Stories that Create:

Foundation Posts Constructing a Frame for Cross-Cultural Knowledge Engagement

by

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Foreword

This major research paper plays a significant role in my plan of study. The three main areas of concentration as outlined in my Plan of Study are: Foundation Posts of Indigenous Knowledge (IK); Cultural and Environmental Education – a Bridge for Perceptual Evolution; and Colonialism and Ecoracism as a Barrier to Equitable Dialogue. While the paper focuses upon the foundation posts it does also deal at length with aspects of environmental thought and issues of colonialism in Canada.

My investigation concentrates on identifying the existence of culturally significant foundation posts that cut across various Indigenous Nations and regional territories. The phrase "foundation posts" is derived from the customary importance of Long House posts. House posts are an important aspect of the construction of Long Houses, a historically significant style of residence created by Indigenous communities on the West Coast of Canada. These posts are situated either as external or internal architectural support structures. Whether the posts are utilized inside or outside of a Long House, the posts hold great significance from both a cultural/historical construct and as a social system identifier. The posts identified the kin family who inhabited the Longhouse and were carved with the figures of ancestors portraying mythical/legendary events of a family's history, origin stories, key relationships and/or family rights to hunting, fishing and gathering territories. I consider the model of foundation posts to strengthen and sustain the values, principles and traditions of Indigenous knowledges, much as the house posts support a history and kinship of the people who built and resided in the Longhouse.

My research analyzes the presence of culturally significant foundation posts of principles and knowledge, which occur in Indigenous Nations across Canada. With the existence of these

foundation posts there is an opportunity to consider the potential to advance the present discourse and ideology of governments and external groups in interaction with Indigenous peoples and communities. I also consider the impacts of historical and contemporary colonialism on dialogue and relations. In particular I weigh the impacts of colonialism upon the stability and continuation of these foundation posts within Indigenous Nations and Canada today. The interconnections between the foundation posts and the environment are also highlighted, potentially functioning as a pathway to a recreated and evolving discourse between humanity and the natural world.

This major paper draws on and contributes to all three components of my area of concentration. Furthermore, this paper is a key element in fulfilling many of the learning objectives in my overall plan of study.

Abstract

This major research paper examines the presence of culturally significant "foundation posts" of principles and knowledge which, I propose, can be seen as connecting diverse Indigenous Nations across Canada. The distinctiveness of these nations is exhibited in their cultural ceremonies, stories, customs and traditions, as well as the ecology of each region but there still seems to be a deeper, intangible that appears to link this diversity. I developed the phrase "foundation posts", to discuss fundamental themes, by linking the principles which sustain Indigenous Knowledge (IK) with the customary importance of Long House posts. House posts are an important aspect of the construction of Long Houses, a historically significant style of residence created by Indigenous communities on the West Coast of Canada. By considering these foundation posts from the perspective of particular Indigenous cultural traditions, we may nurture a set of protocols for equitable, respectful discourse.

My research was conducted by utilizing the methodology as outlined by Shawn Wilson in *Research is Ceremony, Indigenous Research Methods*. The focus of the methodology in *Research is Ceremony* is the value of relationships. Wilson describes how research begins with the telling of a story, someone's story, and then the researcher analyzes it as well as the relationship between the story and these interrelationships. In particular, I have incorporated Wilson's methodology by recounting a story from each Indigenous community, which illustrates the potential foundation posts of that particular community, nation, or band. In particular, I consider the stories of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Stó:lō and Cree. Each story allows me to explore and pursue any relationships leading to further cross-cultural foundation posts. This permits me to utilize Wilson's methodology centering on relationships but introducing aspects of storytelling, a key element in the oral traditions of Indigenous peoples.

My analysis classified analogous words or phrases in exploring comparable foundation posts. I searched for thematic relationships between the principles, similarity of values or process rather than identical terminology. For the thematic analysis I recorded sentences and contextualized words, which were utilized in descriptions of principles or values. The foundation posts are the result of the thematic analysis I conducted from my literary review of core texts. These foundation posts are those which were either discussed directly and/or were thematically recognized across the Nuu-chah-nulth, Stó:lō and Cree nations.

The stories are the lessons that each foundation post presents for us to search for the richer meanings within each post, both independently and mutually. These may be essential principles to consider if humanity hopes to restore and reconstruct the ongoing relationships they have with the environment and one another. The stories of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Stó:lō and Cree, may connect us to a deeper part of ourselves and our collective memories. Indigenous stories can link people to the wholeness of relationships, where interconnections with the earth, land and all of life are underpinning all other relationships.

Dedication

To Sarah and Grandma Voss, for inspiring me each in your own way.

Acknowledgements

There are so many that I wish to thank, that I will must certainly forget someone in the long list of those that I am a grateful too, so to those I forget I ask for your forgiveness.

I would first like to acknowledge the three writers and their texts which I utilized as my core texts and which upon I based much of my research and analysis. Their insights and respectful discourse of the worldviews of their peoples inspired and humbled me and I hope that my work is in some small way a tribute to them.

- Richard Atleo (*Umeek*) – Tsawalk, A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview; Nuu-chah-nulth
- Jo-ann Archibald (*Q'um Q'um Xiiem*) – Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit; Stó:lō
- Shawn Wilson – Research is Ceremony, Indigenous Research Methods; Opaskawayah Cree

I would like to thank and acknowledge the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations, the traditional territory on which York University resides and where I have lived and carried out my research for the last two years.

To my supervisor, Dr. Ravi de Costa, for his generosity of time, unfailing encouragement and his scholarly advice in helping me bring my work to life. My advisor, Dr. Timothy Leduc, for his valuable advice over the last two years. Dr. Leesa Fawcett, for her insightful wisdom and unwavering kindness. To Dr. Ray Rogers who inspired my heart and spirit to continue to search for answers. Dr. Heather Shpuniarsky for her wisdom and scholarship in Indigenous knowledge, history and issues. And to all the faculty who so generously offered their time in and outside of the classroom.

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Prologue

In deference to the many Indigenous writers and scholars for whom I am indebted in the research that this paper is constructed upon, I write this prologue. In much of my reading and research over the last two years I have noted that many Indigenous scholars and writers begin their writings with a short prologue to locate themselves either within their work and/or their world. As I write this I wonder how I locate myself, writing as an academic and a white settler, as I begin to write about the worldviews of Indigenous peoples on whose land I now live, unjustly and unlawfully.

My family's background is mostly Irish and German, although there are also healthy doses of Scottish, Dutch and Swedish in my lineage. My family are settlers and have been for four generations, five if you include my daughter. I am, or have been, a mother, daughter, sister, wife and friend. Most of my life has been spent in British Columbia, on the West Coast of Canada. I grew up always having a close relationship to the land and the myriad of creatures that call this world home. I spent much of my childhood camping, riding, hiking and spent a great deal of time in the forests, lakes, and rivers.

To this day I have a deep and abiding love for the mountains and ocean of my home. My other enduring love has always been stories, whether in a book or being told by someone. It is my hope that this paper honours the authors of my core texts but any errors in my interpretations, analysis and conclusions are my own and in no way reflects upon the excellence of their works.

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Introduction

This major research paper examines the presence of culturally significant "foundation posts" of principles and knowledge which, I propose, can be seen as linking across diverse Indigenous Nations across Canada. The distinctiveness of these nations is exhibited in their cultural ceremonies, stories, customs and traditions, as well as the ecology of each region but there still seems to be a deeper, intangible that appears to link this diversity. These foundation posts may also offer another perspective of Canada's colonial history and the dominant settler ideology which fostered the aggressive stand taken with both the Indigenous peoples and the environment. In further considering these foundation posts from the perspective of particular Indigenous cultural traditions, it may even be to nurture a set of protocols to advance the present discourse ideology of governments and external groups in interaction with Indigenous peoples and communities. Of particular interest to this paper is what such an approach can offer our critical dialogues surrounding environmental matters in a Canadian context. "The world is changing faster than our understanding of it" (Cruikshank 1998, p. 50), and thus we need a social response that can help to foster internal cultural changes in our rapidly changing world. This is what I propose that Indigenous foundation posts can offer Indigenous and non-Indigenous discourse in Canada.

The phrase "foundation posts" is derived from the concept of linking the principles that sustain Indigenous knowledge with the traditional prominence of the house posts of a Longhouse. I am utilizing the metaphor of foundation posts and the construction of a Long House to present a symbolic context and structure for this paper. In particular I wish for this imagery to interweave the stories and the storying of the principles.

House posts are an important aspect of the construction of Long Houses, a historically significant style of residence created by Indigenous communities on the West Coast of Canada. Although there are also Longhouse structures on the East Coast, in particular the Haudenosaunee, which translates as People of the Longhouse, I have chosen to focus on the West Coast tradition for my foundation posts. This is in part due to the symbolic nature of the house posts in West Coast Indigenous communities as well as my personal connection to the region. These posts were situated as either external or internal architectural support structures. Whether the posts were utilized inside or outside of a Longhouse, the posts held great significance from both a cultural/historical construct and as a social system identifier. The posts identified the kin family who inhabited the Longhouse and were carved with the figures of ancestors portraying mythical/legendary events of a family's history, origin stories, key relationships and/or family rights to hunting, fishing and gathering territories. The model of foundation posts can be considered as supporting and sustaining the values, principles and traditions of Indigenous knowledges much as the house posts supported a history and kinship of the people who built and resided in the Longhouse.

The significance of the foundation posts in the West Coast Longhouses is evident in the cultural and traditional references within their social structures. Structures that take us far beyond the continuing narrow, environmental academic frameworks of Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) which separates knowledge from its cultural heart. As shown by the many texts that reference TEK rather than Indigenous knowledge (IK) but several key texts have also expressed concern regarding the academic and/or non-indigenous labelling of segments of Indigenous knowledge systems, such as TEK. These publications articulate an apprehension that the potentially erroneous descriptors are in fact another form of colonialism

and may not be an accurate term for the holistic and inclusive nature of IK (Berkes 2008, Leduc 2010, Evering 2012). Consequently, I have chosen to utilize the term Indigenous knowledge (or IK) for my research, as it is my view that IK is the most encompassing of the phrases thus far in my reading. It is also my understanding that ecological knowledge is not expressed separately within IK systems, but rather as an element of a greater whole and I believe this to be an important distinction when conducting my research.

In drawing upon this discourse on the diversity and breadth of Indigenous knowledge, it is important to highlight that present day terminology for First People's is varied and often disputed. Archibald notes that often "terms such as 'First Nations,' 'Aboriginal,' 'Indigenous,' and 'Indian' (were) interchangeably" (2008, p. xi) applied. While Michell highlights the structure of, "The term Indigenous (which) refers to the original peoples (global – wide) who have a long-standing connection, relationship, and occupancy of a particular geographical land base" (2013, p. 4). Additionally in *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith states that, " 'Indigenous peoples' is a relatively recent term which emerged in the 1970's out of the struggles primarily of the American Indian Movement (AIM), and the Canadian Indian Brotherhood. It is a term that internationalizes the experiences, the issues, and the struggles of some of the world's colonized peoples" (2002, p. 7). The United Nations has not adopted a formal definition for indigenous peoples but rather the organization has developed a "modern understanding" for the term, indigenous including, "self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member; historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; strong link to territories; distinct social, economic or political systems; distinct language, culture and beliefs; and resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments

and systems as distinctive peoples and communities (United Nations, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2015).

Finally, the term Indigenous is also "increasingly being used by Indigenous scholars in published works in reference to individuals or groups of people who have a longstanding relationship with a particular place prior to European contact. The term is also commonly used at the international level" (Michell 2013, p. 3). Therefore the terminology I will utilize in this paper for the First People's will be Indigenous, which for the purposes of this paper will encompass all aboriginal groups in Canada inclusive of First Nations, Metis and Inuit. It is not my intention to infer that these groups are uniform nor to diminish the diversity of these communities, rather it is a term that I use following various Indigenous thinkers to help consider that which connects. In fact, the approach I take to these Indigenous foundation posts is supported in diversely grounded cultural understandings that are told by particular respected Indigenous voices.

I conducted an in-depth review of select texts from Indigenous leaders and scholars from three regions across Canada. The first text is *Tsawalk, A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* by Richard Atleo, the Nuu-chah-nulth region is on the West Coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. The next manuscript is by Jo-Ann Archibald of the Stó:lō nation *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*. The Stó:lō nation's region rests along the Fraser River in British Columbia. The last text is *Research is Ceremony, Indigenous Research Methods* by Shawn Wilson of the Opaskwayak Cree from the Saskatchewan/Pasquia Rivers area.

These authors were selected, as they are Indigenous scholars, who write from within a worldview of their home communities. Additionally, the books were selected because of the intimate and in-depth discourse of each author's view of their peoples' values and traditions. I

considered including other Indigenous peoples and regions but given the limited length that was allowable for my Master's work I needed to limit my scope of inquiry to only three traditions at this time. In particular I would have preferred to have utilized a more exhaustive list of Indigenous scholars and authors but once again owing to the constraints of my program guidelines it was not possible.

These texts became the core of my research method and allowed for me to perform a thematic analysis of the words, phrases and themes to determine the presence of foundation posts. A full summary and description of the methodology and analysis that I employed in my research will be presented in chapter one. The unique perspectives offered in each of these texts will orient each chapter through the words and stories of these respected authors. The chapters will build upon each other as well as the related interdisciplinary research of Indigenous worldviews and principles as I begin to construct the foundation posts.

This major paper is broken down into four chapters. The first chapter lays the groundwork for the following chapters by examining the reasons for my research; the importance of, structure for and environmental values in Indigenous knowledge; the impacts of colonialism on Indigenous knowledge; the composition of and stories which construct the foundation posts; and finally the methodology which was employed in this research paper. Each of the following chapters focuses upon an Indigenous group within Canada and the foundation posts of each of these nations. The Nuu-chah-nulth worldview is considered in chapter two. Chapter three reviews the principles of the Stó:lō Nation, while chapter four contemplates the values of the Cree peoples.

I consider each chapter of this paper as a story of principles that will guide us on a journey as we search for the foundation posts to support and strengthen the Long House that we are

building. Stories are the spirit of many Indigenous people and I believe they can lead us to a deeper understanding of the significance of these foundation posts and maybe even of ourselves. So now I will begin to build and story these foundation posts.

Building and Storying Foundation Posts

This chapter constructs the groundwork for looking upon the principles and stories of the foundation posts of Indigenous people in Canada. Before looking at issues around Indigenous knowledge (IK), colonialism, and outlining my methodology, I want to start with why am I concerned with foundation posts and related questions including: Are there comparable principles across Indigenous communities within Canada and could the knowledge of these values be beneficial for equitable discourse? Could this knowledge nurture the relationships between groups and the environment by way of forming a context for a novel set of protocols for discourse? In many ways my interest in foundation posts started in 2010 when I travelled to Australia for a conference. While at the conference I met a number of Maori researchers and in the course of our discussions I was struck by the strides towards equitable discourse which appeared to be occurring in New Zealand. When I arrived in New Zealand, I was further surprised by the apparent acknowledgement and appreciation of Maori culture generally and in their schools, including their language and cultural protocols. It was all quite different and unfamiliar to my experience of Indigenous-settler relations in Canada, and it began to highlight the importance of Indigenous principles to a sustainable future.

As I continued on my vacation I read and researched the history of the Maori and in relation to the emergence of the New Zealand nation. The basis for discourse, negotiation and rights between the Government of New Zealand and the Maori people is the Treaty of Waitangi, which was signed in 1840. To present day this treaty is the core document for the Maori people in their continued dialogue and negotiations in such matters as land rights, cultural recognition and environmental guardianship with the New Zealand government (Berkes 2010, Smith 2002). Present day protocols include such customary concerns as entry to *marae* (the meeting house),

appropriate greetings and farewells as well as gift giving (New Zealand, Ministry of Justice - Tāhū o te Ture 2015). These are practiced and recognized as significant by New Zealand society and are outlined on most Government of New Zealand websites as well as numerous Maori community websites. An understanding of these protocols is readily accessible to the populace.

After I returned to Canada I continued to research these matters and in particular the cultural protocols, which had been enacted for meetings, research and negotiations with the Maori people. I began to wonder about the protocols for discourse in Canada with Indigenous peoples. I was aware there were established protocols enacted by the government, institutions or in some cases by specific Indigenous communities. But I continued to wonder if there was a set of protocols that could be utilized across Canada. Which is much more of a challenge given Canada's much larger geographical area and the greater diversity among Indigenous nations and language. This is not to claim that the Maori are a homogenous society but rather a similarity of language and cultural norms exist within many of the Maori iwi (peoples or tribe). Considering the diversity in Canada, I continued to question if there were traditional customary principles across Indigenous Nations in Canada that could be the basis of dialogue with the nation state around issues such as reconciliation and current environmental issues. Or did cross-cultural traditional values, protocols, and principles even exist? My reading and study suggests there does not currently exist an explicit appreciation of foundational protocols to help mediate dialogues between different levels of government, various institutions (non-governmental, corporate), and a diversity of First Nations communities. There does not appear to be a broad-based protocol like that elucidated in New Zealand's relation with the Maori, one which is built from common principles key to Indigenous communities across Canada.

The image of the foundation post is from the Long Houses of the West Coast of Canada. It is

to this region of Canada that my trip New Zealand returned me to. Growing up here, I have always admired the beauty of the Long Houses created by many Indigenous nations along the West Coast of BC. During one of my family's annual summer vacation, when I was a child we traveled extensively across Vancouver Island. On these trips I was afforded the privilege of visiting a few modern examples of Long Houses, in addition to a visit to the BC Museum with their extensive photo collection. These events deeply affected me, inspiring a sincere admiration for the beautiful carvings on the house posts and totem poles. Therefore in my consideration of the principles and stories that can help me understand my relation with the Indigenous Foundation Posts of Canada, this paper is in my own way attempting to pay respect to the First Nations of my birthplace while opening out to a larger and diverse nation. Now I will continue with a section that considers the structure and significance of Indigenous knowledge.

Indigenous Knowledge

Before defining Indigenous knowledge (IK) and other important aspects of the system I believe it is important to first of all understand the importance of traditional knowledge systems at this time in our history. First, IK is an evolving structure of knowledge, history, experience and wisdom, it is "not just a knowledge of the past, but also a knowledge of the present" (Menzies & Butler 2006, p. 8). Secondly, that it is not solely a system which is only valuable for its ecological knowledge but rather the entire system is what is important as well as critical to its own survival, and to those whom depend upon it. Lastly, the engagement of this knowledge must be done within the framework in which it exists and respected for its significance and the primacy of those who are its carriers. "It is crucial to understand the context of its articulation – the political and ideological forces that influence its construction" (Butler 2006, p. 121).

Berkes has broadly defined IK "as the local knowledge held by indigenous peoples or local knowledge unique to a given culture or society" (2008, p. 9). Indigenous knowledge encompasses values, worldview and cosmology and is the source of both the protocols and the interactions between Indigenous peoples and their universe. Worldviews can be thought of as "a set of assumptions and beliefs that form the basis of a people's comprehension of the world" (Cajete 2000, p. 62). Indigenous worldviews structure a culture's value system. In particular, it forms and explains the relationships between humans, humans and other beings, and humans and the spirit world. These are expressed through storytelling, experiential learning, dance, ceremony and songs (Michell 2013). It also is displayed in art, like those carvings depicted on the house posts of the western Long Houses.

This knowledge contains all aspects of knowledge concerning a specific people and their territory. It includes the ecological, cultural, social, agricultural, technical and spiritual, which evolves through time, as it is imparted from generation to generation (Battiste 2005). Young-Ing also includes in the range of Indigenous knowledge the following more extensive list including "ancient stories, songs and dances; traditional architecture and agricultural; biodiversity-related and medicinal, herbal and plant knowledge; ancient motifs, crests and other artistic designs; various artistic mediums, styles, forms and techniques; spiritual and religious institutions and their symbols" (2008, p. 61). For example animal symbols carved on the Longhouse posts to identify a families' lineage. Similarly, I will imagine inscribing the beings and creatures from the stories in the upcoming chapters upon the foundation posts to begin constructing this Longhouse. These chapters each follow different traditions, which individually offer unique dimensions but will clarify the underpinning principles that connect across these nations.

Indigenous knowledge is "dynamic and adaptive" (Berkes 2008, p. 6) which is why in such a time of environmental upheaval a system built upon change and adaptation could be very advantageous for humanity to consider as it moves forward. The ever-changing world, environmentally, economically and socially will require a unity of adaptive knowledge systems. It is important to recognize that the environmental aspects of IK cannot be divorced from "from the religious, the aesthetic, or the social" (Berkes 2008, p. 6). IK can be portrayed as holistic as all the components are interconnected and do not stand in isolation but rather as a complex, cohesive system of protocols and principles (Menzies & Butler 2006). These elements consist of all living entities, for many there is no distinction between animate and inanimate when determining life, which includes humans, the spiritual realm and the earth itself. In a sense, the foundation posts arise from the ground of our life and reach up toward the sky.

Another important dimension of these posts is Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), though it is often discussed in today's environmental discourses as almost equivalent to IK rather than a part of it. TEK is defined by Berkes as a "subset of IK. TEK is the ecological part of IK, the land-based, practical knowledge of species, and the beliefs regarding human interaction with the ecosystem" (Menzies & Butler 2006, p. 6). The issue of TEK is evident in Berkes definition, when he identifies it is a "subset" of IK, by subsetting the knowledge it loses its context and meaning or some may say the spirit of the knowledge. It is specific not only to an ecosystem, but also to a way of understanding the world" (Menzies & Butler 2006, p. 9). By utilizing TEK as just another knowledge practice for scientific exploitation it is diminished from what Indigenous knowledge is as a comprehensive system. "Classificatory studies projected as traditional ecological knowledge, or TEK . . . recast, indigenous knowledge continues to be presented as an object for science rather than as a system of knowledge that could inform

science" (Cruikshank 1998, p. 50). In fragmenting Indigenous knowledge into such subcategories as TEK the potential for genuine collaborative efforts are limited and hindered (Evering 2012).

As Indigenous knowledge is so intertwined with the culture and social structures of Indigenous peoples it is also critically linked with the languages of its peoples and can be considered inseparable. "It has been said when you lose your language you lose a part of your Spirit" (Michell 2013, p. 13). Language is a fundamental structure of how Indigenous culture's values and codes are produced and there meanings transmitted. "While many Indigenous peoples may not speak their language, cultural values remain alive and reflect a worldview found in their native language. Values that honour relationships are important for cultures that value the journey as much as the destination" (Kovach 2005, p. 27). Although Indigenous cultures and languages are diverse, parallels can be found not necessarily through traditional practices but what those customs reinforced within the culture, its worldview and the relationships of kinship between humans and the natural world (Michell 2013). As such, the foundation posts need to balance diverse Indigenous representations and understandings while also highlighting the common principles that connect.

Indigenous knowledge systems are diverse and although not uniform, similar values exist within the principles that weave throughout many of these systems (Evering 2012). Some of the parallel values intersecting Indigenous cultures, and arguably other cultures, are "love, respect, compassion, and humility" (Michell 2013, p. 13) and "mitakuye oyasin", we are all related, from the Lakota (Cajete 2000, p. 178) which is a much more uniquely Indigenous value. This particular dictum speaks to relationships and the importance of healthy relationships within Indigenous knowledge. These relationships are guided by the principal that all "entities of nature

– plants, animals, stones, trees, mountains, rivers, lakes and a host of other living entities" (Cajete 2000, p. 178) are related and in relationships. As Cajete so eloquently phrased this principle, ". . . Embodied relationships that must be honoured . . . perceive(ing) themselves as living in a sea of relationships" (2000, p. 178). The interactions of Indigenous knowledge with the environment are as seamless as the environment, or the natural world itself. The environment is of IK rather than a unit of IK just as the people, customs and stories are of IK, there is no separation.

Indigenous peoples over millennia have developed methods to categorize, collaborate and transmit their knowledge systems and environmental wisdom.

> "Information, insight, and techniques are passed down and improved from one generation to another. Knowledge workers observe ecosystems and gather eyewitness reports from others so that they can continually test and improve their own systematic, predictive models ecological dynamics. In the real world of changing ecosystems and changing diseases, knowledge holders and workers must adapt rapidly or lose credibility and status."(Battiste 2005, p. 8).

Battiste has outlined some of the arguments against the contemporary misnomers surrounding IK, the notion that somehow the knowledge is static or trapped in history. Indigenous knowledge (IK) is not of the past but rather its historical roots combined with its continuous evolution in response to cultural and environmental transformations makes it an effective knowledge system. It is an especially efficient system at responding to rapid changes, much as the rapid changes humanity is seeing in contemporary environmental issues. As I continue to explore Indigenous knowledge and the environment it is essential that the reader understand that the cultures of and within IK, do not consider IK a notion or belief but rather it is a way of living. This is a critical aspect to appreciate because to separate the environmental knowledge existing within IK out of its cultural context, a sense of belonging to something beyond just a physical existence and the deeper meanings to be learned are lost. The profound respect and reverence

for life and humanity's position within it is a greater contribution then just the straightforward environmental knowledge. Next I will continue by examining more closely the links between Indigenous knowledge and the natural world.

Indigenous Knowledge and the Environment

The fundamental values within the knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples are rooted in the interconnections between humans and their environment. These principles create a structure for living in respectful relationships which are sustainable and reciprocal with the environment and the lives within that environment (Smith 2002). IK is considered to be a holistic system, as the composition of the system acknowledges the interconnectedness of everything. Established upon an understanding that humans are but another element in the world, a world "characterized as kincentricity" (Turner & Spalding 2013, p. 4). This kincentricity encompasses places and life forms from the mountains to the lakes, ravens to salmon, the trees to the plants, all are sentient beings that are considered kin practically, environmentally and spirituality (Turner & Spalding 2013). For example in the North, Indigenous peoples do not view the natural world as just a landscape but rather as an animate, breathing environment (Berkes 2008). This knowledge is "grounded in a spiritual and reciprocal relationship between the people and their environment. The natural world is often understood as sentient and proactive and infused with spirit" (Menzies & Butler 2006, p. 10). Such research is clearly suggestive of some common principles and protocols found across Indigenous cultures that will be further considered here in relation to the foundation posts.

The discovery, or rediscovery, of the concept of ecosystems has also resulted in an increased interest in Indigenous knowledge and the ecological methods which underpin the knowledge system (Berkes 2008). Ecology's models of ecosystems and the web of life are a

reconceptualization of values already contained within Indigenous knowledge systems. Just as the environment is made up of interconnected relationships, the holistic IK system is a matrix of interconnected relationships. Indigenous knowledge may provide the context for instruction "in dealing with human – environment relations" (Berkes 2008, p. 19). Lessons in holism rather than reductionism, reciprocity rather than segregation and interconnectedness rather than solitude. "Many Indigenous societies do not act in the same way to restrain nature, because they find more to embrace within it" (Borrows 2010, p. 29).

The environmental crisis that humanity presently finds itself facing must in turn be faced with multiple solutions from diverse avenues (Turner & Spalding 2013). Globally and nationally, it is essential that all systems of knowledge be respected and collaboratively engaged if there is to be an opportunity for reconciliation and finding a sustainable way forward. While "society's resilience depends on diversity" (Turner & Spalding 2013, p. 2), this principle seems to be intimately related to the diversity that is a marker of ecological resilience as well. With the rapid changes occurring in the environment, the IK from communities, which are often remote and prone to rapid resource variability, may have vital knowledge and wisdom on how to respond to the unpredictability of today's environment. The next section will review some of the impacts upon Indigenous knowledge resulting from historical, and continued, acts of colonialism.

Colonial Consequences to Indigenous Knowledge

Our present environmental challenges need to be clearly situated within the history of colonialism in Canada that has limited our appreciation of Indigenous peoples, IK, and an appreciation of Indigenous foundation posts for all Canadians. In many ways, this colonial history can be seen as beginning with the Papal Bull of 1493 continuing with acts carried out

under the ideology of Manifest Destiny to the national Indian Act that first came into effect in 1876 (Borrows 2010). Continuing on with the *Constitution Act* of 1982 but which would also establish movement in the recognition and acknowledgment of Indigenous and treaty rights. In the article, *The Ethical Space of Engagement*, Ermine points out that "The Supreme Court acknowledged that these cultural rights arise within the system of beliefs, social practices, and ceremonies of the Aboriginal peoples. In essence, Aboriginal rights must be informed by and asserted through Indigenous knowledge" (2007, p. 201). The impact of historical and current colonialism has been, and continues to be, catastrophic to many Indigenous peoples, their cultures, land and resources. As Borrows emphasizes, "The problem with the *Indian Act* for many years has been its failure to incorporate human rights standards" (2010, p. 37). The fragmentation and dislocation caused by colonialism through forced removals to reserves, residential schools, the overarching assimilationist ideology and such political slogan's as "kill the Indian, save the Man", all have had untold negative social, cultural and economic consequences (Butler 2006). The inequity of power and political structures have been used to the advantage of settler governments and their objectives. For as suggested in the chapter *Treaty Governance* by James Henderson, "the *Final Report* of the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples described how the Federal government ignored, failed to fulfill, replaced Treaty governance with false assumptions and abuse of power and law" (2008, p. 31). This is the historic context that informs the engagement of IK as TEK, to be extracted and used, rather than a holistic knowledge that informs particular ways of relating to the world.

In a sense, the history of colonial relations has been about severing the foundation posts of particular Indigenous nations and Indigenous people generally. The overall implications of these colonial practices of prejudice and intolerance on Indigenous peoples in Canada have been

catastrophic to the people and their culture. In the words of Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "The legacy, . . . , of the fragmentation and alienation of a cultural 'estate' over hundreds of years is that the material connection between people, their place, their languages, their beliefs and their practices has been torn apart" (2002, p. 89). It will be critical to both acknowledge the damage of colonialism and to create open discourse concerning the harm perpetrated upon the Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems for any successful dialogue on knowledge collaboration to occur (Butler 2006). For Indigenous knowledge "is not simply a body of knowledge, but political discourse" (Butler 2006, p. 121). As Hoare, Levy and Robinson suggest, "if knowledge is fundamental to understanding, interpreting and establishing values within a society, can control over its production becomes an integral component of cultural survival" (1993, p. 46). A political dialogue that is critical given the rapidity of environmental change and a need for diverse perspectives, thus our colonial history needs to be engaged as we respond to these changes. Foundation posts will be central to reconsidering these relations. The last section of this chapter will consider how I use stories to construct these foundation posts.

Storying Foundation Posts

The four chapters to follow will consider and explore individually the foundation posts of four Indigenous peoples from across Canada. Each chapter will begin with a short introduction to the storyteller and author of that chapter's core text. This will be followed by a story as narrated by the storyteller (author), which is from the culture, history and oral tradition of his or her Indigenous community. Next I will briefly discuss storytelling as it is reflected in the culture and lifeways of each of these Indigenous communities. The remainder of each chapter will then concentrate on investigating and analyzing the foundation posts from within the unique principles of each Indigenous community.

A foundation post can be defined as a common value or principle established within the worldviews of an Indigenous people. Worldview can be described as "a set of assumptions and beliefs that form the basis of a people's comprehension of the world" (Cajete 2000, p. 62). While the definition for cosmology "is the contextual foundation for philosophy, a grand guiding story, by nature speculative, in that it tries to explain the universe, its origin, characteristics, and essential nature" (Cajete 2000, p. 58). As we are beginning to see in the previous discussions regarding IK, the environment and colonialism some common values are starting to emerge such as relationships and interconnections. We will look deeper into these potential foundation posts through the stories of the various traditions which appear in the subsequent chapters beginning with Atleo's *Tsawalk, A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. But before moving on to these chapters, I want to clarify the methodology I will be utilizing. It all begins with the importance of stories throughout Indigenous knowledge traditions and within Indigenous communities.

Storying the Foundation Posts: Methodological Considerations

Why stories? One of the best and articulate answers I have read is, ""Stories remind us of who we are and our belonging" (Kovach 2009, p. 94). As Kovach alludes these stories may teach us about ourselves, our connections to each other and to the environment which sustains us. All stories are capable of entertaining and even inspiring but not all stories teach. Those stories that teach, make us question ourselves or our perceptions, encouraging or compelling us to contemplate or reassess a truth. Pratt comments on the power of stories in research, stating "stories give theory flesh and breath" (cited in Jones 2005, p. 763). Therefore stories may offer humanity learning and experience, which reaches a deeper place within us, reminding us of the principles we have forgotten. For example, one story that will be shared, *How Son of Raven Captured the Day* by Richard Atleo in Chapter 1, can remind us that we cannot solve our

problems by ourselves but rather that we must work together within and for the web of life to thrive. Stories and the act of storytelling are a more available means of teaching significant lessons (Kovach 2013). Many of these stories, from cultures that have strong oral traditions, do not often have a clearly defined view or explanation rather the listener is left to unearth the kernel of knowledge for themselves. They are thus the opening for each chapter that follows as we consider the different foundation posts

The origin stories of Indigenous peoples frame Indigenous knowledge systems especially the connections to the land and places of the people. It is the relationships with the land and the natural world which creates and roots the worldview of an Indigenous peoples (Michell 2013). As Michell elucidates, "Our thinking and ways of living and being are guided by natural laws of balance and harmony, which are written all over the land"(2013, p. 16). Oral traditions establish and provide Indigenous peoples with "the codes of conduct as human beings within our communities" (Ermine 2007, p. 195); communities in this context means the broader category of all life not just human communities. The stories and narratives of oral traditions also explain and point out the importance of the complex, vital relationships between humans and humans, humans and all living entities as well as the spirit world. Although the stories can construct the larger cosmologies of a people, they also transmit and frame memories, histories and the simple practices of everyday life (Cruikshank 1998). Even though these stories are "rooted in ancient traditions, they can be used in strikingly modern ways" (Cruikshank 1998, p. 26).

"Oral ways of knowing" (Smith 2002, p. 33), or what are more commonly referred to as oral traditions, are still considered the histories of people not just stories for entertainment and education but also as connections to community, group memories and chronicles. History, in particular the history of indigenous peoples, is a contested place between nations both in the past

and in contemporary times. The stories which constitute this history, are particularly contested with the classification of oral tradition being deemed less valid in a historical context (Smith 2002). Augustine aptly clarifies this problem, "Oral histories cannot be validated by the standard systems of a literate society. It would be unfair to judge the spiritual beliefs, the emotions and dreams of a culture based on oral traditions with tolls that do not give much weight to matters that are of greater importance to one culture and not in another" (2008, p. 5). Although attitudes are shifting with such court decisions as the Delgamuukw case in 1997 which saw the Supreme Court of Canada recommend to a lower court to reconsider the value of oral histories and testimonies in cases before the court (Augustine 2008). In the Van der Peet decision the Supreme Court of Canada also recognized the value of these oral histories in cases concerning land title (Augustine 2008).

The recovery of language is critical to the recovery of Indigenous "oral ways of knowing" and histories. Language is the breath that gives life to these stories, where often the deeper meanings and inner stories lie. In recovering stories, the past and memories are restored (Smith 2002). As much as Indigenous history, Indigenous language has been forcefully removed or remodelled, "as words are squashed into English word boxes, concepts run over the top like spring water in a barrel" (Miller et al. 2000, p. 90). This is why each chapter begins with an Indigenous narrated story that then opens out to interdisciplinary academic discourses related to the themes in those stories. It is hoped that IK will be the basis for understanding the foundation posts of a national Long House, which brings me to some concluding methodological considerations.

My research was conducted by utilizing the methodology as outlined by Shawn Wilson in *Research is Ceremony, Indigenous Research Methods*. The focus of the methodology in

Research is Ceremony is the value of relationships. The interactions, which form relationships and the interconnections between relationships, must also be considered. Wilson describes how research begins with the telling of a story, someone's story, and then the researcher analyzes it as well as the relationship that exists between these two points. As Wilson describes it, "when you use a story, your own or others' it's claiming a voice and establishing a relationship" (2008, p. 125). In particular, I have incorporated Wilson's methodology by recounting a story from each Indigenous community which illustrates the potential foundation posts of that particular community, nation, or band. I continue by presenting the relationships and connections linking these stories, the intersections traversing communities. Each story allows me to explore and pursue any relationships leading to further cross-cultural foundation posts. This permits me to utilize Wilson's methodology centering on relationships but introducing aspects of storytelling, a key element in the oral traditions of Indigenous peoples.

In addition I apply a metaphor of constructing a Long House with the foundation posts similar to the manner in which the house posts would be utilized in the traditional architecture of the houses. As the stories reveal the foundation posts of each Indigenous worldview, they will be figuratively engraved and then placed into the structure of the house. I conducted an in-depth literature review by exploring the culturally rooted texts of well-respected Indigenous scholars and/or elders from diverse Indigenous peoples across select regions in Canada. In this paper I refer to these manuscripts as core texts. In reading and analyzing these texts I employed an autoethnographic approach which is described by Jones as how "personal stories become a means for interpreting the past, translating and transforming contexts, and envisioning a future" (Jones 2005, p. 767-68). Autoethnography is defined as a "research, writing, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social" (Jones 2005, p. 765).

I have endeavoured to conduct my research with a decolonialized approach, through the employment of texts rather than by either studying a community or from within a community. This may be considered a decolonialized method given the belief in many Indigenous communities that they have been over-researched, so by utilizing the texts of Indigenous scholars I hope to remove this aspect of the colonialists research of the other (Smith 2002). The analysis, which I employed, classified analogous words or phrases in exploring comparable foundation posts. I searched for thematic relationships between the principles, a similarity of values or process rather than identical terminology. This thematic analysis examined the texts "through the thematic grouping or bundling into themes" (Kovach 2009, p. 53). For the thematic analysis I recorded sentences and contextualized words which were utilized in descriptions of principles or values. These results were then entered into a spreadsheet where I analyzed similarity of themes and words to determine a standardized term for each foundation post.

The core texts which I utilized as my primary research manuscripts are listed here in the order they appear by chapter, which follows a West to East regional trajectory:

1. *Tsawalk, A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*, Atleo, E.R. (2004). (Nuu-chah-nulth)
2. *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*. Archibald, J. (2008). (Stó:lō)
3. *Research is Ceremony, Indigenous Research Methods,* Wilson, S. (2008). (Opaskwayak Cree)

Now with my methodology outlined, we can begin our journey to searching for and realizing these foundation posts by engaging first with Richard Atleo's story, *How Son of Raven Captured the Day*.

Nuu-chah-nulth

This chapter examines the principles and prospective foundation posts of the Nuu-chah-nulth as described in *Tsawalk, A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. *Tsawalk* details the worldview of the Nuu-chah-nulth people from Atleo's perspective as a scholar, elder and hereditary chief so his cultural knowledge may be considered reliable and as an accurate portrayal of Nuu-chah-nulth principles. I now begin with Alteo's telling of a traditional Nuu-chah-nulth story that will act as an anchor as I explore the foundation posts of the Nuu-chah-nulth.

How Son of Raven Captured the Day, a Nuu-chah-nulth Story

They had no light in the beginning. Son of Raven suggested that they try to capture the day. Across the waters a Chief owned the light of day, which he kept carefully guarded in a box. The people who lived in darkness grew tired of this and wondered what to do.

"How can we do that?" he was asked.

"We will entertain the Chief with a dance. Son of Deer, who can not only run fast but also leap far, will dance. If we are to capture the day, Deer must dance as one who is inspired, as one who captivates an audience."

"And then what will happen?" they asked Son of Raven.

"Deer will have soft dry cedar bark tied behind him. When no one seems to expect it, he will dance close to the day box and dip this bark into the fire."

"Yes, that's a good idea!" they said.

[In order for Son of Deer to dance for the Chief who owned the day, protocols had to be observed. Petitions, preparations, prayers, cleansing ceremonies, and a great deal of self-discipline and practice would take place before Son of Deer could appear before the Chief. These protocols do not appear in the story because every listener during traditional times would have been well versed in the necessity of observing appropriate diplomatic processes. In fact, an important underlying assumption about traditional experience is that the whole of life and existence is characterized by relationships that are inherent.]

All was now prepared. Every exacting detail of ritual, ceremony, and practice had been observed. Son of Deer was dressed in his finest dancing costume, and the soft dry cedar bark was now carefully tied behind him. When they reached the other side, the dancing began.

The Chief and his people watched. At first there was little evident interest in the dancing. This is usual. Highly accomplished people are not easily impressed. But gradually Son of Deer's dancing began to take hold of his audience. He danced with inspiration fuelled by the desire to fulfill a great need. He danced tirelessly, effortlessly, drawing strength from all those who lived in darkness. Now he danced by the day box. Without missing a beat he dipped the dry cedar bark into the day box. Instantly it caught fire and Son of Deer sprang for the door. But the Chief and the people were quicker. Before Son of Deer could leap out of reach, the fire was snuffed out. Now the Chief and his people knew that Son of Raven wanted the daylight. From now on the day box would be more closely guarded.

The people who live in darkness regrouped.

"Go and get Wren, the wise one," Son of Raven said. When Wren arrived he offered the following advice: "The Chief has two beautiful daughters, and the sockeye salmon are running now. Women will be cleaning and preparing fish. Turn yourselves into sockeye and swim to the other shore. When you are captured you will then have an opportunity to kidnap the Chief's

daughters."

So everyone transformed into sockeye, except Son of Raven, who could be satisfied with nothing less than taking the form of a giant king salmon. When the people of the day saw the huge king salmon they asked, "Is it not Son of Raven? Yes, it must be he who wishes to take the day from us." When Wren subsequently advised a transformation into salmonberry shoots, which were also then in season, Son of Raven again foiled the plan with egotistical one-upmanship by transforming into a giant salmon-berry shoot.

However, Wren is not named "he always speaks rightly" without good reason. Rather than rejecting or chastising Son of Raven for his blunders, Wren devised a plan that would take advantage of Son of Raven's great desire to do great deeds. This new plan required that Son of Raven transform into a tiny leaf that would float in the Chief's well. When the Chief's daughter came for a drink, Son of Raven would manoeuvre himself in such a way that she would be made to swallow him.

So it happened that son of Raven became a tiny leaf floating in the Chief's well. When the Chief's daughter came for a drink, she dipped her cup into the well. As she lifted her cup to drink, she blew the tiny leaves away from her side of the cup. She drank deeply. One tiny leaf drifted toward her mouth. Before she could stop, she swallowed it.

"Oh well, it's only a leaf," she thought.

But not long after this, the daughter became pregnant. She wondered how it could have happened, for she had no husband. In due time she bore a son. It was a crybaby. It cried so much that the mother and her relatives were all suspicious.

"Is it not Son of Raven?" the old people asked. "It seems to cry too much to be one of us."

But what if they were mistaken? What if the baby really belonged to the Chief's daughter? They could not be sure. So the baby was accepted.

As the baby grew, it continued to cry and whine a lot. When the baby was old enough, he loved to play in the canoes. All day he would play in these canoes. He also knew about the paddle of great power owned by his mother. With one stroke the paddle could propel any canoe a great distance. The boy began to whine for this paddle. He whined and whined. Finally his mother relented. Still the mother was careful. The boy could play with the paddle, but the canoe must remain tied to the shore. Again the boy whined and wheedled until he was allowed to paddle freely about. The boy was carefully watched, but nothing unusual happened. Gradually, the family began to trust him. Wasn't he just a boy who liked to play like other boys?

One day the boy began to play with the Day Box that sat in its usual well-guarded place. He wanted the Day Box to play with in his canoe, he said. The Chief would not hear of it. No, the boy must not play with the Day Box in his canoe. The boy pleaded. He cried. Over and over he wailed, "I want to play with the Day Box in my canoe! I want to play with the Day Box in my canoe! I want to play with the Day Box in my canoe!" He got on everyone's nerves. Day after day it was same thing. "I want to play with the Day Box in my canoe!" Finally, the grandmother, in exasperation, told the boy's mother, "You never have mercy on him. Let him play with the Day Box in his canoe."

With the Day Box in his canoe, the boy was especially careful since he was closely watched. However, the boy did nothing unusual. He appeared content and happy simply to have the Day Box in his canoe while he played. Grandmother was happy. Mother was happy. The incessant crying and whining had stopped.

Meanwhile, among those who lived in darkness, Wren had sent some mice on an important mission across the waters to the shores of the Chief who owned the light of day. During the night the mice ate holes in all of the canoes except the one belonging to the boy. The next morning the boy began to play with the Day Box again. He was being watched but not so closely anymore. Then, all of a sudden, the boy gave a mighty thrust of his mother's paddle. Swiftly his canoe raced over the water toward the other shore. The Chief and his people panicked. They scrambled for their canoes. One by one, as the canoes were launched into the deep, they sank. The mice had done a good job.

As the boy neared the other shore, he began to uncover the Day Box very slowly. Now, for the first time, the people of darkness began to experience daylight. They looked and saw that it was Son of Raven who was coming to bring them the light. It grew brighter and brighter until the fullness of day was upon them.

Today, when the tide is out, you may notice that Son of Raven is the first to enjoy any food that is found at the water's edge. That is his right and privilege, recognised by all Nuu-chah-nulth. (Atleo 2004, pp. 6-10)

Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview

The Nuu-chah-nulth people are the people who dwell "all along the mountains and sea" (Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council 2005), they live along roughly 300 kilometers of the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island. This region extends from Brooks Peninsula south to Point-no-Point (Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council 2005). The Nuu-chah-nulth are divided into 14 tribes which are further divided into 3 sub-regions: the Southern, the Central and the Northern (Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council 2005). Archaeological evidence indicates that the Nuu-chah-nulth have resided in this area for more than 4,200 years (McMillan 1999). The story of Son of Raven is connected to the land of the Nuu-chah-nulth at "the water's edge" (Atleo 2004, p. 10), the 'in between' of land and water similar to the betwixt and between of light and dark; dawn and dusk.

It is important to note that the Nuu-chah-nulth language is highly contextualized which signifies that much of the vocabulary has strong linkages to culture, history, land and the natural world. The contextualization of the Nuu-chah-nulth language is an important construct as it illustrates the inter-weaving of storytelling, history, culture, place and language. This language contextualization is particularly meaningful given the impacts of colonialism upon the Nuu-chah-nulth people. For despite the pressures of assimilation, residential schools and the myriad of colonial legislation that were enacted to eradicate the culture of indigenous peoples in Canada, the Nuu-chah-nulth managed to maintain their language's contextual characteristics.

A story of the Nuu-chah-nulth home, *How Son of Raven Captured the D*ay demonstrates the collective knowledge of origins and observed protocols of being part of creation. As Son of

Deer executes the required ceremonies before performing his dance, the Storyteller would traditionally not need to elaborate, as these would be implicitly understood by all the Nuu-chah-nulth people. For us, an introduction to where a story like this opens is needed, something which Atleo offers us. Stories, he explains, impart life teachings implicitly rather than explicitly. The stories which storytellers present are ancestral, reaching back in time to the "original storytellers" (Atleo 2004, p. 2). A time that stretches beyond memory to stories of the beginning when the Son of Raven was born. In particular, origin stories offer a foundation of vital "truths about the nature of the universe" (Atleo 2004, p. 2). Origin stories root the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview in an understanding of the innate complexity of life and interconnectedness of a creation that possesses *thli-muhk-sti*, spirit. "That each is like the other in spirit, in essence" (Atleo 2004, p. 62). All life possessing *thli-muhk-sti* or spirit is not something often acknowledged in present day society, which permits humans to isolate themselves from the value of other species and lives. Atleo elucidates how "biological differentiation is acknowledged at one level of understanding. At another level of understanding, biological differentiation is understood as the result of transformations from a common source of being" (2004, p. 86).

These origin stories further illustrate that creation encompasses not only the physical world of life but also includes the spirit world. The Son of Raven traverses the spirit world and natural world to bring light to the entire world. In the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview, life encompasses both the physical manifestation of life and the spiritual realm. "The physical dimension is like a mirror or shadow of the spiritual realm" (Atleo 2004, p. 18). These two dominions create a single universe of a common source of being. Recognition of this common origin of life made it necessary for the Nuu-chah-nulth people to establish cultural values, which created a system of protocols founded in respect and reciprocity within interrelationship and intrarelationships. The

relationship between these two worlds has continuity through these protocols, and a respectful humility and recognition of the oneness of life.

Many see stories as nothing more than the legends or myths of a lost time. To engage Atleo and those of following chapters, we must come to see stories as a tool to teach us about ourselves and the connections that are so critical for our lives and perhaps our survival. Stories do not live in the past, they connect us to our past and offer to teach us something about our future or at least its potential. The retrieval of the cultural values captured within origin stories could be the basis for a dialogue within the larger society, which embraces the environment, unity and storytelling. These lessons allow for and encourage us to look deeper into the stories, and within ourselves. This reconceptualization of self may also offer a greater level of appreciation of both our precarious environmental position and our responsibility to all life. Lets now turn our attention to locating and observing the foundation posts that Son of Raven is disclosing.

Foundation Posts

The story of *How Son of Raven Captured the Day* guides us onward to consider and intersect with the Nuu-chah-nulth foundation posts. For as Son of Raven enacts his story he carries his listeners with him, and for the purpose of this chapter I will follow his story as I search for these foundation posts. The relationships that interconnect Son of Raven to Son of Deer, Wren and the others are mutual and courteous.

Atleo illuminates six basic principles to Nuu-chah-nulth worldview and stories. These are interconnectedness, respect, reciprocity, harmony or sense of community, relationships, and "all my relations". In the thematic analysis, which I conducted, it was apparent that a key principle within relationships is the requirement for relationships to be established between all aspects of life, to include "all my relations". The principle of "all my relations" relates to the one origin of

all life and the recognition of that single origin which informs the likeness of all life. In light of this crossover I enfolded "all my relations" within a foundation post called relationships. Relationships are engaged and maintained between all peoples, human, animal, plant and all others, or "all my relations" as depicted within the Nuu-chah-nulth story. The thematic analysis of the text supports this interaction.

Additionally, the principle of a sense of community or harmony that Atleo considers is closely linked to reciprocity demonstrated in his description of the need for a reciprocal relationship between the spiritual and earth realms. Furthermore, he goes on to explain that this reciprocity creates a sense of community and harmony. Given the close connections made by Atleo between these two principles I will discuss them both within the foundation post of reciprocity. Once again the thematic analysis of these words corroborates this intersection.

Although Atleo illustrates six principles key to the cultural framework of the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples, in this paper I am going to discuss them in relation to four foundation posts that are beginning to come into view through the story and analysis: Interconnectedness, Relationships, Reciprocity and Respect. All four of these posts are represented within the story, *How Son of Raven Captured the Day*, whether through the relationships between the animal communities, people and the animals, the spirit world, and the interconnectedness of their shared plight. Just as the environmental crisis today interconnects all life to the larger plight that we all face. It may well be that re-engaging with these foundation posts could begin to mend the detachment of humanity from nature. We will move on to now examine the individual foundation posts that have been elucidated by Son of Raven.

Interconnectedness

The story of the Son of Raven establishes the interconnectedness of all the peoples, animal

and human, who are trying to bring light to their world. They must all work as interconnected beings, a unit of like-minded individuals, to overcome the darkness and to capture the light for all life. These complex interconnections have also been identified in environmental science and ecology in such models as the web of life (Paehlke 1995). "The web of life is a concept that organisms and processes within and among ecosystems are tied to each other through numerous relationships including pathways of energy and nutrient transfer" (Paehlke 1995, p. 675). As Berkes (2008) highlights in *Sacred Ecology*, many North American Indigenous cultures including the Nuu-chah-nulth consider all life to be interconnected and interdependent.

The Nuu-chah-nulth have a worldview which considers everything as being "interrelated and interconnected" (Atleo 2004, p. 96). This is a keystone principle of the Nuu-chah-nulth vision of creation as a unity of all life, *heshook-ish tsawalk* or "everything is one" (Atleo 2004, p. 117). *Heshook-itsh tsawalk* indicates much more than just the unity of life forms it also means holism and the wholeness of life. Holism and interconnection are of one accord. Creation nurtures the origins of holism and the design of the interrelationships that connect "all created beings" (Atleo, 2004 p. 20) or "creation's original design of wholeness" (Atleo 2004, p. 16). The interrelationships which are contextualized by *heshook-ish tsawalk* (everything is one) are evident in the connectivity between the air, land, water and the life forms, which depend upon these elements. "The entire ecosystem of the earth is a unity" (Atleo 2004, p.38). Environmental science and other fields are now identifying that in fact ecosystems are interrelated, not made up of disparate units but rather a interconnected whole.

Acquiring knowledge through oral teachings, stories and other avenues of learning such as dreams and *?uusu*mč or vision quest, offers the Nuu-chah-nulth people a broader vision of the unity of creation. "For example, although deer, wolf, and salmon are scientifically classified as

animals within the biological dimension of existence and therefore as separate from humans, Nuu-chah-nulth peoples also know and experience these animals as *quu?as*, as people like themselves. The same is true of trees and the multitude of other life forms" (Atleo 2011, p. 36).

The principle of interdependence is a primary value to the Nuu-chah-nulth people as it permeates many other beliefs and ethics. It is so fundamental to the cultural norms that interdependence to each other within community is an expected and accepted necessity of the community character. The sense of community is grounded in people asking for help when it is needed and that when one does not ask it is deemed to be unkind as the individual is not depending upon the interdependence of their community. Although colonialism has perilously impeded these community connections, the links endure through such values as the foundation posts represent and the persistence with which communities have continued to retain these principles.

Interconnection and the interrelatedness of all life forms is displayed throughout the interrelationships of the natural world. The unity, interrelationship and interconnection within the universe is considered to not only enfold the physical world but also the spirit world. This is reinforced in the origin stories, which tell of the both the unity of all life and the unique diversity of creation that exists within this unity (Atleo 2011). These interconnections are highlighted in the Son of Raven story when, for example, the small mice chew holes in all the canoes, to safeguard Son of Raven's escape and in this diversion serve the light to overcome the darkness. This sort of cooperation and collaboration is what is required for humanity to overcome our manmade ecological crisis.

Relationships

The relationships which both exist and continue to develop between the Son of Raven and

the other beings is the underpinning of their eventual success. Without the understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses as well as the respect offered between members of the community, Son of Raven would certainly have not captured the day. This story rests upon interconnectedness, a web of mutually respectful relationships.

Interconnection is intrinsically linked to relationships, as one life must be connected to another for a relationship to exist as well relationships between individuals of all life forms are critical to the continuation of life. Within the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview all of life and its existence is established upon and embodied by relationships, which are intrinsic to life. These relationships were established from a common origin as taught in Nuu-chah-nulth origin stories. Much as the relationships, which occur from the origins of Son of Raven, Son of Deer and Wren. The story describes how innate the relationships are between creation, all life, and the source of creation. Consequently, the Nuu-chah-nulth lifeways are formed within the creation and preservation of relationships, the relationships between all life forms or "all my relations". This expression signifies the common ancestry of all life regardless of any external differences. A common ancestry, which acknowledges "that beneath the exterior appearance of the salmon, the bear, the wolf, the eagle, and the raven are people just like you and me" (Atleo 2011, p. 106). Western science acknowledges this common ancestry of which we are all a part although this ancestry is recognized at a genetic level rather than relationally. All life is dependent upon and in relationship with all other life for completeness and existence.

"All my relations" is a phrase that reflects the complex web of interdependent connections that includes humans and extends from the many beings in our midst to the spirit world. Origin stories once again play a critical role in illustrating such important lessons. For example the story that began this chapter, Son of Raven, is not only concerning "the light of understanding,

knowledge, power, and the gifts of healing" (Atleo 2011, p. 83), it also illuminates the significance of community and the relationships within and between communities. In the Son of Raven story Atleo states, "that the whole of life and existence is characterized by relationships that are inherent" Atleo 2004, p. 7). The relationships in the story allow for the communities of animals and humans to work together to bring light to the world and therefore sustain life's continuance.

Even within Nuu-chah-nulth communities, protocols concerning the interactions and dealings between individuals, groups or families to reach agreement on an issue or arrangement all parties must be in agreement or no agreement is reached. Atleo goes on to explain that most often band councils are "sharply focused on issues and their resolutions, rather than on . . . personal agendas" (Atleo 2004, p. 88) to reach consensus in relationship to one another. Even with the disruptions and interference of the colonization of the Nuu-chah-nulth home region, the relational community protocols that arose at the time of Raven are still functioning.

Relationships are key to the complex interactions, interconnections, and interplay between individuals, life forms and communities. All life forms are created to be in relationships, to connect, relate and come together, not to be separated, disconnected and isolated. "All life forms have a common origin, all the Earth's diverse beings are to be treated according to the demands of this common origin . . . The sacredness of a common origin determines the basis of relationships between diverse life forms" (Atleo 2004, p. 59). The mutual relationships between Son of Raven, Son of Deer, Wren and all the other peoples in the opening story are critical to capturing the light.

One of the sources of today's environmental crisis could certainly be traced to a lack of relational connections between humanity and other life. By distancing ourselves from the

relationships which are so critical, to not only to our ability to flourish but most certainly to survive, humanity has severed its relationship to itself. "The earth's biosphere has been severely damaged and is in need of emergency repair" (Atleo 2004, p. 66). Atleo further explains that without all of humanity taking responsibility for our current environmental predicament that we will have only limited success.

> "If the theory of *tsawalk* has some credence, as I believe it does, then the responsibility for the current planetary crisis must be shared by all: both those who colonized and those who have been colonized. The idea of shared responsibility must be understood within the context of an inherent polarity that includes its opposite – the refusal to share responsibility. To this day, responsibility for the planet has not been shared." (Atleo 2011, p. 58)

For without a relationship to that which surrounds us and upon which we depend, whether it is clean water or air, healthy soil or unspoiled sources of food, we diminish ourselves and potentially condemn the future.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity naturally co-exists in a balanced relationship. Creation's original design required "beneficial reciprocity" (Atleo 2004, p. 35). This beneficial reciprocity can be seen in the Son of Raven story as each animal community acts in the best interest of all and for the mutual benefit of every community. From the smallest of creatures, the mice, to the wisest Wren, each fulfills an essential relational and co-operative reciprocity which serve the interests of the entire community. Helpfulness and reciprocity is the demand of creation so it can continue its fundamental plan exemplified "by oneness, wholeness, interconnectedness, and interrelationality" (Atleo 2004, p. 14). Both the earthly and the spiritual realms are required to maintain the principle of reciprocity within and between each realm. "There is mutual recognition, mutual respect, and mutual responsibility between the spiritual and earthly communities" (Atleo 2004, p. 46). The principles of reciprocity, balance and harmony are

received from origin stories. When any of these are out of equilibrium then it is considered to be *wicks ca?miihta* (things are out of balance, things are not in harmony). This expression concerns all elements or any being of creation "including people, forests, animals, and all other life forms – the river, estuary, inlet, or ocean" (Atleo 2011, p. 34).

These reciprocal relationships have been acknowledged in the food webs, which interconnect all life in a cycle of reciprocity (Paehlke 1995). But there is more going on here for Atleo than simply the physics of ecological reciprocity represented by food webs. The reciprocity of giving and receiving is in of itself a balance and harmony of generosity. Reciprocity and its counterpart, generosity, "as a general community practice over millennia has proven pragmatic" (Atleo, 2004, p. 39). The act of giving and receiving acknowledges and encourages reciprocity, bringing balance and harmony to the relationships between life forms (Atleo 2011). Humans participate in the ecological reciprocity of food webs not simply as a large predator, but as a being that must balance their needs with the wider world through a protocol of generosity.

This reciprocity and generosity is not evident at the beginning of The Son of Raven story as the Chief and his people will not share the light which forces the other communities to resort to trickery and deception. It is these collaborative acts that respond to the Chief's lack of generosity, a way that eventually costs him the Day Box and control of the daylight. The Nuu-chah-nulth of the past considered so keenly the consequences of an individual's lacking generosity that it was connected with the same word as death. The potlatch system was integral to the principles of reciprocity and generosity, maintaining "balance and harmony between and among all life forms" (Atleo 2011, p. 166). The interruption, and in some cases loss, of these traditional customs has been exceedingly detrimental to the cultural continuity of Indigenous communities. To protect and preserve these practices and traditions, many Indigenous

communities secreted away their knowledge systems (Turner & Spalding 2013).

Harmony such as exists between Wren and Son of Raven, as Wren understands Son of Raven's true nature and assists in developing an appropriate plan which takes advantage of Son of Raven's "great desire to commit great deeds" (Atleo 2004, p. 8). Generosity and reciprocity, assistance and giving/receiving acted as laws rather than solely as principles. Reciprocity through the potlatch structure, which ensured stable relationships and nearly non-existent scarcity or starvation, or the darkness before Raven captured the light (Atleo 2011).

An acknowledgement of reciprocity and the necessity for its re-emergence in our present day society would certainly contribute to practices aimed at moving us towards sustainability. The global decline of bee, and most pollinator, populations may be an example of the non-reciprocity of today's society towards the natural world (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2015). Given the necessity of bees for pollination of many critical food resources upon which humans rely, the loss of these species' will have untold repercussions on food security around the world. "The fact is that ecosystem services provided by pollinators are essential for food production" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2015, p. *Protecting the Pollinators*). There is much debate across scientific, agricultural, apiarist and farming communities as to why this is happening. Some natural beekeepers, or apiarists, believe that Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is less "a problem that arrives from the outside to be solved, and more as a situation that requires responses that re-make the bee and human relations" (Green & Ginn, 2014, p. 151). Without a concrete reason for CCD humanity is left to wonder what lack of reciprocity or combination of environmental modifications have resulted in this dire situation.

Respect

Respect is a central theme in *How Son of Raven Captured the Day*, as each community

respects the unique characteristics and strengths each member can bring to their campaign to bring light to the world. Recognizing one's strength and even weaknesses is a sign of respect between individuals and communities. For example "Son of Deer, who can not only run fast but also leap far, will dance", acknowledges the beauty and grace of deer and even though he is unsuccessful in capturing the light, the respect for his efforts and his uniqueness is recognized.

The necessary unity of reciprocity and respect is evident by the requirement for respect to exist for reciprocity to flourish. Life, its existence and continuance necessitate mutual respect between "spiritual and earthly communities" (Atleo 2004, p. 46). *Isaak*, the Nuu-chah-nulth word for respect obliges an understanding and acknowledgement that creation arose from a common origin and thus respect, or *isaak*, must be offered to all life. The intricate web of relationships formed by this common origin is embodied fundamentally by respect, or *isaak*. The common origin of life has been elucidated through the efforts of Darwin and other scientists, who acknowledge the fundamental link of all life to a singular source. Furthermore, Atleo declares that, "*Isaak* is predicated upon the notion that every life form has intrinsic value and that this should be recognized through appropriate protocols of interaction. . . . life forms of every kind are held in equal esteem" (Atleo 2004, p. 130). Sacred respect, *iis?ak*, depicts the intrinsic value of all life as well as each individual's unique, essential purpose (Atleo 2011). The tradition of respect acknowledges the significance of the existence and continuance of all life forms over the individual need for humans to serve their own objectives. Great respect is shown and offered to Raven as reward for his bringing light to the world, on behalf of all the peoples and communities when he is "the first to enjoy any food that is found at water's edge. . . . That is his right and privilege" (Atleo 2004, p. 10).

To illustrate the importance of respect, Atleo portrays how a chief does not make unilateral

decisions because a worldview, which includes respect, must also appreciate that each person is connected with creation and therefore the Nuu-chah-nulth, Creator of All. As further explanation, Atleo describes how during discussions on issues at community meetings each individual is enabled, and encouraged, to speak and offer solutions. After an issue is addressed completely, if a solution was clear repetition of the result was required from individuals to acknowledge an agreement of consensus. At each step of this process respectful discourse in consideration of each other was believed critical to the practice of consensus. These customs are the laws of conduct and respect although these laws have been almost entirely ignored in the relationships of the colonizers to the Indigenous people, within the Nuu-chah-nulth communities these laws have remained. The edicts also demonstrate why respect is extended to all life forms, for if an individual being is part of creation then in turn that individual must be permitted to follow the path that creation created upon its behalf.

A loss of respect for all life and the larger environment may well be the greatest error that humanity has made in its drive towards the present day crisis in which we find ourselves. Berkes rightfully states, "This alienation from nature has contributed to the environmental problems of the contemporary world" (2008, p. 2). By disrespecting our position within the complex, delicate web of life and the corresponding relationships we may have sowed the seeds of our own destruction. By returning to a place of respect for each other, the communities of other life forms and our position within the interrelated fabric of life we may begin to find a truer balance in our interactions with the environment.

Conclusion

This chapter has begun to elucidate the structure for four of the foundation posts of the Nuu-chah-nulth as interpreted from Atleo's, *Tsawalk, A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. The four

foundation posts may well be observed, as elements of relationships but each should be viewed as distinctive by its significance yet interlinked as a circle of kinship. Each combines mutually towards an interconnecting purpose but just as with all life, each is diverse and unique. House posts are all components of the base structure but each must still rely upon the other to reinforce the roof. Interconnectedness, relationships, reciprocity and respect are all aspects of relations but in this work I will delineate each post separately and as distinct so as to establish an appreciation for of the uniqueness of each element.

These four foundation posts can be observed in the story of Son of Raven in the necessity for interconnected relationships, which are created upon reciprocity and respect. The respectful relationships between Son of Raven, Wren, Son of Deer and the other beings is apparent in each of their reciprocal interactions and humble acknowledgements of each other's contributions to capturing the day. Each community and being is interconnected in their need and objective to bring light to the world. As these posts are formed with the images of these stories they have knowledge to offer us today, if we listen, about the deep past and its echoes for the coming future. The reconnection of these stories to our present offers us conduits to a new, or very old, relationship to our environment.

In the light of day, which Son of Raven provided, I have offered the first story to begin constructing these narrative foundation posts. The posts which will become the framework as I fit each column into a corner of this storied dwelling, much as the Longhouses of the West Coast. Each post is now etched with the aspect of Son of Raven surrounded by all the communities which supported him in his endeavour, a quest for all. As I stand in the center of this building I look to the indistinct form of another image slowly emerging upon the foundation posts. These new impressions will be sketched upon the posts when I examine the principles of

the Stó:lō Nation in the next chapter.

Stó:lō

With this chapter I consider the values and potential foundation posts of the Stó:lō people, explored through Jo-ann Archibald's core text *Indigenous Storywork*. Unlike the previous chapter which was built upon the worldview text of Atleo, this core text is centered on the role of story in Stó:lō culture and education. While Archibald does not directly discuss the worldview principles of the Stó:lō, she discusses the framework of values that the Stó:lō engage in their oral traditions. Her depiction of the structure for this storywork and its protocols can be applied as a framework for the Stó:lō worldview principles, as stories are a central structure for the transmission of knowledge. Archibald notes that Simon Ortiz, *Woven Stone*, explains that "Oral tradition is inclusive . . . oral tradition is the consciousness of the people" (1992, p. 7). Stories are both the spoken histories and the means of teaching values and protocols. As Kovach eloquently states "our stories are our truth and knowledge" (Kovach 2009, p. 148).

Indigenous Storywork is written from Archibald's perspective as a scholar and storyteller so her cultural knowledge may be deemed dependable and offers a fair representation of Stó:lō philosophies. Accordingly I will once again commence with Stó:lō stories, one traditional and one contemporary to anchor the exploration of the principles and foundation posts of the Stó:lō Nation.

Mink and Miss Pitch, a Stó:lō Story

Mink is a Trickster character journeying to find a wife. He often picks beautiful but unavailable women and wants to marry them immediately. Mink usually has trouble because of his quick pick. Miss Pitch is the new object of Mink's attention and desire. Mink tries to persuade Miss Pitch to marry him by saying that he will look after all her needs. She lets Mink get close to her one night but turns down his marriage proposal the next day because she implies that they are too different to have a good marriage. She then ignores him. Mink won't take no for an answer and gets angry, then violent, with Miss Pitch when he can't have his way. He hits Miss Pitch when he can't have his way. He hits Miss Pitch with one arm, then the other, and kicks her with one foot, then the other. Then he butts her with his forehead and gets stuck to her pitchiness, overnight, in this awkward position. The next day, when the sun warms Miss Pitch, she releases Mink, knowing that she has made her point. Mink goes away. His search continues. (Archibald 2008, p. 91, as recounted from Susan Jimmie, Stó:lō Nation).

The Bird in the Tree, a Stó:lō Story

There were two male cousins; one lived in a northern isolated part of BC, and the other in the city of Vancouver. One day, the northern cousin came to visit his city cousin.

The city fellow wanted to bring his cousin to the better, more lively parts of Vancouver. He chose Robson Street. Robson Street gets quite busy with lots of people walking along the street, shopping and looking around. There's lots of traffic, loud music being played from the car stereos. As they were walking down Robson Street, the northern fellow said, "I feel out of place here. This cement sidewalk is so hard, my feet are sore from walking on it. There are so many people, you get bumped a lot. It's so noisy. I miss my home. I miss the quiet. I miss the smell of the land. I miss the trees and mountains being close by, and I miss the birds' songs. I feel as out of place as that bird I hear singing in a tree at the end of the street".

The city cousin said, "You must be homesick: how can you hear a bird singing in a tree at the end of the street with all this noise?" The northern cousin said, "Let me show you something. Do you have any coins?" The city fellow handed him a pocketful of change. The northern cousin took it and threw the coins onto the cement.

A strange thing happened as those coins hit the sidewalk. There was a moment of silence. In that moment of silence, those who listened heard a bird singing in a tree at the end of the street. (Archibald 2008, p. 95)

Stó:lō Worldview

In the present day, the 23 reserves and approximately 5,000 people that constitute the Stó:lō First Nation extends from Mission to Hope, British Columbia along the Fraser River (Stó:lō Nation 2009, Butler 2006). The customary name of the river is, Stó:lō or Solh Temexw from the nation's traditional language of Halkomelem or Hal'quem'eylem language (Wilcock 2011, Butler 2006). Therefore, the Stó:lō Nation is termed "the people of the river" (Butler 2006, p. 112). In *Historicizing Indigenous Knowledge, Practical and Political Issues*, Butler emphasizes that "the colonization of Stó:lō territory and the alienation of Stó:lō resources by Non-Natives has had significant impact on their relationship with the land and resources" (2006, p. 111). Such impacts as the loss of, or extreme impediment to, the traditional Stó:lō fisheries through regulation, commercialization and over-harvesting. *The Bird in the Tree* story reveals these lost connections when one cousin is incapable of hearing the bird or seeing the life that surrounds him until the other cousin intercedes.

While Atleo identified six principles in his Nuu-chah-nulth tradition, Archibald says the Stó:lō people identify seven principles surrounding storytelling and stories, "respect,

responsibility, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy" (2008, p. ix). Indigenous Nations have diverse protocols and traditions which regulate the utilization and dissemination of stories for "teaching and learning purposes" (Archibald 2008, p. 83). These customs that govern storytelling though varied are often analogous allowing for a comparison of core principles and thematic intersections. Protocols can be considered the established cultural actions and duties for individuals' who are forming or maintaining a relationship of respect and reciprocity.

"Our lives are stories . . . Storytellers have to be very responsible. They are setting the pace of breathing. A story is, and has, breath. Storytellers learn to let that happen" (LCES 1994, p. 49-50). During the act of storytelling the listener is not a passive witness but rather they become an active participant experiencing the story. The act of participation and involvement creates an interrelationship between the storyteller, the act of storytelling, the story and the active listener, which are vital elements in the culture of oral traditions. As in the story of *Mink and Miss Pitch*, the responsibility is considerable for a story that offers instruction about the hardships of misunderstanding and disrespect, violence and intractable disparities. As much as humans have disregarded their connections to the environment, the disrespect and violence for which humanity has enacted upon the natural world. Although humanity is not disconnected, rather it is richly and profoundly connected to all of life but at a deeper level, one that we may reach through the acknowledgment and understanding of these stories.

It is understood among the Stó:lō Nation that storytellers have a great responsibility to the stories they tell and to the individuals who listen and receive the stories because of the power of the stories. Archibald indicates how Thomas King conveys the complex nature of this power as, "Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous" (King 2003, p. 9). Storytellers consider the act of storytelling to be an essential responsibility but to recall and learn from a story one

must “write it on your heart” (Wickwire & Robinson 1989, p. 28). The reciprocity in storytelling between storyteller, story and listener is darkly juxtaposed with the lack of reciprocity in the clenching violence of Mink, which keeps him far away from his own heart. While Miss Pitch’s respectful act of releasing Mink unharmed to learn the lesson of generosity rather than covetousness. The greedy nature of Mink may well epitomize the avarice of the colonial appropriation of land through occupation, misrepresentation and annexation (Miller et al. 2012). In the conquest of Indigenous, “traditional territories, colonizers broke and continue to break Indigenous laws” (Miller et al. 2012, p. 90).

Stories are transmitted from storyteller to listener and the learning that occurs is crucial to the continuation of Indigenous knowledge and cultural endurance. Many of these stories, there connections and the embedded worldviews, have been compromised by “the legacy of forced colonization and assimilation during the missionary and residential–school eras” (Archibald 2008, p. 13) but not lost, damaged but not eradicated, hushed but not silenced.

As the Stó:lō people live and stand upon their land they are sustained and grounded in the knowledge that is acquired from that close relationship. This support reaches back to an unknown time, a time immemorial. The time before the beginning, when there was all but darkness until light was newly brought to the world, as when the Son of Raven captured the light for the inhabitants of the world. The origin stories of the beginning of time, one of which was narrated in the Nuu-chah-nulth story are not disconnected from the present or the future but rather they carry the knowledge anew. Stories which offer visions and concepts to build upon; that acknowledge and respect the Indigenous principles; and which are constructing the foundation posts. As with *the Bird in the Tree* story the environment and the living creatures have not disappeared but rather have only disappeared from our vision and our perception. It

takes the act of the cousin throwing the coins for the other cousin to hear and acknowledge the bird, the life surrounding him that is only diminished by his lack of awareness.

The foundations of the essential underpinnings of Indigenous knowledge are conveyed in the traditional and contemporary stories, spiritual principles, ceremonies, land and the customary teachings offered by Elders. "In seeking to understand Elders' teachings, knowing the values and actions of responsibility, respect, reverence, and reciprocity are essential" (Archibald 2008, p. 42). The story of *Mink and Miss Pitch* is a narrative concerning standards of conduct, respect, responsibility for one's action and relationship. Respect is hard won and easily lost but responsibility must be constant, much of the environmental damage occurring may well be grounded in a lack of respect and a misuse of responsibility. The authors of the article, *A Science for Survival: Values and Conservation Biology*, observe that "For society to learn to act effectively, it must perceive the link between ecosystem function and human welfare . . . Until we mend the cleavage in our understanding of the relationships among ecology, economics, and ethics, a willingness to make changes to maintain the long-term integrity and quality of the biosphere will not develop" (Dwight & Oelschlaeger 1996, p. 909). It seems across Indigenous traditions that storytelling is seen as essential to helping people renew such relations with a complex world. Next we will begin to consider the foundation posts as revealed by way of the Stó:lō stories of *Mink and Miss Pitch* and *The Bird in the Tree*.

Foundation Posts

The stories of *Mink and Miss Pitch* and *The Bird in the Tree* will give us direction as I examine the foundation posts of the Stó:lō Nation and the deeper connections that can be provided by the stories as we relate to each principle. *Mink and Miss Pitch* expose the antithesis of reciprocity and relationships in Mink's behaviour towards Miss Pitch. But Miss Pitch seems

to offer us a glimpse of respect in her generosity by releasing Mink rather than harm or punish him. Whereas, *The Bird in the Tree* maybe starting to illustrate for us interconnectedness and the endurance of relationships through the vision of the cousins.

In *Indigenous Storywork*, Archibald identifies seven norms in storywork, these are: "respect, reverence, responsibility, reciprocity, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy" (Archibald 2008, p. 2). In addition, she also indicates the significance of developing and preserving relationships between people and communities (human and animal), and storyteller and story. Establishing and observing respect and responsibility in relationships is crucial to the tradition of reciprocity. Mink does not observe respect or reciprocity in his interactions with Miss Pitch, but Miss Pitch offers respect in her release of Mink in spite of his own foolhardiness. Interconnectedness exists whether humans are aware of it or not, which is so strikingly demonstrated when the bird song is revealed behind the noise and chaos of the city by the cousin's actions.

Holism considers the whole to be as, if not more, important than the individual elements that form the whole, such as the earth and the species of animals and plants, which populate the world. This principle is deeply intertwined with interrelatedness. The connection between holism and its focus on the integration of and connections between elements as well as the principle of interconnectedness permitted me to unify these two principles under the foundation post of interconnectedness. The linking of these two principles was also suggested in my thematic analysis which indicated these elements being used almost interchangeably. Ecosystems can be seen as a whole, a holistic concept of divergent units functioning together towards a singular co-existing goal (Callicott 2003, Paehlke 1995). "Emerging out of the discourse of ecology is a view of human society as a part of a web of life within the ecosystem" (Berkes 2008, p. 2). This view as described by Berkes, can be perceived in the relationship

between the cousins and the web of life. The story of *the Bird in the Tree* also begins to reveal the holism and interconnections as the bird is acknowledged; the links to the other world are remembered.

Archibald in *Storywork* underscores the responsibilities that exist within relationships. This inherent connection between responsibility and relationship was also revealed in the thematic groupings which I considered in my analysis of the foundation posts. The principles of synergy and reciprocity are also closely related and appear to be inextricably linked. When the cousin in the story *The Bird in the Tree* tosses the coins and they strike the pavement the synergy of the moment, a split second in time, when silence overcomes the din of the city and the song of a single bird can be caught offers a quiet insight into the reciprocity of memory. Synergy combines and exchanges between elements to the mutual benefit of all components, as reciprocity is the undertaking of exchanges of actions or offerings for the mutual benefit of all. While reverence is a fragment of the aggregate of respect, for without respect reverence would likely not exist. Therefore, reverence has been united with and within the foundation post of respect.

The seven principles as defined by Archibald, "respect, reverence, responsibility, reciprocity, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy" (Archibald 2008, p. 2) may well be considered core principles within the Stó:lō culture. However, in this chapter I discuss them in relation to the four foundation posts as indicated by my analysis and have been highlighted in the previous chapter: Interconnectedness, Relationships, Reciprocity and Respect. Respect and relationships are uncovered within the story of *Mink and Miss Pitch* while interconnectedness and reciprocity are revealed in *The Bird in the Tree*. These stories also offer insight into the consequences of the loss of respect or relationships amongst life as illustrated by Mink in his appalling interactions

with Miss Pitch. Alternatively, in the story of *The Bird in the Tree*, which presents an opportunity to appreciate that humanity, may only be separated from the natural world by our own perceptions and choices. The wisdom of these stories and the principles elucidated by Indigenous knowledge may hold "value in contributing to solving our contemporary ecological problems" (Menzies & Butler 2006, p. 16).

Interconnectedness

The interconnectedness of the cousins to the environment can be seen in *the Bird in the Tree*, even though one cousin does not remember this connection until he is reminded. These interconnections with the environment and life still exist whether or not they are recognized or acknowledged. Humanity may choose to accept or ignore their interdependence to and within the circle or web of life but the fact still remains that they are bound to these connections for their existence and very survival. Holism signifies the profound interconnectedness between all aspects of an individual, the intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual which form a whole person. A whole person develops these interrelated aspects thru and in relationship with family, community, nation, land and other communities of life forms. As the story of *The Bird in the Tree* illustrates the interrelationships between all life endure even the silenced connections. It just takes someone to silence the noise for us to once again hear the stifled voices of life.

A circle often symbolizes this form of holism as it does within the cultural framework of the Stó:lō Nation. The holistic nature of the circle reflects a collective understanding of the need for balance and harmony to both exist and be maintained "among animals, people, elements of nature, and the Spirit World" (Archibald 2008, p. 11). Cultural knowledge and observation of protocols are necessary elements of this acknowledged system of interconnectedness. Or as in the story of *Mink and Miss Pitch*, when Mink ignores all observances of courtesy and protocol

eventually to his own determinant and shame. The environmental connections these stories illuminate may offer humanity a link to the lost instructions of these interrelationships with the environment. This interconnectedness of life as "the sacred circle of life" (Archibald 2008, p. 11). Interconnectedness and interrelationships exist not only between all life forms and the land, water and air but also storytelling, place and the Stó:lō people.

The foundation post of interconnectedness that is exhibited within the Stó:lō Nation is mirrored in the interconnections which Atleo also articulates, "The entire ecosystem of the earth is a unity" (Atleo 2004, p.38). As the Nuu-chah-nulth, Son of Raven story revealed, the interconnected nature of the relationships between the communities as they act together to bring light to the world each contributing to the success of their quest. Similarly, *the Bird in the Tree*, demonstrates the connection between the cousins and their interrelationship with the bird. Even as early as 1942, these interconnections were asserted by Aldo Leopold, "the cooperation of the interdependent parts" (1942, p. 482).

Relationships

All relationships are established upon the respect and reciprocity between individuals, communities, Nations, with present, past and future generations, all other living beings and the Earth. *Mink and Miss Pitch* offers insight into the incorrect realization of a relationship. Those initiated with violence are relationships to be disregarded, just as Miss Pitch releases and then disregards Mink. Alternatively *the Bird in the Tree* offers a portrait of a correct relationship between life forms as the cousin displays how despite the chaos of his surroundings he can still connect to the hidden bird. Especially given the urban setting in which he finds himself which offers a unique challenge to finding and connecting with his ecological relations. The impacts of this loss of connection to the natural world within urban settings have been shown to impact the

deeper interrelatedness to the larger environment and willingness for individual's to take action (Hunter 2011). People ought to come to recognize that the urban environment possesses an ecology and life of its own even within its urban setting (Hunter 2011). In addition to the relationship between cousin and cousin, and the bonds that are visible between them, there is a silently whispered connection between the northern cousin and the bird. An analogous relationship as those exhibited between the Son of Raven, Son of Deer and Wren which are implicit rather than explicitly acknowledged.

The Stó:lō consider that an individual must be considered culturally "worthy" and "ready" (Archibald 2008, p. 108) to understand the relationship between storywork and respect, reverence, responsibility and reciprocity. These cultural principles have been compromised by historical colonial oppression of, the continued disregard for and modernization of Indigenous culture. Many of these same Indigenous cultures, including the Nuu-chah-nulth and Stó:lō, are making determined efforts to conserve and revitalize their cultural traditions. These fundamental values and their affiliation to the relationship between storytellers and oral tradition are a foundation of the cultural system of the Stó:lō. Respectful relationships from within the culture of Stó:lō storywork requires reciprocity and learning, to listen with serenity and heart. The potential relationship between Mink and Miss Pitch is limited by their great differences and then by his belligerence and cruelty.

Moreover, these relationships are developed with all other life forms as the phrase "all my relations" (Archibald 2008, p. 42) denotes. "All my relations" is a reminder that people are relatives to not only humans but also the larger kinship of life. *The Bird in the Tree* story calls attention to how all life forms are "all my relations", as one being can locate another by the bonds of that unspoken relationship. As well as indicating an expansion of the web of life to

encompass the land, air, water, mountains and spirit world. By extension "all my relations" also implies a responsibility of reciprocity and respect within the relationships formed within the ecological web of life.

The foundation post of relationships traverse the Stó:lō and Nuu-chah-nulth people's. As all life is sacred, so to are the relationships that are critical to life's survival, "the relationship that is assumed to be inherent in the nature of existence" (Atleo 2004, p. 120). Son of Raven's relationships are unspoken but acknowledged and respected much as the cousin seeking out *the Bird in the Tree*. These relationships are essential to the functioning of each life whether by succeeding in capturing the day or in being reminded of home and place.

The relationships that have been silenced within our contemporary environmental catastrophe, are the relationships to which humanity should be looking to for guidance. The relationships between temperature and melting glaciers, air pollution and tar sands development or overfishing and collapsed fish stocks are just a few among the infinite number of relationships, which are ongoing, not around us but rather with us. Yet for the most part these relationships are either ignored or unrecognized as well as humanity's connection and responsibility to them. The silencing of the other voices in these relationships is deafening much as the bird was silent in *the Bird in the Tree* until someone chose to hear it. Until humanity makes a choice to listen they will remain divorced from these relationships.

Reciprocity

The cousin sensing the song of the hidden bird, seemingly silent in the tree can be viewed as an act of synchronicity and reciprocity. Whereas the story of *Mink and Miss Pitch* highlights an utter lack of reciprocity, as Mink's deeds display his contempt for Miss Pitch and the principle of reciprocity. This is a story of warning for people to not replicate Mink's actions but rather to

always recognize and acknowledge the need for reciprocity, and the value of the concept to the welfare of humanity. Mink's behaviour stands in stark contrast to the reciprocity in the relationships in the Nuu-chah-nulth story of *How Son of Raven Captured the Day* for without these acts of reciprocity Son of Raven would have never captured light for the world. Reciprocity is a deeply valued principle and the concept is fundamental to the transmission of cultural knowledge and protocol, bringing together past, present and future generations.

This foundation post can be seen in the reciprocal relationships of the Stó:lō people with their environment as evidenced by the cousin's acknowledgement of his longing for the environment and his revealing of its unseen presence to his cousin. The reciprocity of balance which the Stó:lō continue with their environment by utilizing other species' in a diverse manner so as not to impede any one species' to greatly and to ensure their continuity. This harmonious interaction ensures a resilience of both the species and the Stó:lō people (Turner & Spalding 2013). A number of these species and their associated stocks have endured significantly increased pressure since colonization. The concept of reciprocity is critical to knowledge exchange as it links the relationship of sharing and responsibility between generations and storytellers. Reciprocity governs a continuity of balance and harmony between individuals and between communities, human and non-human. The reciprocal relationship between balance and harmony rests upon the interconnectedness of holism. Just as the harmony of the bird song reminds the cousin of home.

Storytelling is an act of reciprocity between the storyteller, listener and community. Additionally, when an individual becomes a storyteller they have acted in reciprocity with those that were their teachers, other storytellers and Elders. "Stories have the power to make our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits work together. When we lose a part of ourselves, we lose balance and harmony" (Archibald 2008, p. 12) such is the significance of reciprocity and

storytelling. It is a customary protocol to offer gifts to a storyteller as an act of reciprocity; often this gift is food as an act of nourishing the storyteller and their story.

Reciprocity as a foundation post forms a link between the Stó:lō and Nuu-chah-nulth as it is a key principle in both their cultures. Both Atleo and Archibald stress that reciprocity and, its counterpart, balance, are vital to respectful relationships. Much as the story of *The Bird in the Tree* offers a picture of balanced reciprocal and respectful relationships, the story of *Mink and Miss Pitch* demonstrates a contrary manner of reciprocity and relations. The Son of Raven also exhibits the reciprocal relationships that he has respectfully developed with his and other communities.

The reciprocity necessary in relationships whether between humans or between humans and the natural world are critical to the strength and well-being of those same relationships. Mink's lack of reciprocity with Miss Pitch could well be a mirror for humanity's interactions with the environment. Resources, whether trees, oil, land or species, are being depleted at an ever-increasing rate with little or no thought of a reciprocal return. Has humanity become like Mink? Rather than being released to continue on as Miss Pitch so generously allowed for Mink, will humanity become trapped in the pitch or quagmire that it has produced? For example, the current debate concerning the veracity of climate change and the deniers of the impact of humans upon our climate are hampering movement towards change. Maybe the deeper understanding that can be gathered from *Mink and Miss Pitch* is the act of compassion and reciprocity that Miss Pitch bestowed and that reciprocal relationships and respect are only a coin's throw from humanity's vision or at least perception.

Respect

Respect is a foundation post interconnected with the reciprocal relationships that are woven

throughout all life. The principle of respect is apparent in the trust the cousin has for his own intuition and the connection he feels to the natural world. Whereas the respect denied to Miss Pitch by Mink's behaviour is a stark contrast to *the Bird in the Tree*. A disparity that is a lesson to humanity of lost respect and the need for respectful relationship across the culturally constructed and imposed environmental boundaries. The respectful relationships that exist between all beings is so wonderfully framed by Son of Raven, Son of Deer and Wren in their respect for one another.

Respect is a traditional core concept as illustrated by Archibald in the early pages of her book when she described the foundations of storywork being, ". . . respect, reverence, responsibility, reciprocity, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy" (2008, p. 2). The origin of respect is closely interwoven with "trust and being culturally worthy" (Archibald 2008, p. 41). To live with humility and honour, a person must observe respect for everyone, even those that one may dislike. Miss Pitch, in the story *Mink and Miss Pitch*, still observes respect for Mink, even after his assault of her, by only catching him in her pitch and releasing him unharmed the next day when her pitch warms and softens. Archibald noted in her own work and research that she "started with the principles of respect for cultural knowledge embedded in the stories and respect for the people who owned or shared stories as an ethical guide" (2008, p. 36). The lack of respect, or outright contempt, for Indigenous culture and knowledge which was, and in many cases continues to be, shown by colonial nation-states is as sharply disrespectful as the actions of Mink.

Respect is an integral part of relationships whether between an Elder and a researcher, a storyteller and a listener or a human and a plant or animal. Similar to the respect exhibited by the cousin who tosses the coins so that his cousin can be reminded of his own relationship to the

environment and the life that surrounds him. The principle of respect also embraces knowledge, storytelling and protocols. Circles also embody the respect each offers another whether in a talking circle of people where equality is paramount or the respect that is traditionally expected within the circle of life. Both respect and disrespect are evident in the story of *Mink and Miss Pitch*, as Mink resorts to violence to try and convince Miss Pitch of his worthiness while Miss Pitch continues to be respectful and honourable proving her true worth.

In *Principles of Tsawalk*, Atleo relates ". . . the importance of recognition, of mutual respect and understanding" (Atleo 2011, p. 80). Respect is a fundamental value, a foundation post, for both the Nuu-chah-nulth and Stó:lō as illustrated with respect being included in each of their original lists of basic principles. The loss of respect for the natural world could be one of the underpinning causes for the present environmental situation which humans find themselves in today. Respect is a vital requirement of all relationships even, or in particular, with the environment. Without respect relationships wither and die. If society is to rectify this environmental dilemma, it will need once again to build a relationship based on respect for all life and the Earth. The Stó:lō experience of and principle for respect is demonstrated in the stories they share and in the principle which is a foundation post of their culture. These stories can be lessons for the larger society to begin to understand why respect is so critical to not only the relationship humans have with the natural world but also with each other.

Conclusion

With this chapter I examined the four foundation posts that began to come into view in the previous chapter through the main principles and protocols of Stó:lō culture as described in Archibald's, *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*. The principles of interconnectedness, relationships, reciprocity and respect are core values in the culture of the

Stó:lō people. In *Mink and Miss Pitch* the dishonouring of interconnections, relationships and respect is shown by Mink and the strength of Miss Pitch's honour by continuing to show respect. The foundation post of interconnectedness can be perceived as soon as the coins strike the concrete in *Bird in the Tree*. The cousin has displayed what he already knew, that the bird was singing in the tree, though no one else seemed to be able to hear it before his actions. This interconnectedness is lost in the exchanges between Mink and Miss Pitch for Mink's aggression breaks these bonds. Consequently it also destroys any opportunity for relationship. The relationship between the cousin and the bird is all but hidden but to him, and the relationship between the cousins presents the close ties of family as one shares his longing for home with the other. Reciprocity is quietly revealed in the song of the bird which is lost amidst the din of the city and only made known by the actions of the northern cousin. The juxtaposition of respect in the two stories exposes the consequences of a loss of respect, Mink is alone once again, and offered respect, the cousins are both reminded of the beauty of the world.

These stories and foundation posts connect back to the Nuu-chah-nulth story of Son of Raven as he collaborates in interconnected relationships with other communities to bring sunlight to their world. These relationships are reciprocal with Son of Deer attempting to win the light or the mice aiding in the Son of Raven's escape. As with the Stó:lō cousins, all of the community in the Son of Raven story respect each others strengths, weaknesses and needs. By adding the story of *Mink and Miss Pitch* and *The Bird in the Tree* to the edifice of my foundation posts, the richness and depth of the two stories now engraved upon the post have fortified the house poles. The structure has become stronger and more stable with the addition of this story and the image of *Mink and Miss Pitch* and *The Bird in the Tree*. Now I as stand in the doorway of this Longhouse, I search for the next image that is vaguely visible on the posts. These new

imaginings and the stories from which they are emerging will become visible as I consider the values of the Cree in the next chapter.

Cree

This final case study chapter investigates the worldview and foundation posts of the Cree people. The text utilized for this chapter, is the inspiring book by Shawn Wilson, *Research is Ceremony*. Dr. Wilson is an Opaskwayak Cree who holds a doctorate in Indigenous Studies and whose research focuses on Indigenous research methodologies. In particular, this text emphasizes Cree methodology and worldview. Wilson's experiential knowledge within his community of Elders, his Indigenous and Western education and his scholarly research can attest to the reliability of this text as an authentic depiction of the Cree, specifically Opaskwayak, worldview. The geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity of the Cree people means that Wilson's text while representative may not fully denote the principles of all Cree nations, and as such I reference a secondary text from another Cree scholar. This text is *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* by Margaret Kovach, which examines the values and traditions of the Indigenous knowledge system of the Plains Cree.

Wilson uses stories extensively in his text to position himself and his dialogue, as stories are the context of history and learning, as he states "when you use a story, your own or others' it's claiming a voice and establishing a relationship" (2008, p. 125). Therefore, I will again begin with two contemporary stories offered by Wilson to serve as an anchor as we investigate the Cree worldview in relation to these emerging foundation posts.

Coyote goes to School, a Cree Story

Coyote was once again fed up with running around all day in the hot sun for a few scrawny gophers and rabbits. Dirt up his nose, dirt in his eyes, and what for? Barely a mouthful. Coyote had tried getting food at the supermarket one time like the Human People do but got the shit kicked out of him for that. So, once again, he went to his brother, Raven, to ask him advice.

Coyote said, "Raven, there's got to be an easier way to get fed. I tried the supermarket – gotten beaten up. Tried to get money from welfare but came up against the Devil's Spawn in a K-Mart dress. Nothing's worked so far. You got any other ideas?"

"Well," Raven said thoughtfully, "the White Humans seem pretty well fed and they say that the key to success is a good education. Maybe you could go to school."

"Hmmm," Coyote mused, "maybe I'll try it. Couldn't hurt."

Well, Coyote went off to the city to the university because that's where Raven said adults go to school.

In a few days Coyote was back.

"Well my brother, "Raven Inquired, "did you get your education?"

"Not exactly," Coyote replied, "education is as hard to get as a welfare cheque. To get an education like the teachers at university takes at least 10 years – that's a Coyote's entire lifetime – and, in the end, you don't get paid much anyways."

"When I got to the university they asked me what program I was in. I didn't know so they sent me to this guy who told me about the programs. I kinda like the idea of biology – if I learned more about gophers maybe they'd be easier to catch. I liked the idea of engineering – maybe I could invent a great rabbit trap. But in the end I settled on Native Studies. Now that's something I can understand – I've known these guys for thousands of years, even been one when it suited me."

"When I asked this guy what Indian told him the stuff he was saying, he said none – he read it in a book. Then I asked who the Indian was who wrote the book. And he said, it wasn't an Indian, it was a white guy. Then I asked him what Indian the guy who wrote the book learned from and the teacher got mad and told me to sit down."

The next day I went to my Indians of North America class. I was really looking forward to meeting all those Indians. And you know what? There was another white guy standing up there and not an Indian in sight. I asked the teacher, "Are we going to visit all the Indians?" He said, No. So I asked him, "How are we going to learn about Indians then?" And he said, just like the other guy, from a book written by a white guy. So I asked him if I could talk to this guy who wrote the book and the teachers said, "No, he's dead."

"By then, I was getting pretty confused about this education staff but I went to my next class – Indian Religions. And guess what? When I went in, there wasn't another white guy standing up at the front of the room – there was a white woman!"

"I sat down and I asked her,' Are we going to the sweatlodge?' 'No.' 'Sundance?' 'No.' 'Yuwipi?' 'No.' 'Then how are we going to learn – no wait, I know – from a book written by a dead white guy! I'm starting to get the hang of this education business."

"So then I go to my Research Methods class thinking I've got it figured out. In this class the teacher (you've got it – another white guy) said that our research must be ethical, that we must follow the guidelines set out by the university for research on human subjects. The rules are there, my teacher said, to protect the Indians from unscrupulous researchers. Who made these rules I asked – you guessed it – a bunch of white guys. They decided we need protecting and that they were the ones to decide how best to protect us from them. So I told my teacher that I wanted to interview my father. The teacher said, you've got to ask the ethics review committee for permission. What?! I've got to ask a bunch of white guys for permission to talk to my own dad? That can't be right. I was confused all over again."

"So I sat down and thought about all this for a long time. Finally I figured it out. If white guys teach all the courses about Indians and they teach in the way white people think, then to find Indians teaching the way Indians think all I had to do was give up Native Studies and join the White Studies program!" (Wilson 2008, pp. 17-19, as recounted from Heather Harris' [Cree] article 2002, pp. 194-196)

A Father's Memory, a Cree Story

It was one of those really fine sunny and warm September days after the leaves have turned to their many colours that I was out walking on the Saskatchewan Prairie. I was enjoying the autumn stillness when I started to wonder how it may have been like there on that very spot several hundred years ago. I could imagine the endless stretches of faded green grasses with perhaps herds of thousands of buffalo grazing along the hollows trying to store up as much fat in their bodies as a way of getting ready for the cold and snow-filled months ahead. I could see the

flocks of neepin-ayesuk (summer birds) winging their way south as their way of coping with the winter. I began to wonder if there would be any of my ancestors anywhere nearby also busy getting themselves ready for the harsh months ahead. As I topped a gentle knoll I spotted a wooded area below along one of the many creeks wind their way through the prairies. I went into the woods to see if there would be enough resources in the vicinity to sustain a camp through the winter. There would be enough of a shelter from the winds in the woods and enough dry wood for warmth and cooking. Perhaps they would have dried a lot of buffalo meat to last the winter along with a good supply of wild berries that would have been picked while they were ripe. The creek would supply the necessary water for the winter and perhaps even some fish. There would also have been harvesting of what is known as the passenger pigeon. One of my grandfathers told me of them when I was a young boy. "These birds were a gift from the Creator to us Human Beings," he used to say. They were not afraid of Humans so our ancestors used to harvest enough to last them through the winter. This gift was sort of like our insurance that we would not starve during severe winters. Unfortunately that characteristic caused their extinction once the white settlers arrived. They recklessly depleted, like the buffalo, these wonderful birds.

Anyway as I was walking through the spaces between the clumps of willows and trees all of a sudden I realized in mid-stride that if our ancestors had been living here for centuries it is likely that some may have died even on the very spot I was going to step. If that were the case then everywhere I go on this continent is also likely the case. Everywhere there remains would have gone back into the land that became enriched by them. They would supply nutrition for the grass I was walking on, the worm that feeds on the grass, and the bird that feeds on the worm and so on. We Two-legged Beings eventually find nutrition from the same sources! Thus our ancestors ARE part of us in that way. We are all connected! Now I truly understood the term "and all our relations". We are only a part of that circle. (Wilson 2008, pp. 95-96, as recounted by his father)

Cree Worldview

The Opaskwayak Cree Nation have inhabited the region which radiates out from the junction of the Saskatchewan and Pasquia Rivers (Opaskwayak Cree Nation 2015). This territory and river were a significant gathering place for cultural and economic exchanges for the Cree nations of the region. In present day the area is often referred to as The Pas and is home to approximately 4,500 Opaskwayak Cree (Opaskwayak Cree Nation 2015). The area continues to be of import to the Cree people as many contemporary meetings of the Cree nations have taken place within the boundaries of the Opaskwayak Cree territory. The Cree Nations' range extends from Northern Alberta to Newfoundland/Labrador. Language diversity and the geographical range of the Cree peoples have created an extensive range of cultural and social customs (Cree Cultural Institute 2015). This is the purpose for my inclusion of the secondary text from an author from a different Cree nation than that of Wilson.

Indigenous education and research customarily view learning as experiential whether through such methods as storytelling or place-based learning (Wilson 2008). The transmission of this knowledge occurs through generations evolving as one generation contributes their knowledge to the cultural knowledge collective. Indigenous knowledge is an all-embracing system of knowledge, education, science and spirit (Martin-Hill 2007). Indigenous peoples have a unique, albeit diverse, way of viewing the world, and living and being within that world. This worldview contains the cosmological structure and ethical principles for those lifeways (Wilson 2008). Wilson emphasizes that knowledge "cannot be owned or discovered but is merely a set of relationships that may be given a visible form" (Wilson 2008, p. 127). It is critical to appreciate the significance which is bound within the relationships formed in these knowledge systems, and the cultures that create and recreate the knowledge. To "recognize the importance of the relational quality of knowledge and knowing, then we recognize that all knowledge is cultural knowledge" (Wilson 2008, p. 91). Furthermore this knowledge rests in the land, connected to the Cree peoples that have lived upon the land for untold generations. As Kovach states, "our knowledges are bound to place" (2009, p. 37). This principle can be readily observed in *A Father's Memory* as he walks across the lands of his ancestors, remembering his and their deep connections to the place and the communities of other creatures that live, or once lived, upon the same land and provided for them. The relationships that the Cree people establish and nurture with the environment is not viewed any differently then those relationships that exist between humans (Wilson 2008).

In Cree culture accountability, responsibility and reciprocity are critical to the well-being and continuation of knowledge relationships (Wilson 2008). Wilson explains that these obligations for accountability in and to relationships form a methodology of relational reality. He describes

how, “relations do not merely shape reality, they are reality” (Wilson 2008, p. 7). These relations form the methodology of research. Thus, relational research formulates the structure for analysis and data collection from within the culture. Data is observable through the five senses much as it is in conventional Western research but Indigenous research and knowledge is also augmented by stories, cosmology and “from putting form to a bundle of relationships that were previously invisible” (Wilson 2008, p. 111). Wilson explains that by being true to these relationship one cannot feign objectivity. Objectivity nullifies accountability to the relationships. “When we try to cut ourselves off at the neck and pretend an objectivity that does not exist in the human world, we become dangerous, to ourselves first, and then to the people around us” (Hampton 1995, p. 52). Much like the detachment and nullified responsibility that Coyote finds when he tries to attend university. The instructors teaching the Native Studies course are non-Native and are not accountable to books written by long dead “white guys”.

The ceremony of storytelling and Indigenous research does not have to be formal to develop relationships with others or the knowledge (Wilson 2008). Rather the research must be completed “within the value (of) *miýo-wîcêhtowin*, meaning having or possessing good relations” (Cardinal and Hildebrant 2000, p. 14). As the title of his book states, Wilson (2008) stresses that research, like education and storytelling, is a ceremony. “Stories remind us of who we are and of our belonging” (Kovach 2009, p. 94). Indigenous knowledge is carried in the stories of the people; it is the conduit for intergenerational transmission (Wilson 2008). Stories are the knots of relationships, which weave the fabric of Indigenous culture. When *Coyote goes to School* he is continuously searching for these relationships between the teachers and himself, the teachers and what is taught, and what is being taught and his own experiential knowledge. History, customs, stories, knowledge and traditional principles support the social unity and

structure of a community (Kovach 2009).

It is vital that stories also offer the narratives of the storytellers themselves, their lives and experiences. Storytellers introduce their experiences into the narrative, as does the listener, so that each individual hearing the story is able to adapt the meaning and apply it to their own lives (Wilson 2008). This meaning and connection back to one's own life is missing for Coyote when he attends university. Although there are sacred stories which are not personalized and do not change except for individual nuances of the storyteller such as voice articulation. The relationship between the storyteller and listener is bound in a respectful reciprocity of offering and learning. Storytellers tell stories without explanation as the process of learning is individual "to explain too much is not honouring" the listener (Wilson 2008, p. 135). The listener is responsible for their learning and growth; the personalized nature of this process makes the learner "accountable to all our relations" (Wilson 2008, p. 135). Stevenson emphasizes "that Indigenous oral histories do not share conventional categorical boundaries: the package is holistic – they include religious teachings, metaphysical links, cultural insights, history, linguistic structures, literary and aesthetic form, and Indigenous truths" (cited in Kovach 2009, p. 101). Language is the framework of stories and knowledge. Indigenous "language is built like (a) metaphor. One word is like a zip file, zip disk that crunches all this information into it" (Wilson 2008, p. 112). The lessons and wisdom, which live within these stories, are not just data or history rather they may offer something deeper, a new or very old way of viewing our world and the environment (Wilson 2008).

The Indigenous worldview is established in the interconnected relationships between the people and the land. These connections further bond the people to their ancestors and future generations. This is reflected in *A Father's Memory* when he comes to realize "in mid-stride that

if our ancestors had been living here for centuries it is likely that some may have died even on the very spot I was going to step" (Wilson 2008, p. 96). Wilson clarifies that "rather than viewing ourselves as being in relationship with other people or things, we are the relationships that we hold and are part of" (2008, p. 80). This relationship with the land is what gives the Cree their spiritual centre and "sense of belonging" (Wilson 2008, p. 88). The relationships between the Cree, the natural world and cosmos gives rise to the spiritual essence of their existence (Wilson 2008). Spirituality is not discrete from the Cree people rather is an "infused part of the whole" (Wilson 2008, p. 89). The spirit is key to ceremony and the daily-lived lives of the Cree or as one Elder explained to Wilson, "the part of a ceremony that people see, like the sweat lodge, the communion or whatever, is only the period at the end of a long sentence" (2008, p. 89). Indigenous knowledge does not disconnect science from spirit and culture. Whereas Western knowledge traditions tend to consider knowledge through the practice of intellect, for Indigenous knowledge systems the senses, spirit and intuition are also used as methods of knowledge acquisition (Wilson 2008). Some individuals within contemporary environmental studies and sciences have begun reassessing this purely intellectual categorization of knowledge with such concepts as the Gaia theory, which views the world as being alive, conceivably a living system of knowledge (VanDeVeer & Pierce 2003). Now we can start with a broader examination of the principles that the Cree worldview adds to the emerging foundation posts.

Foundation Posts

The two Cree stories that began this chapter will give us a path to follow as we consider the principles of the foundation posts of the Cree peoples. *Coyote goes to School* offers insight into the obstacles caused by unequal power in relationship and the frustration of neglected interconnections. In *A Father's Memory* respectful reciprocity is present in his memories of the

interconnected relationships of his life. These stories can lead us to a richer understanding and connection to our environment and ourselves.

In *Research is Ceremony*, Wilson (2008) elucidates key values of the Opaskwayak Cree, which are relationships, respect, interrelationships or circle, reciprocity and responsibility. Responsibility is considered as it relates to relationships and in particular research protocol (Wilson 2008). Kovach (2009) also emphasizes the significance of relationships, reciprocity, respect and interrelationships or kinship. Wilson (2008) continues to explain that responsibility is constructed within accountability and reciprocity. In *A Father's Memory* his memory of the passenger pigeon and the lack of accountability that "recklessly depleted", eventually ending in its extinction after the arrival of the "white settlers" (Wilson 2008, p. 96). Therefore given the close relationship which Wilson considers between responsibility and reciprocity, and the thematic analysis of his explanations and phrasing, I have summarized these values within the foundation post of reciprocity.

The principle of the circle is described by Wilson "as a . . . foundation platform . . . it's relational, it's a structure that supports an inclusion, a wholeness" (2008, p. 92). This circle of interconnections and interactions is also visible in the interrelationships which are recognized in such concepts as ecosystems and living webs. An ecosystem can be defined as "a community of living things of diverse species interacting with one another and their inorganic environment" (VanDeVeer & Pierce 2003, p. 651). Wilson employs the description of the wholeness of the circle in his discussions regarding the significance of relationships and the interconnections that hold them together. The incorporation of the circle and interconnections as a foundation post is based upon this theme in Wilson's text linking these two ideas so closely together.

To begin our journey into the Cree foundation posts I will begin by considering

interconnectedness, then move onto relationships, reciprocity and finally respect.

Interconnectedness

The foundation post of interconnection can be observed between Coyote and his brother Raven, and his trust in their relationship and conversations. This connection is quite similar to the familial interrelationships between Son of Raven, Wren and Son of Deer in the Nuu-chah-nulth story. As well as the bond that was displayed between the cousins in the Stó:lō story of *The Bird in the Tree*. The interconnections that are evident in the Father's story include links to birds, animals, trees and most especially to his ancestors and the land. "That which the trees exhale, I inhale. That which I exhale, the tree inhales" (Graveline 1998, p. 57). The father's recognition of his connection to the land by imagining what the land would have been like several hundred years before and if the area would be suitable for maintaining a winter camp. Adelson plainly states, "history of the people and the history of the land do not simply correspond to each other – they are one and the same" (2000, p. 29).

Wilson (2008) describes the Indigenous paradigm as considering knowledge to be relational. "Knowledge is shared with all creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, . . . but it is a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos; it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth" (Wilson 2008, p. 56-57). It is the maintenance and nourishing of the interconnections that reinforces the respect for, and within, relationships. Coyote complains to Raven about the absence of interconnections at school especially between the teachers and the subject matter. He is startled that most of the Indigenous knowledge comes from books and that the books have been written by "a white guy" (Wilson 2008, p. 18). Coyote is coming into relation with the colonial tendencies of education which presumes the superiority of European educational and literary traditions. "The notion that empirical evidence is sounder than cultural knowledge

permeates western thought but alienates many Indigenous scholars . . . It is the notion of the superiority of empirical knowledge that leads to the idea that written text supersedes oral tradition" (Wilson 2008, p. 58). The interconnections that exist between all life and entities must be respectful and reciprocal reinforcing a balance with and within the environment (Kovach 2009).

Indigenous philosophy and thought consider issues from a more circular practice acknowledging interconnections of ideas and potential solutions. This circular custom is also often present in the stories which circle in and out of the stories within stories (Wilson 2008). This can be viewed in Coyote's story when he keeps re-framing the "white guys" from problem to problem. Since Coyote lives in a reality of circularity he imagines that if the "white guys" are teaching Native Studies then native people must be teaching White Studies. Yet because Coyote stories are trickster stories it calls attention to how the circle is entirely broken because there is in fact no White Studies with native teachers. The circle is a valuable symbol in considering interconnections as it signifies that no one entity or life is placed above another in a human centred hierarchy. In addition the circle implies an equality of components and the interrelated co-existence of those elements (Wilson 2008). Or as the Father says so meaningfully, "We are all connected! Now I truly understand the term 'and all our relations'. We are only part of that circle" (Wilson 2008, p. 96), recognizing his place in the larger circle of life.

The interconnections with the environment which are represented in the Father's story also reflects the connections the cousin has with his environment in the Stó:lō story, *The Bird in the Tree*, from the previous chapter. The interlinking connections between the environment and humans are studied in numerous areas of social and natural sciences. For example, Callicott describes ecology as the study of interrelationships "of organisms to one another and to the

elemental environment . . . bind(ing) the *relata* – plants, animals, soils, and waters – into a seamless fabric" (2003, p. 230). Although these interconnected relationships are being studied and are often acknowledged as critical to overcoming the present environmental crisis there appears to be little integration of this concept into the collective cultural conscience.

Relationships

Coyote goes to School is a story that offers a view of non-relationships. Coyote cannot find a relationship within the university setting or with instructors in his courses. These decontextualized interactions rather than relationships confuse Coyote, who is already unsettled by all of the "white guys" teaching Native Studies rather than the "Indians" he expects should be teaching (Wilson 2008, p. 18). Similarly, the lack of relationship in the Stó:lō story of *Mink and Miss Pitch,* is a one-sided distortion of a relationship. The distortion of an inequitable, abusive relationship where Mink believes that he can badger or force Miss Pitch into submission. The memories of the Father allow us to consider the deeply profound nature of a relationship that extends beyond one individual or one life.

In *Research is Ceremony*, Wilson (2008) clarifies that people belong to the environment, that humanity is not alone but rather that all life is our relations. Furthermore, that we must acknowledge that our relationships with the environment need to be built upon this premise of interrelatedness (Wilson 2008). These relationships, as with relationships between humans, require development and care to maintain healthy relationships. Indigenous knowledge and culture are "all about forming relationships" (Wilson 2008, p. 113), and are comprised of an active "web of relationships"s (Wilson 2008, p. 786). The acknowledgement of the Father in, *A Father's Memory*, of his relationships to the land, birds, buffalo and his ancestors is formed within a web of relationships. He recognizes his place in the food web and greater web of life, as

his ancestors have gone back to the land to enrich the soil, grass, worms and eventually himself. The colonial impacts can also be seen in the story as he describes the extinction of the passenger pigeon and the depletion of the buffalo.

Wilson further elucidates that the relationships formed between individual entities, communities or with ideas in a knowledge system are "more important than the thing itself" (Wilson 2008, p. 73). Within the recognition of relational value is the acceptance that each individual is also interconnected with a myriad of other relationships to which they are also responsible. The relationships made with other people and those that are made with the other entities or the environment are all correspondingly important; "both are equally sacred" (Wilson 2008, p. 87). The Cree worldview acknowledges that relationships must continue to be of primary consequence, as relationships are the essence of the knowledge system (Wilson 2008). Kovach describes that, "knowledges (e.g. values, language), it should be assumed that they are nested, create, and re-created within the context of relationships with other living beings" (2009, p. 47). Knowledge is developed through and within relationships (Wilson 2008). Kovach states it more emphatically as relationships are "wholly integrated with everything else" (2009, p. 57). Coyote's search for knowledge fails because of an absence of relational connections. Indigenous knowledge is a whole, integrated system, whereas Western scientific knowledge systems most often tend to dissect the whole and disassemble its units. By taking knowledge apart into smaller, elemental units the relationships are destroyed and therefore the knowledge may be compromised because it cannot exist outside of its relationships (Wilson 2008). Knowledge and the process of knowing is a process of "self-in-relationship" (Graveline 1998, p. 52).

The relationships of humanity with other life and the environment are critical if we are to overcome the ecological abyss we are careening towards. Rees emphatically declares, "humans

are unlikely to conserve anything for which we do not have love and respect, empathy and compassion. Indeed, it might be argued that for ecological sustainability, we must come to feel in our bones that the violation of nature is a violation of self" (2002, p. 266). Ecological relationships govern the very nature of entities rather than the other way around (Callicott 2003). *A Father's Memory* as much as the Stó:lō story of *The Bird in the Tree* demonstrates the foundation post of relationship through the relational connections each person makes with their environment, these can be compared to the respect and love that Rees suggests.

Reciprocity

The Father's recognition of his own reciprocity to the land, his fellow creatures and ancestors can be sensed in his thoughtful memories and respectful recreation of his ancestors' life. *Coyote goes to School* illustrates how the absence of reciprocity can affect one's perception of an institution as well as one's situation.

Reciprocity is another central principle within the worldview of the Cree people. It is considered to be a guiding mechanism in maintaining strong relationships (Wilson 2008). The power balance in relationships can be compromised without reciprocity. This lack of reciprocity that produces serious power inequities can be observed in the colonial relationships between the government and Indigenous nations. Colonialism has created power imbalances beginning with the original Papal Bull to the Indian Act and to contemporary treaty negotiations. Government power is constructed upon privilege rather than on reciprocity or relationships. As the Lakota scholar, Vine Deloria, Jr., stated, "The basic problem is that American society is a right society, not a responsibility society" (Corntassel 2008, p. 121). Even Coyote recognizes this power imbalance when he tries to attend university and comes to he realize his education will be constructed and managed by the "white guys".

Reciprocal relationships ensure respectful relationships which are balanced and harmonious (Wilson 2008). In *Research is Ceremony*, the relational connections between reciprocity, responsibility and respect are clearly delineated as imperative to relational accountability within and between communities of all life forms (Wilson 2008). Reciprocity is considered more than an exchange or gift-giving rather that it is an honouring of each individual life as well as respecting the equality and significance of each life (Wilson 2008). Reciprocal relationships acknowledge that "one relationship is not more significant than another. Rather, it is a balance of all. Relational balance is holistic" (Kovach 2009, p. 62). Wilson (2008) stresses that relational accountability, when each individual is accountable to all their relationships, is a central context within Cree principles. This accountability involves all the elements and components of life. As Berkes posits, "the more holistic approaches in ecology provide a new vision of the earth as an ecosystem of interconnected relationships in which humans are part of the web of life" (Berkes 2008,p. 253). The Cree words which form the foundation for the concept of reciprocity are *otcinawin*, the breaking of natural law, and *pastahowin*, the breaking of a sacred law (Wilson 2008). These words and meaning relate back to relational accountability, for the words infer that injustice or mistreatment break the laws of the natural world, which disrupt the natural balance and harmony (Wilson 2008). Reciprocity in relationships results in a continuity of balance and harmony within and between communities.

If, as Wilson suggests, a lack of reciprocity or relational accountability breaks the laws of the natural world, can it further be suggested that humanity has broken these laws of relational accountability which has resulted in today's serious environmental rift? As Wackernagel and Rees propose, the " 'environmental crisis' is less an environmental and technical problem than it is a behavioral and social one. It can therefore be resolved only with the help of behavioral and

social solutions" (1996, p. xi). It may be the case that we are responsible for restoring this relational accountability with the environment. Just as Miss Pitch restored her reciprocity with the natural world by releasing Mink unharmed in the Stó:lō story of *Mink and Miss Pitch* or the Father's appreciation for his reciprocal relationships with the land and his ancestors in *A Father's Memory*.

Respect

The Cree stories of *A Father's Memory* and *Coyote goes to School* can both represent the foundation post of respect but in opposing manners. Coyote does not find respect for Indigenous knowledge or his own history in the university setting. Rather he finds himself perplexed and misunderstood. On the other hand in the memories of the Father we can see and appreciate his profound respect for the land and ancestors upon which he treads. This was similarly visible in the interaction of the cousin to *the Bird in the Tree* from the Stó:lō chapter when the northern cousin hears the bird singing and reveals it to his cousin.

Respect as with reciprocity is one of the core values of the Cree people and more specifically within their relational structure. Relationships are guided by respect and strengthened by respectful conduct. As Wilson (2008) explicates much of Western society regards respect to the individual as the highest form of respect whereas in Cree society respect, which is shown among relations and in relationships, is the primary acknowledgement of this principle of relationship. Relational accountability also obliges that relationships be governed by respect and reciprocity. Weber-Pillwax states the importance of this principle when she concedes, "Respect means living that relationship in all forms of interactions" (unpublished PhD dissertation 2003, p. 50; as cited in Wilson 2008, p. 58). Juxtaposed with the unlived and mistreated relationships created by colonialism. Described by Smith "as discourses . . . played out in systems of power and

domination" (2002, p. 44). Indigenous knowledge, its history, evolution, transmission and stories are also in relationships with each element and with individuals. Respect in relationships includes the relationship that individuals form with knowledge. By having a relationship with knowledge, a concept or an idea it commits that person to respecting the knowledge and the relationship that has developed (Wilson 2008). This respect is also formed in the relationships which develop amongst the storytellers, stories and listeners as the conduits of Indigenous knowledge.

"Respect regulates how we treat Mother Earth, the plants, the animals, and our brothers and sisters of all races" (Steinhauer 2001, p. 86). This relational respect is also constructed in the reciprocal relationships the Cree create with the environment (Kovach 2009). Respect may be sorely lacking in the human-earth relationship today, but "humans are gifted by the potential for self-awareness and intelligent choice, and *knowing our circumstances is an invitation to change*" (Wackernagel & Rees 1996, p. xi). Even as the Father in *A Father's Memory* recognizes and acknowledges his place among "all my relations", it displays for us the basis of respect for our position within creation and maybe an invitation to act appropriately. This potential for self-awareness and respect should be something that humanity seeks in its future interactions with the environment.

Conclusion

The foundation posts of the Cree people have been considered within this chapter through the core text of Wilson, *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* and the ancillary text of *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* by Margaret Kovach. The core principles within the worldview of the Cree people embrace Interconnectedness, Relationships, Reciprocity and Respect. These foundation posts of

respectful relationships and interconnected reciprocity determine the relationships amongst Cree nations, communities and the living world. *A Father's Memory* displays the interconnectedness that exists between the Father and the land as well as generationally between him and his ancestors. Whilst these interconnections bind the Father to the well-being of the birds and animals of the land and to his peoples' past relationships to their environment. The living environment is both sentient to and in relationship with the Cree people (Berkes 2008).

The story of *Coyote goes to School* displays the antithesis of a lack of relationships. As Coyote attends his courses and meets his instructors, he is held at arms length by the absence of experiential knowledge and the knowledge keepers. Whereas the Father is in relationship with all that surrounds him including his memories, history and ancestors. He recognizes himself in these relationships and his responsibility to those interrelationships. All of these reciprocal relations are in turn responsible to one another. The reciprocity the Father shares with his ancestors as they return to the land and enter the cycle of the interrelated webs of food and life. He understands the reciprocal nature of life and his place in and amongst it. The respect that is so prominent in *A Father's Memory* story with the respect he acknowledges to the land and his ancestors is seemingly absent from *Coyote goes to School*, except in that Coyote is searching for that respect. Just as the Father recognizes the disrespect for the passenger pigeon by the settlers, Coyote recognizes the disrespect for traditional Indigenous knowledge in the Native Studies university program.

The dichotomy which is present between the two Cree stories of *A Father's Memory* and *Coyote goes to School* is mirrored in the Stó:lō stories of *Mink and Miss Pitch* and *The Bird in the Tree*. The interrelationships displayed in *A Father's Memory, The Bird in the Tree* as well as Atleo's, *How Son of Raven Captured the Day,* juxtapose the severed relationships which are seen

in *Coyote goes to School* and *Mink and Miss Pitch*.

The stories of *Coyote goes to School* and *A Father's Memory* are now shaped upon the foundation posts further strengthening the base of the Long House. They also bring to completion this phase of our journey. The Long House structure has been raised upon the stories which we have followed down this storied and knowledge-laden trail. So now I as stand in the centre of this Longhouse, I am delighted to see the image-filled posts that will now support the roof that will cover us as we have one final dialogue to consider our findings and there meanings.

Conclusion

Son of Raven, Mink and Miss Pitch, Bird in the Tree, Coyote and a Father have assisted our journey as we have searched for foundation posts that can help us construct the stories of a common Long House. As we have traveled with these embodied stories we've created the foundation posts which now support a Long House of knowledge, from the diverse worldviews and cultures of Indigenous nations in Canada. This structure now filled with stories and knowledge can be the basis for establishing new protocols for relational dialogue amongst nations, governments, institutions, and with the environment. The foundation posts cannot only serve as a guide to equitable discourse but by embracing the stories we may also see "others' life experiences through our own eyes" (Wilson 2008, p. 17). Knowledge within the stories and now written upon the foundation posts highlights that knowledge is not individually owned but it is a collaboration of interpretations of relationships (Wilson 2008). This knowledge is formed within relationships and if it is severed from the relationships it may lose its life and spirit.

The stories of this Long House can offer us vital understandings and teachings about, as Atleo describes origin stories, "important truths about the nature of the universe" (2004, p. 5). The stories are the lessons that each foundation post presents for us to search for the richer meanings within each post, both independently and mutually. These may be essential principles to consider if humanity hopes to restore and reconstruct the ongoing relationships they have with the environment and one another. These stories connect us to a deeper part of ourselves and our collective memories. Indigenous stories can link people to the wholeness of relationships, where relations with the earth, land and all of life are underpinning all other interrelationships. More aptly summarized, "Included within that familial relationship is the understanding that we have a relationship with the land that is reciprocal. It has cared for us. We must care for it" (Miller et

al. 2012, p. 90). Everything has spirit, customarily, the separation of animate/inanimate does not exist in Indigenous cultures, everything is a relation (Little Bear 2000). Indigenous knowledge recognizes the spirit in the land, plants and animals and the importance of forming relationships with each. These interconnected relationships must be constructed and balanced by reciprocity and respect.

Indigenous knowledge is transmitted through oral tradition and experiential learning, comprising the stories, histories, experiences, relationships, interconnectedness, holism and values of a people and place (Cajete 2000). These values are expressed in relationships and acts of sharing. "Relationships result from interactions with the group and with all of creation" (Little Bear 2000, p. 77). Sharing is not just the act of giving and receiving of goods but it is about the creating and strengthening of relationships (Little Bear 2000). Codes of conduct and principles bound within these ethics "govern our relationships with each other and with the environment" (Smith 2002, p. 120). Respect is a term frequently utilized in Indigenous knowledge to emphasize the significance of respect in relationships, those with each other and with all of life. Through respectful relationships all life remains in a locus of balance, harmony and reciprocity (Smith 2002). Smith asserts, "respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct" (Smith 2002, p. 120). Indigenous nations are diverse and distinct in their cultures, languages and in many other areas of social organizations. That said, these foundation posts can be considered as essential principles that cut across the diversity without denying that same diversity. Wilson noted in his own research "how Indigenous people from all over the world have so much in common" (Wilson 2008, p. 28).

The foundation posts are the results of the thematic analysis which I conducted from my literary review of the core texts. These four foundation posts are those which were either discussed directly and/or were thematically recognized across the Nuu-chah-nulth, Stó:lō and Cree nations. While there were other principles which were cited in the core texts or appeared in the analysis, it was possible to discuss all these principles within the context of these four that connected across the Indigenous worldviews. While these foundation posts may appear to only be aspects of the foundation post of relationships each post is in fact unique; each one readily relates to and unites with each of the other foundation posts. So although relationship may appear to be the pre-eminent principle, without the interconnectivity of the other three this principle would be diminished to nothing more than a word. The other foundation posts give us important links to the deeper relationships we need to establish. Interconnection's foundation post reveals how we need to understand at a deeper level our profound dependency upon all other life forms and our intense intertwinement with the larger environment. The foundation post of reciprocity is a reminder to humanity that it can no longer continue to just take from the natural world without a reciprocal restoring of stewardship, care and relations. Respect as a foundation post establishes the need for reverent co-existence and the respectful role humans need to play within their relationships with the environment. I want to briefly review each of these foundation posts one last time before my concluding thoughts.

Interconnectedness

There is an interrelationship or unity between all elements of life, no one life or species dominates the rest (Atleo 2004). All life is animate, has spirit and is in constant motion within interconnected relationships with one another (Little Bear 2000). Furthermore, all creation is diverse and unique but all are consider to be related and interdependent because all life arises

from one source (Michell 2013). Indigenous knowledge and lifeways are given breath by these "interrelationships with the human world, the spirit, and the inanimate entities of the ecosystem" (Kovach 2005, p. 28). Indigenous cultures may be diverse but a worldview of interconnectedness is mutual. Globally this is evident in such diverse cultures as the Maori and their principle of interconnected relations (Smith 2002), or the Cree and Blackfoot worldview of "the Great Circle of Life" (Michell 2013, p. 25) where humans are but one part of the circle. Indigenous knowledge is often described as holistic, which means that all elements of life are interconnected. Holism is structured upon the interconnections and harmony that emerges from these connections (Archibald 2008, Little Bear 2000). This concept of holism is also demonstrated in the ecological concept of ecosystems, (Menzies & Butler 2006). The foundation post of interconnectedness is not only based upon philosophies but upon the long-term and critical observations of the natural world by Indigenous peoples. These observations offered insight into the interdependence of the web of life and the interrelationships between life forms (Cajete 2000). The visible and invisible knots, and interrelationships, which are being formed, transformed, strengthened and sadly even dissolved (Wilson 2008).

Relationships

The knots of relationships that create the culture, principles and knowledge also constructs the structure which sustains these traditions (Wilson 2008). It is an all-encompassing relationship of relationships. The Nuu-chah-nuulth consider a key facet of relationships to be that "inherent in the design of creation: *heshook-ish tsawalk*, everything is one" (Atleo 2004, p. 120). The relationships that exist between and amongst all entities of the world are "of paramount importance" to Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems (Little Bear 2000, p. 76). Indigenous knowledge is oriented to relationships, those "with plants, animals, and natural

forces" or "all my relations" (Cajete 2000, p. 103). These are direct relationships between humans, other entities and the Earth. The relationship that Indigenous peoples have with the Earth is "the source of knowledge and meaning for human life and community" (Cajete 2000, p. 109). The maintenance and preservation of these relationships are critical to Indigenous people and their knowledge systems not just as a matter of responsibility but also as an obligation to creation and to survival itself (Little Bear 2000). The principles and customs which Indigenous people live by are not just a function of culture but have the additional aim of sustaining the culture within these relationships. Relationships are not only a foundation for knowledge but also for the cultural, familial, social, political and economic systems (Kovach 2005). The lifeways of the Yupiaq people, of the Arctic, and their cultural principles are grounded in relationships, the "maintaining and sustaining relationships among human, natural, and spiritual worlds" (Cajete 2000, p. 66). Maintaining the balance within and with the natural world is of paramount importance to the Yupiaq people (Cajete 2000). These traditional foundation posts may offer a new perspective of community, an expanding of the concept of community. The social relationships between communities are critical as an acknowledgement that human society is but a part of the larger community of life, which forms the natural world; and that they are neither separate nor anymore unique (Cajete 2000).

Reciprocity

Reciprocal relationships are the base for the continuing, successful relations "between original peoples, lands, and their Creator" (Miller et al. 2012, p. 91). Reciprocity is a vital concept within Indigenous knowledge and a critical element in the relationships between humans and communities but as well between humans and the other entities that populate the natural world (Turner and Spalding 2013). Harmony and balance are bound to reciprocity, as reciprocity

is the keystone in maintaining these elements in harmonious relationships (Atleo 2004). As "the natural world is often understood as sentient and proactive and infused with spirit" (Menzies & Butler 2006, p. 10) so to is the principle of reciprocity, connecting to spirit as it situates people in relation to creation. Michell (2013) clarifies that the lifeways of Indigenous peoples are about the continuance of reciprocity within interdependent relationships with and within their environment. Indigenous peoples employ reciprocity in their cultural, social and economic relationships. Smith (2002) emphasizes in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, that reciprocity is not only an element of relationships but also an element of responsibility. She further explains that in Indigenous knowledge or in research conducted by Indigenous scholars there is always the expectation of reciprocity, the sharing of knowledge or "reporting back" (Smith 2002, p. 15). The foundation post of reciprocity is fundamental to the interconnected relationships of all communities, human and other life forms.

Respect

The respect that Indigenous peoples have for other entities, "all our relations", is formed on the principle of coexistence and cooperation. The nature of creation requires respectful practices (Atleo 2004). Reciprocal relationships require respect and an understanding of the responsibilities in preserving those relationships (Michell 2013). Respect for the unity, spirit and wisdom within each life is a key value in Indigenous knowledge (Little Bear 2000). "The philosophical premise of take what you need (and only what you need), give back, and offer thanks suggests a deep respect for other living beings" (Kovach 2005, p. 30). The traditional values, laws and ethics strengthen the great respect for life, which regulates the reciprocal relationships in which Indigenous people live. Ceremony creates respectful space which supports the interrelationship of "the heart, mind, body, and spirit" (Archibald 2008, p. 126). In

addition, the recognition of interconnectedness reveals an abiding respect for the places, animals, plants and communities of life (Cajete 2000). The Maori also maintain protocols of "being respectful, of showing or accepting respect and reciprocating respectful behaviours" (Smith 2002, p. 15). Respect as a foundation post is deeply united with the reciprocity in relationships and the acknowledgement of humanity's interconnectedness.

The relationship of Indigenous peoples to the environment is a connection to self in a larger mysterious context. Life in all its forms are of and from the creator, "the Creator and creation are one" (Atleo 2004, p. 117). One of the most significant differences between Western and Indigenous systems is the belief that the earth is a living entity (Smith 2002). The phrase Mother Earth is not just a cliché but rather a respectful acknowledgement that all life is of the earth. Today's environmental crisis may well be embedded in the loss of these connections to the earth and life. Atleo states emphatically that our "environmental crisis is a crisis of imbalance and disharmony between human and nonhuman" (2004, p. 63). Indigenous knowledge "can complement, supplement, and guide biological science and resource management" (Menzies & Butler 2006, p. 6). As well it can offer a structure for ecosystem and resource stewardship through the introduction of and respect for traditional customs and conservation practices (Menzies & Butler 2006). We have responsibility for locating a direction out of the disaster in which we find ourselves more for future generations then ourselves. As Oren Lyons stated in his 1992 address to the United Nations: "even though you and I are in different boats – you in your boat and we in our canoe – we share the same river of life. What befalls me befalls you. And downstream, downstream in this river of life, our children will pay for our selfishness, for our greed, and for our lack of vision" (cited in Michell 2013, p. 26).

Final Thoughts

So what can the foundation posts and stories of the Long House offer us in our search for respectful discourse and environmental stability? We can employ these foundation posts as guides, continually looking upon the images of these stories so we can more deeply learn from their wisdom and search out other stories which further our learning. These foundation posts also present us with a structure for discourse, for the protocols to engage in dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. For example, meetings which are formatted on a circular dialogue would encourage respect and reciprocity through an equitable exchange of ideas. Battiste (2005) suggests that finding commonalities between two systems is a more advantageous place to begin rather than focusing on the differences. These foundation posts may offer this starting point through their stories. In addition, the foundation posts should be a framework for exploring and including other cultures in dialogue, in particular as it pertains to collaborating on responses to our environmental crisis. Diverse systems of knowledge can stimulate cultural growth causing a culture to be more adaptable, especially in a rapidly changing world (Evering 2012). "The ability to draw from and bridge these knowledge systems is desirable, especially given the complexity of the problem and the need to address it at a multitude of scales" (Turner & Spalding 2013, p. 2).

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