneity and spirituality. Roy resists being defined by labels. For me, what comes through most strongly is how Roy uses storytelling and his art as a method of healing and connection.

From the outset, Roy disrupts common colonial notions about indigeneity by connecting that with Christianity and acknowledging his Scottish/European ancestry. Indigenous people and Christianity are too often presented as mutually exclusive categories, while Indigenous people are also widely considered to have a pure line of descent. Recent discussions sparked by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission have reminded people of 'Christianity's core role in the country's ongoing colonial history.' (Bradford & Horton: 2016:5) Political theorist Siphiwe Dube states:

> 'The relationship between the Canadian state and the Christian churches has been historically framed by an ambivalent co – dependence and a paternalistic stance towards the Indigenous communities of Canada by both sets of institutions, whereby the civilising missions of the Christian churches and the Canadian Nation State aligned at critical points in relation to the Indigenous communities.' (Dube 2016:148).

Christian beliefs, ideas and practices were presented as civilised, 'The Bible and the plough' were promoted as the twin pillars of progress**,** and in contrast Indigenous people were often framed as heathens, and their practices deemed to be witchcraft, savagery and idolatry. (J. R Miller 2018) Recent scholarship has worked to untangle the complex colonial relationship between Indigenous people and Christianity.[160] While many Indigenous people in British Columbia today reject Christianity for the role it played in colonialism, many others continue to interpret, negotiate and practice Christianity in ways meaningful to them. Marites Sison (2010) wrote a special report about a particular event at the TRC called 'Native traditional spiritualties in conversation with Christianity'; she noted that each of the panellists spoke of

[160] James Axtell (1985) Martin & Nicholas (2010) Neylan (2003) Treat (1996, 2003) Robertson (2012) McNally (2000).

their struggle to balance the benefits of their Christian faith, the negative legacy of Christianity in their lives, and the teachings of the elders in their communities. One strategy Roy employed was to separate the teachings of Christianity from the institution of the Church. This may also account for his rejection of the word religion.

On his website, Roy presents himself as a Canadian First Nations artist. He spoke of the fears he had in speaking about the Canadian settler side of his identity, because of how and on what grounds an Indigenous identity can be claimed. This issue has been fuelled by imposed definitions of Indigenous people found in the *Indian Act*. Acknowledging that side of his identity, despite his fears of rejection, has afforded him freedom to experiment with his art and reach a wider audience.

Through his art and storytelling, Roy grapples with aspects of the past – notably colonialism - his identity as a Canadian First Nations man, and the connections he holds for people and places. Many of the pictures in his gallery are derived from local landscapes. Roy argues for the 'spatial and visionary connection' that is made when people communicate through art, and says that this connection comes from being open to the images that emerge from that shared encounter. Roy stated very explicitly that storytelling is all about images, and that artists like himself tell stories over and over again for the purpose of teaching. He stresses that that is how it was done prior to colonisation, and that is a big part of why he is passionate about sharing his knowledge and beliefs in this format. His art and storytelling offers him a way of connecting with such traditional practices. By framing storytelling itself as a traditional practice, Roy is aligning tourism with tradition and so bridging connections between the past, present and future.

Tourism provides Roy with an audience and consumers to connect with, learn from, and to teach. His longhouse style gallery alters the image and perception of the town. Thanks to this gallery, his artwork and the histories, stories and ideas that come with it take centre stage.[126] Roy values the educational forum and function that tourism can provide and also the sense of approval he gains for his work. Roy's gallery, as well as his storytelling sessions, are free to attend. His gallery is a big tourist attraction in the small town of Tofino placing his artwork and the histories, stories and ideas that come with it centre stage. Roy sells his work on a range of

levels from affordable postcards and storybooks to expensive limited-edition prints. These pieces can also be found, enjoyed and purchased in other spaces in museums, galleries and online – expanding the reach significantly. Roy describes how he was finally convinced that he should write books because that would enable him to reach even more people with his teaching. Although he shares his messages and beliefs through his art he does not wish to impose his ideas on others, rather he hopes that through heartfelt truths, people might be encouraged to create and form their own ideas and images.

Indigenous Education Professor, Judy Iseke (2013) characterises different types of stories and the various purposes behind sharing them. She lists mythical, personal and sacred storytelling types; storytelling as pedagogical tools; storytelling as witnessing and remembering; and stories of spirituality as sources of strength. Roy seems to pull on all four of these types. Julie Cruikshank (1998) argues that the power of storytelling is its ability to subvert official orthodoxies and challenge conventional ways of thinking. She looks at storytelling not just for the content but as a strategy for communication and that the meanings the story provokes are not inherent in the story, rather they are created in the everyday situations in which they are told. Tourism is a stereotype filled setting; Roy embraces the expectations that come with this in order to tell stories in innovative, directed and strategic ways.[161] The need for healing is a dominant theme in his stories.

Roy attributes much of his inspiration and success as an artist to being true to himself, his ancestors, God, and his teacher the eagle. He draws parallels between his spirituality and the teachings of the Christian Church arguing that they often have a similar method, message and vocabularies. He argues for the idea that we are all children of 'Mother Earth and Heavenly Father.' Roy is scornful about the role of the Church in colonization, seeing it as an institution that 'systematically broke down the culture of his ancestors.' Although Roy is content to see truths in many religions, he expresses concern if organised religion pushes for only one set of received truths. Roy presented his spirituality as a series of practices and ways of seeing and being that underscores much of what he does and why he does it. He emphasised the responsibility he feels to his ancestors and also to the generations that will succeed him,

[161] See Kovach (2009).

acknowledging that when he is referred to as *a* chief, not *the* chief, it is the role that is more important and which will live on.

Chapter 5: Tsimka Martin

Image 22. Photo of Tsimka Martin taken by Graeme Owsianski.

My name is Tsimka Martin I come from the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, my father is Joe Martin a Tla-o-qui-aht member, my mother is from Quebec she is non-native, but I grew up primarily in Tla-o-qui-aht territory in the village of Esowista, just down the road from Tofino, and Tofino is in Tla-o-qui-aht territory and *Tribal Parks*.

The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation meaning the 'people from Clayoqua' or the people from 'Tla-o-qui' is based on the west-coast of Vancouver Island and is part of the Nuu-chah-nulth language group. They have occupied the area of Meares Island, Tofino, Long beach and Sutton pass. The Tla-o-qui-aht Nation has over 1200 members.[162]

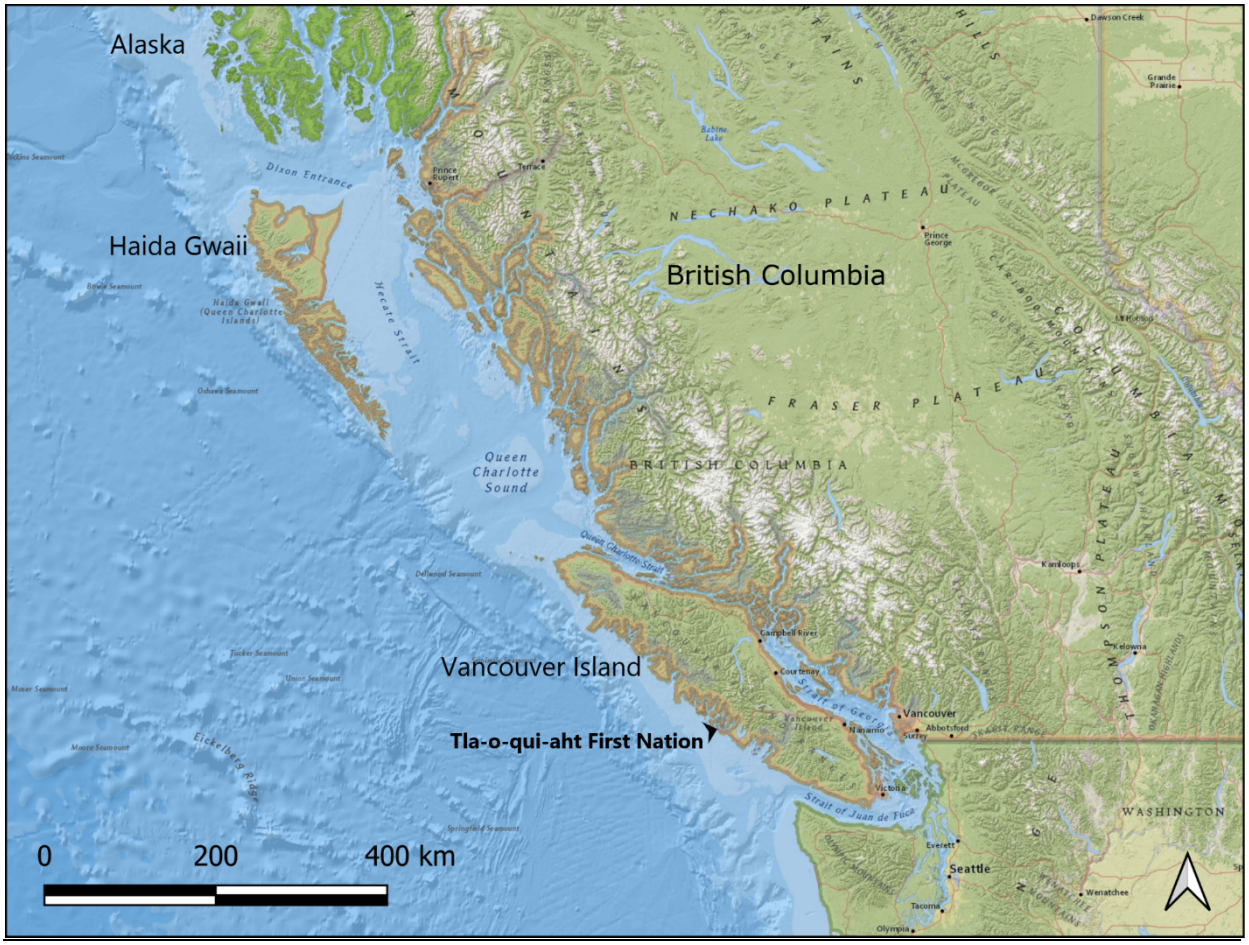


Image 23. Illustration of approximate location of Tla-o-qui-aht territory on Vancouver Island.

[162] https://www.tla-o-qui-aht.org/ (accessed March 2021).

Introduction

This chapter is built around my experiences and interview with Tsimka Martin who owns and operates the *T'ashii Paddle School* based in Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks. Tsimka is also a musician, 'knowledge seeker and language learner.' She was born in the 1980s, when Meares Island was declared a Tribal Park by her uncle Moses Martin and the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation. *T'ashii Paddle School* is presented as a 'First Nations owned and operated business that offers cultural interpretation and tours to a variety of areas in 'Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks.' Their website notes that 'T'ashii' is a Nuu-chah-nulth word meaning 'path' on land or on water. Their vision is 'to create a path to learning and connection with the natural environment through paddling.'[163]

I met Tsimka in March 2018, while in Tofino for the annual whale festival.[164] I signed up for another 'Cultural Canoe Tour' with *T'ashii Paddle School*, having previously taken the tour with Tana.[165] I was keen to see what it would be like with a different guide. I later told Tsimka about the project that I was working on and asked if she would like to take part. We exchanged a few emails and met again in May 2018 for an interview, which lasted several hours and ranged widely. What I have presented in this chapter relates to my questions about why Tsimka was involved in Indigenous Tourism? How was indigeneity and spirituality articulated in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation? Tsimka was clear about her ambitions to raise awareness of historic and current colonial treatment and policies, and its various effects. She asserts Indigenous claims to the land and is determined to train and empower young people in important life and guiding skills.

Tour

The tour consisted of six people, four guests and two guides. Tsimka introduced herself first in Nuu-chah-nulth and then in English. Tsimka was joined by a guide-in-training named Terrell Lamb, and after everyone had introduced themselves, we practised some paddle strokes and set off. Tsimka explained that the canoe we were travelling in had been carved by her father

[163] For Tribal Parks see: https://tribalparksalliance.com/ (accessed April 2020).
[164] For Tofino Tourism webpage and information on the annual whale festival see: https://tourismtofino.com/event/pacific-rim-whale-festival/ (accessed April 2020).
[165] Tana Thomas: Chapter 3.

Joe Martin out of one piece of wood. Typically, a canoe of this size would have been used for whale hunting last practised by Tla-o-qui-aht over a 100 years ago.[166] The wide bow gave the hunters a good angle and manoeuvrability to harpoon the whales. Tsimka's father is a master Carver who has carved over 60 canoes. His expertise, combined with modern power tools means he can make an entire canoe in one month.[167]

We paddled for a while to get clear of the harbour and in a good position for the tides, and then we paused for Tsimka to tell us some local history. The Nuu-chah-nulth Nations have had a fraught history amongst themselves: including a lot of warfare and apparently they had even wiped out a whole other nation.[168] I was surprised by this comment, not in terms of history, but more that it is uncommon in tourist settings to hear Indigenous people being presented as anything less than peaceful. Tsimka explained that we were currently in Tla-o-qui-aht territory and told us about the industrial logging company *McMillian Bloedel* that was operating on unceded lands; with pride, she spoke about the protests that followed, and as a result, how much of Meares Island is now protected.[169] She explained that industrial logging just does not fit with cultural ways; 'we only take what we need.' I took this as a critique of government and capitalist policies. We stopped for a rest not far from a water reservoir where Tsimka took the opportunity to tell us how on several occasions the reservoir had run low, and that this was mostly down to the overpopulation of Tofino in the summer months. This raises a common tension with tourism, that while it brings opportunities and income to more remote areas, it can place a strain on local resources, thus threatening to spoil the experience that tourists come for.

Tsimka spoke about the three residential schools that were in the area and directed our attention to a totem pole that stood on Meares Island near where the Christie residential school had once stood.[170] Totem poles 'work as histories and as clues to the past', Tsimka

[166] For a history on Nuu-chah-nulth Whale hunting see: Monks *et al* (2001).
[167] For more Information on Master Carver Joe Martin see: https://www.tofinotime.com/artists/R-JMfrm.htm (accessed April, 2020).
[168] For an historical account on the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation see: Jackson (2005).
[169] For more information on the McMillian Bloedel court case: https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/meares-island-case-ongoing (accessed April 2020).
[170] For more information on the catholic run Christie residential school: https://collections.irshdc.ubc.ca/index.php/Detail/entities/43 (accessed April 2020).

noted, 'you just have to know how to read them. They help keep our stories alive.' As we were about to land on Meares Island, I noticed a jetty had been built since I was last there. This was obviously a practical development but one that indicated that tourism was proving to be economically successful. Just before the trail begins there is a wood carving of a sea serpent. We were told that this image represents a legendary creature in Nuu-chah-nulth mythology, named Haietlik, who was both an ally and a weapon of the thunderbird, and who served as an aid for whale hunters.[171] This double-headed serpent has a head that is as sharp as a knife and a tongue that shoots lightning bolts. One bolt from a Haietlik would injure a whale enough that the thunderbird could then carry the whale away, thus assisting in the hunt. Whalers who carved this image into their canoe were considered to be very lucky in hunting. This same figure is present in many Nuu-chah-nulth ceremonies and dances and is the official emblem for the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation and for the Tin Wis Hotel.

Image 24. Sign on Meares Island welcoming guests to Tla-o-qui-aht tribal parks with the canoe and sea serpent engraved.

[171] For more information on Haietluk: https://umistapotlatch.ca/objets-objects/index-eng.php?object=80.01.030&nojs=true (accessed April 2020).

Tsimka spoke about the deep connection she feels with the land and the various protocols that exist in her community regarding how to care for it. For example, if she wanted to harvest cedar and take bark from the tree, she first prays and asks the tree for permission. She then listens and gets a sense of how to respond. If she receives a positive feeling from the tree, she continues, if not, she walks on. Other methods include testing to see if the bark comes off easily, if it does, then it's a good indication that the tree is ok for the harvester to take what they need. Another practice is to take from a tree that is exposed to the light in order to avoid rot.

On the paddle back to Tofino, Tsimka sang to us one of her 'nation's traditional paddling songs', noting that there are strict rules governing who may sing what and when. The song she sang was designed to encourage and motivate paddlers – and it seemed to work with us. Tsimka's tour focused on the history and politics of the people and place, expressing the responsibility she feels to fight for its protection, grounding that firmly in her cultural practises.

Interview

In May 2018, we met at a restaurant in Tofino called Sobo.[172] I realised quite quickly that this restaurant was too loud and too impersonal to record an interview, so we agreed we would eat lunch and then go somewhere else. Our conversation began around a painting that hung above us in the restaurant. It was by a friend of hers, Marika Swan, who lived locally and portrayed a woman dancing. I told Tsimka how much I liked it, adding that to me the woman dancing seemed 'stuck.' Tsimka told me that the picture was about a ceremonial dancer, and because so many ceremonies had been banned by the colonial government, for her, the art was about freedom. She added that the feeling of being 'stuck' well describes the journey her people had been undertaking. Women now hold less central roles in certain ceremonies, due to the influence and impact of the Church and colonialism. She was pleased that tourism facilitated the showcasing and purchasing of locally produced art.

[172] The interview took place on 27 May 2018 in Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks.

Over lunch, Tsimka told me about a *guardianship program* she had just attended in Ottawa, the capital city of Canada located on the east side of the country.[173] She was invited as a leader to share her knowledge, learn from other Indigenous leaders and to perform a song. One of Tsimka's many passions is music and I listened to one of her songs on YouTube after the interview. It is called 'Grabbing Spree', and amongst other things it is about the effects of colonialism and capitalism on the earth and people; as well as a plea for a change to the grabbing mentality that she sees as being so prevalent today.[174]

Describing the *guardianship program*, she expressed her fears about whether she deserved to be there and how she had felt very nervous beforehand. In order to help centre herself upon arrival, she had said a prayer that her Grandpa Levi Martin had taught her. The prayer is about acknowledging where you are, stating that you come with good intentions, and that you will do your best. She informed me that the *guardianship program* is happening all over the country. Its purpose is to give 'knowledge holders and seekers' and language learners space and opportunities to share ideas, network and gain empowerment. We spent several enjoyable hours over lunch swapping stories and experiences, recommending books – getting to know each other, all of which eased us into the interview.

After lunch we walked to the *Eagle Aerie gallery*, which she thought would be a good place for us to talk. It is designed like a longhouse and she sometimes came here to think and to enjoy the quiet.[175] The gallery is a public space, it felt as if I was invited into a personal one for her providing a supportive backdrop for the discussion that followed.

Tsimka began by telling me more about the area, starting with the protest that happened in 1993, which she referred to as 'the war of the woods.' 'It was on the news everywhere. People were like, what's the big deal with this area, and tourism was born from that and it has just boomed from then.' I thought this was an interesting way of framing our discussion; by

[173] For more information on the guardianship programme: https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/indigenous-guardians-pilot-program.html (accessed April 2020).
[174] Tsimka's music video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQ9bhiyABCs (accessed April 2020).
[175] Roy Henry Vickers Eagle Aerie Gallery https://royhenryvickers.com/pages/the-gallery (accessed May 2020).

establishing ownership of the area and showing how it had been hard fought for. Tsimka moved on to tell me about how *Tashii Paddle School* came about.

> After high school, I started guiding for my older sister Gisele Martin, her traditional name is Tlaook. Her company was called Tlaook Cultural Adventures. My father had gifted us a traditional 30ft dugout canoe at Christmas. I was 12 at the time, so I was like 'err…thanks dad, what am I going to do with this? My sister was 7 years older than I was; she had also done whale-watching tours with our dad growing up, but was always more interested in talking about our culture than just the whales, so this was a way to focus on that!

When she then turned 18, Tsimka began to guide for her sister's company. After a while she knew she had enough experience to do it by herself. She described enjoying the leadership skills that can be learned from the job; managing different people, facilitating discussions, making decisions, public speaking etc. She emphasized the importance of having a physical presence on the land and said that 'from March to October, that is a good amount of time to have eyes on land and water. It is so important to have that presence on the land. It is a sharp contrast from residential school times.' What she reminded me of here, was that one impact of the residential schools had been to keep people away from the land. Tourism was now providing her with a connection and presence on the land, and doing so in ways in keeping with roles that were held in the past.

Her sister had eventually closed down her company to focus her attention on language revitalisation instead. Because it's seasonal work there is a lower ceiling to how much can be earned. This is why the job is better suited to young Nuu-chah-nulth people, people who are just looking for a summer job. Tsimka felt strongly that the skills learned through the guiding are very valuable, and she is passionate about giving young people the opportunity to develop them. So, when she met her partner Emre, who was an entrepreneur who had been to business school, and who knew how to set up and establish a business, she began working with him to create *Tashii Paddle School*. His focus was on stand-up paddle boarding offering tours and lessons. Her focus was the canoe and the training of guides, a process she really enjoyed.

> It can be hard to find a young person that's in the right place. You need a certain reliability and health as well as a natural ability to be a leader, as well as being physically healthy and strong. [...] It does not always work out, but I have been

> lucky. Being a small business, I do have to be very selective, as training takes up a lot of my time. I have had good success overall.

Tsimka paused to give me more background on the area and local industry.

> This place had a big industry before tourism, but due to the mismanagement of the department of fisheries and oceans Canada, that changed. We have so many native fish in Tofino and the Clayoquot territories. There are five different species of salmon, halibut, herring, lingcod, but due to such mismanagement, the herring stocks are minimal, and the salmon are in danger, and the local salmon that runs into the sound are now only a tiny fraction of what they used to be. We had a logging industry too, and that had an impact because of the debris and the landslides it caused, which affected the oceans. It has had a huge impact on the water. The salmon farm industry moved in, and has caused all kinds of problems. Those farms should be removed! The farms are located in the inlet where wild salmon runs are. The baby salmon don't have proper scales developed, so they are more vulnerable and catch sea lice or parasites. There are all kinds of diseases in those farms, so many problems. It shows the ongoing mismanagement by colonial governments and by our own government. I hope that it will come to an end.

I asked Tsimka to explain what she meant when she said 'her own government?' She replied:

> Nuu-chah-nulth is a cultural grouping now. We have a similar language, but there are different dialects. Similar lifestyle, culture and art, but there are also key differences. We share a connection to this place, being Indigenous to the Clayoquot sound – this is an anglicisation of our word and then it was applied to the whole sound.

She explained that as the fishing industry started to crash, the logging industry was given a lot of attention.

> When the last residential school closed down in the area, especially in 1984, around the time I was born, the people of my nation, the Tla-o-qui-aht, took a stand in our area. The elected chief, not hereditary, are two different bodies. So, the elected chief, Moses Martin, a great uncle or grandpa as we say in our way, was the spokesperson when the logging protests began on Meares Island.[176] He said to the loggers, 'welcome, this our garden', he did a traditional welcome ceremony. He said 'we invite you to come ashore and you can come eat, share food and talk with us, but you must leave your chainsaws on the ground or in the boat.

[176] For more information on elected and hereditary chiefs system see: https://bc.ctvnews.ca/elected-vs-hereditary-chiefs-what-s-the-difference-in-indigenous-communities-1.4247466 (accessed April 2020).

I was struck by this image of people welcoming guests with chainsaws to a garden, an image which suggests very different views of nature, and positions First Nations as defenders. Tsimka was impressed that people at that time, just after the residential schools, were able to stand up to logging companies and to the government.

> When the Canadian Government arrived and planted their flag, they drew tiny circles in our land around ancient village sites and called them reservations. [...] Because all you people do is fish, they said, we will give you a lot less land than those Indians over there, where they have to run around and chase buffalo. So the reservations here are tiny, and then, they made our traditional fishing illegal. So they said, sustain yourself just off the fish, and then they made that illegal. It was all about severing our connection to our land and culture. So there was that, and also some law that said you cannot have three or more 'Indians' in the gathering because they might be conspiring against the government.[177]

The statement above speaks to the erosion of Indigenous rights under colonialism, which included the potlatch ban that the government enforced until 1951. Tsimka commented that 'the potlatch is a really important societal ceremony for us, it encompasses our governance, our spirituality, feasting and economy.[178] Gift economy was much more pronounced in former times.'

Tsimka spoke more about the residential schools that were run by Christian missionaries:

> Here it was mostly Catholic. The schools took small children away from their parents, stripped them of their dress and cut their hair off, and they were forbidden to speak their own language. If parents resisted putting their children in the schools they were put in prison. The children were punished if they were caught speaking their language, with strappings, and there was a lot of sexual abuse and neglect. They even did nutritional experiments. They were deliberately not feeding kids to see how long they could survive. It was real destruction and it has had such a big impact, with several generations going through that trauma, and it builds. The impact is crazy.

Tsimka added that at least her people were able to remain in their traditional territory and 'there is strength in that; healing can happen because of that. That's more than some Indigenous people around the world today.' The reason she wanted to talk about this history is 'because context matters and affects everything. Tourism therefore is not just good or bad,

[177] For more information on reservations in Canada: https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/reserves/ (accessed April 2020).
[178] For more Information on the potlatch see: chapter 2 and conclusion.

it's context dependent.' She informed me that a lot of taxes go to Canada even though, 'we are rightful owners and the stewards of this land and have been for thousands of years.' But, as with tourism, 'you need to engage even when it is unbalanced.' Tsimka feels lucky to have been educated and to be able to do what she is doing, but she also feels like an anomaly. That, she explained, is the legacy of the residential schools. 'What that does to a community is hard to even describe' said Tsimka as she listed addiction, depression, the breakdown of families and sexual abuse, stating that:

> Historically our people were so strong on families, and that's also part of our strength today, but there is still a huge amount of sexual abuse that ruins families. [...] It's a sick cycle that is hard to break. There is a lot of healing that's happening but there is also so much more to do. I talk about this on our tours, because there is such a disconnect to people who have never heard about it, and we cannot reconcile if we do not know the stories of Indigenous peoples in a place!

I told Tsimka that if it had not been for tourism and *Tashii Paddle School* in particular, that I would not have heard and learned about any of this here in Tofino. Tsimka told me how important she thinks tourism is to provide a space for learning and engagement, which things like guiding and art can offer. 'The Tin Wis Hotel is good because they have lots of Tla-o-qui-aht people working there, but because they are working in service positions you do not get the same opportunity to learn from each other.' Tsimka then pointed to the art on the walls of the gallery in which we were sitting and said: 'Each picture has a different write up and this would give someone a little window into this place or to important themes.' She did however make it clear that it is the person-to-person connection that will make the real difference.

One of the key problems with tourism in the area is that most of the guides are not Indigenous, Tsimka said: 'they are interpreting the world around them in a very scientific approach, compartmentalising and separating things.' The Tla-o-qui-aht approach is to be knowledgeable and take pride in the world around you; for her it came down to an understanding of the interconnectedness of it all. The word she used to capture what she was describing was, 'Hishuk–ish–tsawalk' a Nuu-chah-nulth word translated to mean; 'everything is one, and everything affects everything else.' She did note that there are some Tla-o-qui-aht operators driving boats and that they then can offer different interpretations, but the nature of their job means they mostly speak to locals, not tourists. Tsimka made the point here that the people often holding those jobs, like driving a boat, are men. She doesn't see many

women in these roles and therefore she said, 'if someone's not seeing that out there it is hard to imagine doing it.' She described feeling 'really blessed' at the start of her business as many of her guides were young women.

Tsimka spoke passionately about an initiative that she is part of called *Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks* which began in response to logging threats.[179] Unlike *National Parks* Canada, *Tribal Parks* are about working out what land should be used and for what purposes, where tourism should take place for example, and what activities would be appropriate.[180] The community perspective and involvement is partly what distinguishes this initiative from Canada Parks.

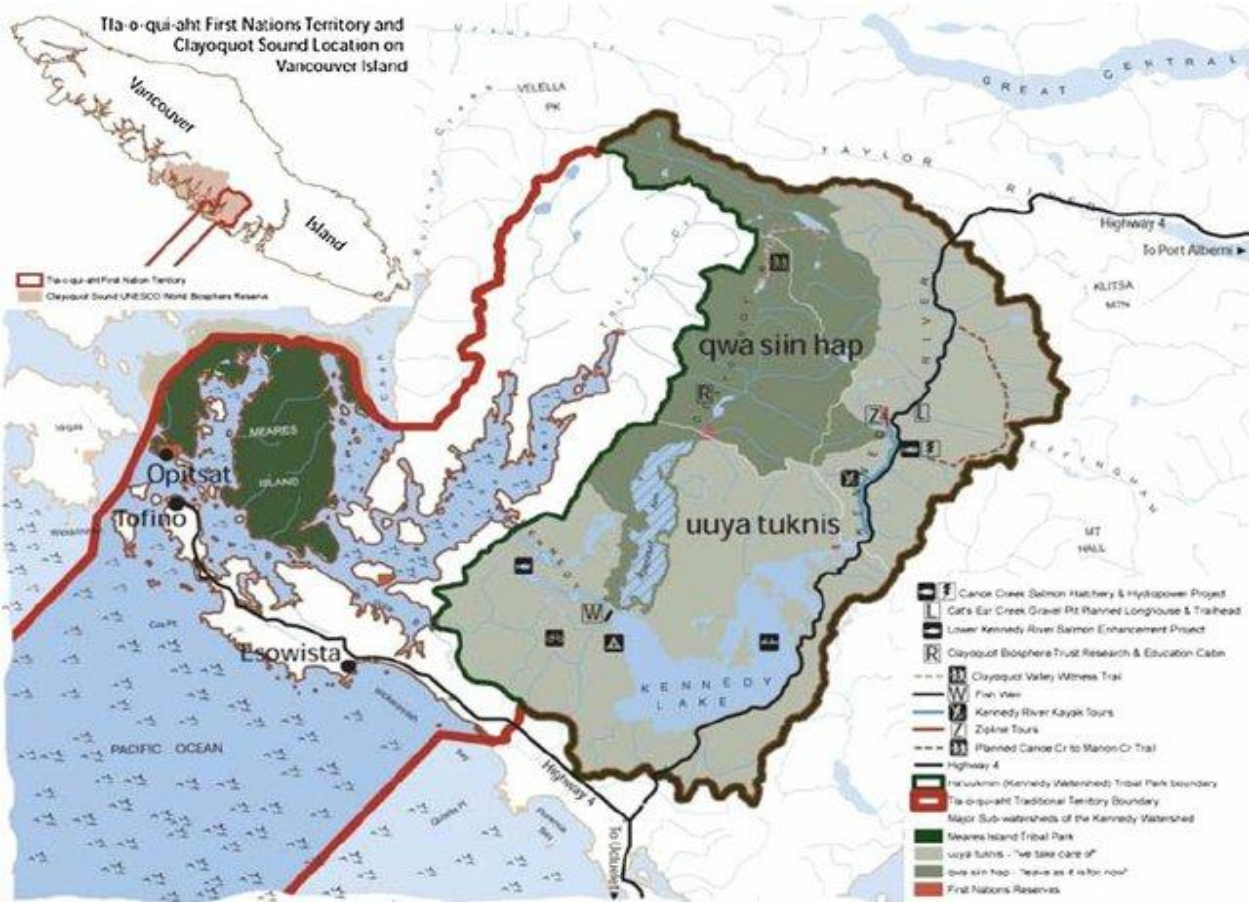
> They see this area like a wilderness, and an animal habitat. But the term wilderness – people think it's untouched by man, but actually you can see the selective harvests and places that have been gardened. We think of it as ancestral gardens. Some areas don't see as many humans as others, but you can always see the stewardship if you know how to look for it.

Tashii Paddle School, Tsimka explained, pays one percent of its earnings into the Tribal Parks initiative to show support. The sign and boardwalk on the 'Big Tree Trail', on Tribal Park land, is about changing the mindset of people, so tourists can see that it's more than just land. She hopes that one day Canada will acknowledge them, and they will continue working towards that goal, along with organisations like the Nature Conservancy and Truth & Reconciliation Commission.[181] Tsimka was not overly confident that this would ever come about, and just hoped for the removal of obstacles to their progress.

[179] The Tla-o-qui-aht are now engaged in the British Columbia Treaty process, which has been ongoing since 1993 and involves many other First Nations in British Columbia. Unlike other parts of Canada, in British Columbia much of the land base is not covered by 'formal treaties' and the treaty process is a primary arena within which contested claims over the land and sea (and the resources within them) are contested. The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) states, "Our authority and ownership have never been extinguished, given up, signed away by Treaty or any other means or superseded by any law. http://www.bctreaty.ca/nuu-chah-nulth-tribal-council (accessed May 2020).

[180] National Parks, Canada see: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/index (accessed May 2020).

[181] For the Nature conservancy see: https://www.nature.org/en-us/ (accessed May 2020). For TRC see https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525 (accessed May 2020).



Im*age 25. Map of* Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks.

Tsimka takes pride in improving her knowledge of the territory, is clear about the values she wishes to uphold, and with this in mind she looks for appropriate ways to engage in the economy. She notes the problem, however, that 'there is all this colonial stuff going on that makes it harder,' but is optimistic as Tofino currently has a progressive Mayor who acknowledges and supports the *Tribal Parks* initiative. Tsimka is currently working on a project with Tourism Tofino about 'a value initiative' for tourists visiting Tofino and she explained:

> First part is for a brochure to be distributed around Tofino about Tla-o-qui-aht values, to give a welcome from our people. At the moment, people can come here and not even know what nation or what area they are in. So, I think it is important to offer some understanding and core principles.[182]

Tsimka said that whenever she sits down with the Mayor they speak about various levels of governance, the importance of speaking up, and struggling with the trauma of the past. 'If you are healthy enough to do the work, you need to, the problem is that then you have to have so

[182] For the brochure: https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DdfnlinVMAAu5q7?format=jpg&name=4096x4096 (accessed August 2022).

many roles.' Tsimka looked a little embarrassed at the implication that she was one of the people doing the work and filling those roles, but she then stipulated that:

> I have certain privileges. My family was grounded and steady enough. Everyone has struggles and I had my journey, but I had a steady enough foundation to be a reasonably healthy adult. Not everyone has that and many are struggling. Even in my appearances, people don't know what I am when they look at me, and there's so much racism so it's a different take when people meet me, so I recognise that too.

She understood that the resentment from some people might come from a history of oppression and colonisation, and because there was some negativity surrounding people of mixed background. It was not always an issue, but it was something she is mindful and sensitive about. Tsimka has to deal with stereotypes of various kinds, those held by her community and those held by tourists.

I told Tsimka about a play I had seen recently called 'Salt Baby.' It was a play about a woman struggling with her identity and sense of belonging. This character was dating a man whom she felt didn't understand her struggle and the pressure she felt to date an Indigenous man. The root of one of her insecurities was the name her family called her, Salt Baby: she had always understood this name to be about the lightness of her skin, but one day, after a conversation with her father, she realised that name had nothing to do with that and instead was a comment on her being strong like salt. This was a profound revelation and seemed to release a lot of tension she felt about 'not being indigenous enough' and feeling like she constantly needed to prove her identity. Tsimka told me that she had heard of this play and remarked that she thinks that feeling is quite common. We spoke for a while about societal norms and prejudices that run deep and are hard to squash, be they colonial ideas of what constitutes as Indigenous, as well as gender roles and biases.

I asked Tsimka how she felt about being one of only a few Indigenous owned tour companies in Tofino. Overall, she felt that *Tashii Paddle School* was embraced by the community. She explained that one of the obstacles stopping Indigenous people from entering the market is the lack of money and inheritance. Tsimka added that the Tla-o-qui-aht people have a rich history of hosting people which she felt gave them an advantage for working in tourism. She saw tourism as a way of making money and was proud of how she was training the guides,

through which both she and they gain time to learn and talk about histories, families and what they thought appropriate to share with tourists. I commented that I thought being in the water paddling together helped to facilitate a learning environment and perhaps made it easier to listen to heavy histories. Tsimka noted that it also takes the pressure off the guides and added that:

> I certainly have my own ideas, around what is and is not appropriate. However, there are cultural understandings across the board in our community about how to do things in the right way. For example, sharing of songs. There is cultural copyright on our songs. Some songs you can share more freely than others, then there are ceremonial songs which can only be sung in certain situations and by certain people. It's important for the guide to go to their families and ask for permission. Their family might say, this is a fun song you can share in tourism, but please ask that no one record it. They might explain that it is just for that moment and they might request that they share the meaning along with the song. So for me personally I love singing. I have developed my own songs and poetry, but I ask people not to record. I don't want to be on a shaky video on YouTube. I prefer to be professional and have a back and forth relationship. We always go over that.

Tsimka also encouraged the guides to talk to people in their families about any residential school experiences, but would always warn them how sensitive the topic can be, and that people might not be ready to speak and share. She gave the example of a guide who had visited his grandmother who spoke to him about her experiences, but afterwards the guide decided that the information was too sensitive to share. Tsimka said that 'you really have to navigate that stuff for yourself, and you need to seek the appropriate permission.' She acknowledged that she had got things wrong in the past, but the principles are important and she makes the effort to share them with other businesses that want to develop, saying:

> When I was setting up, I went to our Chief and council meeting, which is one way to be accountable to each other. It is a colonial system, but it's a way to check in. I told them what I would be doing and sought approval and I felt good about that.

I asked Tsimka to explain who the chief was and how the system worked. She said that the hereditary chief is a traditional system of governance, and there is a 'hakuum' who is a woman or wife that is most close to the chief, 'like a King and Queen if you want to see it that way.' I asked if chiefs need to be men? She told me that, for the Tla-o-qui-aht she had always heard of male chiefs. The women would often come from arranged marriages and the women went into the man's territory, she continued:

> It was patriarchal that way; however, it is somewhat how you choose to look at it. In former times, women were seen as such a gift. It was so important to be welcomed and be given a role. Whereas these days there is so much anger in our communities, about who has authority and power. If a woman married into a different nation or to another community it would now probably feel like she would never be on the same level as a woman who comes from that community, whereas in former times she would be fully accepted and embraced.

Tsimka made the point that the work she does as a guide is holistic, because when you are speaking and sharing about history and culture you have to be constantly learning and growing to avoid sounding like it is just an 'auto spiel.' She admitted that when it comes to the month of August she does not have the same energy and it can feel like the role is on repeat. I asked Tsimka about the process of working out what skills the guides need, she explained:

> I guess I figured out what skills I have to do what I do, and then determine what skills the guides need to build on. Dividing that between hard skills and soft skills. There is the hard skills training, and then the public speaking training, which is really by experience but you can train the guides with the basics. Like I said, learning about their own family's stories, experience of residential schools and then they can build on it, about their families or who and how it affected them. I'll get them to practice projecting and looking people in the eye, and practice having equal engagement with the different guests. Some people can suck a lot of energy and ask too many questions without listening and some might be genuinely interested, but then no one else gets a chance, so creating that equality is a skill.

We talked about the kinds of tourists who come on these canoe trips to which she replied:

> I think it's mostly people that actually have an interest in First Nations peoples and history which makes it easier to connect, because there tends to be at least one person who is interested. Some people have just been dragged along by a partner or friend who might be interested. For some people, it's like the kayak company ran out of kayaks, and they just want to get on the water. However, at the start I often do an introduction to ask what people are interested in. It's good to get everyone to hear from everyone else to know where they are coming from and anything they are particularly interested in on the tour, so the guide can get a better sense and also just for everyone to meet each other. If people are interested you share more or sometimes you can feel they are not, so you do the bare minimum. You can get one group with some people that seem very interested and some who are not, so you have to talk over them, and that will totally change the tour for some people. Culturally I've found it's mostly Europeans.

She noted a shift from people believing their traditions were worthless, to now finding them valuable, saying: 'First it was this attitude of like, your language and your Satan worshipping ways are bad.' She is happy that there is now a better appreciation of Indigenous peoples'

cultures, but notes some people still show little respect and just take what they like. She gave the example of how Indigenous knowledge about plants is often extracted by non-native authors with no acknowledgement of which elders or communities shared such knowledge. She added that the emphasis with non-native authors tends to be on the plant's use rather than on human-plant relationship, as for example:

> The way we say thank you in our culture as 'ukshuck tiskis' which literally translates to mean 'you have been very useful', and a big ceremonial thank you is 'klackoh klakoh.' But in Western culture there's a kind of using without reciprocity and that shows in the way things are framed and talked about. What's the relationship with this plant, would be a really different question and important thing to know. How do you care for it? There are people who are appreciating it on that level, like, in our beyond human community, what are those interactions like? Instead, the framing and overall influence is still about capitalism and the financial benefit. The way it is approached, it's lopsided. We have to continue to be cautious. It is a step-by-step process to turn things around.

She gave another example that illustrates what she understood to be a tension around respecting Tla-o-qui-aht values:

> On the plane yesterday, I got this deep feeling, it happens sometimes…there were these young people, they sounded nice and they were wanting to surf in Tofino and were saying there's this big place, this house in Cox bay on sale for a couple of million, if only I had that money! I start bubbling inside, because that is not how this land is – this is Tla-o-qui-aht territory. I am frustrated that it's sold as 'fee simple lands.'[183] Those young people have no idea I'm annoyed by this, as an Indigenous person. We have a long way to go still…a long, long way to reconciliation. Canada talks about reconciliation but to them it's an apology and here you go we give you all some money and get more stories out there. However, they are not addressing the fact that we need support for self-determination and governance, to have an economically viable relationship with our lands, and what does 'title' look like and mean![184] Indigenous communities can over emphasise the importance of rights, it is about having responsibility too, it's about stewardship, taking care of the living things.

We discussed the fact that Tsimka uses different terms like Tla-o-qui-aht, First Nations, and Indigenous, and on asking how and why she used these different terms, she explained:

> It switched from Aboriginal to Indigenous some time ago, and I feel like it's following the trend for native people to identify ourselves, in our own way. I think

[183] For more information on 'Fee simple land' see: https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96250_12 (accessed May 2020).
[184] For more information on the so-called Aboriginal Land Title see: https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/aboriginal_title/ (accessed May 2020).

> that might be how Indigenous started, it is being used way more than Aboriginal. Canada responded to it, and acknowledged it! I think they mean the same, but I might be wrong. In Canada, there's the Inuit and the First Nations and Metis. I used to say First Nations but other groups didn't feel like it encompassed them, so now I use Indigenous when I am referring to those people with a shared history of colonialism, and I may use Tla-o-qui-aht but that's more just about the area and context. I have lots more to learn about different places and contexts.[185]

She expressed concern about the term 'Indigenous' in that there's a risk of different people being stamped as one. While Indigenous people also do this, especially when it comes to ceremonies, for Tsimka, teachings, practises, and beliefs are very specific and grounded in place. She added that she supposes that everyone is Indigenous to somewhere, but for her it is about 'an ongoing connection and an effort to reconnect.' She told me about a book called *Braiding Sweetgrass* by an 'Indigenous knowledge holder' and scientist, who ties these two things together in a beautiful way.[186] On asking Tsimka what is meant by being a 'knowledge keeper', she explained that cultural knowledge holders or keepers are people who have either through remembering or seeking managed to hold on to knowledge and can teach it well. Such people can be young or old and the term is less of a title more of an acknowledgement. I commented to Tsimka that the book sounds interesting and mentioned to her that I worry a lot as a researcher about how I will be putting my research together and that I am nervous that I might miss something important or take something for granted. Tsimka responded:

> Yeah I have to trust you and your sense, like, if you want to explore something I trust you will connect with me on that, and later on it can be more of a hassle, but I think that check is essential. It's an interesting time in intellectual property. I don't know what all the laws are and how that all comes about? It's like that with language, there's so many new words that don't exist. Like 'industrial way', we didn't need this word in the past, but today we do, so we created it from the word 'to blast' and it's about the knowledge at the root that frames and creates the new things. The word we now have for 'industrial site' translates to our language to mean 'Made from blasting.'

This illustrates the continuous creativity involved in language resurgence and the importance of paying close attention to language use and translation. We continued talking about

[185] The term First Nations legally excludes Inuit and Metis people.
[186] Kimmerer (2015) Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants.

appropriation and how difficult it can be to draw the line, Tsimka said that when it comes to spiritual ceremonies there is a lot of disconnection, as when people start selling things in another spiritual place, making things their own. She commented on the New Age movement, how people are so hungry for spirituality and how complicated it all is, working out when it is ok to charge for something:

> Making a living is important, but I tend to stay away from doing specific ceremonies for tourists. My grandpa is good at doing it. He would charge and go to a place, or a wedding and do his ceremony but I'm not sure how I feel about that. In reality all of life is spiritual, I don't know, I am in a weird place about that. They used to say in our way of life, our medicine people would never sell medicine, but we had different kinds of currency. We had a gift economy but also money, which was in the form of dentalia shells and we used them in exchange for goods and services. Maybe if it's used to support or to give back to that family and that might be the way to do it but, gift economy isn't what it used to be so maybe today it is appropriate to charge? What is just more appropriation and what is engagement?

Tsimka remarked that other religions seem much more open and eager to bring people in whereas they are much more guarded. The shift from not being allowed to practice beliefs to the interest now expressed she considers weird. She felt that the canoe suited her because it was not too specific or ceremonial; it was just a way of life:

> The canoe serves a base service, so in that sense there is less pressure. You can be in this canoe and paddle and share and the tourists are enough out of their element. I am the one steering and in control and they can listen and then more authority is given naturally to the guide.

She described this as being very different from a wedding, which she sometimes gets asked to do, and which she said she felt a deep discomfort about. She spoke about her own authority to do that, comparing herself to her Uncle Levi, whom she described as being more visually stunning, as an elder, with beautiful long hair, a deep voice and distinguished stance. She said that perhaps it also had something to do with her Mum being Roman Catholic and how she would attend church when she was young. Maybe one day she would feel different but for now she was exploring it all on a personal level only.

Tsimka spoke about the impact of the Catholic Church and the resentment and distrust which she felt about it. She felt that the Church says more about fear and conformity than it does

about her worldview, and as such offered her little. She said that she could not accept the notion that all people are sinners and unless you repent, you go to hell. Tsimka drew the contrast between this and her tradition:

> In Nuu-chah-nulth and for Tla-o-qui-aht people it is more integrated. [...] There are so many different ways to approach things, in a way for it to be reciprocal. I think spirituality is much more about respect for all life; it is more in everything you do.

She continued:

> Being Catholic, maybe you check in, but when I try to put myself in the shoes of fearing hell or wanting God's love, it's weird. It is fun, I guess thinking about a capital GOD, I like thinking about it, entertaining it. I grew up going to church, but yeah, I was young when I thought hmmm, this does not add up for me.

Tsimka said that because her parents come from different religious backgrounds, she feels more freedom to choose, but she worries that by so doing it might be less respectful:

> When I do look at history and culture from my Dad's side I respect so much, but I do not necessarily want everything to come back and I need to be able to see why things were or are a certain way...Yeah, if I can't always find a connection to the land then I don't get it. Like how when it's low tide you do not walk down on the shore or you will disrupt the clams and you will offend them; that is a teaching I get, but there are some other things that I just do not get. Some leaders express things in very strange ways but yeah I guess I'm always looking through a lens of 'how is this benefitting our relationship with the natural world and for supporting and respecting all natural things?' If I can't make that connection, then I'm not sure about it.

Tsimka highlights the complexities within the concept of indigeneity and illustrates the dynamics of navigating traditions. I asked her about the language learning work that she does. She told me she is not fluent in either her mum or her Dad's native language. Her Mum taught her French when she was little and her Dad had lost a lot of his language when he went to school. She is learning the Nuu-chah-nulth language now and said:

> I hear more about culture than religion in Nuu-chah-nulth. I think of religion as an institutional thing. It has a ring to it like, RELIGION!!! (Serious, deep boom) I have some fundamental values. I have certain things I try to uphold, but yeah, it's mostly referred to as spirituality. It can actually change family to family. Different stories for different families that shape a worldview.

She continued to reflect on the difficulties of the language we use to discuss religion, spirituality and the environment.

> Maybe it's a problem of categorisation, maybe there is no word for it because it's all integrated. It's not like THE environment and THE spirituality. But, I recognise that English word the most. When it's talked about like 'The Environment', we are in one – all the time...it's like why is this considered a separate thing. We are surely all environmentalists? Maybe that's why people like to hand over that thought process, and say, you choose what I think and believe…Yikes! I would be curious to meet philosophers back in our day, in our culture. I have met people with stories about HOW you choose to think, less about WHAT to think, but I've heard some. I wish I could remember better, but I do remember a story from another Indigenous nation of a grandpa teaching his grandson about a greedy angry hungry wolf and a good generous wolf. The point of the story is about which one you choose to feed. That's where your attention goes and where your energy flows and it can go either way, like where are you putting your efforts and thoughts? I relate that story to our double-headed serpent. That there are two sides to everything at least and that you have to face yourself.

After raising and putting aside these problems of translation**,** we concluded our conversation by discussing Tsimka's ambitions for the future, both personally and *for Tashii Paddle School*. She told me how she hopes more Nuu-chah-nulth businesses will develop and how she would like to help in bringing that about. She was confident that guiding could be helpful in the process of healing.

> I guess I hope that more peaceful and connected ways of tourism come about, I get so annoyed with noise and floatplanes. I think we have a great opportunity with tourism, to get around in a different way, set up something more positive. I hope that as the community develops more tourism, it does it in a way that is more grounded in our values. It's ironic that someone comes for serenity, but by coming, that ruins it. It's weird.

She hoped that one day a guide would be able to take over the canoe part of the business, allowing her to move more into language work and music.[187] But she was intent on keeping on training, and hoped that this would expand.

[187] In 2020, Tsimka sold the business and now works learning and teaching the Nuu-chah-nulth language.

Reflections

What follows are some reflections related to my research questions: What did Tsimka say about why she was involved in Indigenous Tourism? How was indigeneity and spirituality articulated in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation? Two things come across most strongly to me in this chapter: first, is the importance of land sovereignty; and secondly – and related to this matter – how the regulations and definitions of indigeneity have affected her.

Tsimka mentioned how her parents have come from different places and speaks to the colonial baggage that affects how she is perceived by people. Indigeneity has long been heavily regulated on cultural, religious, biological or legal grounds, or some combination of these. After confederation in 1867, Canada erected mechanisms to legislate 'Indian' identity. For example, the original *Indian Act* of 1867, which has gone through many iterations, imposed a definition of 'Indianness' that distinguished between 'status' and 'non-status Indians' and also on grounds of gender. Between 1867 and 1951, women and their children who were 'status Indians' lost their status if they married a man who did not have 'status'; this policy did not apply to men. The designation of 'status' had real political implications as it determined who had access to treaty rights and services. In the early twentieth century, anthropologists made evaluations of 'Indianness' based on biological features.[188] Debates around authenticity are still prevalent today and remain rooted in colonial assumptions of purity and stasis. This has contributed to benchmarks being drawn and fractures emerging about and between people who identify with some form of indigeneity. Although these ideas and policies have been criticised and dismissed, their effects still linger as Tsimka's remarks might suggest. Colonial constructions of 'Indianness' closely contributed to the dispossession of Indigenous lands because the government sought to restrict the number of those who could claim access and rights. Yet many people claim that 95% of British Columbia should be considered Indigenous territory as it was never 'legally' signed away. [189]

Sovereignty means different things to different Indigenous people. Anthropologist Arkotong Longkumer (2020) writes about 'sovereignty in motion', which helpfully approaches

[188] Raibmon (2004, 2008) Neylan (2003) Lawrence (2003, 2004, 2011) Garroutte (2003).
[189] Lawrence (2011) Horton (2012).

sovereignty as a practice and about becoming. He makes a deliberate move away from seeing sovereignty as a lofty political theory and economic nationalism and directs his attention to the narratives and lived out experiences of people. Longkumer draws on the idea of place-making and place-worlds, referring to how ideas are brought into being. Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal parks could be seen as an assertion of sovereignty. Tsimka situates herself locally as coming from the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and living in Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks; she emphasises the importance of the land, noting the healing that comes from living on traditional territory. Tsimka states that the Tla-o-qui-aht are 'the rightful owners and stewards of the land and have been for thousands of years', that their land is not a wilderness, but their ancestral garden. Being a tour guide facilitates for her a sense of ownership and witness, reinforced by the sign on the boardwalk, the emblem on the clothes she and Terrell wore, and in the historical accounts that she chooses to tell. The recounting of the 'war of the woods' protest on the tour, and at the start of our interview, highlights how hard they have fought to protect this beautiful area that tourists now visit. Tsimka is challenging the logging businesses and the *Canada Park*s system and offering what she sees as a clear alternative with Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks, where the land will be carefully cared for and managed. 'By the act of place-naming, space is transformed symbolically into a place, that is, a space with a history' (Carter 1987: xxiv). This 'space with a history' is brought to life through the process of naming Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks.

Tsimka's work with tourism enables her to train young people to be present on the land, learn from it, and teach others about it. Her work in tourism is a way of demonstrating such claims to visitors. Tsimka insists that her guides learn about their own family histories and those of the region, which they can better teach tourists, a process she considers important for the healing that is needed in communities. She is explicit in exposing traumatic aspects of the past and the struggles her people have faced under colonialism: things like, the banning of the potlatch, the separation of children from their families and the land in the residential school system, and the myriad policies incorporated in the *Indian Act*. In talking about the 'war of the woods', she uses history to support her claims, her rights and her path for the future, where the Tla-o-qui-aht people reclaim their rightful ownership of the land.

The marginalisation of women, noted above in the operation of the *Indian Act* and colonialism and reinforced by the role of the Catholic Church is something Tsimka is keen to change. She spoke about the subordinate role women now play in ceremonies, arguing that there has been a change in attitude towards women, from being well-respected in the past, to now being often excluded. Whether this is the case or not, by placing the blame on the Church, Tsimka invites change which can still be anchored in the past. With this argument she can encourage women to take leadership positions; she is proud of having trained and employed many women through her business. Tsimka is using tourism as an opportunity to explore to learn more about personal and collective histories and at the same time educating others.

Tsimka spoke about the Catholic Church as an institution largely governed by fear and conformity. In contrast, she prefers a worldview that is more integrated and open, something that she is prepared to call 'spirituality.' However, she does not see spirituality as a separate thing, independent of, say, the environment, rather she points to the Tla-o-qui-aht word 'Hishuk-ish-tsawalk' meaning 'everything affects everything else.' This approach is exemplified by the way in which she described the potlatch as a ceremony that encompasses governance, spirituality, feasting and economy. Tsimka comments that although she aligns more with Tla-o-qui-aht teachings, she does not want a return to all its practices, beliefs and ideas. She is adamant, however, about the need for a return to greater reverence for nature. Not content with simply accepting past traditional practices, Tsimka negotiates what fits in her 'respect for all living things.' One way in which I understand Tsimka articulating her indigeneity is through how she draws contrasts largely based on values and she does this on a range of scales from personal, family, to a collective 'our' vis a vis western capitalism.

Different terms like First Nations, Native and Indigenous are employed by Tsimka who speaks to the adaptive and sometimes limited nature of language in this regard. The term First Nations legally excludes Inuit and Metis people; Tsimka remarked that native is perhaps too vague, as she said, everyone is native to somewhere. The term Indigenous replaced Aboriginal, which she says came more from Indigenous people than government but she is worried that the term could flatten important differences between people, communities and nations. The point about the adaptability of language is reinforced when Tsimka, along with her uncle and father, create new words in Nuu-chah-nulth that reflect new spaces and uses; the example

she gave, was to create a Nuu-chah-nulth word for 'Industrial sites', pointedly created with the words 'made from blasting.' Tsimka's effort to learn the Nuu-chah-nulth language in which she introduces herself to tourists and uses the tours to teach the guides-in-training, could work as a reminder to tourists of the colonial policies that disconnected people from their previously spoken languages. Nuu-chah-nulth, like many Indigenous languages, is in the process of being revitalised. Speaking Nuu-chah-nulth could also serve to signal to tourists the unique knowledge of the guides and the shared connection to other Nuu-chah-nulth speaking peoples.

Chapter 6: K'odi Nelson

Image 26: Portrait of K'odi Nelson

My name is K'odi Nelson I am the lead cultural guide for *Sea Wolf Adventures* and the Executive Director of the *Nawalakw Healing Society and Lodge*. I come from the Musgạ'makw Dzawadạ'enux̱w (Four Tribes of Kingcome Inlet) and from the 'Mamạlilik̲ạla (Village Island) Nation. I am also a teacher, dancer and song keeper.

The Kwakwaka'wakw First Nation means 'The people who speak Kwak'wala.' Today members of the Kwakwaka'wakw belong to one or more of nine different nations. Their land is found on the coastal areas of north-east Vancouver Island and mainland British Columbia. Many members have moved to communities such as Alert Bay, Campbell River and Port Hardy. [190]

Image 27. Approximate illustration of Yalis (Alert Bay) home to some Kwakwaka'wakw speaking peoples.

[190] https://umistapotlatch.ca/notre_peuple-our_people-eng.php (accessed March 2021).

Introduction

Image 28. Sign on waterfront at Alert bay 'Home of the Killer whale.'

I first met K'odi in July 2017, in Yalis (Alert Bay) 'Home of the Killer Whale' which is on Cormorant Island, a small island north-east of Vancouver Island. The village of Alert Bay has a population of around 500 people, with over half the resident's members of the Namgis First Nation of the Kwakwaka'wakw.[191] I knew of Alert Bay as it is home to the UNESCO accredited *U'mista Cultural Centre* which I was keen to visit.[192] I learnt of *Sea Wolf Adventures* through the *Indigenous Tourism British Columbia* website. They were offering a 'cultural experience', which was, at that time, advertised as follows:

> Cultural Tours and Experiences with Sea Wolf Adventures' offer opportunities to learn about the traditions and history of Kwakwaka'wakw people. Your local guide will share his deep-rooted knowledge and historical insight as you experience the past through songs, stories and artefacts. Come and have a deeper experience!

[191] See Kwakwaka'wakw Council: https://www.kwakiutl.bc.ca/our-culture (accessed August 2020).
[192] U'mista Cultural Centre: https://www.umista.ca/ (accessed August 2020).

K'odi Nelson was our guide for that day, and I did another tour with him when I returned a year later. In this chapter, I will recount my experience of the first tour in 2017, with some additional comments regarding the later trip in 2018. I will then present details of the interview which took place in September 2018. What stands out to me in this chapter is how K'odi is using the economic and political gains made possible through tourism to achieve community goals; assert his claim on the land, instil pride in his community, and to educate tourists.

Tour

I walked down to the 'Government Dock' early in the morning. Two other guests were waiting, both Americans in their sixties, from Washington State. K'odi soon arrived by boat, accompanied by his young son and a friend. He introduced himself first in Kwak'wala and then in English, saying he was from Kingcome Inlet.[193] He has only recently learnt to speak Kwak'wala.[194] We set off in the boat in search of whales. Enroute K'odi told us how he had grown up on the Island with his mother, but because the school on the Island only goes up to seventh grade, he had to travel to Port McNeil on Vancouver Island to continue his education. The school soon recognized his talents as a football player and had convinced his mother to send him to boarding school in Victoria so the scouts could notice him.[195] To pursue his career in football, he moved to the UK after High School, but he only lasted a few months. He described it as too hard and lonely. He had cried each night longing for home, much like he remarked, his dad must have felt when he was at residential school.

After a few minutes we paused as K'odi pointed out the Namgis century-old burial ground, which has, amongst the stone graves, some large Memorial Totem Poles, to commemorate deceased members of the Kwakwaka'wakw, typically the Chiefs. We were asked not to take pictures as a sign of respect and told that no tourists are allowed on the site, as it is a sacred space reserved for the community and family members. Some of the poles were lying on the ground. When a pole falls, some see it as a sign that it has done its work, K'odi said; that the

[193] For more information on the Kingcome inlet see: https://www.kingcome.ca/region (accessed August 2020).
[194] To learn more about the Kwak'wala language: https://www.firstvoices.com/sections/Kwakwala (accessed August 2020).
[195] Victoria is the capital city of British Columbia, located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island.

ancestors' spirit has left. Other people might try to restore or have new poles created**.** I often saw signs like these at burial grounds, marking respect for sacred sites, and denoting community control of tourism.

As we searched for signs of whales, we saw eagles, dolphins, and porpoises, and it wasn't long before K'odi spotted the elusive whale blow. We stopped the boat, and watched the water trying to anticipate where the whales would reappear. This area is a well-known whale watching hotspot and we were told that whales play an important role in Kwakwaka'wakw culture. The Kwak'wala word for killer whale is *Maxinuxw*, which can be translated as 'side by side tribe' as a reference to how they travel – together and coordinated. For this same reason they are sometimes called Sea Wolves, hence the name of the company. K'odi said that 'whales are considered life givers, you can say prayers to the whales and they can grant you health and long life.' Many Kwakwaka'wakw dances include representations of killer whales with a person wearing an ornate wooden mask and mimicking its movements. K'odi then shared a story about how, several years back, when he and his son were out on the water, he began to sing a traditional song. As he did the whales moved closer and closer to the boat, upon which his son got scared and started screaming, begging his dad to stop singing. His son smiled as his Dad recounted this story. Throughout the trip, K'odi made efforts to teach his son – who looked approximately ten years old – how to use the boat and be a guide. He explained how important it was to him that his son feels that he has a future here, adding that it is hard to find people to do this job, that although he could find people willing to drive the boat, those same people were often unwilling to be a guide or vice versa.

We stayed out on the water for a couple of hours and K'odi communicated with other tour companies who were sharing locations for viewing wildlife. As we explored the area, we were told a range of stories and facts about different animals. For example, sea lions' whiskers were typically used for the masks made for ceremonies and are believed to imbue the mask with powers. K'odi pointed to old village settlements and shared some of the different Kwakwaka'wakw origin stories. I would not do these stories justice if I tried to repeat any from memory. Although there are lots of different origin stories from the many different Kwakwaka'wakw nations, all of them show that the Kwakwaka'wakw were created right here. That is why, K'odi said, they fight so hard for their land, water and lives. He added that evidence for this claim can be found in oral histories, petroglyphs, and in the many different developed languages, which take centuries to form. [196]

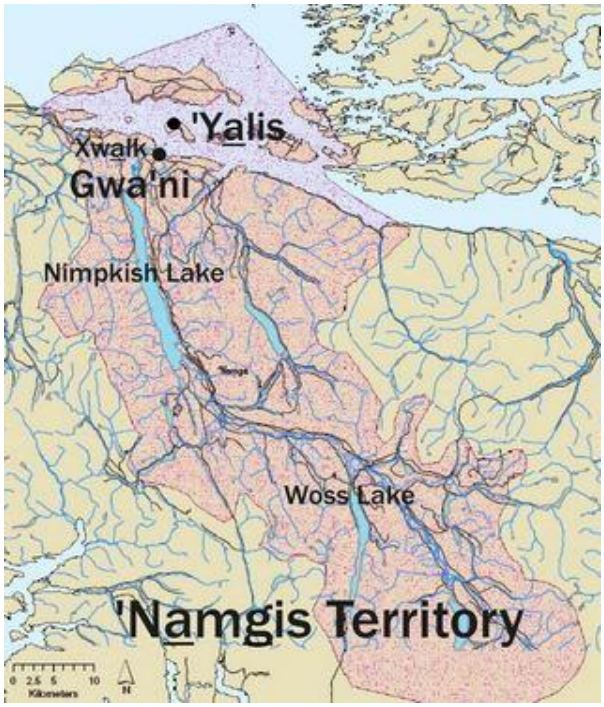


Image 29. Map of Nimpkish River that K'odi showed us on the tour.

K'odi showed us a map of the Namgis territory and pointed to the Nimpkish river (Gwa'ni). explaining that this is the largest watershed in Vancouver Island. It is said to have been placed there by a Creator to support the many kinds of salmon, and to supply enough food to feed humans whilst they remain on earth. Some Kwakwaka'wakw Nations are said to be descended from salmon. This led K'odi to speak with passion and concern about the depleting salmon stocks as a result of the illegal fish farms owned by the Norwegian company *Marine Harvest*.[197] These origin stories illustrate an

[196] Petroglyphs is a term for images created by carving into rock.
[197] For more information on the disputes regarding Fish farms see: https://ejatlas.org/print/swanson-occupation-canada (accessed August 2020).

ongoing connection to the place, reinforce a unique relationship with nature and help to establish motivation to defend and fight for all that this encompasses.

Image 30. Totem Poles and U'mista Centre.

After a couple of hours on the water we travelled back to Alert Bay and walked to the U'mista Cultural Centre, a beautiful building right on the shore. Before we entered K'odi directed us to the field right behind, there we stood by a plaque that commemorates St Michael's Residential School.[198] The school was built in 1929 and was one of the last residential schools

[198] St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay was operational from 1929 – 1975. It was the largest Anglican run residential school in Canada. For more Information see: Dyson & Rubenstein (2020).

to close in British Columbia in the 1970s.[199] In 1974 the building was turned over to the Namgis First Nations and in 2015 it was demolished.[200] In May of that same year the Namgis members held a ceremony and blessed the land.[201] K'odi told us that his father had attended this school and that one Christmas, his father, a young boy at the time, was eagerly awaiting his father to pick him up and take him home for the holidays. He had packed his bag ready to go, but was told that his father never came. Over the years that boy became very angry and resentful towards his father. When he was much older, he confronted his father, who, in shock, responded that he had in fact come to collect him, but had informed him that his son had been transferred to another school and they couldn't tell him where. This was the sort of abuse that happened in these schools, K'odi said. As a result, his dad had grown up without a dad, and then subsequently, so had K'odi. His dad was now managing to turn things around and thanks to that he and K'odi now had a better relationship. Many people who have been through that system are not able to do that, K'odi said.

[199] I recall a poster from the U'mista cultural centre that compared the odds of children dying in Indian residential schools = 1 in 25, to the odds of Canadians dying who served in World War II = 1 in 26.

[200] Namgis First Nation: https://www.namgis.bc.ca/ (accessed August 2020).

[201] When I was in Alert Bay, I met Barbara Cranmer. She was a filmmaker who had made a film about the demolition and the healing ceremony that occurred on the day. She kindly left work to go to her home to get me a copy of her film called 'our stories, our voices'. https://www.umista.ca/products/our-voices-our-stories-by-barb-cranmer (accessed August 2020).

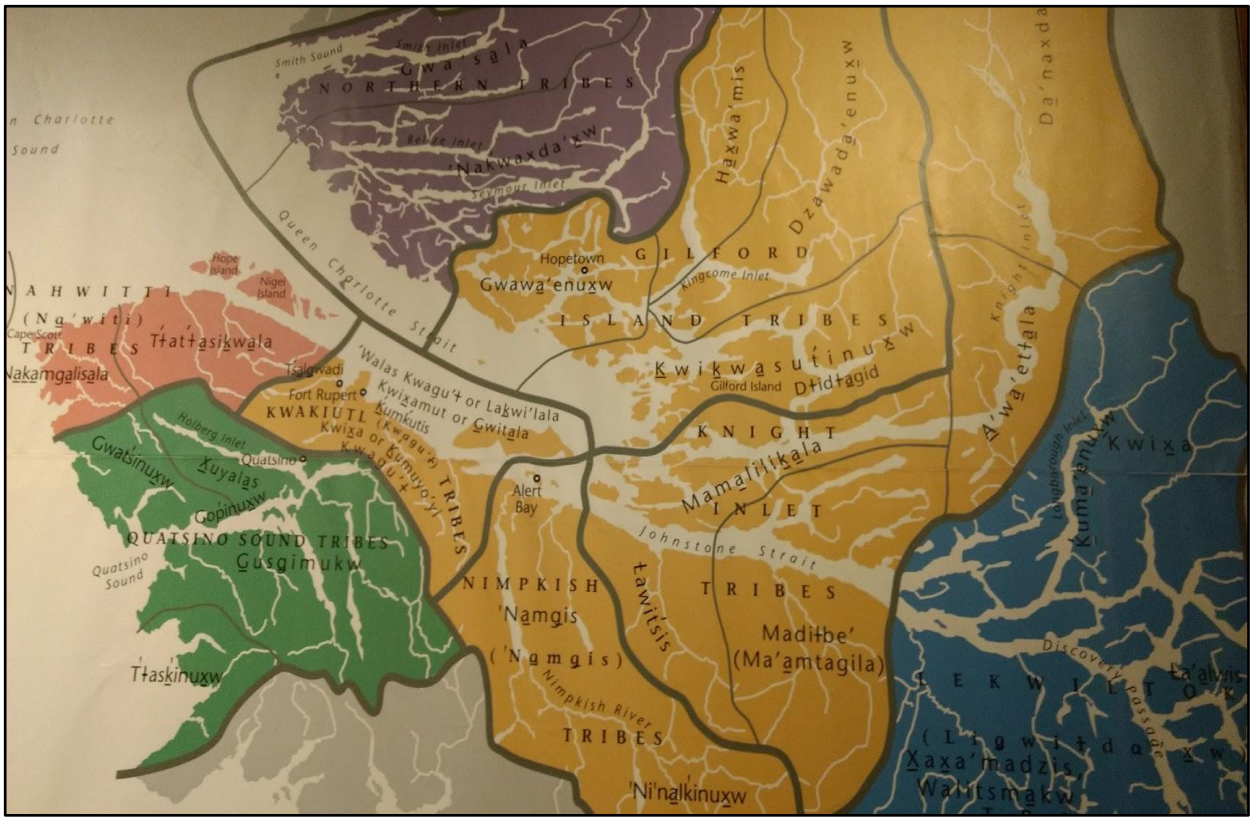


Image 31: Map of Kwakwaka'wakw territory.

As we entered the U'mista Cultural Centre, K'odi introduced the different staff members; some of which were family, some friends, from young teenagers to seniors. It was clear that this Centre was thriving as a community space. We then walked over to a large colourful map on the wall, which highlighted the nearby Indigenous territories. Near to the map was a sign that began with the following statement:

The Kwakwaka'wakw

(The Kwak'wala speaking tribes)

Ever since the white people came to our lands we have been known as Kwawkewlths by Indian affairs or as Kwakiutl by anthropologists. In fact we are Kwakwaka'wakw, people who speak the same language and have different names for our separate groups.

I read this comment as a clear declaration of intent that this Centre would attempt to take control of narratives and correct previous misunderstandings of the Kwakwaka'wakw. K'odi informed us that the logo of the U'mista Cultural Centre depicts the sun in human form. To

the Kwakwaka'wakw this is not a fireball in the sky, but a little man who each morning, wakes up, puts on his abalone earrings and walks across the sky. The earrings are the things that shine the light. K'odi told us more stories about the history of the area. One was about when the English came and were shocked to see that the people here had guns, not knowing that they had been trading down the river with the Spanish. The English had recorded that 'we were the dirtiest and smelliest people', K'odi laughed, and said that back then they would cover their warriors in dirt to prepare them for war.[202] We then independently walked around the Centre before meeting K'odi in the Mask exhibit. I learned from the large posters around the Centre, that *U'mista* means the return of our treasures and in 'earlier times' this referred to the people who were taken captive and then came home. For the Centre today, it refers to the treasures returning home from distant museums.[203]

Image 32: The U'mista Cultural Centre sign.

One of the main themes and exhibits of the *centre* is the potlatch. The potlatch means 'to give' in Chinook trade jargon.[204] Potlatches are about giving away wealth, celebrating with songs and dances, and marking particular occasions like birth, naming, marriage and death. The more the host would give away the higher a status they would receive. The potlatch was banned in Canada between 1885 and 1951. An 'illegal' potlatch was held in Kwakwaka'wakw

[202] This story made us laugh but it is a fundamental lesson about how misunderstandings can occur with powerful consequences.
[203] For more information on the repatriation efforts by the U'mista centre: https://www.umista.ca/pages/collection-history (accessed August 2020).
[204] For more information on Chinook Trade language see: http://bcmetis.com/2014/03/chinook-jargon-a-metis-trade-language-of-the-pacific-northwest/ (accessed August 2020).

territory in 1921. Much of the sacred regalia used in that potlatch was confiscated, with many items ending up in museums around the world. The Kwakwaka'wakw have fought for many decades for the return of that regalia; much of it has been returned, and is now housed, partly in the U'mista Centre, and partly in the Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre on Quadra Island. [205]

Lining one wall of the museum were portraits of different people belonging to different Kwakwaka'wakw Nations, illustrating the variety of cultures, languages and beliefs.[206] Many of the accounts and stories connected to the portraits were referenced to the works of George Hunt and Franz Boas, a few also referenced the British Library, the Royal British Columbia Museum and some from contemporary local oral history sources.[207] Opposite these pictures in a glass case was an exhibit-in-progress called 'Edward Curtis meets the Kwakwaka'wakw.' In 1914, Edward Curtis produced a silent film entitled 'In the Land of the Head Hunters'.[208] This was the first feature length film to star 'Native North Americans.' It featured 'non-professional actors from Kwakwaka'wakw communities.' Having heard about this film, I was surprised to see it represented here in the U'mista Cultural Centre. Until I read on and saw that the film had been reconceptualised from the documentary it had once been presented as, to a moment of cultural encounter between Curtis and the Kwakwaka'wakw actors who were performing Curtis' scripted version of their own past for a camera. The exhibit discussed aspects of the film that were considered reliable like art works and housing infrastructure, but pointed out that many of the sensational elements were exaggerated and had been long abandoned – the head hunting for example. Although the portrayal of Kwakwaka'wakw rituals was intended to hasten the assimilation of First Nations, the film, it is argued, helped to do the opposite, to maintain aspects of their visual culture. This encounter has been reframed from a capturing of a 'vanishing race' to now serving as evidence for Kwakwaka'wakw cultural survival and transformation under shifting historical conditions, reimagining the terms of colonial repression, and as an example intercultural encounter.

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[205] Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre see: https://www.museumatcapemudge.com/ (accessed August 2020).
[206] For more information on the different Kwakwaka'wakw 'tribes': https://www.umista.ca/pages/kwakwakawakw-tribes (accessed August 2020).
[207] George Hunt see : http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hunt_george_16E.html (accessed August 2020). Franz Boas see: https://www.thoughtco.com/franz-boas-4582034 (accessed August 2020.)
[208] Edward Curtis (1914) 'In the land of Head-hunters.'

We met back up with K'odi in the mask exhibit, which is in a separate section, marked by glass and some steps. We were asked not to take any photos, and it was apparent that we should treat the space with respect and reverence. There were many masks on display, each accompanied by information about that mask, the dance it would be used in, and who would wear it and with what reason or effect. Many of the masks and the dances were referred to as sacred. K'odi said the potlatch ban was enforced because it involved giving away wealth, which was the opposite of 'the west and so they were frightened.' Comparisons like these work to establish a distinct identity. They had bought the potlatch back and now celebrate important events that way, and they were in the process of relearning many old dances. A potlatch helps you to grieve; K'odi said that this is a way to say an official goodbye and you burn things that the departed will need on their journey, like food and clothes. Whenever food falls from the table or a cupboard it's considered to be a sign that they need to hold one of these ceremonies. K'odi added that they remove the shoes of the dead, so they won't be heard when the spirits visit the houses. Many of the write-ups next to the masks say that they are worn in ceremonies by men. I asked if that was always the case. He told me that men tend to be the ones wearing masks in ceremonies, but it's not a hierarchical thing, just that there are different roles to play, especially in dances and ceremonies. The Kwakwaka'wakw have a matrilineal system of governance, where wealth gets passed down the female line, the wealth being knowledge not money. The knowledge refers to the places where one can pick berries, weaving skills, as well as prayers, songs and dances. This system helps to ensure that it is passed down to the children. Many of the masks are based on animals or supernatural figures. I recognise a few, like Tsunikwa – the wild women of the woods. Many were made from or included cedar wood. The tour came to an end. K'odi was a generous host, making sure we were comfortable and shared a lot of information with us.

My second trip with K'odi and *Sea Wolf Adventures* was in 2018. For this trip we went bear watching; travelling longer distances with a bigger group and in a new boat with the Sea Wolf logo on. It was clear that business was rapidly increasing in popularity. The driver of the power boat was a woman, which for that type of boat, I had not seen before in my many tours in the region.

Image 33: Brown Bear and cubs. Taken by Luca Patrignani.

K'odi's focus was on the significance of bears. His tone was notably more political. He spoke at length and with passion about the destruction caused by the Norwegian fish farms, that the diseases from these badly kept farms were killing the wild salmon, which would affect the number of whales that might visit the region. This obviously has a big impact on the environment and may also negatively affect his tourism business. Not as part of the tour this time, I went back to U'mista centre where many of the exhibitions were the same, but I noticed two new ones. One was about Kwakwaka'wakw activism, noting important figures like Chief Dan George, Frank Calder, Chief Simon Baker, Chief Joe Capilano and Chief Andy Paull – to name just a few.[209] The other was a large colourful timeline of Indigenous Rights in Canada. The first plaque for this exhibit read as follows:

> Canada is often upheld as a nation that champions multiculturalism and human rights, but the experience of many Indigenous people belie those values. The

[209] Dr Frank Calder: https://www.nisgaanation.ca/news/honouring-our-past-dr-frank-calder (accessed August 2020), Chief Simon Baker: https://www.nativeonline.com/khot-la-cha.htm (accessed August 2020), Chief Joe Capilano: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/su_a_pu_luck_13E.html (accessed August 2020), Chief Andy Paull: https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/andrew-paull (accessed August 2020) .

> timeline highlights some of the significant events over the past 150 years. While the timeline covers the years from 1867 – 2017 this history really began with the first contact between Europeans and Indigenous people in Canada. The royal proclamation and the Indian Residential school system were important developments that laid the foundation for Indigenous relations with colonial authorities prior to 1867. [210]

Interview

K'odi began by telling me about a meeting later that day concerning land tenure and permits, which he needed for his Healing Centre.[211] He found it irksome that 'I, Me, have to go to BC parks to ask permission to build on my land.' [212] Without it, he will not be able to get-the-go-ahead from funders, which he needs to build his Healing Centre, and that is his main mission. Working with *Sea Wolf Adventures* had made him see the potential for multiple-day trips with tourists, rather than just the one-day trips they currently offer. From this he had developed his vision for a healing centre which will serve tourists in peak season and the community for the rest of the year.[213] This is what he is currently focusing all of his attention on, looking at ways to fundraise and getting the right permissions, for land, water etc., so he can build the lodge 'as an economic driver for the community.'

> The idea that I have is to have it as a space for cultural language and revitalisation, as well as a health and wellness centre – during the months when it's not peak tourist season. So off-season community members will be there, and tourists will sustain it in the peak season.

I asked K'odi about his work with *Sea Wolf Adventures.* He has been working for the company since its beginning, five summers ago. His cousin Mike Willie started the business. At that time, no one was getting paid. K'odi was just helping him out, but now they have a brand-new boat,

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[210] 1867 was when the Dominion of Canada was created. For more information see https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/british-columbia-and-confederation (accessed August 2020).
[211] The Interview took place on 27th November 2018.
[212] For more information about Land Tenure see: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/transportation-infrastructure/engineering-standards-guidelines/environmental-management/reference-documents/environmental-regulatory-compliance/crown-land-tenure (accessed September 2020).
[213] Peak tourist season is June – August.

and everyone is getting paid and they were fully booked the previous summer.[214] He reflected that:

> It has given me a sense of pride in being First Nations, because we have clients that are asking us specific questions about who we are and where we come from. It creates an environment that starts to value that. [...] It's also good that we are out on our territory. We become the eyes and ears of the territory, because lots of people don't have boats anymore, so we need to be those eyes and ears. So if there's fish farms etc., we know and tell the communities.

K'odi spoke at length about the benefits of tourism, remarking that 'obviously the economics of tourism is important in that it's creating jobs for our people', adding if he, or other members of his community will not build it, then someone else will, and he feels that they are the ones that need to benefit from their traditional land. Having heard about the fish farms on both the cultural and grizzly bear tours, I asked K'odi for an update. He said:

> Well court cases are going on, and a few of our tribes are having government to government talks with them at the moment, but it remains to be seen if these are stalling tactics or not. [...] There are billions of dollars involved so...that's another thing, we bring our fighting spirit to environmental issues and I think people will gravitate towards us on these issues as First Nations peoples fighting. We feel it's our obligation. [...] it's what ecotourism does. It helps get our stories heard.[215]

K'odi shifts his language to speak more generally about the role of First Nations people as environmental stewards and his appreciation of the role ecotourism can play.

I asked him what he thinks draws people to *Sea Wolf Adventures* and he replied: 'we feel that we have something very unique and it just seems to be growing.' In expanding on reasons for that growth he added:

> I think people are genuinely wanting to right the wrongs of the past. In our country, and maybe all across the world, it seems like more and more people are wanting to learn about history when they go on vacation. They don't just want the whales and bears. They want to know what these people do, who they are, etc. and I think that's only going to grow. Especially people living in the huge cities in the world, maybe it's a sense of belonging or wanting to be one with nature. We bring that! We have lived with nature for thousands of years.

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[214] Mike Willie, owner of Sea Wolf Adventures. https://seawolfadventures.ca/about/ (accessed September 2020).

[215] Theodossopoulos (2019) writes about Indigenous tourism as a means 'to reach out to the world in search of new allies and supportive connections.'

K'odi and I spoke about the remote beauty, peace and serenity of Alert Bay:

> Well, we First Nations People of this territory originated in these lands. I think that's why we fight and protect it the way that we do. Because we are at one with the land and everything about us has a connection to the land, food and resources have sustained us for thousands of years. They go hand-in-hand, people and the land, and our origin stories. The lodge is at a site because logging operations were happening there and I couldn't help but think, if I had a lodge there, I probably could have stopped that logging and that's the site of one of our origin stories. When it comes to land and resources, people have to understand that once we screw that up as human beings we are doomed... and so when you come on one of our tours it looks pristine and beautiful and intact, but we know from living here that there is less fish and damage is being done every day. We are just a small remote village with a small voice, so how do we gain support, we get our message out? We bring people, like yourself here, and we educate them, people from all walks of life. That's another benefit of eco-tourism.

Eco-tourism works as another way to distinguish some businesses from others, signalling the care taken for the environment. K'odi spoke at length about the strong connection that he felt he has with nature, explaining that 'everything has its own spirit', which should be treated with respect and reverence:

> The salmon have a spirit and we have a ceremony for the salmon when the first ones are caught in the summer, we release it back into the river and ask for forgiveness for taking his friends. We have prayers for cedar trees before we use its bark, we don't have a GOD but a great spirit, or more like, everything has its own spirit. [...] We never think we are greater than anyone else, we are all equal in life.

Noting this reference and distinction between God and spirits I ask K'odi if he considers himself religious? He replied:

> I wouldn't say the word religion, for me personally, that's just the history we've had with different religions. I can feel my back tighten and people act weird when religions are talked about. With colonialism and the Church and the government treating us the way they did.

I asked K'odi how he chooses to share what he does with tourists? He responded that he doesn't have set criteria, and that it's mostly determined by the questions he gets on the day. Although he said there are common themes he tries to get across. He said, 'mostly we want to tell some of our history, we want to talk about environmental stuff.' In terms of what he doesn't share he is quite resolute that he doesn't share any songs or dances. For him, he feels that they have so much to share that they don't need to share everything, and some stuff they

can keep for the community. He describes tourism as 'dancing with the devil' and the need to be careful with it.

> Because our cultural stuff is still very much intact, and if we start doing stuff just for money – well money makes people weird right? But I believe we have so much to offer that we don't have to touch certain sacred stuff. Everyday when tourists get off the boat they don't realise that we have not sung a song or shared a dance. We don't need to do that sort of stuff, tourists are happy.

I asked whether this is a *Sea Wolf Adventures policy* or a personal one, or perhaps one shared by the community. He said that when his healing centre opens and he will have tourists for longer he will have to get more creative with the activities on offer, but he is certain he still won't touch singing and dancing. I wondered if this was partly a response to directives given by ITBC, who recommend that hosts of companies they market share a song or a dance. I think boundaries like these work to reinforce the sacredness of that which is not shared with tourists. After K'odi's tour I went to a performance by the dancing group of which K'odi is a part of. I wondered if the sharing is more about the context in which they are shared, rather than not sharing it all. The performance took place in a longhouse, there were protocols that were followed and explanations given.

K'odi mentioned that his dad wanted him to become a teacher 'to help my people revive our culture', and he noted:

> It's difficult for kids to wrap their heads around the relocation of our people. The social spin offs that are so negative. I truly believe that we need to instil pride back into our people and I'm convinced that they will blossom. We are very connected to our environment, and it's mostly about educating people so they respect the land. The tides are slowly starting to change, it's medicine for our elders to see the young full of pride.

The Healing Center has now been completed. It is called Nawalakw which means supernatural in Kwak'wala. The mission given on the website is: 'To assert kwakwaka'wakw title for our communities through the creation and sustainable operation of education and wellness facilities in our territory.' It also states that:

> The Musgamagw have origin stories that tie us to the territory, which we have occupied for millennia. In recent centuries, since contact, our people have endured successive waves of traumatic disruptions that have threatened our very existence. However, at this moment in 2019, we stand looking both to our past and our future. Nawalakw Society will be a catalyst with far reaching implications for the health of our communities and our territory.

Reflections

What follows are some reflections related to my research questions: What did K'odi say about why he was involved in Indigenous Tourism? How was indigeneity and spirituality articulated in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation? What comes across most strongly is K'odi's sense of pride in what tourism can achieve for his community and how it offers them a way of staying on their small and remote island. Tourism enables them to 'have eyes and ears on the land', and to engage visitors on relevant political issues, like the destruction caused by the fish farms. He hopes that the money generated from tourism can be used to fund community programmes like the Nawalakw healing lodge.

K'odi's sense of pride in how his community has taken to tourism, as an industry is a useful counterpoint to the view that Indigenous people have been excluded, displaced and/or considered to be outside of modern capitalist economies and politics.[216] Historian John Lutz in his book *Makuk* (2018) relates to a 'widespread misconception that, after the arrival of Europeans in British Columbia, Aboriginal people remained outside the capitalist economy.' Lutz argues that Indigenous people were involved in the changing economy of paid work, partly as a means of displacing and transforming their own economies, and partly as a means of what he calls 'peaceable subordination' in the establishment of Canada.[217] Linda Calla, who has worked for *Indigenous Tourism British Columbia* for many years, notes how this industry has grown in significance as other industries like fishing, mining and logging that used to be key employers of Indigenous people, especially in remote areas, have declined.[218] Theodossopoulos (2019) notes that Indigenous Tourism 'also consolidates an awareness of Indigenous tourism as an asset for both the community and the national government. The community can then renegotiate land rights etc. from a position that reflects their contribution to the national economy. [219] As Alexis Bunten (2010) argued, Indigenous tourism generates jobs and contributes to the local economy without relying on natural resource

[216] See John Lutz *Makuk (2008:* 6–7*)* fishing, hunting, gathering, building and even farming that aboriginal people, 'did was not labour, not in a way that met the definition of classical economics. Labour is at the core of how Europeans and later North Americans valued themselves.

[217] By 'Peaceable subordination', he refers to the colonial strategies used to dominate occupied lands while publicly deploring the violence of conquest.

[218] Interview with Linda Calla took place on 14 July 2018 in North Vancouver.

[219] Theodosspolous' work is based on the Embera community in Panama.

extraction. Through tourism Indigenous workers are able to demonstrate their care and connection to the environment – something which tourists pay to learn about.

A dominant articulation of indigeneity for K'odi is with the land and nature. The origin stories establish this connection and are supported by various claims throughout the tour. Examples include his story of battling between the dream of being a footballer and the sickness he felt from being apart from the land. His ability to communicate with the whales through music, the central role animal depictions play in the important potlatch ceremony, and how parts of animals are used to imbue masks with particular powers. This connection to the land is part of what motivates K'odi to work in tourism, so he can have 'eyes and ears' on the land and report back to the community and tourists about happenings on the land that have not been agreed upon by the Kwakwaka'wakw. As he stated, Tourism 'helps get our stories heard.' Having an economically prosperous presence on the land, that tourism enables, is something K'odi is hopeful might deter other industries from moving in and causing destruction. A particular connection with nature and the environment is illustrated by the tours to see whales and bears, and the references to the spirits associated with each. This is also celebrated at the U'mista Cultural Centre, it comes through in K'odi's disparaging remarks about the damage done by both logging companies and foreign owned fish farms. It is a selling point for K'odi that he feels that tourists do not just want to know about the animals and the land; they want to know about our connection to them. In outlining the challenges the Inuvialuit face as they embrace tourism, Professor Claudia Notzke (1998:67) suggests a two-fold response:

> To protect the integrity of their land based economy and a way of life from trespass and interference of the tourism industry; and to engage in tourism activities in a way which enables the industry to fit into, nurture, and benefit community mixed economies to an optimum degree.

K'odi uses the term 'dancing with the devil' to describe the precarious balancing act of embracing the tourism industry while upholding community values and protocols. [220]

[220] Professor of Native American studies Duane Champagne (2007) writes: native communities are greatly concerned about economic issues, but they do not wish to sacrifice culture, preferred institutional relations, and their internal social relations in favour of economic development.

The role of the U'mista Cultural Centre, which features strongly in K'odi's tour, well illustrates points made by James Clifford (1997:121) about the distinction he sees between cultural centres and museums. For K'odi this centre offers a site that reframes and challenges past accounts of the Kwakwaka'wakw and their relationship with the Canadian state. This fits Clifford's view that such centres should be 'to some degree oppositional with exhibits reflecting excluded experiences of colonial past and current struggles.' He suggests that the notion of a unified or linear history is challenged by local community histories. For K'odi and his community there is added significance in the fact that the cultural centre is built next to where the residential school once stood, where visitors may listen to personal accounts of harsh colonial pasts and how these experiences have affected the present. This centre is a vibrant community space housing objects that had once been confiscated and stolen, that is now under the management of the community. The objects are displayed as important cultural objects, not as particular pieces of art, which Clifford notes as a feature of national museums. The first exhibition I saw as I walked in was of the portraits and stories from a range of community members, some of which were origin stories. The only exhibition that presented a linear account of history was the timeline of colonial laws and policies. In his use of the centre in his tours, K'odi is making a firm connection with the community and marking the space as separate from a museum. [221]

Much of the tour was presented as spiritual, but this was not highlighted as something separate, but as a way that K'odi sees and interprets what surrounds him, the land, the nature and the history and origins of the people and place. The demarcations that were drawn included the signs on the graveyard and the refusal to share certain songs and dances with tourists. These boundaries remind tourists that this is a job, and one that the guides have the right to navigate. For me at least, such boundaries made whatever access we were getting appear more significant, like a reminder that you have been given a privilege. K'odi rejected the term religion, which he saw as being tied to the church and to the government, institutions responsible for the colonial policies that had been so harmful.

[221] James Clifford (1997:122) writes: The general characteristics of a majority museum are; 1) the search for the best and most authentic cultural forms 2) the interest in exemplary or representative objects 3) the sense of owning a collections that is a treasure for the city for the national patrimony and for humanity and 4) the tendency to separate fine art from ethnographic culture. This fits my experience of national museums like Royal BC Museum.

Chapter 7: SGaana Gaahlandaay (Alix Goetzinger)

Image 34. Portrait of Alix Goetzinger taken by Patrick Shannon.

The way that Haida's always introduce themselves is from the beginning of time, because we are constantly drawing our lineage back to that point and reaffirming our history that way and our oral histories and language go back that far. So, in Xaayda Kil, I say, SGaana Gaahlandaay haan.uu dii kiiGa ga, wagyen Alix yaatsxaayda kihl gii. Kay Llnagaay uu hll chii'akaatl'lxa. So that's how I start my intro, it gets longer sometimes but I just say, good day my name is (SGaana Gaahlandaay) which means Spirit of the Killer Whale, my english name is Alix and I come from the Kayanath people and our origin story comes from (Kay Llnagaay) which means sea lion village.

The Haida Nation. Haida Gwaii is located 100 kilometres west of the northern coast of British Columbia, Canada and is an isolated group of about 150 islands, large and small. About 5000 people inhabit these islands. Today, Haida people make up half of the 5000 people living on the islands. Haida Gwaii consists of two main islands Graham Island to the north and Moresby Island to the south.[222]

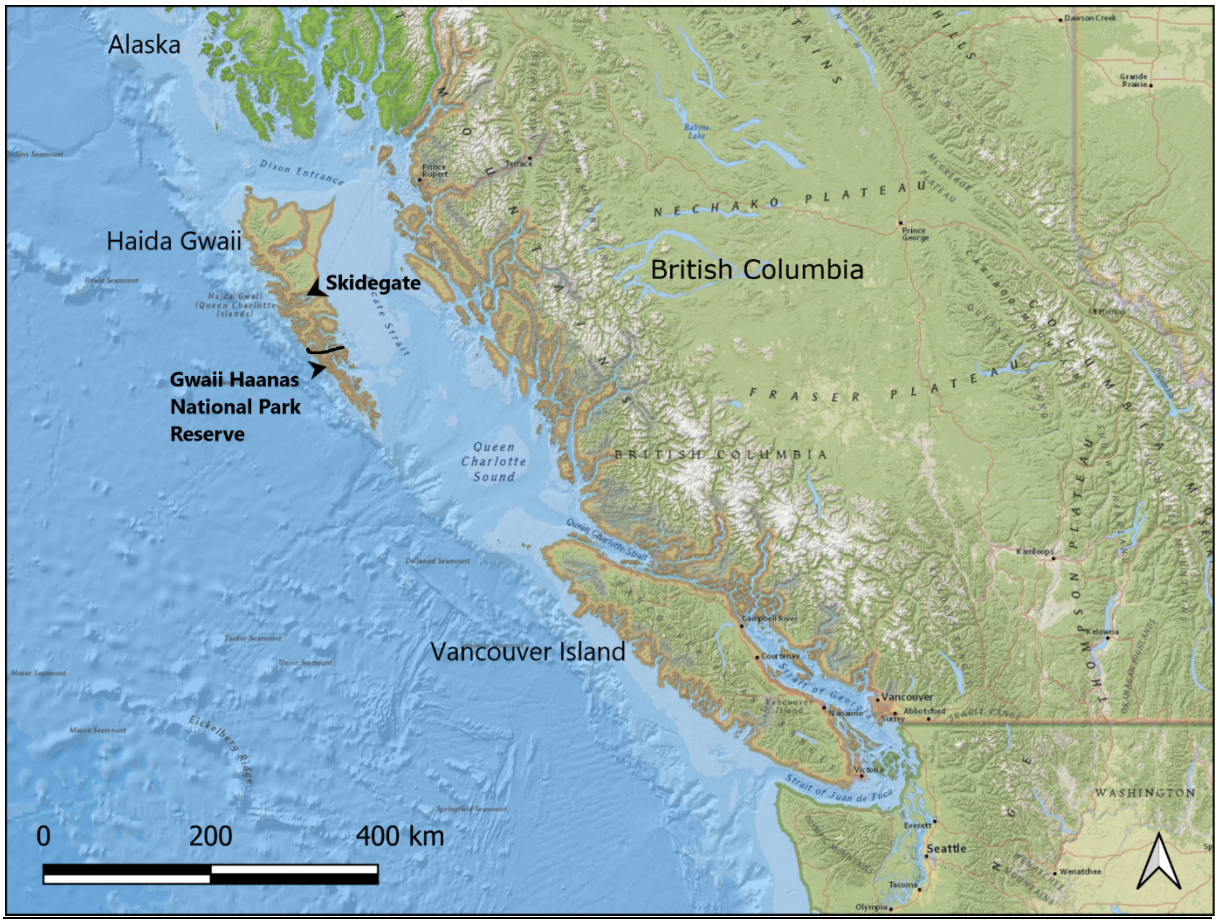

Image 35: Map of Haida Gwaii with Skidegate and Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve highlighted.

[222] More information on Haida people https://www.haidanation.ca/ (accessed March 2021).

Introduction

In August 2018, I travelled with friends to Haida Gwaii. It was a long trip that took three days travelling by car and on *BC ferries*. In research prior to the trip, and with the help of *ITBC,* we learnt about the company, *Haida Style Expeditions*, and saw an advertisement for one of their *'Storytelling Adventures'*:

> No matter where we travel, our day together will be filled with wildlife viewing, sightseeing, history and adventure. In addition to visiting Haida cultural sites, we will get out of the boat midday for a traditional Haida feast on land, for local salmon and stories.

I signed up for a tour that would take us to lk'yah G̲awG̲a (Windy Bay) and to G̲andll K'in Gwaay.yaay (Hotsprings Island). SG̲aana G̲aahlandaay (Alix) was our guide. This chapter starts with the tour and then moves on to an account of an interview with Alix that took place a few days later on the ferry back to the mainland. What stands out to me is how Alix sees tourism as a means to amplify Haida voices, demonstrate sovereignty over the land, and provide space for mutual education. I am interested in how Alix navigates tourist perceptions and expectations and offer some reflections on how I see her articulating her indigeneity and spirituality.

Tour

At 7.30 am we walked down to the harbour dock in the village of Queen Charlotte where we were greeted by six other tourists and our hosts: James, Alix and Bilal.[223] They kitted us up with gumboots and rain jackets and when the whole group arrived, we all introduced ourselves. James is part owner of the company, a member of the Eagle Moiety and served as our skipper for the day**.** Alix introduced herself with her two names, and Bilal told us that he was a youth guide-in-training. There were nine guests in all, mostly from other parts of Canada. We got into a Zodiac boat and set off for the day. It took a couple of hours to get to the first stop Hlk'yah G̲awG̲a (Windy bay). The ocean felt immense and powerful. We moved very fast, and apart from a few conversations, the boat was mostly quiet, with everyone presumably adjusting to the morning and taking in the seascape. After about an hour, we

[223] Queen Charlotte Village: https://www.queencharlotte.ca/ (accessed September 2020).

paused very close to a large group of sea lions barking and clambering over each other; we were told that in *X̲aadas Kíl* sea lions are called *Káyd, Káydaay*.

Image 36: Sea lions enroute to Gwaii Hannas. Taken by Luca Patrignani.

As we watched, we were each handed a memorably delicious cinnamon bun which helped to wake everybody up. James then spoke to us about *Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve*, explaining that this protected park consists of 138 of the approximately 150 islands that make up Haida Gwaii. In the Haida language, Gwaii Haanas means 'Islands of beauty.'[224] Just before we landed at lk'yah G̲awG̲a (Windy bay), James called ahead and asked the 'watchmen' for permission to come ashore.

The watchmen was a traditional governance system that worked to alert the community to the approach of an enemy. As I listened I recalled the Haida pole from Andy Everson's tour, where the watchmen were depicted as three human figures with hats. This image is now the

[224] *Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve*: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas (accessed September 2020).

formal symbol for the regenerated programme. The mandate for the watchmen today is to safeguard *Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve* to welcome and teach visitors about the natural and cultural heritage of the area, and to ensure that the tourists treat the area with respect and leave no trace. The programme provides seasonal employment for Haida people in peak tourist season, between May and October. It restarted in 1985, when it was noticed that some people were visiting the islands, taking items and causing destruction at old village sites, and had little to no awareness of important principles and values seen as necessary to protect the area.

Image 37: Depictions of the watchmen on top of the Legacy Pole

This watchmen program has since grown to become a network of 'coastal guardian watchmen', expanding up and down the west coast of British Columbia and even across the country. The program's vision is that each nation can manage and safeguard the land and waters in their territories according to their own laws, and visions for the future.

On being granted permission to disembark, we found ourselves in thick ancient, old growth rainforest, the ground covered with moss and large western hemlocks, sitka spruce and red cedar trees. Alix formally introduced herself both in English and in Haida and told us the clan and moiety to which she belonged. She said that there were two Haida moieties: Raven and the Eagle, and within these two moieties there are many clans, around 12 from Queen Charlotte and 16 from the north of Haida Gwaii. She offered us a formal welcome and explained that she would be our guide for the day.

Image 38: Old growth forests in Gwaii Haanas National Park. Taken by Luca Patrignani 2018.

Alix informed us that the Haida believe in reincarnation and therefore it is important to look after all living things. She hoped that like her namesake she might return as a killer whale. As we walked through the forest, Alix pointed out trees that had been harvested for hundreds of years. She spoke about the importance of cedar, that this 'tree of life' was used for creating houses, canoes, totem poles, clothes and ceremonial gear. We walked past evidence of old village sites, including large imprints in the moss where a big house would have previously stood. She said archaeologists can now learn a lot of information from the forests and believe that some of the species of trees are around 15,000 years old, and the culturally modified trees are great examples of how well the Haida have managed their resources. Whenever Alix was asked a question that she did not know the answer to, she would reply openly, 'I don't have stories about that. I will ask some elders and see who remembers.' We were told a lot about the different trees, about how their root systems help to sustain the forest and send nutrients to other trees and plants in need. She explained this as a great example of the Haida concept of 'Gina waadluxan gud kwaagid', which translates as 'everything depends on everything else.'

Alix pointed to one particular tree that was part of the 1985 protests against the loggers. The loggers had intended to pursue a five-year plan to log much of the southern archipelago of Haida Gwaii.[225] This plan sparked protests and blockades by both Haida and non-Haidas living in Haida Gwaii; and resulted in many arrests. A lot of media attention followed, with the help of individuals like author David Suzaki, whose show, *The Nature of Things*, stirred a nationwide media campaign. The Loo Taas canoe, carved by Haida artist and Carver Bill Reid of the Kaadaas gahh Kiiguwaay clan, was paddled the 600 miles from Vancouver to Skidegate.[226] Alix spoke with passion and pride as she described this important historical event, telling us that her mother and aunt were there on the front lines, risking their jobs and lives to protect this land.

We soon arrived at a beach where we relaxed and chatted with the other tourists, while the three guides and the watchmen made us a delicious lunch of; salmon, venison, potatoes and salads. One of the topics we discussed over lunch was Truth and Reconciliation. Alix remarked that although she is of course happy that this work is occurring, one concern she has is that the words could imply that reconciliation has been achieved rather than it being a long-term ongoing process. After lunch, we walked over to the Legacy pole.

[225] For information about the Athlii Gwaii protests in 1985 see: https://watershedsentinel.ca/articles/celebrating-athlii-gwaii-first-nations-successful-blockade-against-logging-in-bc/ (accessed September 2020).

[226] David Suzaki is a Canadian Academic, environmental activist and director of the David Suzaki foundation see: https://davidsuzuki.org/ (accessed September 2020) For more Information on the Loo Taas canoe see:https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/iljuwas-bill-reid/key-works/loo-taas (accessed September 2020).

Image 39: Alix Goetzinger standing in front of the Gwaii Hannas legacy pole in Hlk'yah ǤawǤa (Windy Bay) on Lyell Island.

The 42-foot Legacy Pole was raised in 2013 in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of an agreement made between the Canadian Government and the Haida Nation regarding the co-management of the region, which had been designated as a heritage site and a national

park reserve.[227] Alix explained the totem in great detail. At the top of the pole is an eagle, which represents the sky and one of the Haida moieties. Next, there is the symbol of the watchmen, to honour those protecting Gwaii Haanas, past and present. Followed by the dog, this represents recent archaeological findings that indicate human presence on Haida Gwaii as early as 14,000 years ago. Inside the dog is a marten, who represents the sound of an earthquake, and inside the marten is a visitor who represents the guests who come and experience Gwaii Haanas.[228] In the middle of the pole is a "supernatural creature" called a 'wasco', who was described to us as half seawolf/half killer whale. Below this is the image of a sacred supernatural being who holds up Haida Gwaii, and whenever he moves the island shakes. Next comes the raven, to represent the other moiety to create balance with the eagle at the top, then five 'good people' standing together, which honours the line at Athlii Gwaii and all the others who worked together in the protests to protect Gwaii Haanas.[229] At the base of the pole is the image of a grizzly bear which ties ancient stories with recent archaeological findings that grizzly bears once existed on Haida Gwaii. Within the bear is a Sculpin (a fish) which denotes the extreme nature of the sea. Alix told us that the fish at the bottom and the eagle at the top illustrate that the park is protected from the seafloor to the mountain tops and for 50 nautical miles around the park.

This legacy pole is the first totem pole to be raised in Gwaii Haanas in 130 years.[230] There was a big ceremony. The elders blessed it with water and cedar, and the 'wild man' who is half human, half supernatural, did a dance to infuse the pole with life. *Haida Style Expeditions* took trips back and forth from Queen Charlotte village to bring people here to witness this historical event. Alix missed it as the elders were prioritised and the boat could not return again owing to rough weather. Prime minister, Justin Trudeau was among the visitors, Alix

[227] The legacy pole and the agreement made with the Canadian government. https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas/culture/mat-heraldique-legacy-pole (accessed September 2020).

[228] Marten is a small mammal and member of the weasel family.

[229] Totem poles had been purposely felled after Christian missionaries labelled them as sinful idols and because government policies allowed collectors to remove the poles in the name of preservation. See: Totem pole raising 50 years ago sparked 'reawakening,' Haida artist says | CBC News (accessed September 2020).

[230] In 1884, the federal government of Canada passed the potlatch law. This sparked what was later named 'The Northwest Coast Scramble' where poles and other artefacts were apprehended and sold. This law was in place until 1951. For more information see: Cole (1985).

told us with some glee that as Trudeau kept standing at the front, a space reserved for Chiefs and Elders, 'Big James' stood behind him wearing a controversial T-shirt and scowling, which ruined all of Trudeau's photo opportunities. I interpreted this as a political statement.

I asked Alix about the significance of a 'Wasco.' She told me that the Wasco holds a story about a woman who accuses her son-in-law of being lazy, an accusation that is considered a huge insult for Haida people. The son-in-law tried to prove her wrong by hunting the Wasco. To do this he split a tree in half and dangled children's feet from it as bait. He captured Wasco, wore his skin as a disguise to deliver it to his mother-in-law as food. The woman, not knowing that it was her son-in-law in disguise, thought she was responsible for conjuring the animal and held a big potlatch to feed everyone. On boasting of her new magical powers, her son-in-law revealed himself to her, upon which she instantly died of shame. Alix added that the theme of shame is common in Haida stories and often results in death.

We returned to the boat and continued on to G̲andll K'in Gwaay.yaay (Hotsprings Island). There we were welcomed to shore by the watchmen: Sean, Helen and their young daughter Thora who are members of the Raven clan. Sean is an archaeologist, curator and collections manager at the Haida Gwaii Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay. He has been involved in the watchman program since 2003. He tries to come to Gwaii Haanas every summer and tells us how important he considers the role as an ambassador for Haida Gwaii and the Haida Nation. He pointed out that they are the only Haida some people meet during their entire stay on Haida Gwaii, and added that he could not think of a better way to connect to his culture, family and land, noting how important it is to share and teach his daughter these values and skills at such a young age. Close to where we landed there was a trail to various hot springs where we all bathed for several hours. On the way back I spoke with Alix about tourism and her experiences. She felt bittersweet as not many Haida get to visit Gwaii Haanas. Hence for her it is important that *Haida Style Expeditions* encourage Haida youth to join their tours, just like Bilal.

Interview

Alix and I arranged to meet on the ferry heading back to British Columbia's mainland, for she was just finishing the season with *Haida Style Expeditions* and preparing to return to college.[231] I first told Alix about my project, went over some ethical considerations and commented on how much I had learned from the tour. Alix responded by saying how Haida Gwaii has gained quite a 'buzz' since *National Geographic* had made it one of the top places in the world to visit, after which they had had a royal visit, and 'the amazing race.'[232] It was apparently common to still meet travellers that had only recently learnt that Haida Gwaii existed, such is the isolation of the place.

I asked Alix about her name SGaana Gaahlandaay (Spirit of the killer whale). She had received it two years earlier at her great uncles' potlatch. He is a Chief and she explained:

> The potlatch was dedicated to passing on that Chieftainship to my mother's brother, but with so many witnesses we had much more business to do – our legal business.[...] As you have probably seen, everything in Haida Culture is big and everybody is involved.

Alix's Aunt, who is the matriarch of the clan and the eldest of her mother's sisters, created and gifted her the name through a ceremony. She already had a Haida name, which she had been given at a young age, but at that stage, her family did not yet know who she was, so she had just been given a sentimental name that had been passed down.

> I still own that name and can pass it down. But when I was 20, I am 22 now, I was given this adult name. I had been through school and had succeeded a lot with work. My Aunty recognised this, saw that I was becoming an adult and so gave me the name. When you receive a name through a ceremony, you have to speak it publicly three times and then dance your name as a new person. Then you hug a line of Matriarchs and Chiefs to cement it, and show that this is part of your new identity, and that's how it went with my naming ceremony.

[231] The Interview took place on 1 September 2018.

[232] National Geographic https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/best-trips-2015/ Royal Visit: https://globalnews.ca/news/2942691/royal-tour-2016-day-7-duke-and-duchess-of-cambridge-to-visit-haida-gwaii-b-c/ (accessed September 2020) The Amazing Race: is a BBC television series.

For the other part of her introduction Alix explained that the names of villages do not have much to do with who people are, or what crest they use, saying:

> We are from the sea lion village but we don't wear a sea lion crest – we do wear it in our face paint just to show the marking of a sea lion, but other than that we are not sea lion people. The way they are named is very literal, specified to a significant feature of the place. Another village name for example is called sunshine village, a place that was very sunny.

I asked Alix when she used which name?

> Recently, I get to use my Haida name more and more as part of my identity, in a community or in a group of people my age, who want to become fluent in the language. So I've learnt a lot of other peoples' Haida names and call them by that, because I think it shows a lot of respect if you call people by their Indigenous name.[...] I use the name as often as I can, especially in Haida Gwaii where it's easy to use. Families use it as often as they can. Also I think it's used more because the name is so new, just two years old, James and Shawn at work use it as much as they can. It's good to use that space to speak Haida.[233]

We moved on to talking about Alix's work in tourism. This was Alix's fourth year as a 'cultural ambassador, tour guide or cultural interpreter, whatever you want to call it'; she had started out at the Haida Heritage Centre.[234]

Image 40: Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay - 2018 Taken by Luca Patrignani.

[233] For research that discusses language in tourism see: Greathouse-Amador (2005) Cassel & Maureira (2017).

[234] Haida Heritage Centre see: https://haidaheritagecentre.com/ (accessed September 2020).

> Before working there I was terrified of public speaking, I was very much learning the culture, I thought I was doing a lot before I got into this type of work. But I hadn't realised how much there is to know and learn and what knowledge gaps to fill. I felt huge internal pressure to learn about my own history, collect as much information as I can, not just for the sake of tourism, and to be able to get the information across properly, so guests leave with correct information, but for my own sake as well, so I can pass that on. So I started at the front desk just talking to people. I had a lot of social anxiety, so speaking to strangers wasn't my thing. To communicate with people like that, it was a huge step for me.

After a while Alix asked to lead the totem pole tour at the Heritage Centre, so she studied the booklet the staff had put together, 'learning what the crests are, what village they are from, and a bit of the history.' At first she was not confident in her knowledge. She was stressing and studying over and over again and was apprehensive about taking the tour and having to refer to her papers, worried she would appear as if she didn't know what she was talking about, but then:

> On my first tour I looked at the totem poles and realised that just from growing up here and seeing these figures so often, I can do this, I know this, and I was like yeah actually it is all right there, that's just what I need to know. When you're talking about your own history and culture there's no way to feel embarrassed or to feel anxious to say something because, when you're passionate – no matter how introverted you feel – that will push you to speak...that was my big starting point. And now I am a storyteller. I speak in stories...that was a long story.

Alix presents her knowledge more as a realisation than a learned role. She worked at the Heritage Centre for three years mostly leading the totem pole tours, but after a while she expanded to lead her own tours. *National Geographic,* for example, would organise tours twice a year for large groups of people, (sometimes over ninety people), who they would split into two groups and 'just go really hard for like two hours straight.' That was a lot to get used to and over time she became almost like the face of the Haida Heritage Centre, the person they directed to for interviews. It was like 'oh by the way Alix you have an interview with *Global* at 2pm.'[235] Although she would panic about this at first, worried as to what she would say, as the work expanded, she gained more experience and became more comfortable. She remarked how much she enjoyed interacting with so many people, making new connections with different cultures whilst sharing aspects of her own:

> I think that's the most powerful part of tourism, that there is a way we can all get to the same level of understanding and compare our own cultures. There's always similarities, and I think that really moves us forward in Truth and Reconciliation, just the ability to understand each other is really important. That's kind of what I

[235] Global Canada is a Canadian news network. https://globalnews.ca/ (accessed February 2021).

> figured out, that we are all just people, trying to get on the same level of understanding.

Alix continued telling me about her work at the Haida Heritage Centre and how it had really sparked her enjoyment of tourism:

> I feel like I am educating and spreading that around and I also feel like I'm doing my part in learning that so I can pass that down. So it's like a two-in-one, I feel really satisfied. People thank you directly for what you do, Thanks for telling us this story. It feels really good, I really enjoy the feeling that comes when you share something with somebody.

The work at the Heritage Centre brought her to *Haida Style Expeditions*. This was her first full summer working, having done a couple of weeks the summer before. She had felt ready for the challenge and didn't want to pass on the opportunity. She explained that at the Heritage Centre she was often doing the same tours, no longer learning new things and was restricted to an hour with the guests. With her new role she was able to share so much history and commented on how good that made her feel. 'With *Haida Style* you get the guests for the whole day, literally, 8am at the dock to 6pm in the evening, all that time to say what I need to say. A lot of room to say what's on my mind; not just culturally, but politically, environmentally, all of it wrapped in a bow.' I asked if she felt in control of what she shared?

> Yes, I feel very in charge of that whole process, and every day I make little mental notes, like this is something I need to know more about, and it's kind of aggressive in my head. I hope it doesn't come off that way. I often tell myself, research this, ask for something that I need – to fill this gap.

I asked Alix whether she also chooses not to share things with tourists?

> Oh totally! It comes from maybe someone who's uneducated or ignorant, they ask too far of a question or maybe they make an accusation. And I did a lot of public workshops on dealing with difficult people. When you're talking about your own identity, how do you diffuse that? It's something I get all the time without them even realising. They'll say something like 'oh are you Haida?' and I'm there, as a Haida guide, on the boat wearing my Haida crew hat, and it's a Haida owned and operated company. I've had that question so much it becomes exhausting! People question saying, "you don't look like you're native".

Alix experienced this more often at the Heritage Centre, than at *Haida Style Expeditions,* but she put this down partly to there being more visitors at the centre. She commented that when she worked at the counter, some people would ask: "oh do they allow non-native people to work here? That's interesting, how did you come to work here?" Faced with such questions

she would think to herself, 'if they knew me, knew my identity, they would understand how hurtful that accusation really is.' She recalled a recent visit of a large tour group to the *centre*, when one visitor – everyone on the island now knows who that person is – became angry and vocal because he thought his tour had been given by white people. Alix said:

> The four female guides were Haida, who had worked hard to learn their lineage, introduce themselves in Haida, learned to dance in traditional ceremonies, but just because of the shade of their skin, because they don't look like Pocahontas-style-native', these people make accusations and then leave. That's the hard part about tourism, being stereotyped. It's a really weird thing to deal with. You want to reply, like what's your heritage, you don't look ⅛ Italian or whatever. Geographically, anthropologically we are all different, with different skin colours, different hair. It has nothing to do with who we are or how much we are native. It's a real jaw dropper. You don't know how to fill that space. They want their version of authenticity.

This had become so common that Alix had worked on a stock response about how everyone looks and sounds different, warning people not to judge. She was shocked that she sometimes needed to do this with adults. Responses apparently varied, with some people being apologetic, acknowledging their ignorance. Alix would feel good if she felt people had learned something. However, some people can be aggressive and 'you just have to let them be in their own ignorance for the sake of your own mental health.' She acknowledged that 'I think some people just want to feel powerful.' For the most part, she said, 'the people that visit the Haida Gwaii, it's such an effort to make it here, when they arrive they are willing to be educated.'

Expanding on the topic of judgement and stereotypes, Alix brought up her age and gender, saying she had started doing tours at 18, and is now 22. 'I am young, Indigenous and a woman and these three things kind of work against me. Not to stereotype old white men in return, but it's often them that judge, that want to 'mansplain', get on their high horse and interrupt you whenever you are speaking.' People would often mistake her for a dockhand and when she gives her full introduction and introduces herself as the guide, 'people click and are surprised, but then they realise I know my shit.' Alix thinks these issues will always be there but is hopeful they will improve with time. She pointed out some important differences between the *Heritage Centre* and the *Haida style* tours, noting that on the tour:

> We know your names, we give you gear and we feed you and we take you to personal ancestral places, either people we have descended from or people we have known, it's very personal. On the boat to Gwaii Haanas there is no cell service and people probably feel a little vulnerable. We are their only ride back.

Alix posited that this is a good thing; they are there to host and take care of the guests and when people feel that vulnerability and see the generosity, they are more likely to open up and not be aggressive. She added that the 'magic' of Gwaii Haanas, the history and beauty of it, and the old village sites, is so powerful that the 'magic' is hard to miss. She said:

> It's enough to change somebody. It's such a different environment, when we come ashore there are traditionally only two people at that site, living there and occupying it. You almost start questioning, does this exist? It's too magical, like an ancient energy. This is very different from say a display, with the tour, you are telling the history right there, it really has such an impact.

I asked Alix why she waited until she was at the village site to introduce herself? She explained this it is partly practical, that there's not much time on the dock before they set off and people arrive at different times, and also because she enjoys the performance of it, 'a dramatic build-up', she described it as:

> The journey to get there is so beautiful. I show where we are going on a map but otherwise people don't really know what's in store. I formally introduce myself in the village, whether or not it's the village I come from. I'm still Haida, it's in my blood line and just being connected to it, it all ties into my identity, the land and the ocean. It all ties in to who I am, and so I wait to introduce myself when I'm standing right within it.

Alix said that this is tradition, and that in her community, before you tell a story, you have to introduce yourself and your whole lineage, even if people already know who you are. She explained that you have to make the effort to trace it as far back as you can, before you begin any story. She said that this helped to establish trust, credibility and respect, noting that it was important that you addressed people with due formality.

Interested in what Alix said about standing in Gwaii Haanas and being connected to the land and ocean, I asked her if she wouldn't mind expanding on that. She replied:

> Well hmmm that's tenfold. It goes into so many layers of who we are as Haida people and that is our main edge in Haida Gwaii tourism. Through tourism we are educating and showing cultural education, and showcasing the history and cultures whilst also underlying our environmental and political stance, and our

> title case and the court cases we are working on. So whilst educating, we are showing how important the earth is and recognising the territory.
>
> There are so many sayings in Haida that constitute our identity through the land and the ocean. Like when I introduce myself I mention the village that I come from, in that first speech, I say my clan came out of the ocean in Sea Lion village. And that is such an important part of who we are. That's our third rebirth in Haida history. So first, we came from the sky and returned to the sky, and then we were reborn through the land and returned to the land, and the third is the ocean. So we are in the ocean rebirth. We are due to go back to the ocean at some point. And we have origin stories of the ocean dwelling people, the underwater realm and the supernaturals that live there, different figures from the ocean. It all ties into our Haida values and how we identify ourselves. I can't remember how I heard this, but Haida people wouldn't exist without the Haida Gwaii. That entire place shapes us and our cultures and our Haida ways. Our fourth Haida law says 'waad luxan gud ad kwaagi' which means 'everything depends on everything else.' It's a huge root of what makes us who we are, looking ahead and checking whatever we are doing doesn't affect something else in a bad way.

Alix continued by telling me about the cyclical and interconnected nature of everything, that if something is damaged, then their people are damaged. This understanding and deep connection is what sustains them and will save the Haida Gwaii. On commenting that everything in life on earth is spiritual, I asked Alix to expand, and she said:

> We have over 500 named supernatural beings, and they all encompass our beliefs. There is a creek woman for every single creek, different women in the forest, moss women, mouse women, ice women, all of which have an important role to play. It's similar to Christianity with the different angels and archangels that have a role in the stories that we learn and get values from. We often used the word Creator, which does not take a specific name because there is not one name. We have different creators for different things. I think the word Creator is more modern that we are connecting to now. So instead of god we are saying Creator, but in terms of ancient Haida values there are different Creators for every single clan. We are all born in different ways. So, maybe you've heard of the Raven in the clam shell?[236] Only three clans were born that way. My clan just walked out of the ocean. Some clans are born through supernatural women, where the women had five girls and five boys which gave birth to a specific raven lineage. There are many creators, many ways we came to be and for all the different intricacies of Haida Gwaii; the trees, the ocean, the fish, the air, everything, it's all different and you can get quite deep with it, and it explains why there are so many they all have big jobs to do.

Noticing the link Alix drew with Christianity, I asked about her views on the term religion, to which she replied:

[236] Bill Reid's clamshell: http://www.billreidfoundation.ca/banknote/raven.htm (accessed September 2020).

> I lean toward the word spirituality, but I think belief covers it. Religion, I think, implies a lot of boundaries and I think for us it's very broad, our view of the world, there aren't many rules in terms of what you can and can't say. It's not as binding as some religions are.

I asked Alix what she felt about sharing Haida beliefs with tourists, to which she responded:

> I think tourism helps to bring to the surface things like belief. I think Haida beliefs and culture are so projected because we are so isolated, so we have a big megaphone which we need to shake out to the mainland. It has put a bubble around us like this is Haida Gwaii and this is what's going on. In the media we are still a very small place. We are a small nation, doing big things, making different moves from other nations. We are holding onto stuff with a force. I think we are one of two nations that have no treaties signed with the government, so I think we have more wiggle room. We are sort of able to make our next move in this difficult chess game. Tom Swanky's work helps to prove our resistance, to show the smallpox genocide was intentional, and our culture and people have been depleting and it's not our fault.[237] To be able to inch forward, make our voices a bit louder. Our tour season drives us in the summer and boosts the whole economy so our cultures are lifted and can be celebrated more because of that. Maybe other communities feel more in the dark, so are more shy. We are teased for it, but the Haida are really proud people, but I think when you are fighting you need to be loud and proud. I think tourism has helped that.

I asked Alix about the comment she made on the trip about feeling bittersweet that tourists get to go to Gwaii Haanas, but not many locals. I said when I was at the Heritage Centre, I heard one of the tour guide's say something similar, that she found it difficult to see people wearing lots of Haida jewellery that she herself could not afford. I considered buying some jewellery from the Centre, but I was left unsure about whether I should. She responded that:

> I think there's a fine balance between appreciation and appropriation, what is ok and respectful and what is crossing the line. [...] I think it's about understanding what's appropriate. When you see non-Indigenous people wearing some knock off regalia at Coachella like a bikini and headdress, it just shows zero respect for the power and responsibility of what that represents, that people will have spent a lifetime to create or earn the right to wear something like that.[238] But if it's a postcolonial item, jewellery created as a trade item between Indigenous people and Europeans, then it's cool to have that in a modern context. But just understanding the context of where you bought it, engaging with it makes what you wear more special. Part of Haida law, the first one – *everything has to be done*

[237] Tom Swanky is a political philosopher, who has written 'The true story of Canada's War of the extermination on the Pacific. (2013) and 'The Smallpox War in Nuxalk Territory' (2016).

[238] Coachella is a music and arts festival in California: https://www.coachella.com/ (accessed September 2020).

> *in respect* – which leads to the second one, a canon, which is to *ask consent*. When you're unsure about appropriation just ask and that's what makes it respectful and it'll save someone a lifetime of questioning why they got that dreamcatcher tattoo.

I asked Alix how she reacts to the term 'Indigenous', to which she responded:

> I mean there are times when I thought all those terms were right. What's proper now – is Indigenous – across all of Canada referring to people that were here prior to European settlers. The most respectful is to just acknowledge that nation. Because we are all so different. Tribe is a common term in the USA – but yes finding out what nation or asking what heritage. I don't like it when people say 'what are you? Like ...I'm human! I'm preaching for the word nation, but that goes for all people. I have lots of friends who aren't Indigenous, and like for one particular friend, I can tell you my heritage 20,000 years back from the beginning of time, and that this is our territory, but this friend doesn't really know where she's from so I introduce her by saying she has a mix of different heritages, and I think that makes her feel better, that recognition. It goes for everyone. It makes sense to specify the land we are all people on the earth.

Talking about different heritages, I asked if Alix felt any connection to other Indigenous people around the world? She told me about a Pacific basketball tournament they held recently in Haida Gwaii, noting:

> This united not just Indigenous people from the northwest of Canada but also brought together Tongan, Māori and Hawaiians, people that encompassed the Pacific boundary, and the power that we are all people with a unique connection to a place and are fighting for that and trying to revive and breathe life into it. Over the tournament we had all these cultural activities we shared. Sport is such a great way to make friends and connections. All these cultures put together, and the Haka and the Haida dances unite us in strength and affirmation that we are all fighting for the same things and that unity is really powerful. [239]

We talked about Alix's hopes and ambitions for tourism. For the most part, she hopes it stays where it is, that there is no room for growth. She does not want big hotels and to increase capacity too much. 'We only get one freight a week, so you can only get milk once a week and in the summer there's even less and the strain on resources can already be felt. There could be no end to how it could grow so you need to check in and keep it balanced and they need to tread carefully.' She thinks that the feeling of a small town, having to ask the locals where to go and what to see, is nice and an important aesthetic that should remain. She said there is room for a small amount of growth, but that's about refining the businesses that already

[239] There are many organisations that support the 'Pacific Connection' such as the*: Pacific Peoples' Partnership*. *https://pacificpeoplespartnership.org/international/* (accessed February 2021).

exist, and that the peak has been reached or that they are close to it. On asking what Alix felt drew people to the Haida Gwaii, she replied:

> I think people are searching for a really deep connection, to find themselves and disconnect, so yeah to unplug, not just to nature but to a remote place that is really profound. You can get lost in silence here and that's intriguing to people. How the natural beauty, the culture and the history impacts you. I think that's what people are looking for, an escape, and they want to know more, with the recent environmental stresses I think it makes people think and want to change. The world, especially some Canadians are panicking and thinking how do I restructure my brain? Often Indigenous people are at the front line of this and selflessly fighting and peacefully protesting and people are intrigued. They ask how these peoples have existed for so long and they are still fighting for basic human rights, like they are the original people, how is it they have to fight with settlers to protect their land and environment? I think Indigenous people should be making those decisions – like our rules – you pick only what you need and treat everything with respect etc. but for others it's like taking everything you can. [...] We are not perfect, but we are working towards a better system, a good example for the rest of the world.
>
> ...I feel positive then I feel negative. But we had a victory celebration when Enbridge was overturned and the president of Haida Nation elected a new president to govern. When he got up to speak, in the back of everyone's mind it was sombre like we have so much more to fight for.[240] Don't be afraid to celebrate, Haida's have a hard time celebrating. We are just constantly fighting, but we should learn to stop, pat ourselves on the back and acknowledge how far we've come, or we might forget what we have achieved and that might drive us all mad. Yes, we mourn more than we celebrate.

[240] For more information about the Enbridge protests see: https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/news/enbridge-protest/ (accessed September 2020).

Reflections

What follows are some reflections related to my research questions: What did Alix say about why she was involved in Indigenous Tourism? How was indigeneity and spirituality articulated in ways that relate to processes of decolonisation? Alix uses tourism to learn about her culture, to overcome her fear of public speaking, and to gain confidence in who she is, and the knowledge she has, as a Haida woman. This 'becoming' was presented more as a realisation than a learned role. Alix expressed the pride she felt in being a representative of the Haida Nation, believing that it is important work, having the space and opportunity 'to say what I need to say.' Tourism is working as a megaphone for the Haida to communicate with people off the Island, be that with other Indigenous people or non-Indigenous people and tourists. Alix describes how she enjoys the connections and opportunities for growth and mutual understanding that come with her work, commenting that through learning about other cultures, she gets to learn more about herself.

Alix formally introduced herself standing in the old growth rainforests of the recently renamed and protected park of Gwaii Haanas. This place where she stood framed what she was claiming as important to her: lineage, land and nature, recognition and reconnection. She is keen to demonstrate Haida's long-lasting connection to the place, their unique relationship to nature, and the values, and the fight and focus of the Haida Nation which has resulted in recent important political gains. In 2010, Haida people formally returned the colonially imposed name of 'Queen Charlotte Islands.' Naming was and is a crucial tool of colonizing powers, it works to erase the presence and history of the people who were there prior and helps to assert the right of colonial authorities to define and govern those people.[241] In the late 19th century, the Canadian state asserted Haida Gwaii to be sovereign crown territory subject to the provincial and national governments. Until the 1960s Haida people, like all Indigenous people in the country, were claimed to be 'wards of the state.'[242] Haida people have been subject to intense monitoring and regulation by the Canadian Government.[243]

[241] Joseph Weiss (2018).
[242] In 1960's 'Indians' were granted full citizenship and the right to vote by the Canadian state, see: Collison (2014).
[243] For example, *Indian Act*, reservations, residential schools, potlatch ban, band councils etc.

Today, Haida are citizens of Canada and constituents of the Haida Nation. The official renaming of the Haida Gwaii in 2010 speaks to the particular position of the Haida Nation who form one nation governed by The Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) – a unified political body of the Haida people.[244] The CHN was formed to address the issue of title to Haida Gwaii, as well as rights and resources. In particular a conflict over industrial logging in Gwaii Hannas. Haida people and environmentalists fought for its protection and after two decades of protests, lobbying and court cases an agreement was made in 1993 between the Haida Nation and the Federal government of Canada to jointly manage Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage site. This was the first park of its kind in Canada to be co-managed.

The Constitution of the Haida Nation's mandate includes striving for 'the full independence, sovereignty, and self-sufficiency of the Haida Nation' through protocols, and international agreements. The Haida Proclamation is as follows:

> The Haida Nation is the rightful heir to Haida Gwaii. Our culture is born of respect; and intimacy with the land and sea and the air around us. Like the forests, the roots of our people are intertwined such that the greatest troubles cannot overcome us. We owe our existence to Haida Gwaii. The living generation accepts the responsibility to ensure that our heritage is passed on to the following generations. On these islands our ancestors lived and died and here too, we will make our homes until called away to join them in the great beyond (Constitution of the Haida Nation 2018:1)

Central articulations of indigeneity in this account are the land, the ocean and origin stories. Alix said that without Haida Gwaii, Haida people would not exist; origin stories are traced to various parts of Haida Gwaii. As Alix said; 'many of our sayings constitute our identity through the land', and it is the 'deep connection to the land that will sustain us.' Haida identity and the land and ocean were conceptualised and rearticulated as inseparable, and acknowledging this is a way to move forward. The grounds on which Alix connects to other Indigenous people is through a shared connection to the Pacific and in 'breathing life' into these lived connections. Both the revitalised watchmen program and the Legacy pole – the first pole to be erected in the area for 130 years – and the story of the Athlii Gwaii protests signal the active presence of the Haida people in protecting their land.

[244] Council of Haida Nation (2019).

The legacy pole that Alix took us tourists to see, marks this historic agreement. On hearing the different stories this pole depicts, I thought about the various functions this pole now plays. The pole memorializes the protests at Athlii Gwaii and signifies the achievements that have been made since then. The pole demonstrates Haida presence and totem poles are significant symbols of Indigenous presence along the west coast.[245] It is a conversation between the past, present and future. It honours a Haida skill and tradition, it serves as a reminder of a people's resilience against efforts made to keep totem poles as artefacts of the past, it honours the partnership between the Haida and the government, and it signals to tourists that they are welcome and part of this story. It highlights how traditions adapt and take on new meanings and that totem poles function as they always have to hold histories, tell stories and mark events. It provides a focal point for visitors, an assembly point for meetings of many kinds, and is always a talking point. The watchmen programme works in a similar way to demonstrate Haida presence invoking the past whilst looking to the future and showing how traditions take on new lives in new times. [246]

As Alix stated she is proud to assert Haida values to guests and see tourism working as a Megaphone for such a small and remote place to have a big presence and it is for these reasons she thinks tourists are attracted to the region. Alexis Bunten (2010) argues that value systems are what set apart Indigenous owned tourism from non-indigenous tourism. Bunten uses the terms 'Indigenous Capitalism' and 'culturalizing commerce' to describe a distinct strategy 'to achieve ethical, culturally appropriate and successful engagement in global economies.' Indigenous Tourism business 'must operate according to principles that reflect a community's needs and goals...and is always married to cultural perpetuation as part of a strategy to employ identity politics in larger areas of concern to the Indigenous population such as retaining or reclaiming history, representation, land rights and political sovereignty.' Through the language used in the marketing and eventual tours, tourist expectations are met at the same time as community value systems are upheld and reinforced.

[245] For more information about the prominence of totem poles on the Pacific Northwest Coast, see: https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/totem_poles/ (accessed September 2020).

[246] This ties in with the new work Tafjord is working on with 'Governmateriality', exploring how material objects or entities takes and makes place, and how these objects or entities contribute to regulating themselves, their members, and their surroundings. See: https://en.uit.no/project/govmat (accessed February 2021).

The potlatch ceremony stands out as an important articulation of both indigeneity and spirituality. It is through this ceremony that Alix was gifted name, SGaana Gaahlandaay meaning 'spirit of the killer whale', which she described as a rite of passage, as recognition of her work, and dedication to learning about her history and culture. Alix ascribed much of her Haida identity as coming from the values she upholds, the longstanding and ongoing connection to the place, and the effort she puts into learning the history and traditions of her people. She describes the hurt she feels when people question her identity as a member of the Haida Nation on the grounds of appearance. Tourism, although opening up spaces for these types of comments to be expressed, is also giving Alix the opportunity to challenge them.

Alix preferred the term 'belief' for what she describes as 'ancient values', practises and teachings including the belief in reincarnation. The term 'The Creator' is a modern one which she says her people are connecting to, but asserts that she sees this as more of a shift of language or terminology than of beliefs. The term beliefs seems to encompass a package that could include all aspects of Haida identity, particularly how the place is conceptualised. Beliefs were contrasted to religion, free from rules and regulations and open to learning from nature. Alix drew comparisons with Christianity, noting how the different Creators in Haida beliefs are similar to Christian angels and archangels.

Chapter 8: Indigenous Tourism, Reconciliation and Decolonisation.

Introduction

This chapter focuses on shared themes that have emerged from my presentation of the work of each of the guides and connects these more explicitly to the processes of decolonisation, by which they are framed, and to which they contribute. To this end I ask: how do the guides' articulations of indigeneity and spirituality relate to processes of reconciliation and decolonisation; and how do these two processes interact and differ?

In answering these questions, I will first discuss how Indigenous Tourism on Vancouver Island is framed and facilitated by the political agenda of Truth and Reconciliation, followed by an exploration of how reconciliation relates to a wider process of decolonisation. Next, I will discuss a series of registers that have emerged from the interviews and fieldwork regarding tourism as a process of learning, teaching, and healing. Learning and teaching is integral to the guides' work, both in training others to become guides and talking with tourists, and it is basic to healing, in the sense of acknowledging past (and present) grievances and finding ways forward. The chapter concludes with reflections on what I will refer to as religion-making in a decolonial mode.

Reconciliation and Indigenous Tourism in BC

Indigenous tourism in BC, Canada is marketed as a productive venue for reconciliation, which meets many of the 'calls to action' that came out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).[247] Some of these relate to the importance of having space to learn and engage with

[247] For tourism and reconciliation: https://indigenoustourism.ca/plans-reports/indigenous-tourism-is-reconciliation-in-action-2022-2023-action-plan/. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/adv/article-indigenous-tourism-experiences-are-advancing-reconciliation-one-shared/. https://vancouversun.com/news/indigenous-tourism-can-be-a-way-of-reconciliation-tourism-leader-says. (all accessed August 2022). For calls to action; https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/tourism-and-immigration/tourism-industry-resources/our-tourism-strategy/indigenous_tourism_accord.pdf?bcgovtm=buffer (accessed August 2022) and see examples given in the text below.

different Indigenous languages and cultures, as well as the ability to partake effectively in the economy.[248] Indigenous tourism is claimed to work for both domestic and international tourists, and to carry the promise of broader international recognition of Indigenous rights.[249] This narrative has been explicitly embraced by the main marketing and regulatory body *Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC)*. [250] In a recent video produced by *ITBC* entitled 'Why tourism matters', Sierra Hall, a member of the Xai'xais Nation, maintained:

> Tourism is really important to our people as it is a form of reconciliation' ..[yet].. Our community were very, very hesitant in doing tourism, but then one Elder stood up and said, 'you know our youth are starting to lose their way, their culture and their traditions and we don't know another way to bring that back, other than tourism.[251]

Explaining the growth of Indigenous Tourism, Linda Calla, a member of the Squamish Nation who has worked for over a decade for ITBC in numerous roles, gave three reasons:

> First) The decline in the resources industries, like fishing, mining, and logging, all of which involved Indigenous peoples working in remote areas which now have high unemployment rates, something which tourism is helping to solve.
> Secondly) This has been complemented by a positive development that one in three visitors to the province is now seeking an 'authentic Indigenous experience.'[252]

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https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/new-relationship/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-calls-to-action (accessed August 2022).

[248] For languages and culture see 'Calls to action' numbers 13 & 14, for business and economy see 'Call' no 92.

[249] See https://the-message.ca/2022/03/31/destination-bc-invites-international-tourists-to-find-themselves-in-beauty-of-the-land/ (accessed August 2022).

[250] Like ITBC, the larger *Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada* (ITAC) also claims that: 'Indigenous tourism has the power to change perspectives, preserve culture, language and community and provide our relatives with a platform to be the leading voice in reclaiming our space in history — both ancient and modern. See: https://indigenoustourism.ca/ and https://indigenoustourism.ca/tools-resources/power-of-indigenous-tourism-video-series/ (accessed 12th July 2022).

[251] https://www.indigenousbc.com/corporate/news/why-indigneous-tourism-matters-tourism-week-2020/ (accessed 10th July 2022).

[252] https://www.indigenousbc.com/corporate/content/uploads/2019/12/Value-of-Tourism_Full-Report-2017.pdf (accessed August 2022) and https://www.indigenousbc.com/corporate/content/uploads/2019/12/2017-Value-of-Tourism.pdf (accessed August 2022) and https://www.exhibitoronline.com/news/article.asp?ID=21770 (accessed August 2002).

> Thirdly) Indigenous tourism is helping communities to keep their languages and cultures alive, promoting a sense of pride, and offering the guides opportunities to present their own cultures, in their own words, with their own stories and histories. [253]

I interviewed Linda at an early stage in my research; her points resonate strongly with the opinions of everyone I spoke with, including the six people I interviewed.

There are several features to the notion of reconciliation: the honouring of survivors, acknowledgement of past suffering, and acceptance of responsibility. As ITBC put it when calling for September 30th to be seen as a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:

> This is the first-ever national holiday to honour the survivors of Canadian residential institutions and those who never made it home. It is a day to call upon all of those who can effect change to take action to advance reconciliation in Canada. At Indigenous Tourism BC, we believe that every one of us can effect change.
>
> Use this day as a time of reflection that Canada is responsible for the deaths and suffering of Indigenous children at residential institutions across the nation. Take an honest look at current Canadian reality and our part in it. Step forward as a witness to the hard truths and accept responsibility to learn and change. Reconciliation is not just the responsibility of the government – it is a responsibility that belongs to all Canadians. [254]

In suggesting 'Six ways you can effect change', ITBC included:

- 'Know whose land you are on', and respect and 'support the rights, wellness, and economy of your Indigenous hosts.'
- 'Be a sensitive, respectful and grateful traveller' because 'the relationship between Indigenous peoples and lands is sacred and unbreakable.'
- Discover your call to action', the observance of this national day contributes to 'the education of public servants on Indigenous history, including residential school history and lived reality, rights, laws, and relations.'
- 'Educate yourself', under which heading they include the reading of 'key documents and Indigenous literature, including the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and first-hand accounts of residential school survival.'
- Lastly, 'donate to support residential school survivors and invest in indigenous economies', under which heading they encourage the following practices,

[253] Interview with Linda Calla took place 13th July 2018 at Lonsdale Quay in North Vancouver; I also spoke with Linda for my MA research in 2013.
[254] https://www.indigenousbc.com/corporate/news/national-day-for-truth-and-reconciliation/ (accessed July 2022).

> 'purchase Indigenous art, eat at Indigenous restaurants, tour with Indigenous guides, stay at Indigenous accommodations, invest in Indigenous.' [255]

Recent research on Indigenous tourism has suggested ways it can support and contribute to reconciliation and decolonisation.[256] Indigenous Tourism has been seen to further cultural resurgence, offer healing, strengthen communities, help educate tourists on colonial legacies, and raise awareness about land claims and other legal and political fights.[257] In an investigation of over twenty Indigenous tourism case studies from around the world, including British Columbia, Colton & Whitney-Squire (2010: 264) suggested that such tourism was based on a paradigm of attempting to restore 'relationships broken in aboriginal communities by generations of oppression.' They further argued that Indigenous tourism has the potential to 'strengthen community empowerment, economic development, wellness, learning and stewardship.'

Reconciliation features strongly in marketing, but the guides noted that it is often framed historically, rather than as a contemporary struggle. Tsimka remarked that Canada´s talk about reconciliation is simply an apology with some money.[258] Several of the guides I interviewed expressed frustration with slow progress regarding land rights. Yet Tsimka made the point that tourism has helped in the establishment of Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks, as if land claims are somehow less threatening when made under the guise of promoting tourism. There were many protests taking place across BC during the time I was there, and many people reported heavy police presence.[259] Kodi told me that in developing his tourist business, he felt he could deter other industrial claims on the territory.[260] Whilst protests disrupt and cost the province money, the revenues afforded by Indigenous tourism might now be helping those

[255] *Ibid.*
[256] For tourism and reconciliation and decolonisation: Kramvig & Førde (2020), Thimm, (2019), Nepal (2010), Whitford & Ruhanen, (2014).
[257] For tourism and healing: Simpson (2011) & Arellano, Friis & Stuart (2019). For tourism/ education and colonial legacies: Higgins-Desbiolles (2003), Hall & Tucker (2004b). For tourism/ politics/ land claims: Fletcher, Pforr & Brueckner (2016), Nepal & Saarinen (2016) Grimwood, Stinson & King (2019) Cooke (2016 & 2017).
[258] See Chapter 5:117.
[259] For example, Protests against the Kinder-Morgan pipeline, several protests took place over salmon net-pen fish farming: https://salmonbusiness.com/indigenous-people-see-norwegian-invasion/ (accessed 20th August 2022).
[260] See Chapter 6: 140.

voicing land right claims. And there is no denying that Indigenous tourism is making a lot of money for the province.[261]

Similar critiques have been voiced by scholars. Among the main points, is a failure of the reconciliation project to address fundamental issues, like land rights and self-determination, and the implied sovereignty of the settler colonial state.[262] As Hargreaves and Jefferess (2015, 207) explain, people are being asked to accept a linear history of Canada, that begins with discovery and ends with reconciliation, and in between has a 'series of regrettable colonial harms.'[263] Kanien'keha:ka scholar, Taiaike Alfred (2009, 182:3), similarly, argues that reconciliation constitutes a pacifying discourse demanding that Indigenous peoples become 'reconciled with imperialism.' Others have raised concerns about the onus placed on Indigenous peoples to heal for the benefit of the whole nation (Coulthard 2014, 109). As Hargreaves and Jefferess (2015, 201) put it, the official discourses of reconciliation in Canada seek to provide closure, which fits into Canada's national mythology of progress and inclusion. They suggest that a more useful approach would be to see reconciliation as a starting point from which to begin the hard work of rethinking relationships and renegotiating responsibilities.[264]

If reconciliation is not without its critics, so Indigenous tourism as one arena in which to aid the process has also come in for criticism. Many scholars speak about how invasive tourism can be, and how it can be used to smooth over issues of colonial occupation and thus work against goals towards Indigenous sovereignty.[265] Some suggest that it works to uphold neo-colonialist attitudes, with communities being subjected to protectionist attitudes by people who believe they know better, and that the products and businesses which are developed, prioritise the interest of consumers.[266] Others argue that tourism shapes, commodifies and (re)constructs Indigenous culture to suit visitor expectations, often leading to past practices

[261] https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1481138470313/1611867846060 (accessed august 2022).
[262] Monkman (2016) Datta, (2018c); Egan in Baldwin, Cameron & Kobayashi eds 2011); Gebhard, (2017).
[263] Hargreaves & Jefferess in *The Land We Are, eds* L'Hirondelle Hill & McCall (2015).
[264] *Ibid.*
[265] Palmer (1994) Notzke (1998) Korstanje (2012) Richards (2018) Nielsen & Wilson (2012) Williams & Gonzalez (2016).
[266] Butcher (2002), Butler & Hinch (2007) Johnston (2013).

and ways of life being foregrounded and modern realities side-lined.[267] Indigenous peoples who meet such expectations have been accused of being inauthentic and commercialised.[268]

Decolonisation is a wider discourse which can incorporate elements of reconciliation but is less tied to local and national political agendas and entails ideas of wider cultural/social change.[269] Both terms have diverse meanings and implications in practice. Tuck and Yang (2012:36) note that unlike reconciliation, 'decolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity.'[270] For them, reconciliation is mostly concerned with the life and well-being of the settler. In contrast, decolonisation is predominantly about repatriating land to Indigenous peoples. In British Columbia, decolonisation is playing out in diverse ways that include improving education on colonial histories and realities in the province; the use of museums, art galleries and public spaces to celebrate the work of Indigenous artists, art, languages, and practices; the involvement of universities in rethinking curricula, performing land acknowledgements, and challenging certain established norms within the academy. Across Vancouver Island, road names have been changed, and land disputes have been taken to court. In 2019 BC became the first province to sign up to the UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights which has already had an impact on land claims.[271]

Decolonisation, for some, must focus on reclaiming land. Tuck and Young (2012) argue that by obscuring and appropriating the process of decolonisation with other social justice projects, it becomes a metaphor that kills the very possibility of decolonisation, as it entertains a settler future. They remind readers that the violence of colonialism is not located with the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation; they quote Patrick Wolfe (1999) who emphasizes that 'settler colonialism is a structure and not an event.' Decolonisation is a

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[267] Coronado (2014) Heldt, Cassel & Maureira (2015) Viken & Müller (2017) Pashkevich & Keskitalo (2017) Tomaselli (2012).
[268] MacCannell (1973 & 1984) Rossel (1988) Carrier & West (2004).
[269] See Hargreaves & Jefferess in *The Land We Are, eds* L'Hirondelle Hill & McCall (2015).
[270] Indigenous futurity comprises the structures and narratives that support and image a future for Indigenous peoples; for example: Baldwin (2011).
[271] See intro and link https://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/en-ca/knowledge/publications/32ff0686/new-bc-legislation-now-in-force-to-implement-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples-act#:~:text=British%20Columbia%20is%20now%20the,BC's%20efforts%20to%20advance%20reconciliation (accessed august 2022).

massive – and longstanding – process that entails large-scale political, social, and cultural change. Since the onset of colonisation people have engaged in acts of decolonising and have worked in myriad ways to dismantle imposed structures.[272]

For the purposes of this dissertation, I approach decolonisation as a process of deconstructing colonial myths and ideologies and exploring how these myths and dominant discourses have contributed to 'alienation, separation and disconnection.' (YES 2018:1)This entails what I have tried to do in acknowledging the histories, knowledges, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples.[273] I agree with Battiste (2018) who notes that 'decolonization has two pillars, first, settlers need to understand that our system of education is deeply colonial, and part of decolonisation is to help people understand the roots of colonial ideas and histories and to be able to unpack these histories from our own perspectives.' And secondly, 'that decolonization requires recovery from colonial impact, restoration of identities, languages, experiences and for all things Indigenous peoples need restoring, which includes treaties that have been signed, ignored or marginalised for many years.' [274]

Frames and Imaginaries

The work of the guides is framed by the context of reconciliation at work in British Columbia and also by tourist imaginaries. The concept of 'tourist imaginaries' refers to widespread notions about a particular destination, spread through various media, and likely to be known by visitors prior to their visit (Mathisen 2004). Imaginaries connected to Indigenous peoples comprise a range of ideas, 'from the most banal stereotypes to deep respect and knowledge of historical and cultural transformations' (Mathisen (2004, 4), and often located to the past, in ways which complicate the efforts of Indigenous peoples to be heard in contemporary struggles (Ibid.). 'The orientation toward a mythic past tends to place Indigenous people in an ambivalent position; as proud representatives of genuine spiritual traditions on the one hand, and as exotic representatives of a past with no place in modern society, on the other'

[272] Aikau & Gonzalez (2019).
[273] YES, 2018 YES *Don't just resist. Return to who you are.* https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/decolonize/2018/04/09/dont-just-resist-return-to-whoyou-are/ (accessed august 2022) as referenced in Datta (2020).
[274] Battiste as cited in Datta (2018a: 12).

(Mathisen 2020:11). But other paths are possible, including what Graburn (1976) calls dynamic relationships, with images being reworked and constantly shifting. Indigenous guides might have different reasons for playing to certain imaginaries, for instance, trying to enhance and sell their product., and tourists are free to reformulate, relearn, critique, and reject.

The hosts acknowledged that they address 'tourist imaginaries' in their work, either by playing to them, or challenging them. Andy Everson responded to a tourist desire to own important Indigenous ceremonial pieces to display on their walls like trophies, by selling only prints to tourists, and keeping masks and regalia strictly for community and ceremonial settings. This separation worked to signal respect for what he described as a tradition of not displaying ceremonial wear on walls, but instead keeping them stored away, ready for use. Addressing tourist imaginaries involves conscious reflection, and in the words of Bresner (2014:135) 'maintaining a level of recognition and familiarity that mirrors the expectations of the public imagination and at the same time, conveying a representation that is locally meaningful and emblematic to the Indigenous hosts.' One way of preventing this seems to be by establishing boundaries and withholding certain practices – sacred practices in particular – for community settings. References to restrictions on sacred matters – things, practices, and ideas – featured in the presentations of all the guides.

Registers that connect indigeneity and spirituality with decolonisation

I have identified four registers on the basis that they were commonly articulated by the six guides: 1) traditions, 2) languages, 3) land, nature and cedar, and 4) therapeutic history. These registers pull on personal stories while also relating to the colonial past of this province. They illustrate how the six individuals use, negotiate, and sometimes challenge tourist imaginaries, and how tourism – as a result – can enable decolonizing from below, as spaces for learning, teaching, and healing.

Traditions

'Tradition' is an established marker of indigeneity and Indigenous religion and a key part of tourist imaginaries.[275] Tsimka pointed to the irony that, practices and beliefs that were once stigmatised as 'satan worshipping' or overlooked are now sought after and celebrated in tourism.[276] 'Tradition' means and enables different things in this context. One involves temporality, with performances of tradition as a way of demonstrating continuity with the past. Working in tourism was often described as 'in keeping with' traditional practices, including how knowledge has been passed on, using totem poles, ceremonies, dance, drums and singing, through to storytelling**.** These tools for communication could be used and presented in sacred and spiritual ways – or not – depending on the setting. Roy described storytelling as a process of accessing truth which he described as spiritual, because 'truth is spirit.' Tana said about her initial fear of singing traditional songs for tourists, that it helped to think that it is the creator who speaks through her.

Practices articulated as traditions were not presented as fixed.[277] Both Andy and Roy spoke about how much they enjoyed playing with different Indigenous spiritual traditions in order to reach out to a wider, more varied audience. Andy's *Star Wars* prints mix iconic contemporary images with local Indigenous art forms, which raises questions as to when and on what grounds something becomes or remains recognisable as Indigenous. From Alix, I learnt how traditions like the 'watchmen' take on new meanings in tourist contexts, and travel beyond their origins, gaining new life in the process. New meanings emerge from usage of ideas and practices from the past. In some spaces today, a "traditional practice" might signal (pan)-indigeneity when it did not in the past. Likewise, what was once spiritual (or categorized retrospectively as such) might return as secular or unsettled in regard to the binary of religion/secular. Totem poles that now stand outside museums, for example, once stood in the grounds as artefacts with labels that rendered them part of a vanishing culture. They are currently open to a variety of interpretations, including continuity with, and reclaiming of the

[275] See for example, Harvey (2016:79) Kraft et al (2017 & 2021).
[276] See Chapter 5:116.
[277] Harvey (2016:79) suggests that tradition is not something 'fixed or neatly packaged', rather 'tradition offers templates and tested knowledge or experience which the current generation is expected to apply and adapt to their contemporary contexts'.

past, and rejection of the colonial regime that removed them. Totem poles are prominent symbols of indigeneity and spirituality on the west coast of Canada, and they can be connected to particular peoples. On his tour of the totem poles, Andy pointed out that some of the 'mythological' stories about the poles could not be shared by him, as he is 'not Haida and can therefore not tell Haida stories.'

Learning and teaching are interwoven in these contexts. Many of the guides talk about needing to re-learn about traditions long denigrated under colonialism. Being guides give them space and time in which to learn and practice. Tana said of singing traditional songs, that she was more comfortable about doing so for tourists then for people in her community; to people who were unlikely to know the details of traditional singing, in contexts which she controlled. Tourism gave her the time to learn about and practice things which she could, when more confident, take back and perform in her community.

Traditions offer tools by which people can orientate, differentiate, position, and make claims about themselves to others. Traditions were used by the guides to legitimate certain claims, but also approached as malleable and open to change, and as resources to choose from. For Tsimka, only ´traditions that fit with her guiding principle of respect for everything' should be reclaimed. Tana spoke about how hard it can be as a woman engaging with traditions in the community, nervous about following protocols properly, to have the confidence to reject certain traditional ways of doing things, like building a canoe.[278] Joyce Green (2007) notes that although embracing the symbols of one's culture and traditions – particularly against the imposition of colonialism – can be a strategy for reclaiming primacy in the world; the power relations embedded must be considered for who decides what tradition is and for whom. There can never be a single cultural version of tradition.

[278] Canadian Political Science scholar, Joyce Green (2007: 26-27), writes about how traditions can be cast as a counter to colonialism; she says of traditions: 'all societies have them; all venerate them, not all members of a society are similarly faithful to them, nor are all societies monolithic in their identification and replication of them[…]but tradition is neither a monolith, now is it axiomatically good, and the notions of what practices were and are essential, how they should be practiced, who may be involved and who is an authority are all open to interpretation… Unless we can have conversations about what traditions are, how they affect men and women in their gendered roles and what the implications of this are, we are moving a powerful socio-political critique off the table.'

Languages

Prohibiting languages was one of the main strategies colonisers used to separate people from their cultures, as language is basic to identity.[279] Because Indigenous languages were banned under colonialism, speaking one's native language can thus be seen today as an act of resilience and survivance. I found it significant that each tour began with the person introducing themselves in their specific Nation's language, followed by a statement that they were in the process of learning that language. There was a ritual tone to these introductions, conveyed by the usage of a fixed structure and script and demonstrating the host´s position as Indigenous guides on the one hand, and the tourists´ position as their guests, on the other.

Speaking a language and explaining that one is in the process of learning that language does several things. It illustrates a people's distinctiveness and highlights diversity within indigeneity. Learning a language and performing that process for tourists works to recall some of what has been lost in the processes of colonisation that have led to the present situation of reclamation. It also points to the future and the hope that is embedded within the effort of learning a language. It invites tourists to witness and even support the processes of reclaiming language and decolonizing.

Using an Indigenous language can help to invoke the spiritual aspects of a place. Alix, for example, spoke about Haida laws, concepts, and place names and how many words in Haida constitute their identity as people 'through the land'.[280] K'odi told tourists the Kwak'wala name for certain animals like whales which he told us translates to mean 'side by side tribe'.[281] Learning new, old and/or different names and words for places and things demonstrates potential for spiritual significance to be embedded in these names. Tsimka, for example, spoke

[279] Robert Philipson has addressed this aspect of colonialism in his book entitled *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992); he outlined how Canada has attempted to eradicate Indigenous languages through a variety of assimilation policies, the residential schools being chief among them. The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission acknowledged these problems, and other commentators have noted that the current constitution of Canada only recognises two colonial languages, English and French, and excludes over 60 Indigenous languages still found across the Nation.[279] Metis scholar Maria Campbell (1973) describes 'how finding voice and healing the spirit is possible in recovery of Indigenous languages.

[280] See Chapter 7:162.

[281] See Chapter 6:130.

about creating new words to fit new contexts, noting that her community had named an industrial site from Nuu-chah-nulth words that meant 'made from blasting'.[282] This example could be a deliberate commentary on the need for such a term – a term that highlights the destruction of the environment.[283] Language is also used to demonstrate claims to land as with the sign welcoming people to Meares Island which reads**:** 'Welcome to Hithuu?is.'[284]

Land, Nature, and Cedar

It is often claimed that Indigenous people have a special and spiritual relationship with the land that counters Western Cartesian logic that separates humans and nature.[285] One of the unique selling points for Indigenous tourism is that guests get to learn about such connections, through live encounters. [286] When she introduces herself, Alix explains that her Haida name means 'spirit of the killer whale' and that her origin story comes from 'sea lion village'.[287] On his tour, K'odi said that Nimpkish river (Gwa'ni) was placed there by the creator to support the many kinds of salmon living in it, and some Kwakwakw'wakw nations are said to be descended from the salmon. This spiritual connection to the land was presented as one of the reasons he was passionate about protecting it. K'odi described the special role animals have played in ceremonies, for example how sea lion whiskers have been used for masks, as they were believed to impart special powers.[288] Spiritual references lift claims beyond the simply political and add a sense of urgency and ultimacy.[289]

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[282] See Chapter 5: 118.

[283] For research that suggests tourism can be used as a vehicle to encourage language use: Greathouse-Amador, (2005), Pietikainen & Holmes (2011). *ITBC*, based on their market research, encourages language use in tourism businesses. Zeppel (2002) Whitney-squire, Wright & Alsop (2017) write about *language-based tourism*, defined as community-centric wherein tourism is viewed as a means to encourage greater language use and increase visibility and accessibility to language.

[284] See Chapter 5:105.

[285]The Cobo report, an influential document that laid the foundation for Indigenous rights and recognition within the UN system, notes the following: It is essential to know and understand the deeply spiritual special relationship between indigenous peoples and their land as basic to their existence as such, and to all their beliefs, customs, traditions, and culture. ... The entire relationship between the spiritual life of indigenous peoples and Mother Earth, and their land has a great many deep-seated implications. (Cobo 1986: Ch. xxi, 26).

[286] Many of the names for the Indigenous nations describe a connection to the land; Ahousaht First Nation for example, means 'people living with their backs to the land and mountains'.

[287] See Chapter 7:162.

[288] See Chapter 6:131.

[289] See Kraft (2021).

A key spiritual invocation of the land was the ubiquitous use and talk of the importance of Cedar wood. Cedar (yellow and western red) trees grow all along the temperate rainforests of the Northwest coast and were referred to by many people I met as 'the tree of life' and a gift from the Creator. Cedar tree wood, its bark, pitch, branches, and roots are used for shelter, clothing, tools, transport, as well as in art and ceremonial wear. Andy spoke about ancestral practice in the use of cedar, in the making of the totem poles and weaving, and through the tour and regalia he wore, he illustrated the contemporary relevance of these practices. Forest walks led by Tana, Tsimka and Alix, all involved stories about the trees, discussion of harvesting practices, noting for example, the saying of prayers asking permission to harvest. Roy's art gallery was built in the style of a longhouse, made with giant planks of cedar, and in his self-depiction in his warrior print he is wearing a cedar helmet. Tana built the canoe made from cedar as a direct way to connect to land and to the spiritual practices, like treating it as a living being. The U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay was also built using cedar and the potlatch room was filled with masks and regalia made from the wood. Cedar is a recognisable part of indigeneity in the region.[290] Anything involving cedar wood: totem poles, signs, canoes, boardwalks, regalia and in art, is therefore a signifier for tourists. Use of cedar also signifies the value of local material utilised in a sustainable way – a value which is widely expected of Indigenous people.

Land is central to colonialism and decolonisation, and as historian Cole Harris (2004) has put it: 'the experienced materiality of colonialism is grounded in the dispossessions and repossessions of land.'[291] The reservation system, which allocated small portions of land to Indigenous peoples and opened the rest for development, started 70 years after the arrival of Europeans in the 1850s. Indigenous peoples had to be put somewhere, so in British Columbia they were placed on reserves. Less than 1% of all the land in BC would become reservations.

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[290] https://www.indigenousbc.com/stories/cedar-is-life (accessed July 2022). https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/cedar/#:~:text=There%20are%20two%20native%20species,smaller%20size%20and%20bushier%20growth (accessed July 2022). https://www.vancouverislandfreedaily.com/community/cedar-trees-weave-deeply-into-lives-of-coastal-first-nations-communities/ (accessed July 2022).

[291] The two paragraphs above summarise relevant elements from Harris' article '*How did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire*.

Epidemics (smallpox, measles, influenza) had already reduced the Indigenous population of the region and some parts of British Columbia became completely depopulated (Harris 2004: 171) In this history as described by Harris, native peoples became detached from their land and their own means of production, and were transformed into wage labourers, dependent on the social relations of capital. The discourse that treated colonial land as laying waste and awaiting development, and its inhabitants as lazy and savage, was 'exceedingly serviceable' for it gave an altruistic veneer to the colonial control of land and peoples which was seen as a cultural imperative and part of moral civilising missions. The imposition of British common law relating to property helped to legitimise this whole process, aided by the development of the Canadian Indian Act. Indigenous peoples were unable to stop this process, but slowed it down and mitigated its effects, engaging in acts of resistance, writing to officials, creating organisations, and bringing legal cases. It was only in the 1990s that the Supreme Court of Canada finally ruled that 'native title' to land has not been extinguished and laid out terms by which it could be identified.

The issue of land claims featured strongly in the tours, performances, and interviews. The guides talked about land that was once theirs, about past and current protests, and evinced a strong sense of stewardship. In tours in the forests and on water they described spiritual ties and special knowledge, often in the language of (globally increasing) notions of eco-spirituality, of Indigenous knowledge as a way of counteracting threats to nature. Relationships to the land and nature were contrasted to industrial extractive and capitalist models described as the dominant approach in the west. Statements like 'logging doesn't fit with Indigenous approaches to the land', or 'we only take what we need', or 'we respect all living things' and 'we have existed on this land for centuries', work to reinforce the idea that Indigenous people have a unique spiritual relationship to the land and nature.

Some of the hosts made distinct political and legal claims to land, often based on spiritual arguments. I was told, for example, that a 'legendary creature' in Nuu-chah-nulth mythology, named Haietlik (used as the image to represent *Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks)*, was a spiritual aid for whalers. The establishment of *Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks* was a direct challenge to industrial logging companies and to national programs like *Parks Canada* and asserted a claim on behalf of the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation. This claim was based on not having signed away rights in past

treaties, and on the need for a sustainable stewardship of the land, in stark contrast to the capitalist ownership and resource extraction approach to land management that Tsimka sees being taken by the Canadian provincial and federal governments. Both Tsimka and Tana spoke about the 'war of the woods' protest to demonstrate the long-term fight to protect the land. Similarly, the protests in Athlii Gwaii which led to the (re)naming of Haida Gwaii and Gwaii Haanas, and the re-establishment of the watchmen from whom guests ask permission to come ashore, are developments that tourism has helped to facilitate. Just like *Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks,* the Haida watchmen programme uses a logo with spiritual connotations. The watchmen are represented by three figures carved at the top of a totem pole; figures used as a talisman against outside threats.

Tourism has facilitated a presence, having 'eyes and ears' on the land. By being out on the boat each day K'odi could monitor the Norwegian owned fish farms that were damaging the local ecosystem. By building his healing lodge he hoped to curtail other businesses or industries that were not part of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation from operating on that land. One sign of the value that hosts placed on the land was the fact that they set restrictions regarding areas that were out of bounds and/or reserved for community members. The restrictions were either explained in person or shown by a sign, typically both. I saw these signs most commonly at graveyards and by longhouses, and understood them to mark tourists are guests, and as such to be expected to respect the rights of their hosts. Given a history where this has not been the case, this assertion can be empowering. Similarly, the watchmen programme operating in the Haida Gwaii, which has started to spread across British Columbia and Canada wide, is a way to perform sovereignty; by asking to come ashore, guests are prompted to consider rights to the land.

One 'tourist imaginary' that pervades discourses around indigeneity is that they inhabit a wilderness. The idea of wilderness is rooted in, and perpetuated through, colonial narratives and practices which are important in the formation of settler colonial constructions of territory.[292] It is fundamentally a colonial vision and is central to settler colonialism's notions of *terra nullius* and the Frontier.[293] Geographer Bruce Braunn (2002 & 2003) argues that the

[292] For example: Cranon (1996) Corliss (2019) Harding (2020).
[293] Wolfe (2006) Harris (2004) Shipley (2021).

notion of wilderness suggests that nature lies outside of history, and by so doing denies other histories, specifically those of Indigenous peoples. Through representations of the wild frontier 'the Indigenous worldview, the land and the people have been radically transformed in the spatial image of the west.' (Smith 1991:51). In other words, Indigenous space has been colonised.' Indigenous peoples are either collapsed into the notion of wilderness, namely, made part of nature, or have somehow disappeared to later re-enter the scene as protectors and guardians of that so-called wilderness (*Ibid).*

Iconic images of supposedly vast and untouched nature have been and still are used to sell and market Canada to tourists, investors, and settlers.[294] British Columbia was once marketed as untamed and its resources unexploited. Nature plays a huge role in the Canadian narrative and has helped forge an 'imagined community'; ideas of wilderness are highly valued in the national rhetoric.[295] Tana and Tsimka made a point of informing tourists that the area they were visiting was not a 'wilderness', but rather well cared for ancestral gardens.[296] Non-indigenous guides are interpreting the world around them in scientific ways, Tsimka said, compartmentalising and separating, whereas the Tla-o-qui-aht approach teaches that 'everything is one and everything effects everything else – hishuk-ish-tsawalk.**'** Challenging notions of wilderness opens questions about how to conceptualise a place and its histories, corrects perceptions, and teach guests new ways of thinking.

Therapeutic Histories

Indigenous Tourism tells people that there are Indigenous people here. By providing face-to-face communication, the tours can place stories in the 'here and now', offer personal context and meaning, and ground references to past colonial oppression. The six guides told grounded histories, many of which revolved around residential schools, the role of the Church and Christian missionaries, the potlatch and the potlatch ban, and the role of women**.**

[294] https://www.researchgate.net/profil.e/Bill-Borrie/publication/299484408_Trends_in_recreation_use_and_management_of_wilderness/links/57053c0508aef745f717388f/Trends-in-recreation-use-and-management-of-wilderness.pdf#page=9 (accessed August 2022).
[295] Nelson (1989) Thorpe (2012) Harding (2020).
[296] See Chapter 3:80 and Chapter 5:112.

Andy Everson described the residential schools and Christianity 'as the driving force behind the assimilationist policies that destroyed the fabric of the communities.' On a tour to Meares Island, Tsimka pointed out where the different residential schools in the region had once stood, and some buildings still stand, run by the Catholic Church. She spoke about the range of abuses the children had suffered and how parents who resisted sending their children to the schools were put in jail; she defined it as a generational trauma. K'odi, by recounting his father's experience in front of the empty space where St Michael's residential school once stood, exemplified just how recently this occurred.

The potlatch is a critical signifier of indigeneity and spirituality for Indigenous peoples on the north-west coast. The masks and regalia used in the potlatch can be found in museums and cultural centres all over the province. The potlatch ban is highlighted as one of the most damaging parts of colonial legislation. Even dances associated with the potlatch, such as the *Tamanawas,* were prohibited and seen as evidence of devil worship.[297] All six guides described the potlach as a multifaceted ceremony, as – in Andy`s words - a place where 'we do our legal business', 'an essential part of our society', 'a way to symbolise wealth', 'a way of passing down knowledge', 'a ceremony that combines elements of culture, traditions, legalities and spiritualities', and a 'really important societal ceremony which encompasses our governance, our spirituality, feasting and economy.' [298]

When the government of Canada banned the potlatch in 1885, they labelled it simply as a festival, saying in the proclamation:

> Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the potlatch [...] or in the Indian dance known as the 'Tamanawas' is guilty of a misdemeanour and shall be liable to imprisonment.[299]

Use of the term 'festival' can be read as an attempt to diminish the importance of this multifunctional ceremony; none of my hosts ever referred to it as such. The ban lasted until 1951, during which time many of the clothes and masks used in the potlatch were confiscated

[297] Bracken (1997).
[298] See Chapter 2:40.
[299] Indian Act (1884).

and sold. Andy argued that one reason for banning the potlatch was the sharing of wealth, which contrasted with Victorian values of accumulating wealth. The ban failed, he added, and if anything the potlatch became bigger in response.[53] Whilst the significance of the potlatch is discussed on tours, it was not an experience that I saw on offer to tourists.

All the guides mentioned the importance of women in their Indigenous communities in the past. In several cases women were ascribed special qualities and roles, as knowledge keepers, healers and as leaders. Where people commented on the subordinate role women play in their societies and communities today, they blamed the influence of colonialism and the Church. I often heard how many communities considered themselves to be matrilineal – describing how the wealth, which was regularly described as knowledge not money, was passed down through women In her book, *Restricting Relations: Indigenous self-determination, Governance, and Gender*, Rauna Kuokkanen (2019:15) writes about Indigenous feminism and argues for the inclusion of colonialism as an analytical category for conceptualising Indigenous peoples' subjugation in general and Indigenous women's oppression in particular. Kuokkanen draws on Coast Salish writer Lee Miracle's (1988) book *I am women, A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism* in arguing that colonialism radically undermined and transformed gender roles to subordinate, marginalise and exclude Indigenous women. Miracle and other feminist writers discuss how this oppression of women has been internalised and plays out today in Indigenous conceptions of 'nationhood, self-determination movements and self-government structures.'[300] (Kuokkanen 2019:15-16) It was not until 1951 that changes to the *Indian act* allowed the possibility for women to become officially involved in reserve politics. By claiming the root of misogyny and gender-based discrimination lies in Christianity and colonialism, equality and respect of women could then be framed as an act of resistance and a return to more traditional ways of being. Tana, Tsimka and Alix each spoke about their gender as a motivational factor for their actions, hoping to break new ground, but also about their leadership roles being questioned because of their gender. Tana commented that there is an eagerness in the community to see women in these roles but worries sometimes when she engages in public speaking that she is required or heard

[300] On Indigenous feminism and colonialism: Dhamoon (2015), Green (2007) Suzack, Huhndorf, Perreault & Barman (2010) Arvie, Tuck & Morill (2013).

as speaking for all women. One way Tana manages this is to look to her ancestors for guidance. Tsimka spoke about how important it is for younger people to see women in these roles to aspire to them for themselves.

The histories told within Indigenous tourism generally tend to be 'therapeutic histories', (Niezen, 2009) where positive elements of the past and present are highlighted, and negative aspects are excoriated. The dominant discourses are used as a reference point with which to interact. One of the most important aspects of 'therapeutic history' is its potential to change for the better the way members of a community feel about themselves. This positive feeling, Niezen (2009:150) argues, is the main criterion for determining what should be included in the histories. Choosing which narratives to tell is part of a process of self-discovery and affirming collective identity. By highlighting the achievements of one's ancestors, a sense of responsibility and vision for the future is provided.

Tourism provides a setting for both guides and visitors to discuss history. Tourists often come expecting to learn, hopeful of reinforcing positive ideas and images of Indigenous peoples. The guides make use of this space by meeting those expectations, with some critical discussion of past oppression. As Niezen (2009:150) writes:

> **'**From the point of view of those struggling to define themselves in the context of ongoing dispossession and poverty the development of a therapeutic approach to the past follows from the idea that representations of the accomplishments of one's ancestors are a vital healing inheritance. Stories from the past comprise an essence of one's collective being that can be nurtured and drawn from in times of need under conditions of rapid change and intergenerational rupture.'

There is a danger that 'therapeutic history' could slip into propaganda, romanticise, oversimplify, essentialise people and their histories, and work to divide people, but Niezen (2009:168) points out that all histories have this potential and that self-representation – the process of guides choosing what to say and how to say it is 'actually part of a creative process of becoming.' Tourism can in this sense serve to 'increase visibility and the expression and reformulation of a peoples' history and identity in a public arena' (Taylor 2000:281) Clifford (1989: 152-153) asks – how people enmeshed in this disorderly world create an identity that

has continuity, especially when there is no script. Indigenous Tourism is providing spaces for the guides to write that script.[301]

Religion-making in a decolonial mode [302]

'Spirituality' is the favored term among the formal institutions of Indigenous tourism in BC, and among the six guides, all of whom contrast it to 'religion'. Usage resembles what is commonly referred to as 'the new spiritualities in contemporary western societies', but also differ from this complex in significant ways.[303] Among shared traits are a favoring of holism, animism, and healing, a rejection of doctrines and dogma, and views of religions as suppressive forces and institutions, even as colonizing devices. Adding to these, and present in the stories of the six guides, is the colonial past, and efforts to overcome it. By religion making in a decolonial mode, I mean to invoke this sense of resistance and reaction. Corresponding to the stress on individual healing for the new spiritualities, is for decolonial modes a focus on healing of people and protecting their heritage. Corresponding to self-help-books, are attempts to learn from the past (as conveyed by books, exhibits etc.) as a resource for moving forward.

'To be Indigenous is to compare, across scales and relative to context.'(Kraft & Johnson 2017: 13) Colonialism and the nation state frame identity claims by contrast. This also goes for spirituality. Religion is tied to colonial experience, particularly regarding the Church's role with residential schools. The six guides, each in their own way, presented a spirituality that was open, integrated into a worldview, could not be easily separated from other aspects of living, and was not concerned with proselytising. Conversely, religion was described as dogmatic, fear-based, oppressive, rule bound, imposing, and institutional. Values and

[301] Clifford as quoted in Cruickshank (1998:114).

[302] Markus Dressler (2019) has spoken of four ways in which 'religion making' occurs: from above, from below, from a pretended 'outside', and through cultural encounters. In this dissertation it might be possible to see overlaps between each of these approaches. The guides are responding to old repressions in the form of 'religion from above', hence their open rejection of the use of the term 'religion'. They are involved in making religion (spirituality) from below, much of it takes place through encounters.

[303] Heelas & Woodhead (2004).

practices were similarly contrasted to colonial approaches, as with 'grabbing mentality' and industrial approaches juxtaposed to care for the land, and the potlatch juxtaposed to ideas of wealth accumulation.

Tourism is a performative space. The guides drew on diverse resources to perform and communicate their indigeneity and spirituality, including canoes, totem poles, regalia, bodily adornments made from cedar wood, songs, dances, storytelling, art, materials such as copper, languages, names, protocols, signs, and boardwalks. And certain words like, chiefs, ancestors, feathers, legacy, values, supernatural figures, journey, elder, circles and ceremonies, creator, prayers, protection, prophesy, healing, connection, eagle, pipe. Kraft (2021:187) discusses how such registers operate as a 'dynamic pool of resources that enable articulations of Indigenous religion – and therefore its recognition.' Ancestors and the creator were common articulations and singing and dancing were often described as ways to connect with them.
Boundaries and binaries of the secular and spiritual were challenged by the guides. Spiritual aspects were entangled in the everyday, as a part of languages, traditions, land, and histories. However, spiritual practices, like the potlatch ceremony were deliberately separated to mark their sacredness**.** Certain things, spaces and practices could be shifted towards or away from the spiritual depending on the setting and audience. Totem poles, for example, were given special significance when erected by a chief, when used in ceremonies, when used for personal connections with the creator, and they can be used as teaching tools to communicate with tourists with spiritual aspects pointedly removed.

Spirituality is a core ingredient of indigeneity both in terms of tourist imaginaries and expectations and in the processes of reconciliation and decolonization. Colonialism in its various forms has disconnected Indigenous people – from their languages, traditions, land, and histories; prohibited practices and imposed ideas of how to behave and what to believe. As noted in the registers above, spirituality was entangled in all these themes. The guides through tourism and in response to these frames and imaginaries have articulated their spiritualities in a variety of ways. Spirituality constitutes a resource that enables connection, reclamation, creation, and revitalization.

Teaching was a core motivation for all the guides. Teaching people how to become guides, training the young in the skills and knowledge needed to do the work was what Tsimka said she enjoyed most about her job. Tana described how tourism gives you the time to do that cultural work, to dig into the past and dig up those teachings. The teaching was designed to disrupt, historicize, and inform. Andy stated that he enjoyed showing that his culture was 'alive and relevant' and that he hoped his work could serve as a gateway for tourists to learn more. Alix described tourism as a megaphone, helping to spread important messages from a tiny island. Alix said that when you are fighting you must be loud and proud, and tourism has 'helped get our stories heard'. Healing comes from the learning and teaching, from the pride that comes with sharing, and having something special to share, from being heard, and as Tana said, from breaking the silence that has been imposed on them for so long.

In talking with these six guides about why they were engaging in tourism and what they hoped to achieve, I became aware that tourism was being presented not only as a valuable source of employment, but as something being used to 'learn, teach, heal'. This approach aligns with how Indigenous tourism is promoted in the region. Through tourism they are learning and teaching about their past, their identities and languages, and reconnecting with their land, practices, spiritualities, communities, and environment. In so doing, they are putting decolonisation into practice.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This dissertation contributes to a growing body of work that explores contemporary articulations of indigeneity and Indigenous religion, and to a similarly growing field of scholarship on Indigenous tourism. It is based primarily on interviews with six Indigenous guides working in Indigenous tourism in Vancouver Island and the Haida Gwaii (British Columbia). The following three questions have been addressed: 1) How did the guides present their work in tourism? 2) How were indigeneity and spirituality articulated in these presentations? 3) How are these articulations related to processes of decolonization?

My research involved living on Vancouver Island for over fifteen months between 2017 and 2019, during which time I attended tours, conducted interviews, and got a sense of the contexts in which my interlocutors lived and worked. Among these, and of key importance to this dissertation, is the presence of a (recent) colonial past, and current attempts to deal with it, particularly as manifested by a state-driven project of reconciliation, and a broader process of decolonisation.

I have opted for a bottom-up approach, both regarding methods and the design of the thesis. The first part of the thesis is devoted to the six guides successively, to foreground their voices and perspectives. While neither representative nor exhaustive, their voices exemplify the complexities of contemporary indigeneity and Indigenous religion and speak to the broader contexts in which they live and work.

Following the micro-level approach of the first six chapters, is a focus on shared registers, formats, and political contexts in chapter eight. This includes a discussion of the registers of indigeneity and spirituality which have emerged from the preceding chapters, and ways in which they relate to processes of decolonization. And it includes reflections on how the guides negotiate 'tourist imaginaries' on the one hand, and decolonizing efforts on the other. I have

characterised what is occurring as 'learn, teach, heal'. Below I elaborate on this claim regarding the overall results of this study.

'Learn, teach, heal'

'Learn, teach, heal' emerged from my encounters with the guides, as basic to their work as they describe it, and involving their personal development as well as near and distant *selves* and *others;* tourists, the local Indigenous communities to which they belong, and even the long-term project of reconciliation and decolonization.

My encounters with the guides resemble and differ from that of other tourists. Among the methodological lessons – foregrounded by all the guides and directed explicitly to my work as a researcher – was to be careful about stereotypes, to provide space for complexity, particularities, and to respect boundaries. They made it clear that they do not speak in one voice. They relate to indigeneity and spirituality in different ways. And they have agency; Indigenous Tourism is not something that is happening *to* them, and their role in this industry does not make them or the practices they choose to share inauthentic. Instead, they are looking to learn, and teach other guides and tourists – and in that process heal. My role as a 'tourist researcher' has helped me to appreciate just how research is negotiated through encounters. I have been encouraged in this approach by the work of Harvey (2017: 89) with his suggestion that 'guesthood' encourages researchers to afford full respect to their hosts 'and to learn locally appropriate etiquettes of doing respect.'

'Learn, teach, heal' emphasises agency, process, and change, in this thesis connected to 'becoming Indigenous' on the part of the guides, in the context of encounters with tourists. It thus challenges notions of indigeneity and Indigenous religion as fixed in the past and lacking a future. Learning signals change and development. Teaching denotes knowledge, rather than merely entertainment; something normally associated with tourism, and a relationship between teacher and pupil, rather than spectacles only.

Teaching implies learning, and for all parties involved. For the younger guides, tourism offered a space in which to deepen their knowledge of the land, and the traditions connected to, and

a practice ground free from the rules and hierarchies that might exist in their communities. For the older guides tourism offered a way to share their knowledge, experiment with traditional matters, and develop 'gateways'; channels through which tourists can be invited in, learn more, and join them in their causes. Spirituality comes forth as a key matter of sharing, but also as more of a concern than other aspects of traditions and culture, particularly in the form of ceremonies. For instance, the potlatch ceremony was consistently separated from tourism.

'To teach' signals control in these contexts: over what to share, to whom and in which circumstances. And it signals competence, authority, and a responsibility. While obviously a relative form of authority, the guides are in charge of what to share, and how, during tours (and in interviews with me). They all described opportunities for celebrating their cultures and spirituality, along with satisfaction from doing so. They all demonstrated ownership over traditions, and how to practice them.

Finally, the invitation – even encouragement – implied in 'learn, teach, heal', and based on shared notions of these three practices is connected: in healing based on teaching and learning, and tourism as a therapeutic practice carrying the potential for healing. Healing, moreover, is connected to decolonization. Contrasting the focus on self-development in the new spiritualities, is for Indigenous spirituality, in this context, a focus on shared wounds and some sort of collective process of recovery and reclaiming.

Spirituality and indigeneity

The term spirituality was the preferred choice of the six guides, and the term normally used in Indigenous tours more broadly. When specific Indigenous words were invoked, the guides often used the Nuu-chah-nulth word 'Hishuk-ish-tsawalk', which means 'everything is one'. Spirituality was consistently contrasted to organised religion, and statements were frequently made about what spirituality is *not*. Common registers included a sense of community, belonging, shared values and a close and special relationship to the land and to nature. Commonly used metaphors include spirituality as a journey, as about healing, and as providing connectivity, between peoples, the land, the past, present, and future. Spiritual

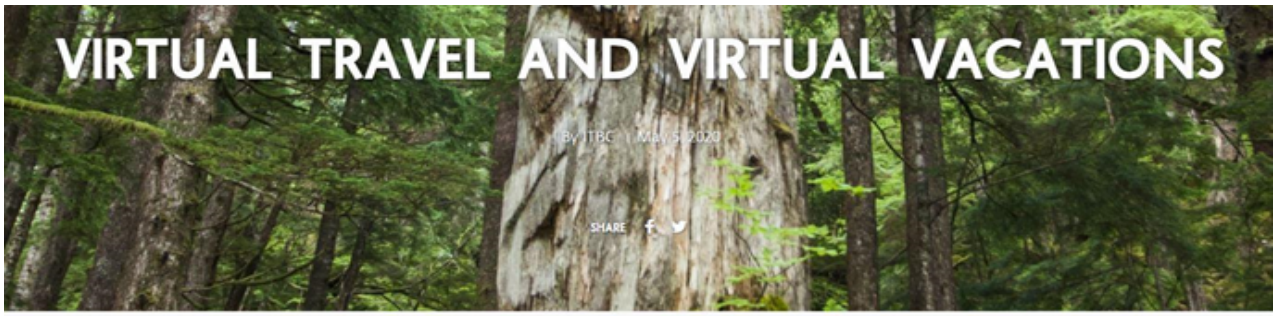
claims were made through recognisable words and images of indigeneity, like relationships with the land, showing the close links between the two markers of identity.

Chapter eight uses the term 'religion making in a decolonial mode', thereby to highlight the mutual dependency of religion making and decolonial practices in this context. This is religion making in the sense of reclaiming, restoring, keeping alive and developing, in the wake of colonial attacks and destruction, and as conscious effort. Boundaries between the secular and religion are bound to be blurred in such contexts, and to involve politics and identity-matters.

Tourism provides not the only or necessarily the most important spaces of returns, but it is one of them, and as I hope I have demonstrated, possibly among the most organised. The results – in the sense of what I have referred to as shared themes and registers – are grounded in local lands, practices, and traditions, but resonate with globalising discourses on Indigenous religion, such as holism, eco-values, nature, animism, kin-centrism.

Indigeneity was primarily connected to local traditions, and the specific lands and landscapes to which they belonged. British Columbia is host to over fifty Indigenous nations. Acknowledging the diversity of practices, teachings, and beliefs as grounded in specific places, were important to all the guides. Upscaled notions of indigeneity were most regularly applied to the Indigenous peoples with borders on the Pacific Ocean, based on shared traditions and practices. Articulations of a global scale were primarily made through notions of colonialism, as common to and connecting Indigenous peoples from around the world.

As I complete revising this dissertation in 2022, coronavirus has affected many things, including tourism. As with so many areas of life, tourism has had to change and become a more virtual experience. This will affect how messages are communicated and understood, and it might also present new opportunities to share Indigenous stories and messages in ways that reach even wider audiences. Whatever happens next, I hope that this study has demonstrated the value of using tourism as a site through which to explore indigeneity and spirituality.



WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER, JUST A LITTLE FURTHER APART.

Indigenous People are the original innovators and land keepers, expert at responding to changes in the natural and human environment. During this time, Indigenous tourism operators turn to online tools to share their knowledge and inspire your future travel with virtual tours and vacations.

Explore the Indigenous cultures and natural beauty of British Columbia's six diverse regions from the comfort of your home. Whale watch on the Salish Sea or witness grizzlies gorging on new spring growth in the Great Bear Rainforest with video tours. Learn to weave with cedar live on social media or listen to audio files of songs and stories. Celebrate our connection to nature and each other without leaving your laptop.

Indigenous Tourism BC invites knowledge and adventure seekers to connect to Indigenous cultures and communities online with virtual tours and vacations.

For now, we pause, stay in, and dream of later. But take notes–firsthand adventure is on its way.

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