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Bagelman, Caroline P. (2015) Picturing transformative texts: anti-colonial learning and the picturebook. PhD thesis.

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Picturing Transformative Texts: Anti-Colonial Learning and the Picturebook

Caroline P. Bagelman,

MA

Submitted in fulfillment of requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education
College of Social Sciences
University of Glasgow

February 2015

Abstract

This project suggests that the exclusion of children from social discourse has been naturalized, and remains largely unchallenged in the West (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 113). While some didactic picturebooks and pedagogies construct and perpetuate this exclusion, I will explore the potential of critical picturebooks and critical pedagogy to counter it. Critical picturebooks and critical pedagogy, I propose, can help to build and support the critical consciousness of readers, transforming their social relations. Specifically, this project is concerned with the exclusion of children from discourse on colonialism in Canada, and it highlights the need for critical consciousness in this area. I suggest that critical picturebooks can play a role in unsettling settler relations, or shifting Canada-Aboriginal relations towards more ethical ones. I therefore offer an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks to facilitate these aims. This pedagogy is generated through putting theory on picturebooks, critical pedagogy, Indigenous methods, as well as local pedagogy in Alert Bay into an interdisciplinary conversation.

I begin by asking ‘how can picturebooks function as transformative texts?’ Drawing on picturebook theory, I present five elements of critical picturebooks that make them conducive to transformative social discourse: 1) flexibility of the form (enabling complex, cross-genre narratives); 2) accessibility of composite texts (allowing for multiliteracies); 3) textual gaps in composite texts; 4) their dialogical nature (often being read and analyzed aloud); and, 5) their ability to address content silenced in many educational settings. I hold that “the plasticity of mind” which Margaret Mackey suggests is engendered by the picturebook’s flexible form (explicated by these five elements) also fosters a plasticity of mind in terms of the reader navigating social issues or complex problems presented in its content (as cited in Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 91). This dual plasticity positions the picturebook as a valuable and empowering discursive or dialogical tool. If, as Paulo Freire asserts, “it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings”, then it is crucial that children are included in social dialogue that has been typically reserved for adults (Freire, 2000, p. 69).

I then discuss the ways in which my participatory action research (PAR) in the community of Alert Bay, British Columbia, illustrates the transformative potentials of picturebooks, and helped to form an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks. Workshops with local children, young adults and adults examined the unique form and content of picturebook narratives. In following with Freire, the aim was not only to explore the pedagogical promise of existing texts, but also to co-develop tools with which participants generate their own self-representations. We focused on developing narratives on food, an important generative theme that connects many facets of life including experiences of colonialism. Through additional conversations and embodied learning activities, I was introduced to local anti-colonial pedagogical methods. I put these experiences into conversation with theories of critical pedagogy put forth by Freire, Ivan Illich, bell hooks and Henry Giroux and a discussion of Indigenous research and pedagogical methods offered by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Sandy Grande, Leanne Simpson, Lynn Gehl, and curricular resources.

This research culminated in making *Grease*, a picturebook on the importance of oolichan oil to Alert Bay, told from a visitor’s perspective. In creating *Grease*, I have aimed to practically apply my proposed pedagogy, and make my work available to both Alert Bay and (in the future) to readers farther afield. This is an effort to address the dearth of anti-colonial literature and education available to children in Canada and elsewhere. The final chapter of my thesis serves as an annotative guide to be read alongside *Grease*. The pedagogy and picturebook combined present tenable ways in which picturebooks can engage children in critical discussions of colonialism and function as transformative texts.

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List of Accompanying Material

- 1) *Grease*, a 29-page picturebook.

Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to the participants and friends in Alert Bay who generously shared their time and stories, homes, food, medicine, canoes, boats, the Art Loft space, classrooms and carving studios with me. Each individual was a thoughtful, patient and giving teacher, demonstrating the richness of pedagogical practice and introducing me to a wide range of meaningful information and ideas. The extraordinary kindness I experienced in Alert Bay left me with a full heart. Barb Merrick, who assisted this fieldwork by driving, recording notes, transcribing conversations, sharing ideas and setting up workshop spaces, helped me a great deal and made the experience very enjoyable.

I feel very fortunate to have had such an involved, critical, compassionate, powerful and impressive team of women as my guides and mentors throughout this process. Evelyn Arizpe has offered her encouragement at every stage of this project, which has been so heartening. This encouragement has come in many forms: she has continuously given thorough feedback on my work, sent me useful literature and relevant picturebook examples, supported my professional development and invited me to energizing conferences. She has also given me the opportunity to participate in her ongoing work on the Visual Journeys research projects. The small role I have taken in Visual Journey-related events, Glasgow school visits and publications has been an inspiring reminder of the power of picturebooks. This was a truly grounding experience to have while writing this thesis - I am amazed by her work and very grateful to her for making me a part of it. Alison Phipps' brilliant insights on critical pedagogy, research ethics and decolonial thinking have also been very formative to the direction of this project. Her academic work as well as her activist work with GRAMNET and with many other groups continues to serve as an example of transformative social engagement, grounded praxis, and meaningful participatory action research. I hope that, in its own way, this project will reflect their commitments to social justice. The personal, creative and academic support I have received from Evelyn and Alison has propelled me through this work and made me feel sincerely cared for.

My sister Jenny has always been my closest and dearest partner in everything I undertake. Throughout this process, Jenny has thoughtfully discussed and edited my work, infused it with her enthusiasm, insights and humor, given excellent advice based on her own post-graduate experiences and lovingly instilled confidence. I am ever grateful and fortunate to have her to guide me.

I would also like to thank the many other friends and loved ones who offered great support, comfort and encouragement to me as I completed this work.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for the assistance that this project has received from the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences.

Dedication

To my mom, Michele: the one who instilled a deep love of picturebooks with her animated readings throughout my childhood; the one who demonstrated through her work and daily life not only a commitment to social justice but to loving others; the one who gave me her unfailing support. In the last journal she left for my sister and me (written at the time that I began this project), she reminded us: “fun has to be a part of any plan”. So many of the decisions I have made with this work have been guided by this advice: spending time having conversations with people rather than simply pouring over texts; playing with watercolour paints, scissors, glue and pens to create illustrations; writing not just in an expository fashion but also in prose. Fun really has been a big part of this project. Challenging and vulnerable moments have also been a part of this project, and her love has helped me to navigate these experiences too. She is in every thought and every page of this work.

Author's Declaration

"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caroline Bagelman". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Printed name Caroline P. Bagelman

Definitions and Abbreviations

Anti-colonial – The term decolonial has increasingly replaced ‘post-colonial’ in academia (Smith, 2012). The term post-colonial has been criticized for its wrongful implication that colonialism is no longer an active phenomena. ‘decolonial’ insists that there is no time that could be identified as taking place ‘after colonialism’, since the impacts of colonialism are continuously experienced, and are simply asserted in new ways. ‘Decolonial’ stresses a de-centering and de-linking of Indigenous cultures and relations from colonialism (Smith, 2012; Grande, 2002). I will favour the term anti-colonial, and would like to identify my work in that vein. ‘Anti-colonial’ also acknowledges the continuous nature of colonialism, but does not de-link itself from colonialism. The term emphasizes that resistance is a relational act and it stresses that a relationship is maintained (in the sense that Anti-Colonialism must be in conversation with colonialism). It makes clear what position is taken in this ongoing relationship (that is: actively opposing it).

Anti-colonial Pedagogy – My understanding of pedagogy is informed by Dwayne Donald’s articulation on the goal of teaching, which grows out of his engagements with Indigenous elders in Alberta, Canada: “teaching is a responsibility and an act of kindness viewed as a movement towards connectivity and relationality” (Donald, 2012, p. 102). The anti-colonial pedagogy for critical picturebooks I offer, which holds this is the goal of teaching/learning, is comprised of methods and practices for not only challenging the subjugation of knowledge (a subjugation which has led to harmful colonial relations) by creatively employing critical composite texts but also celebrating and privileging this knowledge. It also proposes methods for embracing multiple perspectives and complexity in narratives; and, for empowering readers to demand and enact equitable relations in their daily lives.

Critical Consciousness – This concept, developed by Paulo Freire, suggests a process of achieving an in-depth understanding one’s world (1976). It allows for the awareness, and then analysis of social, cultural and political contradictions. By highlighting or increasing the perception and understanding of the nature of oppression, critical consciousness catalyzes praxis and enables people to take action against oppressive forces. This concept borrows from the Marxian notion of class consciousness, which can be described as the awareness one has of the conditions of labour, privilege associated with class, the structure of their class and the interests of their class.

Double Page Spread – This is abbreviated as DPS throughout this work. Also known as ‘an opening’, this term describes two facing pages in a picturebook (the verso and recto) which often contain a continuous flow of images and words across them, generating a visual/textual landscape. As most picturebooks do not have numbered pages, this term is also used to help one refer to specific pages (e.g. ‘the second DPS’).

Indigenous – I use this word to indicate the first and original inhabitants of a land. This term is used in the most current decolonial scholarship, and is a common term of self-identification for first peoples in Canada. My use of this term is inclusive of the Métis, Inuit and Dene people of Canada.

Picturebooks – I use the term picturebook to denote a text comprised of a combination of visual and textual or strictly visual (as is the case for wordless picturebooks) forms of representations to tell a narrative or multiple narratives. In contemporary picturebook

theory, it has been noted that “The established solid spelling of the word “picturebook” emphasizes its terminological usage, to distinguish it from picturebooks, or books with pictures” (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2012, p. 55). This indicates a synergy between the semiotic systems at play in the construction of meaning on the pages. Though this project develops a pedagogy for picturebooks to facilitate the inclusion of children in discourses on colonialism, I would like to avoid definitions of the picturebook that hinge on an age-specific audience or ‘intended audience’. While picturebooks are typically identified as texts for children, they are also read and appreciated by a wide range of ages. Indeed, several well known picturebook ‘makers’ (read: writers and illustrators) like Shaun Tan and Maurice Sendak state that much of their work is not made *for* children, but that children just happened to enjoy them (Tan, Edinburgh Book Fair Author Talk, 2012; Maurice Sendak, NPR interviews, 2001; 2011). The picturebook I have included in this project is not intended for a specific age group.

Postmodern Picturebooks and Critical Picturebooks – Postmodern picturebooks or Contemporary Picturebooks are terms used to describe texts with characteristics that break with traditions such as linearity, clear resolutions, and simple visuals that merely illustrate the text (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008). I will instead use the term critical picturebooks throughout my thesis. ‘Critical picturebooks’ reflect the same complexity attributed to postmodern picturebooks, but avoids the temporal designation – or a correlation of a shift from the modern to the postmodern with particular textual features.

Nikolajeva and others hint at the problem of the temporal designation that the term ‘postmodern picturebooks’ might suggest. She states: “The label of postmodern is not so much a question of historical period, but of a special aesthetics and special philosophy, therefore it would be inaccurate to say that postmodern picturebooks appear in the 90’s” (cited in Pantaleo and Sipe, p. 55). A slow trickle of picturebooks that challenge structure (non-linear, unresolved endings, metafiction and so on) and challenge social norms (less didactic themes, strong, agential child protagonists; gender flexibility, complicating wrong/right or good/bad distinctions) can be seen well before the 90’s. While examples of such texts might be more commonplace now, “the vast majority of picturebooks published today do not show any postmodern traits whatsoever” (Nikolajeva, 55 in P and Sipe).

It is evident how complicated these distinctions are when they are applied to specific texts. For instance, Karen Coats identifies *Harold and the Purple Crayon* as a modernist text. She writes: “Harold, with his purple crayon is an iconic representation of the self in modernist theory...his free will is such that he can create and destroy his world at his own pleasure” (cited in Pantaleo and Sipe, p. 78). While some see Harold as reflecting modernist ‘free will’, I believe he reflects a ‘postmodern’ metafiction. The reader witnesses the process of the images being constructed. His creative interaction with the environment is indicative of the postmodern notion that our realities are fluid, flexible, complicated, subjective, and ideological – it reflects the notion that we are in a critical negotiation with space. Lines like “So he left the path for a short cut across the field” reflect an agential young character who thinks for himself (Johnson, 1955). Others like “he got in bed and drew up the covers” present a ‘postmodern’ unresolved ending, in which the reader must ask ‘what reality will Harold wake to’ (ibid)?

Critical picturebooks play a similar social role as ‘postmodern picturebooks’ - they react to and challenge structure and norms that are in some way oppressive to alternate ways of being/knowing. As norms shift, the content of critique shifts too. ‘Critical picturebooks’ is a term that can flexibly include texts, like *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, based on their critical content. Characteristics of these books will be explored in Chapter I.

Social Discourse – I use this term to describe the act of engaging in dialogue with others on issues that affect social life. This discourse has an important social purpose: it is a means for relating, voicing needs, posing problems, posing responses to problems and so on.

Transformative: This project is concerned with transforming the exclusion of children from social discourse and in so doing, transforming critical consciousness and action. This will require a shift towards regarding children as agential and capable, not as apolitical. Picturebooks and pedagogy that invite conversations on colonialism, for instance, can catalyze or support critical consciousness, and invite children to consider and enact just relations (as they understand them) in their daily practices.

An Introductory Peritext

Like the peritext for a picturebook - which provides establishing and embellishing information, indicating tone, setting, context and intimating what is to come - this introduction serves as a peritext for this thesis. This particular peritext sets the tone by describing the overarching personal and political motivations of the thesis, illuminating methodological choices made, and offering a guide through the practical and theoretical goals of each chapter.

“A Good Story’s Got to Have a Problem”: Taking Issue with the Exclusion of Children from Social Discourse

Kathy (aged 6), who took part in Arizpe and Styles’ *Children Reading Pictures: Interpreting Visual Texts* research project thoughtfully observed: “A good story’s got to have a problem” (Arizpe & Styles, 2003, p. 147). Whether overt or subtle, critical picturebooks pose a problem or a set of problems and offer readers an avenue for exploring possible ways they can be considered. This can be said of most social science research and writing. Paulo Freire, for instance, puts “problem posing” at the heart of his pedagogical method, which he believes catalyzes empowering dialogue and action (Freire, 2005, p. 30).

A problem at the heart of *this* story, or this research, is the often-naturalized *exclusion of children from social discourse*. Since it is the site with which I am most familiar, my work considers this exclusion in the Canadian context, and specifically the exclusions of children from discourse on colonialism within its educational settings, through literature for children and in daily engagements between children and ‘adult society’. Within these spheres, serious social issues and histories are often treated as taboo (Donald, 2012). I am particularly concerned with how this plays out in picturebooks. A number of theorists identify picturebooks as being reflections of the socio-political attitudes of the time, and especially as being reflections of the socio-political attitudes towards children: “the content of picturebooks [has been] shaped by societal beliefs about the needs of an audience of young children” (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p.19). While some didactic picturebooks

construct and perpetuate children's exclusion from social discourse, this thesis explores the potential of critical picturebooks to not only transform this exclusion but to also build and support the critical consciousness of readers, which can transform social relations. I suggest that critical picturebooks, especially when supported by an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks, can play a small but vital role in unsettling settler relations, or shifting Canada-Aboriginal¹ relations to be more ethical.

Having grown up in the unceded and highly contested lands of British Columbia (BC), where ongoing colonial practices of assimilation, discrimination, dispossession and appropriation seriously impinge on Indigenous peoples' rights, freedoms and cultures, I am acutely aware of the need for anti-colonial work, and the need to make this accessible to young people. I suggest that the nature of critical picturebooks, with their combination of semiotic systems and nuanced form and content, have the potential to address this need. *This thesis grows forth, therefore, from the central research question: 'how can picturebooks function as socially transformative texts?'*

I start to frame a response to this question by troubling the widely held distinction between picturebooks as aesthetic *or* educational texts (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p.10). Such a distinction, I insist, fails to consider their ideological impacts: it neutralizes and depoliticizes the picturebook. Even those picturebooks conventionally classified as aesthetic involve meaning-making, problem posing, and other ideological content, which call for close examination (Stephens, 1992, p. 3). These books offer much more than a 'stepping-stone to literacy', as they are often understood (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 15). It is useful, therefore, to consider the pedagogical nature of these critical books and their social implications. To answer my research question, I posit that a tailored *pedagogy for anti-colonial picturebooks* is needed. While picturebook theory, critical pedagogy and decolonial theory lenses are foundational in this, there is a need to bring these together to

¹ When speaking about the relation between Canada (the state) and first peoples, I use the word Aboriginal, though in most other cases throughout this work I will use the word Indigenous. Aboriginal is the word used in legal and official political discourses within Canada, which is defined under Canada's Constitution Act (1982) as including Indian (now First Nations), Métis, and Inuit peoples (eg. on the federal level there is a department of "Aboriginal Affairs" and on the provincial level in BC, there is a ministry of "Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation"). So when I state that I see a need to shift Canada-Aboriginal relations, I am emphasizing the structural inequalities that are particularly present in official channels (for instance, lack of consultation on land use, disproportionate incarceration, unemployment, and poverty). Though, I also recognize that legal and governmental change are only tenable when daily awareness and action shifts. I am concerned with building ethical relations in both official and daily practices.

generate a pedagogy which speaks directly to the picturebook medium and the ways learning functions in and through it.

Background and Motivations

Throughout my Master's degree in political theory at the University of Victoria (UVic), BC, my studies explored power relations, inequalities and exclusions along the lines of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability and so on, but I found the exclusion of children from many facets of cultural, social and political life to be a widely naturalized and, consequently, under-theorized frontier. Taking a picturebook course with Sylvia Pantaleo at UVic was an opportunity for me to explore the ways in which picturebooks can enable the exclusion of children from particular discourse and, conversely, enable meaningful inclusion. Here, I was inspired by critical picturebook examples like Anthony Browne *Voices in the Park* (2000), David Macaulay's *Black and White* (2005), Istvan Banyai's *Zoom* (1998), Jeannie Baker's *Window* (2002), Lauren Child's *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book* (2003), and Shaun Tan's *The Red Tree* (2010).

After I completed my MA from UVic, I worked as a researcher, writer and illustrator for a Vancouver-based NGO, The Critical Thinking Consortium. This gave me the practical experience of creating multi-modal educational resources that focused on engaging young people in social justice issues, which I wanted to build upon through PhD research. For instance, we created a 'realistic fiction' resource, "Developing Global Empathies: Learning through Literature", for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). This examined themes of global poverty and famine. During my varied work at the Consortium, I also completed a resource for Heritage Alberta (a governmental organization which requested material to critically explore the history of the province, for use in their elementary schools). The resource I chose to design and develop examined the experiences of Indigenous children in Alberta's residential schools. Alberta Heritage ultimately rejected this resource, deeming it 'too mature' for 4th grade students. Through this experience, I realized the extent to which colonial violence remains taboo – and particularly how excluded children are from engaging in this very important dimension of social life in Canada. Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles (2012) discuss this practice of taboo in children's literature:

How do we as adults decide what is 'suitable' for children? [...M]any commentators – particularly in the West – have increasingly come to believe that young children must be protected from all things unpleasant and dangerous, in both life and literature. It could be argued that this perception extends to all walks of life in our contemporary risk-adverse culture. And although domestic violence, dying, sex and relationships, sadness and war have all been explored in the pages of the picturebook, some feel that childhood has become more and more sentimentalized in certain areas of visual and verbal literature² (p. 113).

I will problematize this tendency to frame children as apolitical beings, and assert the need to shift this understanding in order to hear and value their experiences and perspectives.

I was interested in Alert Bay³, BC as a field site where I could think about colonialism and anti-colonial pedagogies in a grounded way. The family visits I took to the island when I was young left a strong impression. I can remember seeing new shades of green in Gator Gardens there, and collecting 'old man's beard' lichen from the walking trails with my sister, Jenny. I have memories of a waitress sitting at our table to welcome us and discuss the menu, and of the house poles⁴ peppering the yards. Growing up within K'ómoks First Nation territory, Jenny and I sat and listened to Kwakwaka'wakw storytelling throughout our childhood in the K'ómoks big house (orated by my mom's friend and colleague from Alert Bay, Wedledi Speck). I later did some research into the history of Alert Bay, and in particular the violent forms of colonial education that took place at St. Michael's residential school, whose red brick façade I first saw as a child from the ferry deck as we approached the island. I also took an interest in the rich food practices and histories that are inexorably linked not just to physical but also cultural survival and pedagogy there.

I was struck by the lack of historical and intercultural learning I received on these topics in my own schooling. I continuously came up against what Dwayne Donald identifies as "the prevailing curricular and pedagogical assumption [...] that Aboriginal issues, perspectives,

² Salisbury and Styles (2012) note that there are several other cultures which include the "less cosy aspects of life" in picturebooks. They list Scandinavia, France, Belgium, Germany, and South Korea as examples (p. 113). This project, however, refers mainly to the North American context, as this is where most of my experience as both a student and someone who has worked with children in various capacities, is grounded. The characterization of a "risk averse culture" which largely maintains boundaries around social discourse (or risky topics) in picturebooks, reflects my experiences in North America (ibid).

³ Alert Bay is the English name for the community on Cormorant Island, British Columbia. The Kwak'wala name for the island is Yalis.

⁴ A house pole is a totem pole with one flat side positioned next to family home. The totems on the pole indicates the family's genealogy.

and knowledge systems are only relevant to Aboriginal students” (Donald, 2011, p.102).

I found this sort of retreat only served to generate lack of understanding, appreciation, empathy, and solidarity, and to therefore thwart movement towards more just relations – it obfuscates our relations all together. I became increasingly interested in countering this mode of retreat and taboo with what Donald describes as a “decolonizing form of curriculum theorizing that troubles the pedagogy by reconceptualizing Aboriginal-Canadian relations in more ethically relational ways” (ibid).

While attending the 32nd International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) conference, the Founder of Groundwood books, Patricia Aldana, made a statement about the importance of topics relating to Indigenous history, politics and culture in children’s literature. Her mandate, however, was to publish such books written and illustrated by Indigenous peoples only. As successful books like *The Rabbits*, written and illustrated by non-Aboriginal people⁵ shows us, however, disavowing intercultural narratives from the spectrum of critical picturebooks would be a grievous mistake. As Donald puts it: “If colonialism is indeed a shared condition, then decolonizing needs to be a shared endeavor” (p. 102). This project was an opportunity for me to ‘trouble the pedagogy’ of retreat I had seen modeled in my schooling, enacted by governmental organizations like Heritage Alberta and articulated by Aldana, and to instead reflect a commitment to inter-cultural dialogue, inter-cultural understanding, and building just relations.

In addition to the motivations explored below (which include a desire to make anti-colonial, inter-cultural content available and offer a tangible way to share my research with Alert Bay), the decision to write a picturebook was also informed by advice from my mom and advice gleaned from bell hooks: make learning a joyful enterprise. Writing and illustrating *Grease*, and thinking about it in relation to the rest of the thesis, was an enriching and enjoyable process that kept me engaged in and excited about this work.

Taking Shape

⁵ Reference for use of the term Aboriginal in Australia: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/dont-call-me-indigenous-lowitja/2008/05/01/1209235051400.html>

Initially, I intended to present a genealogy of ‘the child as an apolitical being’, which has functioned as a justification for the exclusion of children from social discourse (reflected clearly by didactic children’s literature). I started writing on the canonical theories of Aristotle, Locke, Hobbes, and Rousseau, and drawing on Childhood Studies to illustrate the philosophical and historical underpinnings for the ‘apolitical child’. From here, I aimed to problematize this exclusionary framework that is present in the theoretical writing inherited from the ‘founding fathers’, and begin to make a case for meaningful inclusion of children in social discourse. Following this, I could begin to talk about the picturebook as a site of possibility for social transformation.

While the genealogical exploration could help to lay groundwork that would justify a need for transformative texts, it ultimately took me away from my central aim, which was to navigate and provide a meaningful response to my research question (again: how can picturebooks function as transformative texts?). My background in political theory emphasized the value of critique, but in this project I have been specifically concerned with offering a *positive critique* – one that is not simply critical but also creative. Rather than critiquing the exclusion of children from social discourse and devoting a large section of this project to establish its origins in Western thought or ‘the canon’, I was resolved to focus on the picturebook as a possibility for transformation, and to demonstrate this potential in a picturebook. Further, since this project deals with anti-colonial pedagogy, I wanted to privilege voices that have been excluded from the canon. So: *this project takes as a given that there is a common exclusion of children from social discourse and moves forward from that point to re-imagine these limits*. Also taken as a given is the belief that including children into our discursive spaces builds more equitable relations between young people and ‘adult society’, allows young people to voice their perspectives, and allows for young people to develop critical consciousness and an awareness of social issues to inform their daily practices. These ‘givens’ are grounded in my familiarity with constructions of childhood in the canon, and my professional experience at the Critical Thinking Consortium, but more importantly: my experience of schooling and childhood.

The Literature

Critical pedagogy takes issue with the way in which authority over knowledge becomes concentrated (e.g. a teacher is seen as the knowledge holder in the classroom; the doctor is

seen as the knowledge holder in the clinic). Theorists and practitioners of critical pedagogy challenge this by valuing subjugated knowledge (based on experience, intuition, folk wisdom and the like). An anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks, I hold, needs to embody this decentering of authority, and so too must my own writing on critical pedagogy. Contrary to traditional academic writing, I have made an attempt to keep this thesis literature-light and subjugated-knowledges heavy. Literature that I do employ is used tactically to make connections and enrich the findings from my fieldwork, rather than determining its meaning.

Thesis Structure

Chapter I – Picturing transformative texts submits that didactic picturebooks have often perpetuated the apolitical status of children and, conversely, many critical picturebooks demonstrate that the medium holds a great deal of potential for exciting meaningful social discourse. This chapter outlines a number of features of the critical picturebook that are conducive to this engagement. I identify five foundational qualities of the picturebook which give way to these types of texts: 1) the flexibility of the form enabling it to cross generic bounds; 2) the accessible nature of composite texts 3) the textual gaps permitting co-authorship and critique; 4) its dialogical nature; and, 5) its independence from institutional education (or: creative freedom). Eliza Dresang's *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a digital Age* (1998) indicates specific techniques some contemporary authors employ to make the most of this form: e.g. synergy between words and images, and non-linear and non-sequential organization/format. This chapter also considers some of their limitations for exciting social change, which the following chapters will seek to address: 1) the problem of mediation; 2) an 'institutionalized logic' restricting the freedom of texts; 3) the material and ideological problems hindering access; and, 4) reductive visual grammar. Considering their ideological and pedagogical nature, I contend that picturebooks' form and content deserve critical examination.

Chapter II - Contextual Wisdom: Forming a pedagogical lens, starts to develop a pedagogy for anti-colonial picturebooks by exploring local knowledge and practice in Alert Bay. The chapter acknowledges the intimate, embodied and subjective nature of praxis with the use of vignettes. Each vignette introduces a key figure in my fieldwork (a local of Alert Bay), and provides a description of our exchanges and the important insights they shared. I

have positioned these voices at the beginning of my thesis in this way to privilege their grounded (yet often-subjugated) knowledge. Literature in the following chapters will help to situate this contextual wisdom in critical pedagogical frameworks and Indigenous theory. The vignettes reflect the pedagogical importance of embodied learning, story-telling, self-representations, solidarity work for empathy-building, multiliteracies, holistic learning, teaching and learning as a cultural responsibility, and knowledge as shared or communal with the end of supporting community. Locals expressed a range of pedagogical challenges to fulfilling these culturally relevant approaches within colonial institutions (e.g. the school system) and amidst colonial mindsets. Some of the challenges this chapter will discuss include the problem of methodologically-unfit training for teachers of Indigenous pedagogy, the lack of appropriate teaching resources for Indigenous learning aims (e.g. lesson plans), a lack of Indigenous representation in children's literature, exclusion of elders as teachers in institutional education settings, and ongoing subjugation of cultural knowledge (e.g. food practices) in schooling.

Chapter III - Theoretical Frameworks: Unpacking critical pedagogy explores the connections and divergences that exist between the contextual wisdom of pedagogy (discussed in the previous chapter) and theoretical perspectives of critical pedagogy theory. In particular, it will engage with the insights offered by Ivan Illich, Freire, bell hooks, and Henry Giroux.

I suggest that though critical pedagogy is made up of diverse approaches, there appears to be a shared concern for the following questions: what qualifies as or what is privileged as knowledge; what is excluded from 'knowledge' (or, subjugated knowledge); who teaches and how is this teaching role earned; how is knowledge conveyed through the teaching process (e.g. drills, dialogue, practice); whether the approach to education aids in the empowerment of students and community; whether the content of lessons reflect the lived realities of students and their specific contexts; what the setting and structure is of the teaching-learning environment, and; what the power dynamic is between teacher and student. Illich (1995) identifies the limitations of institutionalized education, for instance outsourcing knowledge to 'experts', owning and commodifying knowledge through credential-ization, delegitimizing traditional/inherited/intuitive/embodied knowledges. Freire (2000) similarly problematizes 'banking knowledge' systems and emphasizes the need for generative themes that reflect lived realities of students. He points to ways that

education can stimulate dialogue to raise a critical consciousness in students that results in emancipatory praxis, which involves ‘problem posing’. To this discussion, hooks (1994) contributes her powerful formulation of ‘engaged pedagogy’, which insists that pedagogy must focus on the student’s excitement and pleasure of learning. This is most achievable when students are permitted freedom to learn. Students become empowered, hooks suggests, when they see how knowledge can transform their lived realities. While Illich calls for a radical elimination of schools, hooks and Giroux (2006) explore them as sites of possibility for transformative learning. Giroux claims this is partly made possible by unsettling the insular nature of institutional education and cultivating strong ties between schools and communities. Opening schools to different forms of knowledge, and developing meaningful connections between knowledge and community necessitates multiliteracies, which is an explicit way to offset the authority traditional literacy often takes in mainstream education and daily practice. Using multiliteracies means that not only the content considers multiple ways of knowing, but also the content is communicated through a form that reflects (and is a constituent part of) that particular way of knowing. I suggest that the picturebook can embody many of the pedagogical qualities explored in this chapter and foster transformative engagement.

Chapter IV - Fieldwork: A practice in unsettling discusses the specific research design I developed for approaching my fieldwork in Alert Bay, and explains the ways in which it took shape in practice. This chapter is organized into two parts. Part I explains the methodological and ethical dimensions of my fieldwork. Specifically, I outline Freire’s Participatory Action Research method (1982), and how its emphasis on embodied learning and reciprocal knowledge-exchange was fitting for this project. I consider the limitations of the university’s ethical approval process posed in the context of Alert Bay, and explore local conceptions of research ethics by contrast. Part II outlines the picturebook workshops that I facilitated with children and, separately, with adults and young adults. In these workshops, we explored the composite narrative structures of the picturebook, looking at elements of form and style such as typography and page-layout and common literary devices like anthropomorphizing. We then discussed food miles and participants made their own food narratives, reflecting their relationships to imported and local food, in the form of a double-page spread. These workshops allowed me to put picturebook theory, local methods and critical pedagogy theory into practice, and to see young people engage directly with transformative picturebooks.

Chapter V - A Body of Work: Elaborating on embodiment and fieldwork starts by discussing Marjory O’Loughlin’s (2006) work on embodiment and pedagogy, which makes the case for teaching which gives rise to and supports “practical consciousness” (p. 61). This “practical consciousness”, as opposed to “discursive consciousness” which mainstream education has come to favour, must consider the learner as a ‘body-subject’ in her physical environment. I discuss the ways in which embodied learning took place in my fieldwork through cooking, eating, canoeing, carving, hiking, and gardening. Following with a PAR model, these activities were lead by locals and not only allowed me to see critical pedagogy in practice, but also provided textured experience which informed my picturebook project.

Chapter VI - From Mining to Mindful Methods: Indigenous thinkers on decolonization considers how Indigenous theoretical perspectives (from Indigenous thinkers) frame ethical research and critical pedagogy on colonialism. I focus primarily on Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2012), and Sandy Grande’s *Red Pedagogy* (2004). I suggest that both authors, and much of decolonial theory, have two broad aims: 1) to identify and critique the positivist, or extractivist, basis of colonial thinking (and expose its violences), and 2) to propose alternative frameworks or methodologies in response to this colonial paradigm. This chapter teases out two key sites that Smith and Grande insist must be decolonized: education, and theory/research methods. This chapter discusses the way in which positivist approaches have positioned Indigenous communities as subjects of research and receptacles of Western knowledge. So, in both of these key sites (education and theory/research) power relations must shift to position Indigenous communities as the pedagogues and researchers of their own cultures and realities, and as leaders setting the ethical standards and methodologies for non-Indigenous teachers and researchers working in solidarity with them. I draw upon the Western New South Wales Department of Education and Training (WNSWDET) *8 Ways* resource (2014). *8 Ways* directly reflects the decolonial methods that Smith and Grande discuss in a mindful and grounded fashion. This resource echoes the contextual wisdom from Alert Bay as well, and provides concrete ways that picturebooks can function as transformative texts in relation to discourse on colonialism.

Considering my position as a non-Indigenous woman of Jewish heritage doing research with Indigenous communities, I close this chapter with an ethical exploration of inter-

cultural solidarity work, from an Indigenous perspective. Lynn Gehl's *Ally Bill of Responsibilities* (2012), emerging from the Idle No More⁶ movement, is a useful resource that helps me situate myself in this work on decolonial pedagogies. Leanne Simpson's interview with Naomi Kline (2013) also illuminates the ethics and also responsibility of allies to engage in this inter-cultural work. Engaging in Indigenous theory, employing PAR, formulating an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks and writing *Grease* are all efforts to shift the extractivist approach to research.

Chapter VII - On Making a Picturebook: Method, content and style opens with a discussion of John Marsden and Shaun Tan's *The Rabbits* (2010). Though it is not in the purview of this project to offer a literature review of relevant children's picturebooks on the topic of colonialism, I engage with this particular example because it was the text that demonstrated to me the ability of picturebooks to effectively approach this subject, and also highlighted some problems or difficulties with representing colonialism. I suggest that *The Rabbits* stimulates important dialogue on the violence involved in colonial nation-building, and there is much to be taken from this text. The approach I take with *Grease*, however, is in some ways a critical response to Marsden's last line: "who will save us from the Rabbits?" (DPS 15).

I then unfold the methodological reasons and pedagogical motivations for including *Grease* in my research. I suggest that writing and illustrating a picturebook is a meaningful way of engaging in and understanding the medium. Making a picturebook is a way for me to do "research *through* practice rather than research *into* practice" (Pantaleo & Sipe, p. 24). The picturebook project is consistent with the PAR model used in my fieldwork. This model suggests research should not be extractive, but reciprocal, and must retain the goal of benefitting the community. Research, therefore, must be communicated or returned to the community. Giving copies to the local schools and library in Alert Bay returning my research to the community, a way of taking my research outside of a university setting and a way of addressing what Flora (retired Alert Bay principal), noted was a vast under-representation of Indigenous children in picturebooks (and other literature). Working

⁶ Idle No More is a social movement that was precipitated, in December 2012, by Canada's Bill c45, which eroded Indigenous sovereignty and environmental protections, specifically in relation to Navigable Waters Act. It has grown into a nation-wide social movement that involves ongoing protests, teach-ins, advocacy, lobbying and various other activist efforts.

towards publishing *Grease*, and making the work available outside of Alert Bay will allow for what Barbra (Alert Bay documentarian) identified as a need for increased awareness and protection of both the environment and Indigenous cultural practices. In addition, the picturebook is a way to ensure that my PhD work (being concerned with picturebooks, and children's critical engagement) involves children directly.

The last section of this chapter explains the form and content of *Grease*. For instance: I explain my choice of narrator for the story, the use of multiple narratives, the representations of nature or environment, and the use of pastiche or collage.

What Emerges? - Key principles of an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks

In combining four bodies of thought: picturebook theory, critical pedagogy theory, Indigenous/Decolonial theory and the contextual wisdom gleaned from my fieldwork, this work puts forth an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks, which should strive to:

- begin with an understanding of the reader as a 'reader/thinker';
- develop an understanding of the context in which the books are being read, and work with the practices or frameworks therein;
- avoid overly-determined approaches to understanding the meaning of images and words to allow for multiple readings and co-authorship;
- dwell in the textual gaps provided by composite texts;
- employ generative themes;
- consider how not only content but also form as a key site of critical exploration;
- celebrate the melding of different genres and media to explore how meaning shifts or is enriched when images/words are put in new positions or juxtapositions;
- stress the importance of multiple narrative/perspectives;
- celebrate multiple literacies (visual, textual, and audio literacies);

- increase or support critical consciousness of readers allowing readers to consider and practice ethical relations in colonial contexts; and,
- catalyze further dialogue and self-representations of readers.

These principles, and ways in which they can be supported in learning environments, will be elucidated throughout this work. I believe that the contribution to the field that this pedagogy and picturebook makes will be of particular interest to teachers working in colonial contexts (in band schools⁷ and mainstream institutions alike); those living in colonial contexts; academics concerned with decolonization, picturebook studies, critical literacy or critical pedagogy; literacy consultants; organizations concerned with literacy (such as IBBY⁸); parents or guardians concerned with home literacy practices and social engagement of their children; children's authors; and, perhaps most importantly, young readers.

⁷ In British Columbia, a band school, also known as an autonomous (group 2) band school, is an educational institution which is under the jurisdiction of the respective Indigenous band. Despite their 'autonomous status' these institutions are still held to curricular standards set by the provincial (and to a lesser degree the federal) government.

⁸ IBBY is an acronym for The International Board on Books for Young People. IBBY is a non-profit organization concerned with children's literature and literacy.

Chapter I -

Picturing Transformative Texts

And what good is a book, thought Alice, without pictures or conversations.

- Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865.

Postmodern picturebooks [...] explode cultural myths and reveal the constructedness of reality and identity, [and] they do so in the name of freedom, to release readers from the thrall of powerful controlling narratives that threaten to circumscribe their potential.

- Karen Coats, 2008, p. 80

Shortly after I started reading bell hooks' feminist writings, during my undergraduate studies, I had the good fortune of stumbling upon a picturebook she wrote: *Happy to be Nappy* (1990). What was striking about the book was not so much its content, but the fact that the picturebook form was being deployed by a well-respected contemporary thinker as a site for profound social, cultural and political dialogue; what was striking was that the book aimed to engage a *young* audience in this profound dialogue. It was clear that hooks, someone so invested in social change, had taken the time to work on picturebooks because she recognizes something potentially transformative about their form.

The fact that a cultural theorist writing for children struck me as such an aberration seemed to highlight the way in which an exclusion of children from the social discourse has remained largely unchallenged, even in the realm of critical theory. The exclusion of children's voices from social discourse tends to escape the critical attention of 'adult society', and somewhat ironically, the justification of their exclusion in the West has hinged on the notion that children are themselves acritical or: blank slates (Murriss, 2013, p.72)

When children are framed as apolitical, the way 'adult society' engages with children in the home, classroom and through children's literature is likewise apolitical or de-politicized (Stephens, 1992, p. 8; Murriss 2013, p. 11). Some emergent postmodern picturebooks, however, are seeking to unsettle this logic and its subsequent exclusions. Karen Coats insists that:

Rather than viewing children as blank slates ready to receive and mimic an authoritative word, or as developmentally unready for sophisticated jokes and parodies that reveal the instability of narrative, postmodern picturebook authors and illustrators expect their readers to [...] engage in a playful reconsideration of what they know and believe about the world (as cited in Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 80).

hooks' text "*Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*" (1994) considers the ways in which education has the potential and obligation to give people the conceptual and practical tools to transgress problematic notions of race, class and gender. In a similar spirit, I am concerned with the picturebook's capacity for *transforming the exclusion of children from social discourse and in doing so transform the ways in which those readers relate and act in the world*. This chapter will explore ways in which picturebooks offer a powerful avenue for opening up these inclusive discursive spaces. The following chapters will narrow this focus further by thinking about how picturebooks can engage children in anti-colonial discourse, increasing a critical consciousness and potentially transform settler-Indigenous relations.

Kiefer remarks that "for the greater part of the twentieth century the content of picturebooks were shaped by societal beliefs about the needs of an audience of children", which I suggest continues to be the case (as cited in Sipe & Pantaleo 2008, p. 19). While there have been instrumental shifts in these societal beliefs on the needs of children - for instance she points to the Vietnam war and civil rights movement which "opened up previously taboo topics" and called for the "expansion of cultural experiences depicted in picturebooks" (ibid) - I contend that the inclusion of children in social discourse remains limited.

According to Ivan Illich's work *Deschooling Society*, creative and critical thinking is generally innate to young people and is actively 'schooled out' of them through institutionalized education (which requires structured and disciplined thinking of its pupils) (Illich, 1995, p. 1). Many who study reader responses to picturebooks note that it is common for young readers engage creatively and critically with ease:

We have often experienced young people's uncompromising readiness to play with the limits and boundaries of thought and language. [...] Play is what children do, not because they are in a state of innocence, but because they are perpetually learning and the best picturebook makers are their allies in this (Hanes; Murriss, 49; 39).

I believe this supports Illich's above claim. Picturebooks that understand the reader not as an apolitical blank slate who absorbs text, but instead what I will call a 'reader-thinker' with critical awareness and agency to navigate, deconstruct and make meaning with text, is a starting point for transformative text and a pedagogy for picturebooks (ibid). This critical capacity of young readers is further confirmed by the research project by Arizpe and Styles (spanning from 1999-2001 and culminating in the book *Children Reading Pictures* in 2003), through which "there was ample evidence that some young children were able to formulate clever and perceptive responses to picturebooks, far beyond what might be expected of them developmentally" (as cited in Salisbury & Styles, p. 79). This and other work suggests that complexity reflected in critical picturebooks is often welcomed by young readers and seen as a "wonderfully taxing" experience allowing for critical engagement (p. 91).

Deschooling the Picturebook

A distinction is often made, in picturebook theory and common understandings, between picturebooks as aesthetic and picturebooks as educational. Kiefer emphasizes that when defining the picturebook within academia, there is an "agreement among scholars on [...] the emphasis that the picturebook is an art form rather than a teaching tool," that the picturebook is first and foremost "an art form or object rather than utilitarian object", she asserts (as cited in Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 10). She points to a shift from books designed to teach (like 'educational' alphabet books) to those designed for pleasure: "John Newbery [began to] print books for children, solely for their entertainment. His *A Little Pretty Pocket Book*, published in 1744, opened the way for today's literature for children-picturebooks and other books that were aesthetic objects rather than educational ones" (p.17). Kiefer and others likely make the distinction between picturebooks as an art form and picturebooks as an educational tool to separate the books designed to inform children on a specific topic (e.g. counting) from the books meant to stimulate children through visuals and story-telling. However, this distinction is a dubious one because there is overlap between aesthetic (books for pleasure) and educational (books for utility). Matthew Grenby (2008, p. 13), for instance suggests that even Newbery who is noted for making books "solely for [children's] entertainment" (ibid) were also didactic books with a strong educational message. I suggest that this distinction runs the risk of depoliticizing picturebooks.

John Stephens' work *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* is concerned with this disavowal of ideological content in picturebooks. He critiques: "the intelligibility which a society offers its children is a network of ideological positions, many of which are neither articulated nor recognized as being essentially ideological" (Stephens, 1992, p. 8). The picturebook as 'art form' is not simply a set of beautiful, exciting, stimulating images without profound meaning or consequence for the reader, and the picturebook as 'educational tool' is not a site for banal, straightforward lessons void of aesthetic merit; not only does this separation act as an erasure of ideology, it also enforces a problematic separation between pleasure and learning which hooks' 'engaged pedagogy', explored further in chapter III, strongly resists (hooks, 1994, p.13).

Picturebooks, I aim to demonstrate, are never neutral or ideology-free – but are rather *artistic vehicles of meaning*. They therefore have a pedagogical dimension. Stephens argues that because narratives are formed using language⁹ (which has socially determined meaning), and ideology is generated through language, "a narrative without ideology is unthinkable" (Stephens, 1992, p. 8). He insists that ideology plays out in two ways conceptually and two ways narratively. Conceptually, he suggests, the reader and writer navigates both explicit and intentional ideological content and implicit ideological content which is latent in discourse itself. Narratively, he continues, "these relations exist separately on the planes of 'story' (what is represented) and discourse (the process of representing)" (Stephens, 1992, p. 44). In this vein, Michele Anstey and Geoff Bull state: "because texts are social products, produced for particular purposes, audiences and contexts they are not neutral. They reflect (with or without the author's intent) the socio-cultural background of those that produced them and the times and context in which they were produced" (Anstey, 2006, p. 153). Picturebooks are always sites of meaning and learning for the reader (even when authors do not mean to teach) and, when authors do mean to teach, their picturebooks are often vehicles for unintended lessons since the reader interprets and co-authors when she engages with a text (Stephens, 1992. p.9).

⁹ Stephens claims that narratives are comprised of language and that "ideology is formulated in and by language", making narrative and ideology indivisible. Though Stephens does consider ideology in picturebooks (Stephens 165), he does not offer an alternative definition of narratives or ideology that adequately considers the ideological dimensions unique to visual narrative. That is: he does not expand his definition beyond 'language' to encompass 'narratives comprised of images' and 'ideology that is formulated in and by images'. I will engage with Dresang and others in this chapter to address the meaning making that takes place in and through the visual and the visual in relation to text.

As Dave Lewis articulates:

To some extent all pictures will have a decorative, narrative and interpretive potential, even those that appear to stick resolutely to the task of depicting in line and colour what it is that the words say. A graceful line in a tiny monochrome vignette tucked into a corner of a page will possess a charm of its own independent of the extent to which it reflects, or offers an interpretation of, verbal meanings and even the most straightforward of representations may invite a degree or two of interpretation. In any case, ‘what words say’ is rarely straightforward (Lewis, 2001, p. 25).

In refuting claims to neutrality, as Lewis, Anstey, Bull and Stephens entreat, and regarding picturebooks as sites of learning and interrogation for the reader, the need to critically consider the impact of picturebooks’ form, and content and their relation to pedagogy, become evident.

To build a foundation from which a pedagogy for anti-colonial picturebooks can emerge, this chapter will consider both the *transformative possibilities of the picturebook, as well as its limitations*. I will begin by considering the characteristics of picturebooks (in somewhat general terms) can make them conducive to social transformation¹⁰. I put forth five transformative elements or openings afforded by the picturebook as a form, which include: 1) the flexibility of the form enabling it to cross generic bounds 2) the accessible nature of composite texts 3) the textual gaps permitting co-authorship and critique 4) its dialogical nature, and 5) its independence from institutional education (or creative freedom). Following this, I will consider what particular qualities or techniques employed by picturebook authors (eg. metafiction, and pastiche illustration) make them conducive to social transformation. I will employ Dresang’s notion of Radical Change (1999) to unfold these specific features and I will conclude the chapter with a consideration of important limitations to the picturebook’s ability to incite social transformation. These limitations include: 1) the problem of mediation 2) the force of an institutionalized logic restricting the freedom of texts 3) the material problems hindering access, and 4) reductive visual grammar.

Possibilities for Transformation

¹⁰ The term ‘transformative children’s literature’ is used widely in picturebook theory. The focus ranges from ecological (Dobrin & Kid, 2004) and multi-cultural transformations (Mendoza & Reese, 2002) to transformation of the form itself (Reynolds, 2007). I have noticed a relative lack of work on transformation of colonial relations through anti-colonial picturebooks. In addition to transforming notions of the apolitical child allowing more inclusive discursive spaces, I will speak directly to inclusive discursive spaces on colonialism.

Possibility 1: Operating outside of a genre

Perhaps the most promising feature of the picturebook genre is that it is not really a genre. Perry Nodelman writes, "rather than confining itself to exploring the byways of one particular type of text, verbal or pictorial, it exploits genres" (Nodelman, 1988, p.65). This is not only because the picturebook embodies many genres (e.g. fiction and non-fiction; fantasy, fairy tales, poetry, mystery, historical narrative, wordless stories), but also because the way in which it presents these different narratives varies widely (graphic novel formats, pop-up style books, board books, mixed media texts, linear and alinear illustrated stories etc). Again, in Nodelman's words: "pictures and words can now be combined in more or less any way that a book's designer might wish and that in turn raises all sorts of possibilities and challenges for the reader" (Nodelman, 1988, p.144). For this reason picturebooks are sometimes described as a form, rather than a genre (Salisbury & Styles, p. 7).

This flexibility in picturebooks makes an excellent platform for transformative material. Less shrouded in tradition than strictly word-based texts or more traditional or linear picturebooks, contemporary picturebooks are able to "bend, stretch or break the rules and in this play with conventions, a space between the 'real' world and other possible worlds is opened up" (Haynes & Murriss, 2012, p. 39). Children, who are less accustomed to specific literary conventions and reading practices and who have less rigid understandings of what a book is meant to look like, are particularly receptive to this flexibility. Nodelman states: "The picturebook is thus ideally suited to the task of absorbing, reinterpreting and re-presenting the world to an audience for whom negotiating newness is a daily task" (Nodelman, 1998, p. 137).

The picturebook's lack of commitment to any one convention reflects the aims of postmodern thinking: to acknowledge and possibly even celebrate ambiguity which arises out of our complex world(s). It holds that since our reality is amorphous, so too should the media reflecting it. The way in which critical picturebooks "interrogate the static qualities of the picturebook", demanding a multi-constructed reading stance as Margaret Mackey puts it, can help create a "plasticity of mind" (as cited in Salisbury & Styles, p. 91). This plasticity of mind engendered by the picturebook's flexible form, I would add, also lends itself to a plasticity of mind in terms of navigating social issues or complex problems

presented in its content as well, hence positioning the picturebook as a valuable and empowering discursive tool.

Possibility 2: Accessibility of form

The picturebook, it can be argued, was born out of a desire to transform its readers. That is, in some of its earliest most hermeneutically sealed iterations (taking the form of strict catechisms, for instance), the medium of the picture book¹¹ was considered a powerful vehicle to convert or transform heathens into Christians. It was an effective tool due to its capacity for rather universal access: “The vast majority of new converts were illiterate. Visual images in sacred books allowed a universal reading of the Christian message” (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 13).

Despite the fact that my exploration focuses on a very different type of transformative potential offered by the picturebook (namely its capacity to incite critical social engagement of an often excluded population [children]) than did these traditions, both recognize the power of narrative and image functioning synergistically. The ability of a picturebook to reach readers of varying literacy abilities, educational backgrounds, languages, learning styles, disabilities and so on, make it a potent site for engagement (Arizpe, Colomer, Martínez-Roldán, 2014, p. 3). Lewis, in his text *Reading Contemporary Picturebooks: Picturing Text* draws on research that suggests the ability to perceive images is a native trait to humans (Bauer, 1996, p.3). While there are layers of meaning to be taken from an image, which require visual literacy abilities, as well as specific cultural frames of reference, the basic ability to regard the image and derive some degree of meaning from it is a universal trait of the visually-abled, Lewis explains (Lewis, 2001, p. 63). There is, I believe, something deeply unifying about engaging with the image, and likewise there is something profoundly universal about storytelling (which is shared, in different ways, across generations and cultures) as a mode of communication and meaning making (ibid). As Roland Barthes suggests: “The message’s unity occurs on the level of the story” (as cited in Sipe & Pantaleo, 1986, p. 54). Freire’s work can be applied to describe why

¹¹ I have used the words ‘picture book’ rather than the compound word ‘picturebook’ here, to emphasize that these early examples, though precursors today’s visual narratives, maintained more of a divide between text and images. They were more so books with pictures, than our contemporary understanding of a picturebook in which (generally speaking) the two semiotic systems synergistically depend heavily on one another to generate meaning. This is also discussed in the glossary.

picturebooks (which have the ability to tell a story with words and images) are methodologically fitting for a transformative pedagogy.

In his lauded text *Pedagogies of the Oppressed*, Freire suggests that transformative discourse and action is first stimulated by the most basic, generative themes (or, shared facets of social life that generate meaningful engagement) (Freire, 2000, p. 87). The pedagogical power of a good generative theme is its ability to engage people in material that reflects their shared lived experiences in order to enrich an appreciation of both, and to stimulate critical consciousness (ibid). Because the theme reflects shared experience, each individual is valued for the important knowledge they possess and can contribute. While it is vital that the content of critical picturebooks take this to heart as well, the deep generative quality of their composite form make them an excellent medium for engaging young people in social discourse.

Possibility 3: Textual gaps

Reading a word-based text involves an interpretive process, in which meaning is deciphered and created (Rosenblatt, 2005). Visual literacy, too, requires a referential as well as inferential processing of the ‘information’ that is given, and that which literally or figuratively falls out of frame (Arizpe, Colomer, Martínez-Roldán, 2014, p. 30; p.123). It can be said, then, that each semiotic system – the word and the image – necessarily leaves gaps with which the reader must contend. These spaces afforded by a text are often referred to as ‘textual gaps’ (Iser, 1978) or ‘readerly gaps’ (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 75). Picturebooks (with the important exception of wordless picturebooks) combine both semiotic systems: “two forms of representation [...] enter into the construction of the story together” (Lewis, 2001, p. 33). In most cases, this means that the possibility for textual gaps is doubled and perhaps tripled if one considers the gaps not just between/within the words or the gaps within the images, but also the gaps that form between the words and images operating together, often on the same page, to create narratives. Lewis suggests: “the words and pictures together [are] truly transforming each other and in the process, transforming our understanding of what we see and read, some-times to the point where the meaning resonates through two or three levels” (p.53). In the case of postmodern or critical picturebooks, these gaps are both intentional and plentiful. Dresang’s Radical change characteristics, explored in this chapter, will unfurl many of these techniques authors employ to generate productive textual gaps.

Lewis draws out the etymological connection between textile and text¹². He suggests that picturebooks exemplify *text as textile* in their interweaving of picture and word:

The metaphor of weaving is useful for not only does it pick out of us the sensation we have when reading a picturebook of shuttling between one medium and another, but it is also related, through sense and meaning to the term text which is itself etymologically and semantically close to textile. A text in this sense is something woven together, a cohesive patterning of inter-related strands that adds up to more than a mere accumulation of individual parts (p.33).

A picturebook is more than the sum of its parts because both the images and words take on a new life in being combined. There is more at work (or perhaps more aptly: more at play) than what is on the page, since the weaving of the two semiotic systems is in large part done by the reader-thinker.

Lewis suggests that when the reader ‘weaves’ the signs together in reading, her “eyes move from words to pictures and back again, far from leaving behind the meaning of effects of one medium as we enter the other, we carry with us something like semantic traces that colour or inflect what we read and what we see” (p. 35). The analog of ‘ecology’, Lewis goes on to say, is also useful for describing this interaction: “the words are being pulled through the pictures and the pictures are brought into focus by the words. If we translate this [interaction] into ecological terms we might say that the words come to life in the context, the environment, of the pictures and vice versa” (p. 48). I would add that the analogy of the Mobius strip is also a particularly fitting description of the intermedial interaction of word and image. A Mobius strip (a strip of paper with a half twist, connected at the ends) forms a loop – and as one moves the twist along the loop, what appeared to be the inside of the strip then appears to be the outside and this repeats until it is impossible to discern and inside from the outside (they are co-constituent).

The word ‘picturebook’ rather than ‘picture book’ has not just entered our lexicon innocently (Kiefer, 1995) – it has done so because it better reflects the Mobius-like co-dependence of the image and word that characterizes the picturebook form. The textual gaps afforded by the combination of two systems of signs and the varied, complex relationship that these signs have with one another, make the picturebook ripe for critical

¹² The connection between text and textile is not only metaphoric but also etymological. The word text comes from the Latin ‘textare’ meaning ‘to weave’ (Ingold, 2012).

engagement. This composite or intermedial quality of the picturebook embodies one of Giroux's nine 'Principles of Critical Pedagogy' (1991), which suggests that "critical pedagogy needs to create new forms of knowledge through its emphasis on breaking down disciplinary boundaries and creating new spaces where knowledge can be produced" (Giroux, 1991, p. 50).

Images in early picturebooks were predominately used to illustrate what was written in text (offering more or less the same information in a different form): this is what Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott refer to as 'symmetry' (Lewis, 2001, p. 9). Postmodern picturebooks, however, offer an increasing complexity in visual story telling, so much so that the term illustration often does not suffice any longer. These texts often exemplify what Nikolajeva and Scott identify as 'contradiction' – which is a "maximal dissonance" between the image and word (p. 39). Denise Agosto puts it in slightly different terms when she outlines two major forms of text-image interaction: "Twice-told Tales" (akin to Symmetry noted above) and Interdependent Storytelling (akin to Contradiction noted above). Within Interdependent Storytelling (which, again is found in many contemporary picturebooks) she distinguishes two central subcategories: Augmentation (characterized by irony, humor, intimation, humor, fantastic representation, transformation) and Contradiction (characterized by irony, humor, disclosure) (p. 41). "In the case of books that work by augmentation", Lewis explains "the texts and illustrations each amplify, extend and complete the story that the other tells; in the case of contradiction, [...] the texts and information present conflicting information, such as the words describing a sunny day where the corresponding pictures show a rainstorm" (p. 40). Though I would stress that Lewis' example is rather simplistic (used for the purpose of making a clear definition) and there are much more nuanced uses of contradiction in picturebooks such as Wiesner's *The Three Pigs* (2001).

Vitaly, the relationship between the word and image, becoming more nuanced and wrought with textual gaps, mirrors an important methodological shift. In didactic picturebooks, the image tends to reflect what is written, not leaving space for the reader to recon the two together or create meaning within a context. This is a perfect vehicle for imparting a straightforward moral imperative (morals which are not context-based and up to the discretion or critical process of the child, but rather pre-determined by the author and her social codes). The less-straightforward relationship between word and image in postmodern

picturebooks relies on the reader to participate actively in meaning making based on critical inferences on context, because (again) like the Mobius there is a double orientation, or a disorientation created. “If the project of postmodern books is to reveal their own processes, the goal of the revelation is empowerment for the reader; they deliver a strong invitation and even an expectation that readers will participate in meaning making” (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 80).

In addition to the form of the picturebook that combines two semiotic systems permitting textual gaps, the substantive content of many postmodern picturebooks (often placing a focus on parody, metafiction, overlapping narrative and so on) exposes the inconsistency and inconclusiveness of our most familiar narratives – and in poking these holes, they leave room for readers to critically navigate contradictions and consider new possibilities or meaning. In Robyn McCallum’s words: “[...] overt forms of parodic intertextuality can have three main effects: they can foreground the ways in which narrative fictions are constructed out of other texts and discourses; they can indicate possible interpretive positions for readers; and they can enable the representation of a plurality of voices, discourses and meanings” (p. 181). The use of these devices will be explored in more detail through Dresang’s Radical Change characteristics.

Possibility 4: Picturebooks as dialogical

The significance of picturebooks often being read aloud should not be overlooked. This long-entrenched way of interacting with the picturebook means they occupy somewhat of a liminal space: it is at once a form of written or recorded storytelling and a form of oral storytelling. Through the act of reading aloud, the written text is voiced, images are deconstructed, textual gaps are navigated dialogically and extra-textual conversation unfolds between the readers. Unlike other texts, dialogue is an almost inherent component of the picturebook.

This is notable because of the widely recognized power of dialogue as a tool for social change (Freire, 2000). Many have focused on the empowering nature of dialogue allowing for silenced voices to be heard, for subjugated knowledge to get expressed and exchanged, for deepening empathy, for intra and inter cultural understanding (helping to bridge social delineations of class/gender/sexual orientation/religion/age/ability), for marginalized

ontological and ideological positions to be performed (setting the foundations for them to be practiced), for problem posing, and co-operative problem solving.

Dialogue is defined by Freire as “the encounter between [people], mediated by the world, in order to name the world” (Freire, 2000, p. 69). It is seen as an “existential necessity,” central to a process of becoming, in which one defines the self in relation to a community. He states “[i]f it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings” (ibid). If dialogue is, as he states, a key condition of “being human”, it is crucial that children are integrated into these dialogues. The picturebook (while not always operationalized as a serious transformative vehicle) is already established as dialogue-stimulating medium – one that tends to be cross-generational because of the way they are read (typically guardians, teachers, older friends and relatives reading with children). Linking closely to what Freire says of dialogue and ontology, Coates writes: “I want to suggest that children’s *interactions* with postmodern picturebooks provide a key entry point into the project of self-fashioning in contemporary society” (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 76. My emphasis).

Dialogue, Freire (2000) also insists, must be an act based on respect – a respect for different knowledge(s), different literacies, and different social positions, so that what unfolds is not one person speaking with authority or acting on another, but a community working together. This form of dialogue must set itself against what he terms “banking education” which takes place in schools, whereby teachers ‘deposit’ knowledge in the student without any negotiation of meaning or truth with the pupils (Freire, 2000, p. 71). In order to think of the picturebook as a transformative medium, which stimulates dialogue, there must be a respect and value for children as fully human and as able to engage critically. As Freire suggests, it is human to be engaged in a process of becoming and this process is done through dialogue. A respect for children must be reflected by the form and content of the picturebook and through the act of reading aloud.

Possibility 5: Creative freedom

While many traditional educational spaces rely on the ‘banking’ method, in Freire’s estimation, or a deeply institutionalized logic that wrongly conflates teaching with learning, in Illich’s mind, it is possible that picturebooks offer a unique possibility for transformative

education given their independent production. They are generated outside of these confines of institutional education and hence have certain freedoms to offer readers material that may be dismissed or excluded in these spaces.

Authors of picturebooks are often not conventional educators. Illustrators and writers alike tend to come from very diverse backgrounds (they are graphic artists, poets, academics, social scientists, stay-at-home parents, social workers and so on) – and as such often have some critical distance from traditional notions of ‘children’s education’ (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 51). Maurice Sendak and Shaun Tan have been outspoken about this. The position outside of the academy gives authors the creative independence to generate critical work exploring otherwise taboo subjects. bell hooks’ picturebooks consider race and gender, Anthony Browne’s *Voices in the Park* (2000) considers conflictual perspectives, and class divisions, while John Marsden and Shaun Tan’s *The Rabbits* (2010) considers colonialism, cultural violence and migration, for instance.

As I have suggested, thinking about the picturebooks as having pedagogical implications is useful, because it acknowledges the ideological and social roles that these texts might play. While education has been monopolized by schools, both Illich and Freire see meaningful education functioning on a much more dispersed schema in which ‘authority’ over knowledge is not just in the hands of teachers, but shared among people with varying skills and knowledge (Illich, 1995; Freire, 2000). This allows for a wider range of voices to be represented and for a re-evaluation of what it means to be educated. Illich stresses that “the current search for new educational funnels must be reversed into the search for their institutional inverse: educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring” (Illich, 1995, p. ii). Lewis’s assertion that picturebooks can reflect this leveling-out of authority when they are able to break away from the didactic tradition is congruent with Illich. Not only are other voices involved in teaching (with a diversity of picturebook makers sharing their stories), critical books further disperse authority over knowledge by making space for the reader to construct the narrative as well. In Lewis’ words: “The more that authorities dissolve and the more authors and artists abrogate responsibility for leading readers and viewers towards sense and meaning, then the more readers have to write the text they read” (Lewis, 2001, p. 91).

Part of this educational paradigm shift requires a persistent reframing of visual literacy. There is a long-engrained connection between conventional education or learning and the written word, while the image has often been relegated to the realm of un-academic frivolity, or a mere stepping-stone to traditional literacy (Arizpe, Colomer, Martínez-Roldán, 2014, p. 3). Research in this field, however, tends to emphasize referential and inferential skills needed to ‘read’ images, and the importance of focusing on visual literacy in an age more inundated with complex images than any other (ibid). Lewis remarks: “even though we are experienced readers of verbal text we are still learning how to read the picturebook, both in the sense of reading individual books, and in the sense of understanding how they work” (Lewis, 2001, p. 31). Since Lewis made this observation, a large body of research on visual literacy and criticality has emerged, addressing this gap (Heath 2006; Jewitt, 2008, Frey & Fisher, 2008). The Visual Journeys project, culminating in the book *Visual Journeys Through Wordless Narratives* (2014), applied this research in a grounded way to both the classroom and home literacy practices in effort to not only build on an understanding of how visuals work but to empower new arrival and local Glaswegian readers. Through a series of activities: verbal responses to texts, annotations, photography projects and so on, this Visual Journeys project unfolds some of the nuances of meaning-making with images. In continuing to embrace the profound pedagogical value of visual literacy within official and unofficial educational spaces, it will be possible to seize the transformative possibilities they hold for readers.

Radical Change: Techniques of transformation

This chapter has opened up a discussion of the possibilities that picturebooks engender for social transformation. To this point, I have been considering the picturebook as a form (its combination of image and word) and the general features that spring from this form (its textual gaps, its dialogical nature and so on). Engaging with Dresang’s work on Radical Change¹³ will turn the focus to the concrete techniques that are employed by picturebook

¹³ Michèle Anstey and Geoff Bull’s *Evolving Pedagogies* also offers picturebook theory tailored to shifting literacies in a digital environment. They unpack four central modes or modalities (Linguistic, Visual, Audio, Gestural, Spatial) and their key features. I have chosen to focus on Dresang’s work, however, which can be applied more directly to print picturebooks. Anstey and Bull place a larger focus on pedagogies and theory for understanding non-print media. They also focus on oral, textual and visual grammar (employing semiotic code, such as identifying vectors in images), which, as I discuss in the Visual Grammar section of this chapter are less relevant to my work than the more open-ended analysis Dresang offers.

makers in generating critical work. In other words, it will illuminate *how* the form of the picturebook delivers critical content. I acknowledge the difficulty of making the distinction between form and content – since, in Marshal McLuhan’s widely-cited words, ‘the medium is the message’ (1964, p. 9). To simplify, what I am highlighting when I single out ‘content’ is the ‘subjects or topics of exploration’ in picturebooks. Dresang highlights the ways in which the picturebook’s capacity to act as a transformative text hinges on its ability to embody both critical form and content. Or: Radical Change refers to texts pushing the boundaries of traditional literature, with the end of critically engaging readers through complex material, and addressing changes in literacy (including visual literacy) in a digital age (Dresang, 1998, p. 6). “Radical change texts” she suggests, “can provide the kinds of reading experiences that develop readers’ abilities to critically analyze, construct and deconstruct an array of texts and representational forms” (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 44). Dresang traces three central radical change elements: changing forms and formats; changing perspectives; and, challenging boundaries. Each element embodies various methods for achieving radical change and I have provided a brief description using examples drawn from picturebooks that are typically identified as ‘postmodern’ (she cites as an example: *Black and White* by David Macaulay).

1) Changing Forms and Formats (p. 19)

- Graphics are presented in new forms and formats, such as hypertexts, digital texts and multimodal texts. These formats offer several modes of communication within one text: reading (including viewing or visual literacy); writing (including generating electronic texts, or the reader engaged in a form of authorship), speaking and listening. This might manifest itself in a combination of print text, visual images and audio (such as filmic, musical, or computer presentation media).

-Words and pictures also reach “new levels of synergy”, which suggests that they do not operate as separate parts within a text, but rather work in concert to create (often more rich) meaning (p. 20). In *Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Book* Lauren Child employs this technique by making text (for instance the word ‘big’) illustrative of its own meaning (so, the typographic choice, size, color and placement reflect ‘big’). The words are images, and images are words.

-Books use non-linear organization and format, which disturbs familiar structures used in books to deliver a story and hence challenges readers to engage differently and creatively through their disorientation (p. 21). John Scieszka exemplifies this in *The Stinky Cheese*

Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales, when readers are launched without introduction or warning into a narrative told by the Little Red Hen, which is abruptly interrupted by a character from an entirely separate fairy tale: Jack (of *Jack and the Beanstalk*). Jack informs the Little Red Hen that the story cannot yet commence, because the title page needs to come first. The following page is marked, with over-sized black font and a distinctively ironic flair: “Title Page”. Not only has Scieszka demonstrated alinearity of form by starting and interrupting a narrative all before the title page, he has also importantly posed a story as a contestable entity (open to interjections from not only other characters, but readers, too). It emphasizes that the structure and layout (or form) of a text is deliberate, effects the telling of the story and is available for critiquing or ‘poking-fun at’.

-Books have “non sequential organization and format”, by which Dresang implies a similar revision and critique of traditional order (as noted just above) but in regards to disturbing the rote sequence of plots as opposed to the structural components of the book itself (p. 21). Child does this by having her protagonist cut out sections of the plot in a familiar fairytale book, and rearrange the plot by pasting the pieces (and adding new pieces) together in a new way. Similarly, Scieszka has characters from different tales interact and combines disparate plots in unfamiliar ways, and uses different perspectives to interrupt the narrative flow.

-There are multiple layers of meaning in a text (p. 22), for instance, an author may present conflicting information, pun or play with literal and figurative meanings of words and phrases, and employ allegory, or intertextual connections. This allows the reader to engage more actively in the reading process than narratives with singular and clearly delineated meaning or reading according to the author’s very plainly stated intent. In *Voices in the Park*, meaning can be taken from each of the four narratives presented, and meaning can be taken from viewing these narratives together as a whole.

-Interactive formats are used (p. 23). Following from devices that loan themselves to multiple layers of meaning (like intertextuality or word play), postmodern works provide readers with many openings to participate in the authorship or telling of a story (such as making speculations, responding to a direct question, finishing a rhyme and so on). Forms like hyper texts, digital texts and multimodal texts, and physical characteristics like pull tabs, textures, and layered images foster interactive engagement. Sometimes, as is the case in Child’s *Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Book*, the characters themselves demonstrate interaction with texts (Herb cuts and pastes a story to alter the way it unfolds).

2) *Changing Perspectives* (p. 24)

- Multiple perspectives are offered within the text. The plot is made more complex by presenting different points of view on the same event. This complicates the sense of moral clarity in a situation and demands readers to take many voices into account in texts and also to reflect on the way in which their lived experiences are often experienced differently by others. Again, Browne's *Voices in the Park* exemplifies this, as four characters present their personal accounts of walking through the same park.

- There is an inclusion of "previously unheard voices" (p. 25). Scieszka engages with this technique in a provocative way by offering the perspective of villains in familiar fables, which invites empathy for the often 'untold side' of a story. By previously unheard voices, Dresang also refers to dispossessed and underprivileged or persecuted communities, such as homeless populations, and people of certain ethnicities, races, sexualities or abilities.

- There is an inclusion of young characters, who "speak for themselves" (p. 25). As a reflection on the kind of critical and mindful young audience for whom postmodern authors such as Scieszka and Child are writing, their young characters embody critical, inquisitive, assertive and opinionated qualities. The protagonist, Herb, who displays agency in re-writing and writing narrative in *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book*, is an excellent example of this type of character.

3) *Changing Boundaries* (p. 26)

-There is an inclusion of "subjects previously forbidden". Again, holding that the young reader is critical and socially aware, as opposed to being in need of moral reform/direction (as the didactic tradition suggests), postmodern authors introduce complex and conventionally taboo topics for young readers' rumination. Such topics include global issues of famine, violence, death, domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse, war and poverty. *Duck, Death and the Tulip* by Wolf Erlbruch, is a well-loved example of a dark story on death.

- There is an integration of "settings previously overlooked" (p. 27). While early children's literature (during and post Romantic era) tended to sanitize and idealize settings and events, radical change literature introduces more complex and at times difficult settings such as ghettos or refugee camps. The integration of previously overlooked settings can also involve introducing readers into more playful, overlooked settings such as a villain's home (e.g. the wolf's home Scieszka's book).

-Characters are “portrayed in new, complex ways” (p. 28). Rather than fitting neatly into understandings of good or bad, radical change characters demonstrate a range of qualities along a continuum of what might be considered ‘virtue’ and ‘human error’ – but ultimately it is left to the reader to make her own assessments of the character. Shaun Tan’s *The Red Tree*, for instance, offers a portrayal of a young girl suffering from childhood depression. She is reflective, cautious, anxious, sad and in certain moments, content and more optimistic.

-There is an introduction to “new types of communities” (ibid) – which relates closely to the integration of “unheard voices”, but speaks directly to *groups* who are often unrepresented (such as single mothers, transgendered communities, foster and adoptive families, or immigrant communities [as represented in Tan’s *The Arrival*]).

-Stories have unresolved endings (ibid). As previously noted, literature coming out of a didactic tradition generally aim for conclusive endings and decisive morals which can be drawn from them – however – contemporary examples fitting with radical change principles, stories are left open for the reader to draw her own conclusions or wonder about different possible situations that might follow. This requires a more participatory, engaged and critical form of reading a text and meaning making. Again, *Voices in the Park* is a powerful example of this – not only is each of the four encounters of the park inconclusive, the reader is also challenged to think about how they fit together to form a larger narrative, and what can be taken from it.

Limitations

The transformative features I have outlined, and Dresang’s Radical Change elements have pointed to both general and concrete qualities of the picturebook that hold promise for engaging children in social discourse. I will now outline a few limitations to their transformative capacities.

Limitation 1: Narrowing mediation

The fact that picturebooks are often read aloud and hence dialogical in nature is a central transformative feature, which can invite young people into meaningful social exchange. This means that the story is mediated by the person reading aloud. Thoughtful mediation - as Colomer (2002), Manresa and Silva-Diaz (2005) and Sipe (1998) suggest – can catalyze a collective construction of meaning, which can be beneficial to all parties. Otherwise put:

“an interpretive community, led by expert mediation, can enhance reading experiences and responses” (Arizpe, Colomer, Martinez-Roldan, 2014, p. 4) By “providing language” and “posing questions” (185), mediation often encourages closer reading, rumination and analysis of the text than children might do if left on their own to read complicated texts. It is possible to facilitate effectively with “open ended and bridging questions [;] questions focused on the narrative and the literary elements that composed it [;] questions focused on visual elements [; and] questions inviting text-to-life connections” or simply by listening to and reiterating reader’s responses (185). Can draw attention to, but not inform interpretation on, compositional or literary elements (186). In some cases, however, the young person’s freedom to deconstruct, critique and make meaning may also be limited or governed by the orator (typically and adult accepted as an authority figure) who uses more instructive approaches. While images can be ‘read’ by very young children (well before they have acquired traditional literacy skills) and hence children will be able to make meaning based on their independent encounters with the text, it must be acknowledged that on some level the tones, inflections, and pacing of the reading voice as well as interpretations offered by this orator will have a bearing on this meaning and can potentially direct or narrow the scope of engagement. Adult readers may pose questions or comments to the younger readers/listeners about the text that delimit meaning. One possible way of addressing this instructive mediation and power-imbalance is a buddy reading system, often used in schools: a young reader will be paired with another slightly more experienced reader of a similar age who will lead or guide the reading aloud. It is possible (though not necessarily the case) that these two readers, being of the same peer group, are able to work through the text together in a less-hierarchical and more co-mediated manner. Additionally, *Visual Journeys through Wordless Narratives* (Arizpe, Colomer & Martinez-Roldan, 2014, p. 183) suggests many ways of facilitating discussion, particularly through mediated group discussions using general cues and open ended questions, that - when put into practice - effectively fostered a space for many possible readings to emerge. Not all adult readers, however, will adopt such methods while mediating texts.

Limitation 2: ‘Schooled’ approaches in and outside of schools

Illich suggests that a problematic institutionalized logic or schooled approach pervades adult society’s way of thinking inside and outside of official spaces, hence his work’s title is *Deschooling Society* and not simply *Deschooling Schools*. Illich (1995) writes:

School appropriates the money, men, and good will available for education and in addition discourages other institutions from assuming educational tasks. Work, leisure, politics, city living, and even family life depend on schools for the habits and knowledge they presuppose, instead of becoming themselves the means of education (p. 21).

So, while picturebooks are generally produced by unaffiliated individuals and not produced by school boards (which I have suggested could permit them a certain amount of critical distance and freedom to introduce taboo subjects in unconventional forms), it is also possible that these writers and illustrators adopt a banking method or institutionalized logic themselves. In addition to the way the books may be written, a schooled approach or institutionalized logic may pervade the ways in which the books are read. For instance: common schooled approach to children's literature has been the marginalization of the image in relation to the written word – and this understanding has often been internalized by parents and pupils outside of the classroom to the extent that picturebooks have often been regarded as mere 'stepping stones' for more serious literacy and texts in the home (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1995).

While I hold that such schooled approaches (described by Illich as rote and limiting) to reading and writing picturebooks are problematic, unlike Illich, I do not feel it is possible or productive to conflate institutions, in a generalized way, with restrictive pedagogies. Chapter III, which employs thinkers like hooks and Giroux, indicates more complexity – that is: the possibility for institutions to both restrict *and* empower, depending on how they are used. Nonetheless, I believe both perspectives (that institutions are inherently limited to schooled approaches [Illich], or that institutions can empower when operated mindfully [hooks and Giroux]) indicate the need for a critical pedagogy for picturebooks.

Limitation 3: Problem of access

While the composite form of the picturebook makes it accessible to a wide audience, there are a number of impediments to readers actually getting their hands on these critical texts. I would suggest that most picturebooks that are available and that are currently being published do not embody Drasang's characteristics and instead reflect a more didactic tradition or appeal to an engrained consumer desire for gloss, and gimmicks (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 55). In Shelby Wolf's presentation at the Literacies Roundtable at the University of Glasgow, she suggested "An author can make \$50,000 USD to publish a traditional children's book", and that it is much more difficult for "books that challenge convention" to reach this level of monetary success, or get attention from publishers at all

(Wolf, 2012). Publishers dictate what material is made accessible to readers, and there is a complicated politics surrounding the creation of demand for certain types of texts, which they will in turn supply. Given the competitive nature of publishing, it is possible that the relative dearth of critical or radical books even begins at the creative level itself, that is: perhaps less critical material is being created because it is too difficult to get published. Laura Atkins, children's literature scholar and children's book editor, who spent 7 years working for children's publishers in the United States, reflects: "books are shaped by the publishing industry on multiple levels, from the particular tastes of an editor, to the culture of each publisher, as well as general assumptions made about distribution and sales" (2013, p. 1).

What *does* get published tends to go through a screening process by educators, parents and guardians alike to determine what the child will have the opportunity to access. Haynes and Murriss (2009) argue that book selection by school boards and educators is often based on "a text's ability to impart the 'right message'", or for their potential to "influence the agenda for discussion", and likewise the parent's selection of picturebooks for their children will often echo their own ideological positions (p. 6). In extreme cases, some books dealing with themes that are deemed 'inappropriate' may undergo censorship by states, librarians, educators and bookshop owners. *And Tango Makes Three*, a picturebook telling the true story of two male chinstrap penguins at the Central Park York Zoo that co-parented a baby penguin, is an example of such a challenged book that has been subject to censorship (at times resulting in removal from school libraries or, in Singapore, a complete removal of the book from children's sections in libraries and stores) (Machlin & Mulberry, 1). These examples of censorship cause obvious and problematic impediments to accessing particular texts.

Further, given high production costs of the specialized printing and binding of postmodern picturebooks, they are often very expensive texts. Those who are not in privileged positions may only have temporary access to these books at school or public libraries and outside of urban centers in the West or outside of the West entirely, putting limited resources into stocking schools and libraries with picturebooks at all is rarely feasible. This was evident from Alert Bay's public library. Transformative education is aimed at increasing inclusion, and the empowerment of underprivileged or subjugated groups, however given the material

conditions of the picturebook, its transformative potential are often limited to a small segment of society.

Dresang (1999) suggests that the radical characteristics she outlines make texts more accessible and relevant to young readers in a digital age (p. 12), however, she fails to acknowledge that exposure to digital technology and landscapes, and access to the books themselves is class-based and place-based. The assumption is that daily life is saturated with the digital even when one is not using a device (identification cards are scanned, billboards are wired, temporalities and spaces shift) (p. 6), but even 15 years after Dresang's book, this is still not the experience of many living outside of cities or those without use of iPhones, ipads, computers, eBook readers or reliable connection to the internet. It is still entirely possible to live 'in a digital age' without having access to the platforms, information and knowledge of digital technologies. Books that cater to 'youth in a digital age' and take this access, knowledge for granted, run the risk of further alienating these young readers and intensifying classist exclusion. However, there is cause for hope that connectivity and access to digital technologies will become more and more tenable for these groups over time: increasingly, picturebooks are being digitized and free or inexpensive to view, Wi-Fi is made available for free in many cities, and digital devices are more affordable.

Limitation 4: Reductive visual grammar

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen offer useful insights into the peripheral role that visual literacy tends to take in education, and they effectively problematize that exclusion (2006, p. 1). They also make a good case for the need to closely examine images, which they maintain are not neutral but imbued with ideological meaning (p. 14). However, I find their understanding of visual grammar, outlined in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* and taken up by Lewis (2001), limits rather than supports transformative engagement. Their visual grammar "intend[s] to provide inventories of the major compositional structures which have become established as conventions in the course of the history of visual semiotics, and to analyze how they are used to produce meaning' (p. 1). Otherwise put, it attempts to codify elements making up visual landscapes in picturebooks using cues like line, layout or posture to make images intelligible and emphasize how readers develop shared meaning. They suggest, for instance, illustrations

can have transactional or non-transactional content. A transaction, they explain, involves actors and goals. A goal is described as doing something to, or aiming at someone or something else. To explicate this, Lewis suggests that there is *no interaction* taking place in Browne's illustration of the 'super gorilla' flying through the sky (Lewis, p.119). This application of their theory emphasizes to me a central problem with their codification. It suggests that identifying factors like the actor and the goal in an illustration is de facto and not up to interpretation. In a review of their work, Charles Forceville critiques this very problem: Kress and van Leeuwen "assume that their personal interpretations have intersubjective validity. One of the tasks of the project of developing a more refined and sophisticated visual grammar is to be more specific about the differences between shared and non-shared interpretations of (elements of) pictures" (Forceville, p. 172).

Lewis' application to Browne's *Gorilla* reflects a particular understanding of relationships with nature: that one can act upon (not with) the environment and that there is a degree of mastery over nature. A reader could suggest this illustration demonstrates an interaction between the gorilla and his environment – that both are animate. Many Indigenous views and pedagogies would suggest as much. Kress and van Leeuwen indicate that their grammar is for the Western context, and is not universalizing, however this diminishes the multiplicities of social or cultural ways of seeing within the West itself. Who gets to be included in 'the West'? In a transactional image with two participants, they hold that there is an actor and a goal. The actor 'does' while the other participant has 'an action done to, towards or for them' (p. 43). This imposes a specific understanding of power relations upon images, which excludes many other ways of knowing in a Western context alone. I contend that this analysis of actor and participant reduces relationships to linear schemas, making little room for co-operative and symbiotic interactions, for instance.

While Lewis acknowledges the social construction of images: "the signs from which images are composed have developed socially, in the interactions of image makers and their reader or viewers", he adopts their visual grammar which does not make room for multiple constructions of the same images according to different epistemologies or cosmologies (Lewis, p. 120). Agreeing with Kress and van Leeuwen, Lewis writes "What makes visual images intelligible is that makers and users alike share common understandings about how the world[...] can be represented, and about how images can be

and are used” (Lewis, p. 120). The anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks that I propose, conversely, emerges from the view that representation is immensely complicated. Though images are universally important, the reductive notion that Kress and van Leeuwen present (that there is a ‘common understanding about how the world can be represented’) reflects the spirit of positivist frameworks that continue to have harmful impacts on Indigenous communities (this will be explored further in Chapter VI). The culturally specific and rigid methods for analyzing images that they propose diminish the reader’s freedom to read subjectively, or their ability to relish in the indeterminacy of a critical picturebook.

I also take issue with their characterization of pictures as “independently organized and structured message – connected with the verbal text, but in no way dependent on it: and similarly the other way around” (Kress, van Leeuwen, p.17). This is contradictory, considering they apply many of the same grammatical rules that govern language to understand images (which indicates the cross-pollination of structure). This also overlooks what Dresang and others identify as synergy between text and image found in many critical texts, whereby words and pictures become meaningfully entwined. Creative uses of typography or concrete poetry in picturebooks are examples of this synergy. Texts and pictures are not dependent in the sense that one is void of meaning without the other, but I hold that they are certainly inter-dependent in their creation of meaning when they are placed together on a picturebook page. I assert that an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks should avoid overly-structured ways of determining meaning like Kress and van Leeuwen’s Visual Grammar. Their approach claims to indicate ‘shared understandings’ of images, but, in doing so, they exclude other ways of seeing. Pedagogy suitable for critical picturebooks should aim to invite but not dictate possible ways of looking at the image - this was a goal of the picturebook workshops I facilitated, outlined in Chapter IV.

Concluding Thoughts

I have suggested that the exclusion of children from social discourse often remains unchallenged within critical theory. If, as Freire insists, “it is in speaking their word that people [...] transform it, [and] dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings”, it is vital that young people are included (2000, p. 69). This chapter therefore explores ways in which the picturebook can be used as a powerful medium for stimulating critical inclusion of children in social discourse. This inclusion

involves a transformation not only of ‘adult society’s’ view of children as apolitical, but also the transformation of critical consciousness among young readers who are able to engage with these critical picturebooks. I have highlighted five elements of the picturebook which lend to social transformation: a flexibility of the picturebook form; the accessibility arising from a combination of two semiotic systems; the textual gaps permitted by the complex relationships between word and image; its dialogical nature; and, its freedom from institutional constraints. Dresang’s Radical Change characteristics further elucidate specific components that can generate critical texts. I have also considered some limitations to the picturebook as an avenue for transformation: the influence of instructive or narrowing mediation; the force of an institutionalized logic; and, problems surrounding access.

In this chapter, I submit that it is unnecessary to maintain a distinction between the picturebook as an ‘aesthetic object’ and the picturebook as an ‘educational tool’, which denies their ideological and pedagogical impacts. I suggest, instead, that the picturebook’s unique ability to embody *both* realms can enable picturebooks to incite social engagement and transformation. Through their complex melding of images and words, I argue that picturebooks can invite young readers to critically analyze their worlds and transform their own actions within them. In particular, this thesis will focus on the importance of inviting young readers to critically analyze colonial relations.

The following chapter will introduce the field site, Alert Bay, in which my research into anti-colonial pedagogies for picturebooks and local food narratives took place. The insights shared by each person, each presented in the form of vignettes, will begin to frame the problems with colonial approaches to learning, and indicate some traditional or anti-colonial pedagogical methods used by locals. These conversations inform the construction of an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks.

Chapter II -

Contextual Wisdom: Forming a pedagogical lens



Fig. 1: Namgis-style Canoe.

I have suggested that the distinction between aesthetic picturebooks and educational picturebooks is a problematic one that runs the risk of undermining and depoliticizing these texts and falsely separates the visual and intellectual spheres. I maintain that when readers interact with picturebooks (whether the book is intended by the author to be an ‘educational’ text or not) they are learning a range of literacy skills, learning about compositional elements, making intratextual and intertextual connections, and working critically to fill textual gaps. For these reasons, I feel it is necessary to consider pedagogy in a critical discussion of the picturebook.

One possible line of exploration is to unpack the pedagogical approach used by the author. Dresang’s (1999) radical change principles, which outline and analyze the elements employed to construct critical material, is one useful touchstone. I have briefly explored

these elements in the previous chapter. Another line of exploration is the way in which picturebooks can be read or interpolated through a particular pedagogical lens (regardless of authors' intentions). This thesis focuses primarily on the later. Throughout my thesis there are four main sources that I draw from to construct an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks: theoretical works on the topic of picturebooks, theoretical works on critical pedagogy, theoretical work on Indigenous Methods and pedagogy and the fieldwork I completed in Alert Bay, British Columbia.

Insights I have gained through fieldwork and their relation to an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks will be the focus of this chapter, while the third and fifth chapter will employ the theoretical texts to offer useful tools for reading through, and making connections to my encounters in Alert Bay. Putting these different forms of research into conversation will help to illustrate the fluidity and also disjuncture between the theory and practice of critical pedagogy and hopefully provide a more nuanced pedagogy (Freire, 2000).

Why Vignettes?

The words need to be connected to faces.

- Barbra Cranmer, Documentarian

I was born in Kingcome Inlet, and will probably die in Alert Bay, but my story doesn't start or end there.

- Beau Dick, Namgis Carver and Hereditary Chief

I have come to associate particular pedagogical approaches and knowledge with the individuals who shared them with me, and for this reason it is my aim in this chapter to reflect that connection. I hope this emphasizes the way in which knowledge is experiential, contextual, intimate and subjective. This chapter will therefore be a space for introducing a few of the formative voices that emerged in the fieldwork through vignettes, or short prose-style representations of exchanges that highlight the textured and relational nature of the learning that took place. *These vignettes will speak to experiences of colonialism and pedagogical tools used to resist cultural assimilation or annihilation – they aim to acknowledge and celebrate local knowledge.* It is methodologically important to present these exchanges in narrative form not only due to my focus on narrative in picturebooks,

but also given the importance of storytelling in Alert Bay (where there is a strong, ongoing tradition of oral histories [Kwak'wala was not traditionally written] and where the social importance of story telling widely acknowledged).

The vignette is a useful form, as it does not offer a plot like a traditional story (in the contained beginning, middle and end sequence), but rather serves to reveal something nuanced about context. This reflects the fact that what I present here is not exhaustive. I have not been given all of the relevant information and perspectives to present a hermeneutically sealed narrative. As a visitor I am particularly aware of my inability to represent these exchanges in a perfectly fair, balanced and complete way. The vignette form also highlights the difference between personal encounter and data or information. I am uncomfortable with identifying what I learned as 'data' and the exchanges as 'data collection'. I hold that such language implies a colonial approach to learning and research, in which the researcher comes to extract information and the subjects must relinquish precious intellectual or material resources (Smith, 1999, p. 167; Kline, 2013, 3). I believe that 'data' reduces the humanity of the exchange or the sentimentality of the wisdom being shared. I do not aim to present data objectively. I am reflecting my personal experience of and investments in the conversations since I am trying to unfurl how they have collectively informed *my* conceptions of transformative pedagogy, which can be applied to the reading (or understanding) and writing picturebooks. What I provide is a vignette in the literary but also in the photographic sense: an image with blurred or softened edges – a glimpse of something striking and incomplete.

The content of the vignettes below did not come out of formal interviews but conversation or exchange, which I believe indicates a different, more equitable power relationship: there was an intentional pedagogical flexibility between the roles of teacher and student – researcher and the researched – subject and object – knower and known. In contrast to the interviewer and interviewee, there are two (or more) speakers in a conversation. Conventional interviews are often presented in research through straightforward transcription (representing strictly what was said), which can appear disconnected from the tone and setting e.g. how the words were embodied and conveyed. This chapter values these often-neglected details.

One pedagogical constant that emerges through these voices is a need for responsibility, respect and expression of gratitude in one's daily practice. The Kwakwaka'wakw¹⁴ first peoples, for instance, give thanks for the many conditions that gave rise to the cedar tree and the tree itself when they strip its bark; give thanks to the elders that taught the ways of collecting and using the cedar; and, take responsibility to teach these skills to next generations (Cranmer, 1992, p. 8). This giving of thanks is part of a spiritual and cultural practice or way of being the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples call *mayaxa'la*: a deep form of respect (ibid). The bark is stripped in moderation so it can continue to thrive, which is also an act of respect and a celebration of abundance. As a part of this *mayaxa'la*, many Kwakwaka'wakw peoples are acutely aware of the consequences this extraction has on the physical and metaphysical world, and its interconnected systems. As a visitor writing from my experience, I hope for my work to also reflect a sense of gratefulness, awareness, respect and celebration. I am certainly not claiming that this project embodies *mayaxa'la*, as that is an intimate and culturally specific mode of respect, but I attempt to respect the approaches and ways of those I met according to the wishes and guidelines that they themselves have conveyed; according to ethical guidelines set out by PAR; and, according to my own personal ethic. While I am attributing specific bits of wisdom to particular individuals I met, I also acknowledge the interconnectedness of this knowledge that was shared with me, which is often inherited, rearticulated and shared with community.

The selection of voices I have represented here is not comprehensive. I have selected the individuals introduced below due to the pedagogical themes that emerged from our conversations. Other voices will unfurl throughout the thesis. To provide some background information before the vignettes, I will introduce the site of my fieldwork.

Introducing the Field Site: Cormorants and Cormorant Island

¹⁴ Kwakwaka'wakw is a cultural group of Indigenous peoples that includes a number of sub-groups or bands along the Pacific Northwest coast of Canada. While Kwakwaka'wakw embodies a great deal of diversity between its different bands, these peoples share the name Kwakwaka'wakw because they historically share Kwak'waka language roots. In Alert Bay, the major Kwakwaka'wakw band is the Namgis however there are other Kwakwaka'wakw peoples such as the Tlowitsis-Mumtagila living on the island as well.



Fig. 2 Front Street, Alert Bay

Following a 9 hour journey through a gateway of glacier mountain ranges to the northern tip of Vancouver Island in Barb's¹⁵ white Volkswagen, we collapsed in our rental apartment, across the street from Alert Bay's tiny post office in one direction and coastline in the other. Needing a rest, I arbitrarily chose one of the first nature documentaries I could find online: a BBC series called *Wild China*, which explored a landscape dramatically different from the one we had just entered (that of South China's). Striking aerial footage of rice paddies demonstrated the way that ancient technologies were applied to the natural world, and the unique practice of Chinese fisherman was explored as an example of this interaction. For centuries, Cormorant birds have been taken onto Chinese fishing boats, where a noose that is attached to a long line held by the fisherman is loosely tied around their long, white necks. Instinctively, the birds dive for fish, but when they surface, the narrator tells us, they are unable to swallow their catch past the noose. The fisherman takes the fish from their beaks, and sends the birds off for countless other dives into the sea until boats are filled with seafood. It was by complete coincidence that I played this video,

¹⁵ Barb Merrick joined me in Alert Bay to assist me with my fieldwork. In addition to being an old childhood friend, she also studied Sociology (with a focus on food sovereignty), and was formerly a chef. So, she brought with her both an academic and culinary interest in the food practices taking place on the island. She helped with note-taking during conversations with locals, transportation, setting up the workshop space and was an excellent companion with whom I was able to debrief, hike, and cook in this beautiful coastal setting.

which ended up discussing Cormorant fishing, only moments after arriving to Cormorant Island.

The community of Alert Bay is located 45 nautical miles off the northwest coast of Vancouver Island on a small bit of land, enveloped by the sea, called Cormorant Island. It is a place largely defined by the fish that kept many Kwakwaka'wakw peoples alive. To demonstrate the extent of its importance, revered mythological or ancestral figures in these parts are called the "Salmon People"¹⁶ who, it is told, lived in villages under the sea. This is such an important origin story that the Kwakwak'awkw peoples are often colloquially known as 'the salmon people'. In the decline of local fish population due to commercial over-fishing, and various industrial devastations to the ecosystem, and governmental fishing limits imposed on Indigenous peoples, Alert Bay is now largely defined by a complex, cultural-political struggle over (what is left of) the fish. A link between food and dispossession, and food and culture are extraordinarily heightened here (in Chapter IV, I will discuss the way in which food was used as a generative theme for my fieldwork). The captive Chinese Cormorant bird is thus an apt symbol of colonial power that continues to take a toll on this island, which shares its name.

Alert Bay, made up of the Kwakwaka'wakw first peoples, other Indigenous peoples and their non-native neighbors has roughly 1,000 permanent residents. The historical and cultural significance of this place and its people far outreaches its geo-physical size. Long before the influence of settler society, and long before it was given the colonial name 'Alert Bay', there are accounts of the village of Yalis (its original, Kwak'wala name) being a fertile and abundant hub for Indigenous people living there and on surrounding islands - its shores full of seaweeds and scored with clam beds¹⁷ and smoke houses for the endless glut of salmon - its forests growing medicine and food that nourished countless families, and cedar that housed them. Though a number of bands from different surrounding islands like Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em from Village Island, Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis of Gilford Island, or Dzawada'enuxw from Kingcome Inlet came together in this space. In

¹⁶ The Salmon People is an origin story also told by other Indigenous peoples in Canada, such as the Haida.

¹⁷ Clambeds are traditionally cultivated by digging trench-like pits along shorelines, which collect large numbers of clams, making it easy to dig and collect the shellfish when the shore is exposed. There is a common phrase in Alert Bay to describe collecting food from the shores in such a way, which indicates the abundance that was available: 'when the tide is out, our fridge door is open'.

light of its abundance, Alert Bay was a crucial site for potlatches¹⁸ other forms of trade, and celebration.

Recognizing this abundance and ideal location, settlers forcefully established themselves on the island. It is now a site noted for extreme acts of colonial abuse. In 1921, the Government of Canada enacted Section 116 of the Indian Act, in an effort to stop the potlatch custom of dance, song, and wealth distribution and confiscated many precious wooden masks, copper shields, and dance regalia (umista.org). Several people decided to celebrate regardless of this law, and faced persecution during these years. The ban was eventually lifted and during the 1970s and 80s, some of these possessions were returned after long negotiations, (which are mostly housed in the U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay).

In my mind, the educational history in Alert Bay is particularly remarkable, troubling and important to consider, which is one of the key reasons for choosing this site for my fieldwork. Before 'contact', education functioned outside of established institutions as an embodied exchange of knowledge between members of a community (Brown & Brown, 2009, p. 8). Typically, knowledge was passed from experienced elders (or 'the old people' as they are called in Alert Bay) to younger members of the community. Skills such as catching, cleaning and preparing salmon, or carving were taught through elders' demonstration, which the young person observes and then practices under the supervision of many community members (ibid). Kwakwaka'wakw, as an oral culture, used to and continues to employ storytelling as a key pedagogical method for exploring history, cosmology and the like. These stories change slightly with each telling, and given their significance, young people have the responsibility to remember and retell these stories when they take the position of old people in their communities. Abstract knowledge and practical skills intersect in daily practice (for instance, spiritual wisdom about salmon runs influences the practical process of fishing), and they therefore intersect in pedagogical methods. The voices I will introduce will reflect this in different ways, and explain how these traditional pedagogies have gone through different permutations but remain part of daily practice.

¹⁸ A potlatch is a very significant gift giving celebration, which is used to distribute wealth, celebrate abundance and special occasions. The ceremonies involve elaborate dance, song and feasting.

As I will discuss, settler society came to Canada with its own distinct educational philosophies, which grounded learning for children in the institution of the school. In 1878 Anglican missionaries opened the first “Indian Day School” on the island (later giving way to St. Michael’s Residential school), starting a very harmful legacy of colonial education. A number of the locals I spoke with were survivors of St. Michael’s, which closed in 1974.

A Feast of Pedagogical Learning

Having some sense of how complicated and special this place was, I endeavored to gain some insights (whatever locals wished to share with me) into this aggressively oppressed yet resilient community through its food. As I have noted, food has been both a source of oppression and control¹⁹ at the hands of settler society, but also a source of resilience for the Kwakwaka’wakw people. I set out, initially, to lead workshops in Alert Bay that would serve as the foundation of the fieldwork. These would involve embodied, intercultural learning with and through food. In my ethics application I suggested:

Meaningful and transformative education, Paulo Freire asserts, must reflect lived experiences and realities of students. Being a universally-shared experience, food presents rich opportunities for learning, vital to our well-being. Not only the content, but also the form or method of learning must reflect lived experience, therefore, embodied and participatory food workshops are methodologically key. My fieldwork aims to creatively contextualize food within a larger socio-political framework. Focusing on Indigenous Canadian food practices, specifically, presents an opportunity to unsettle the colonizing practice of reforming first peoples through education. It does so by acknowledging these communities as educators, possessing vital and valued knowledge that can inform emerging ethical-food movements and [autonomously] strengthen Indigenous health. Chronicling this research in a picturebook makes this educational exploration accessible to new audiences.

When I started to get situated in Alert Bay, though, I realized that the intercultural learning that was going to take place would be different than the workshops I envisioned from my desk in Glasgow. Precious food like salmon, I came to understand, can be gifted or traded for other goods or services but not purchased in Alert Bay (or, not easily purchased). Further, local food knowledge was something I needed to earn. The idea of the participatory food workshops would diminish the notion of food and knowledge as gifts. Instead, an exchange about food practices ended up taking place on its own time, and on

¹⁹ Settler societies imposed cultural ways of eating and producing food. For instance, St. Michael’s Residential School fed students a Western diet and had students learn Western agricultural techniques in the school’s farm.

locals' own terms. They happened in carving studios, grocery stores, around beach fires, while crabbing, during hikes along the coast, in classrooms, in a canoe, inside someone's kitchen over a meal or while harvesting vegetables. The powerful, truly participatory moments of my research were unplanned and unstructured. My research plans fell flat and I was reminded, daily, that I had a lot to learn – and not just learning information, but learning how learning is done in this place.

My intention was to apply Giroux, Illich and Freire's work (among others) to help me to both design the workshops and interviews that I would put on in Alert Bay, and analyze the data after the fact through this lens. Instead, I have chosen to present my experiences from my fieldwork, and local perspectives, and then suggest ways to read these encounters through theoretical works in the following chapter. In light of this structure, the pedagogical applications of each 'conversation' may not be evident in the space of this chapter. I acknowledge that theory and practice operate on a loop (theory describes the practical and the practical is informed by theory), so I am not suggesting any unidirectional process, instead the ordering I have chosen is meant to highlight and privilege 'on the ground knowledge' of the Kwakwaka'wakw people (knowledge which has been and continues to be aggressively dismissed).

Conversations



Fig. 3 Beau's Carving Chair

Beau

I first saw Beau pacing, quite mindfully, near the beach fire that our new friend Eugene had made using just the dry sticks and seaweed he found on the narrowing shoreline. It was our first night there. Barb and I had only met Eugene (a young tree planter) and his Husky, 'Goose', a few hours earlier on the ferry into Alert Bay.

Eugene called Beau's name, and his face came into focus as he leaned his slender frame over the edge planks of the boardwalk to greet us. Wiry gray and black hair, almost the length of my own, sprouted wildly from a brimmed hat made of a mossy green felt and adorned with an eagle feather.

After a few moments of introductions, he gestured directly across the street to a space below the restaurant, connected to the Inn where we were staying. He told us to visit him there the next day to talk. He left and came back a moment later with cedar chippings from his carving studio, which would help our beach fire burn longer, he said. Eugene emptied the shavings onto the flames and a red, perfumed air lifted.

We went to Beau's carving studio the next afternoon, still smelling strongly of bonfire smoke. The studio, carpeted with wood dust, carving tools and half-finished projects, had a welcoming kind of disorder to it. Beau's wooden chair, with a hand-sewn leather cushion, had its back positioned to a large window that was draped with a grey wool blanket. The wool permitted small bits of bright light to push through the series of moth holes. We sat near him and, without hesitation, he told us about Raven, an important figure in Kwakwaka'wakw mythology. He told us several separate stories about Raven in a fluid succession that, it became clear, were part of a larger narrative. Raven, through his missteps, is regarded to be a great teacher, Beau explained. Mythology, he later made clear, could be a misleading term to describe the stories he was telling, given its implication of fiction. What he was expressing to us was closer to history and cosmology combined, he explained.

A pink ipod played from its docking station on a long table next to Beau. He adjusted the volume once when he first started to talk, but the music was still loud. His voice is a muted but deep and percussive one that paused trustingly to find the right word, remember an important detail, move onto a different story or to concentrate on the task of tucking the unwieldy hair back into the sides of his hat. These breaks were filled with lyrics of whatever pop song was on at the time, often making for a startling contrast with the stories and the calm way Beau orated them. Some of his words were drawn out, and some matched with theatrical sounds and expression made while craning his neck to one side and lifting his jaw. There was a pattern in his movement that set a rhythm to his stories. And, his inflection is unique to this part of the world. His English echoes the lilts and cadence of Kwak'wala, despite the fact that it is not widely spoken. I wished for a moment that I had a notebook and a hand quick enough to transcribe. But stories are meant to be internalized in the memory, Beau emphasized. They are told in the words that come to each storyteller

and retold in the words that come to the next storyteller through a sort of translation, and a co-authoring process.

Beau openly discussed the fact that he struggled with conventional literacy throughout his time at school. Struggling with reading and writing, he was often put into isolation as punishment in school. In that isolation room, he recalls, there was a stack of *Life* magazines meant for the teachers who came to discipline the children. These *Life* magazines became his introduction to a new type of visual literacy. It was an education on how to decode European and North American iconography, photography, illustration, and advertising. It was his North American cultural education, he laughed. “I couldn’t read the words but I could read the pictures”, he said. Those magazines were meant to be read one way, but he found that “there’s a power in choosing how to read” – and that choice became his way to subvert the power of the text as well as the demands of institutional education.

Today, he prefers to hear stories than to read them - the voice tells the story just as much as the words, he suggested. As a visual artist, he is also compelled by the image and its capacity to tell a story. He spends most of his days telling stories through the Kwakwaka’wakw iconography that he carefully renders with cuts into cedar and other local softwood, forming masks, totem poles, house poles, bowls and other pieces.

His relationship with conventional literacy is generally not a positive one. Struggling with reading and writing, he was often put into isolation as punishment in school. In that isolation room, he recalls, there was a stack of *Life* magazines meant for the teachers who came to discipline the children. These *Life* magazines became his introduction to a new type of visual literacy. It was an education on how to decode European and North American iconography, photography, illustration, and advertising. It was his North American cultural education, he laughed. “I couldn’t read the words but I could read the pictures”, he said. Those magazines were meant to be read one way, but he found that “there’s a power in choosing how to read” – and that choice became his way to subvert the power of the text as well as the demands of institutional education.

At a large “Idle No More”²⁰ demonstration in downtown Victoria, months after we met in Alert Bay, Beau and I bumped into one another and made plans to meet for coffee the next day. “I knew I would see you here today” he said, smiling with his whole face. Sometimes I find seeing people outside of a familiar context can make them seem less powerful, or like a less coherent version of themselves, but it was almost the opposite in this case. In a crowd of over two hundred people, he had just the same strong presence. Thinking about the Idle No More movement over coffee, Beau reflected: “When I was a kid, my grandfather would dress up in full regalia and dance in the BC day or Canada day parades. That was the time when we were taught we should all be ashamed of being Indians. I was ashamed and confused by my grandfather’s confidence. When I compare those days with yesterday, I realize that there has been a lot of regeneration and change. Now we are all out there”. There’s the knowledge now, he said, that “since shame has helped to keep people down, pride helps to raise them up”.

Pewi

Forty-foot ceilings made of cedar beams and skylights brought a view of treetops into the very wide central corridor, which ran the length of the school. Its unique aesthetic is fitting, since this space houses a band-operated independent (Group 2) school called T’Lisalagi’Lakw School (T School) built in 1994. A receptionist sat at an open desk situated at the front of the school. She was typing and balancing her toddler on one knee. Even in the presence of the striking architecture, this is what captured my attention. It was a sight that stood out from any school in Canada, America, Italy, or Scotland that I have attended as a pupil or visited for work – where the separation of public and private life is rigidly imposed, making mothering in the workplace out of the question.

Given the invitation to explore the school until class let out, I looked into the classroom space adjacent to the receptionists’ desk. Like all of the classrooms, its walls reached about 15 feet high without a ceiling to close it off from the rest of the school space. The light through the mostly glass ceiling and ambient sounds of children and teachers traveled unhindered into the class. This particular room is without chairs, a teacher’s desk or

²⁰ Idle No More is the name for the Indigenous social movement beginning in Canada, in November 2012. The movement is a reaction to legislative abuses of Aboriginal treaty rights, but it also responds to broader issues of environment and social inequality. The movement is now international in scope.

chalkboard. It has an open floor, with a hand-crafted play fire in the center. It is a simulation of a big house, and is used for both practicing traditional dance and Kwak'wala language class.

I met Pewi here after the last bell sounded - it was her classroom I had been standing in. She showed no sign of exhaustion from the day, and instead she moved around the classroom energetically, eagerly telling me about her work. Her thick black ponytail swung like a metronome to the small of her back.

She is the dance teacher here, and the leading language teacher in the school as well, though Kwak'wala is practiced and integrated into all lessons across the curriculum at the T School. Of the people I met in Alert Bay, Pewi had one of the most ardent, strongly articulated sense of traditional pedagogy. Dance is incredibly important to education, she tells me. Not just because it is vital to pass on a knowledge of the culturally, spiritually significant dances that were performed by their old people, but because using dance in a school curriculum is an important subversive act. It represents the inclusion of subjugated knowledge in an institutional space. The dances that she teaches are the very ones that were forbidden on this island during the potlatch ban and cultural prohibition. Even with the lift of this ban, Western doctrines of education privilege a sort of dualism in schools: "educate the mind, exercise the body", she critiqued.

In addition to the cultural necessity for young people to learn Kwakwaka'wakw (and specifically Namgis) dances, and the symbolic weight or subversive power that dance has when used within an educational setting, Pewi uses dance as a pedagogical tool to teach Kwak'wala. She explains that Total Physical Response is the educational model she uses, which is increasingly being adopted by progressive language teachers. This model involves the co-ordination of movement with language learning (for instance, a particular vocabulary word will be matched by a corresponding motion). Students internalize the learning in their mental and muscle memories. In Pewi's class, Kwak'wala words and sentences are matched with moves making up traditional dances. Sometimes the words are spoken and sometimes they are sung.

Physical Education in mainstream education is intended to deal with all things bodily (for me, this included both playing sports, sexual education and family planning). In the institutions I attended, ‘embodied learning’ generally involved things like mixing chemicals in science class rather than reading a text about the chemical reaction. Certainly, there are teachers that make an effort to make embodied learning central to education, but this version of embodied learning I received (which I believe still reflects mainstream education in BC) generally felt limited or insufficient. Pewi identifies this dualism as a systemic dismissal of so much valuable knowledge.

When she was young, programs like the one she teaches were not available. She took a personal initiative to learn with grandparents, older relatives and other old people after school and on weekends. She remembers the methods that her elders used to teach her dance and Kwak’wala, and she is mindful that her teaching reflects similar methods.

Pewi regularly confronts the pedagogical problems associated with teaching a traditionally unwritten language. An alphabet was only recently created so the words could be put down on paper, she explained. In many ways, she said, this contradicts the nature of the language, which is traditionally oral in nature and acquired through conversation, story telling, and song. The alphabet is simply an effort to ensure the continued presence of Kwak’wala and to ensure that it is recognized by outsiders who put stock in written records, she continued. Teaching through the written word is a deeply engrained educational paradigm – one that she and people of her generation have been trained to value over the spoken word. She stressed how difficult it is to break with those colonial philosophies, especially with the pressure of standardized testing that will be imposed on their students. There are only a handful of fluent Kwak’wala speakers living in her community today, she said, so there is a serious pressure and obligation to teach and promote the continuity of her linguistic tradition. It is not enough for Kwak’wala to be taught, she insisted, but also the method for teaching, and way the language is used must reflect traditional ways. “Learning our native language is empowering, but not when we teach and learn it as if it is English”, she said.

Flora



Fig. 4 T'Lisalagi'Lakw school classroom with students' traditional cedar basket projects

Flora was attending an event above the library on a Saturday evening - my second night in Alert Bay. She was standing next to her husband Jamie, who had a stature that (though sloping with age) still seemed comically double her height. They were there, like the rest of us, to view a small show of local children's artwork in the community art space. With her small voice struggling to compete with sounds of children playing a game of indoor tag and familial conversation, she told me of a large picturebook project she had orchestrated before her retirement from her work with the school board. This project is the reason the town's librarian, Pat, thought to introduce us.

Each book, Flora explained, focused on a different Indigenous band along the North West Coast – there were five books in total. I realized in the following days that Flora and Jamie went on their brisk walks along the main street in front of my rental suite like clockwork each day. From my bedroom window, I could see them pacing along the shore: two rain coats moving in tandem. After a number of encounters along the boardwalk, we arranged a book exchange. I brought a copy of John Marsden and Shaun Tan's *The Rabbits*, and she loaned me her picturebook series – the only copies she owned.

I spent a great deal of time flipping through the pages of her books. They were filled with family photographs and honest writing. To represent each band, the project offered a biography of one local child, who was selected through a lottery process. The books explored the child's family totem, their local food, their language, and other dimensions of their daily life. The child was not meant to represent the entire community, but the way in which community traditions are taken up by one of its members. It stressed the individual *and* collective nature of culture. When Flora and I finally sat down together, over tea and apple pie in one of Alert Bay's two restaurants, I realized what a repository of bold and vital wisdom she housed under her humble manner.

Flora, I learned, was born in Alert Bay, to a Namgis father, who became an engineer for the salmon canneries there, and to a Finnish-Canadian mother, who had been born on a neighboring island, Sointula (along with some of the first immigrants to that area). Working as a nurse in Alert Bay after their marriage, Flora's mother witnessed the St. Michael's Residential School's²¹ opening in 1929 (an opening which followed many other iterations of mission schools beginning in 1881). She would recount to Flora the moment that the formidable brick building was illuminated with electric lights for the first time. Everyone in the hospital across the small bay from the building paused to see it. "Electric lights were so unusual to see at that time – especially in such numbers", Flora explained. Four stories peppered with light bulbs glowed through the windows and on the adjacent shore – it was an unusual spectacle...a specter even. This building and what it stood for, has had a huge bearing on Flora's life.

²¹ St. Michael's Residential School (or, St. Mike's), located in Alert Bay, was opened by the Anglican church. Indigenous children from various surrounding villages were removed from their homes and made to live at the school away from their families. Though some exceptions may have existed, children attending the school were forbidden from speaking their mother tongue(s), engaging in any of their spiritual or cultural practices (such as dance, song, and art) and suffered many physical and emotional abuses.

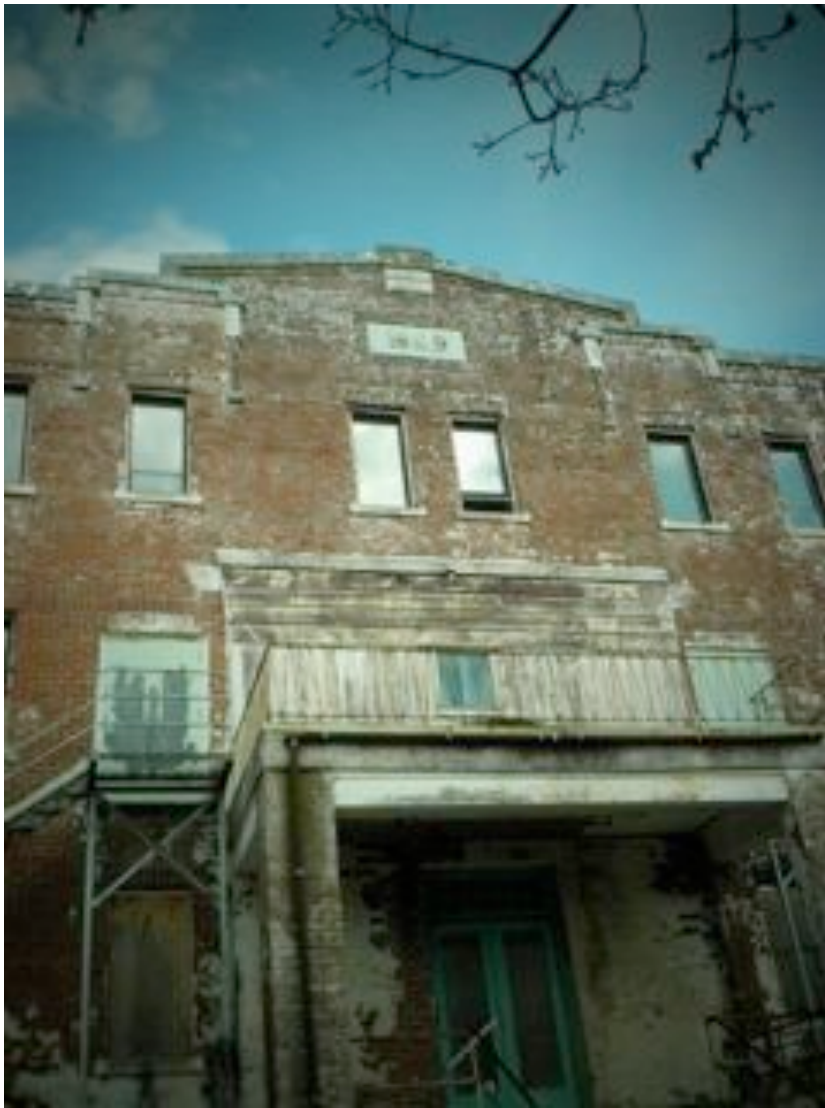


Fig. 5 St. Michael's Residential School

When Flora was school-going age, she was put into Alert Bay Superior School (where the fire hall now stands), while many of her other friends still attended “St. Mike’s”. Hers was the first Provincial school on the Island. The school was mostly attended by children of white Anglican families, or: the children whose parents were involved in running the residential school and church. Around the same time that Alert Bay Superior was put into place (the late 1930s), so too was the Indian Day School, which was federally run. This was a place for local Indigenous children to receive a very similar education to that of the children in St. Mike’s, but to avoid the protest of local families, its pupils were permitted to return home every night.

Regardless of what school you went to in those days, she said, there was little to no cultural education and there was no chance of finding a picturebook (or any book for that

matter) with Indigenous characters represented. This lack of representation wasn't accidental but rather, tactical. Since Indigenous peoples were never permitted to work as educators themselves, they were always, problematically, in the position of being educated by settler society. Literacy was an assimilative tool, which aimed to annihilate mother tongue languages (namely Kwak'wala, in this case). She recalled the policies that were in place when she was young, which prohibited the traditional ways well beyond the walls of the school, too. "There was no dancing then, it was the time during the cultural prohibition," she said, "so, I took up roller skating".

Taking the power to educate away from the family and community was and remains to be perhaps the most powerful method of colonization, she suggested. By prohibiting this transfer of knowledge, and replacing that education with settler ways of knowing, skills, arts and stories, settler society was able to do the most damage. St. Mike's reflects the colonial and cultural violence committed here. It was committed along ideological lines, in a way that clearly recognized the power of knowledge. Having seen how this played out in her hometown, Flora was committed to becoming a teacher herself. Her presence in the classroom would be an opportunity to meaningfully engage in, and not marginalize, Indigenous cultural education.

When she finished public school, she went away to attend teacher's college – some of her most difficult and alienating years, she recalls. She explained that her identity has always been tied to the physical, cultural and spiritual space of Alert Bay, but in order to receive training she was required to leave her home and community. When she returned in 1958, she became one of the first 'Status Indians' to teach at Alert Bay Superior. She had her own first grade class, in the same room she had attended first grade. Forging a valued space for cultural education in the classroom was a struggle throughout her entire career – a struggle characterized by small shifts.

She would go on to teach at Alert Bay Primary School, which was run on an open school model in which democratic choices were made by teachers and students over the content of lessons. This, she says, was the best, and most holistic educational experience she ever

had. In 1969 this was replaced by Alert Bay Elementary School, where Flora eventually become the principal.

An additional school, run by the Namgis band, called The T'Lisalagi'Lakw Band School or the "T School" was then established in 1975 (then rebuilt in 1994) (CCIAP, 2006, p. 5). She explained that the T School "started as a secondary school for challenged youth between 8-10yrs – with the goal of keeping vulnerable youth in school and supported." Quickly though, the school grew into something more.

I learned through our conversation, that the tensions between different contemporary approaches to cultural education is largely embodied by the two primary schools currently existing in Alert Bay today: Alert Bay Elementary School and the T School.

Before the T School, Flora's desire to place an emphasis on cultural learning in the classroom was increasingly being realized at Alert Bay Elementary School. The spirit of the school was to integrate a great deal of cultural knowledge into mainstream lessons, which she stressed was important for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. This knowledge had previously been considered (in mainstream schools) 'non-academic' and belonging to the private sphere and had hence been excluded from the classroom. She learned to weave cultural material into the provincial curriculum where it could fit, and craftily bring into the spaces where it did not, and this included lessons on mythology, iconography, food preparation, potlatches, arts and crafts, dance, song, language and so on.

The T School (in its current form) emerged about 14 years after federal allowances were made for the increased autonomy of Indigenous peoples over the education of children in their communities. Flora notes that this time, following legislation, there was a lot of experimentation and slow (often disappointingly slow) change in classrooms. She told me: "changes in governmental policy around Canadian education in the 1980s were said to 'give Indians control over Indian education'". One of the first schools that I know of in BC to move ahead with increased Indigenous autonomy was on the T'sarlip Reserve in North

Saanich [on southern Vancouver Island]. But, when I visited, [the children] were there... just sitting in rows”.

With this, Flora was highlighting the need for a structural re-thinking of education: the physical organization of space, the content of lessons, the pedagogical approach to teaching them and so on. “Teaching can be a subversive activity – and there’s great importance to making little grassroots changes that make changes in children’s lives – not changes that look good in reports.” There is a tension between government policy and real pedagogical practice, she stressed.

The addition of the T School in Alert Bay, which was informed by both the errors and successes of the few autonomous schools that preceded it in Canada, has at times resulted in what Flora identified as a divide in the community: “Alert Bay School ran cultural programs but when the T school developed stronger cultural programs due to its higher degree of curricular flexibility as a band school, and larger funding base for adequate resources, parents started to regard the two schools as representing different aims: Alert Bay Elementary School was deemed more academic, conventional and disciplined, where the T School was the ‘cultural school’”. She expressed that this is a harmful and false dichotomy. In her mind conventional curriculum and cultural education both have a place in the modern classroom, which prepares students holistically, and this should continue to be the aim of both schools.

Interestingly, the demographic of each school is not dictated by ethnic background: some Indigenous students attend Alert Bay Elementary School, some the T School; some non-Indigenous students attend T School, and some non-Indigenous students attend Alert Bay Elementary School. Alert Bay embodies one of the most complex educational histories I know of, with extreme pedagogical and institutional shifts taking place in the last century.

Growing up, she remembers that the characters represented in children’s literature “were upper or middle class white kids. Then [in the 1960s] they started painting those kids brown”. She insisted: “Unless you change what’s in the book, you’re not making an

impact.” She observed that most of the books available now still offer some breed of this artificial inclusion. This lack of fair representation is what catalyzed her picturebook project, as well as my own picturebook, *Grease*, included in this project. “When children can identify people and places [in the books they read] it gives a sense of place in a concrete way that they do not typically see represented in other texts. It helps them to recognize ‘the real’ is special, and that they are important,” she insisted.

Near the end of her career, she became the Port Hardy district principal for first nations programs, which is when she catalyzed the picturebook project. After over 40 years of teaching, she was still acutely aware of the need for, in her own words, “Material that reflected who first nations kids are... so that when they walk in the school and can see themselves there on the book shelves. For so many years this was not available at all.”

Through her work as a teacher, Flora recognizes that the impact of a children’s book (and other texts) also depends on how it is read. She is suggested that the representation of Indigenous peoples in books is positive but insufficient: “the books are fine, it’s a first step, but there’s a need for first nations educators, and first nations education”. In her last role of District Principal for First Nations Programs, she noticed most of the schools she worked with on the northwest coast “79%-80% of the children had Indigenous heritage, but very few teachers were Indigenous”. Indigenous people must be represented on the page, but also in the physical space of the school, she said. Flora insists that when authority or knowledge is not strictly associated with outside voices, but with voices from their own communities, young learners are empowered.

Giving me advice on writing a picturebook about my experiences in Alert Bay, she emphasized: “be clear on your vision from the start. Use good examples of kid’s lit as a guide.”

Randy



Fig. 6 Randy's carving tools

Randy is Métis, coming from the flat lands of Alberta. Despite having spent much of his adult life in Alert Bay, he was careful to introduce himself this way.

Though his ancestry is tied to other land and people, he has been given two spiritual names at different potlatches in Alert Bay. He explained “the name ‘Ikala’ was given to me by Moskama and the name ‘Tsawi’ was given to me by Mumtagilla”. He tells me that this means he’s adopted into two Kwakwaka’wakw nations, and regarded as family.

The special reserve in Alert Bay where Randy lives, called the Whe-la-la-U, reflects his complex relationship to the island and community where he positioned both inside and outside of the local culture. The Whe-la-la-U, which translates as ‘where everyone is welcome’ was established in 1971 to create an area and supportive services for Indigenous peoples from surrounding communities. While some Indigenous bands were at times warring before contact to gain rights over certain resources, marriages, titles and other honours, I’m told, colonialism often creates a brotherhood and sisterhood among bands out

of necessity (to reclaim their children from residential schools, their dance, song and other traditions and their rights over traditional land and so on). Colonialism functioned and functions through the effacement of the cultural identity of individual groups of Indigenous peoples and especially distinctions between these groups (Smith, 1999).

I left my room shortly after sunrise, on one the first mornings in Alert Bay, to walk along the seawall. There is a quiet in the morning there that reminds me of the woods and rural neighborhoods surrounding my childhood home. Radio music reverberated through the doorframe of the carving studio. Randy was inside, working on a pole he started earlier that week. He offered me a coffee from their electric percolator, and I watched as powdered milk dissolved, softening the dark brown colour to a more opaque one. The carving was in the rough stage where shapes, but not features, start emerging from the grain of the cedar. It is the time when the carver's whole strength is put behind the axe and knife. He was sweating from the work and welcomed a chance to break for conversation.

Perhaps recognizing and empathizing with my position as an outsider in Alert Bay, and perhaps just out of his natural disposition towards kindness and generosity, Randy offered himself up as a bit of an unofficial ambassador. In the studio, the previously shy man I met in the restaurant days earlier readily shared his thoughts and experiences. He has the rare skill of a good teacher to not assume prior knowledge - nothing goes unexplained.

He described the process of melting and forging metal into knives. While Randy was still relatively new to Namgis-style carving (having learned as an adult and not a young boy like Beau) the expertise he brought to the island was his knife and axe making and whittling skills. "My dad was a whittler and a hunter, like most Plains Indians were when I grew up", Randy said. "He was the one who taught me the need for different knives and how to use them." The knives Randy made were mostly forged out of scrap metal he found at the local thrift shop, which he visits every Saturday and Sunday when it opens for business. He took the finishing blades out of a hand-made leather case hanging on the wall, and encouraged me to try them on the house pole. "You have to see how different weight and sharpness works on the cedar", he said. Some of the most experienced Namgis carvers

use his tools to make their poles, boxes, and masks. He is, in this sense, very integral to the process of most carvings done on the island.

Randy gifted me with the first cans of salmon I received in Alert Bay. He had caught and preserved the fish himself. He showed me the community smoke house, and the second carving studio on Grassy Point, which was a series of tarps suspended from trees in a thick wooded area and populated by his adopted cats.

To risk putting it in over-politicized terms, Randy's thoughtful presence in Alert Bay and his work as a carver embodies the importance of being unified in a common struggle or resistance, a requirement of resistance which third wave feminist theory has highlighted patiently and thoroughly. Teaching and learning across these boundaries of difference, while also protecting the cultural distinctiveness of different groups is central to this resistance (Smith 1999). His artistic work is a delicate and artful melding his own peoples' traditional techniques of whittling and knife making with Namgis carving techniques. The local materials like red cedar or yew from Alert Bay's and surrounding forests is a platform for his visual storytelling that combines Métis and regional iconography, in a manner which is self-conscious of both the contradictions it presents and also how it gives rise to new life and reflects changes arising out of migration like his own.

Barbara

The Cranmers have a very notable presence in Alert Bay. Barbara, the eldest of the four Cranmer daughters, was born and raised in Alert Bay to her father also from Cormorant Island and her mother from a neighboring island (Mamalilaculla, or Village Island). Pat, the town librarian, urged me to visit Barbara's cultural center and to ask about her experiences working as an Indigenous documentarian.

At the center, she led us to the patio above the shoreline wearing sandals, in spite of the chill in the spring air.

Barbara has been interested in photography or ‘still images’ since childhood, and recalls seeing an advertisement for Capilano College’s media studies program when she was just a teenager. “Most representations of First Nations people in Canada at that time were coming from the outside, and often inaccurate or negative” she reflected. Believing in the need for self-representations of culture, she enrolled in this program and started developing tools and techniques for using film to do just that.

She emphasized the way in which her culture conveys important information through visual and oral outlets like carving, painting, storytelling, dance and song. She comes from a long line of story-tellers. While many forms of recording information, like written records, can at times be methodologically ineffectual modes for Indigenous representation, she said, the oral and visual can be translated powerfully in film.

She loaned me a series of four films in a cedar box before we left that day and her convictions become even more meaningful as I watched them unfold on screen. Barbara doesn’t use a central narrator in her documentaries, she explained, because she wants to do away with ‘the word of god’ that seems present in a lot of filmmaking; she instead wants to represent many stories and people in her films. “The words need to be connected to faces”, she said.

“There are so many narratives and experiences to tell even on one theme like T’lina”.²² She said speaking about one of her films *T’lina: Rendering of Wealth* (1999) the next time we met. “The tradition of making the grease has been going on forever, but I hadn’t seen it recorded [in film] anywhere so I wanted to show the tradition and to put it into the world. Education is key to preservation, and this footage has been shown in all kinds of places.” She hopes, in other words, for her documentary to be seen all over the world as a means of education (for other people outside of Alert Bay) on the importance and history of the process of making T’lina so that this process, which is so vital to her culture and history, can be preserved. This type of awareness through education is not just for those that are a

²² T’lina, oolichan oil or grease is made from a small smelt-like fish (often known as candlefish). In addition to being central to the traditional diets of people Indigenous of the Pacific North West Coast of Canada, due to its fat content, it is also treated as a sacred cultural resource, representing wealth and promoting well-being.

part of the community here (though she notes that this is of central importance), but it needs to be worldwide, she emphasized. “People should see what traditions exist here so they can be protected, and so that there can be more inter-cultural communication and appreciation and understanding”.

Since she has focused on capturing traditional practices on film, food (like t’lina) has featured heavily. This is not only because food is a source of joy and celebration in her culture, but because there is a sense of urgency to secure these food practices. She reflected that while salmon is eaten year round, as is grease, the presence of traditional foods and traditional food practices have declined since her childhood. This is partially because of a lack of access to the traditional foods of this area: not everyone has a boat, not everyone has a fishing license, or can afford boat fuel, there are far fewer salmon and oolichan in the ocean and rivers due to factors like industrial practices (e.g. logging and commercial fishing).

Barbara recalled canning and preserving salmon with her family at her grandmother’s as a child. The whole family would come together and can, she said. There was always a large surplus of salmon, which would take them through the winter, and which was used for trading or gifting to people. But her favourite food memory is of the ‘gawas’ (dried fish) that her family would make and eat together. It is salmon hung up on sticks, dried in the sun, and then pounded flat. That was the biggest treat, she said, it would melt like salty butter on your tongue. She notes that all her sisters have different roles in the family and in maintaining cultural traditions. Her main role, she said, is the memory keeper or historian and she does this mostly through film.

She suggested that it is crucial for kids to know about food and local food traditions for their health and cultural identity. “Feasting and the potlatch are central to my people. Kids need to understand this and take part so they can pass it on in turn”. During times of celebration, people prepare food as a community, and gather around the food as they share it. She is careful to note, though, that following these traditions and maintaining them on a *daily* basis is vital - and that these traditions need to come back and be present all the time, not just for ceremonies. Highlighting the cultural change that has taken place in only a few

generations, Barbara mentioned that though her knowledge of Kwak'wala is limited, her grandmother spoke Kwak'wala fluently and told stories in her mother tongue. "There are only about 100 people in Yalis who speak Kwak'wala and only about 40 of those are fluent. They are almost entirely old people".

"[Our culture] needs to be a living and continuing history, not just in books or recorded, but practiced and ongoing. People are harvesting seaweed on the other side of the island as we speak[...]The more we educate everyone about the importance of food traditions, and not just the first nations community, the more likely it will be respected and preserved. Our food is a way through which people can learn about all facets of culture".

She lamented: "The Canada food guide says you have to eat all the four food groups, but lots of those foods don't fit us." She notes that the food guide doesn't fit in with the region, seasons, or traditional ways of eating and relating to food. "Food here is seasonal and regional, but it isn't always easy to get anymore. We don't all have boats, and you can't get all the foods year round. We have to get back to our traditions and history. We need to learn again how to respect and understand our environment and to take care of it. This starts with children and educating them about the environment and how to be caretakers. Adults need to relearn this. Books [for children] should include education about the importance of the environment and sustainability". This can instill pride and increase a critical consciousness in children – it should not just involve kids but "needs to be led by kids", she insisted.

Donna, Raven, Kathy and Shelly

I caught Donna one afternoon at the T school, just as class let out, with an armful of folders and loose papers. I recognized her face immediately from Barbara's documentaries, in which she always has an important role.

She welcomed me into the large, bright staff room where we sat with three other teachers: Raven, Shelly and Kathy. It was nearly 4pm, but they were eating the remainder of their lunches, which I imagine had been neglected amid the frenetic activity of the school day.

She starts by asking me a long series of thoughtful questions, which nicely shifted the position of interviewer and interviewee. This was welcomed, given my own discomfort with traditional interviews, and my desire to have a conversation instead. I was not sure if the other teachers planned to stay after finishing their sandwiches but Donna's questions quickly stimulated a group discussion about the challenges of providing rich cultural education, and everyone settled in for a long talk.

A central challenge they each articulated differently was 'how is it possible to offer a traditional education in the very non-traditional setting of the school, and under the pressure of governmental standards for learning?' The limitations, they suggest, are largely structural. Funding from the federal and provincial government makes the facilities of this autonomous band school possible. Despite their nominal autonomy, they are beholden to a number of curriculum guidelines imposed by federal regulations and provincial regulations (through the BC ministry of education), Donna said. Adhering to these guidelines is the only way the education they provide will be recognized by the mainstream secondary and post secondary institutions their students attend. This curriculum is written, by and large, by non-Indigenous professionals in large cities, who are unable to represent the realities on Cormorant Island and therefore fail to reflect the unique learning needs of their students. For Shelly, the limitation is structural in a very literal way, that is: the physical structure of the school. While their classrooms are generally not organized with the conventional rows of seats, she wonders: "how can teachers teach students about salmon in a classroom without turning traditional knowledge into an abstraction – and removing it from its true purpose?" Traditional teaching is done through demonstration, and learning through immediate practice. The classroom as a space does not reflect all of her desired teaching methods.

Donna emphasized one serious impediment to traditional, Indigenous pedagogy that is inherent in institutionalized education: the credential process teachers are required to undergo. Raven, who recently graduated with her teaching degree from the University of British Columbia, mentioned that throughout her entire training, there was only a course or two available that focused on Indigenous pedagogy. While this is a start, Raven emphasized that it was not sufficient. There are no comprehensive programs available in which teachers can receive training that is pedagogically fitting for an autonomous band

school with a focus on cultural education. The training received from university education programs is training to follow mainstream pedagogical models, the same ones that have been used to subjugate Indigenous knowledge. “Somehow, we are meant to fit Indigenous material into that format”, Raven said. As it stands, there are more tailored programs for other specializations (like special education) than there are for Indigenous instruction. In this sense, Raven remarked, before teachers get to classrooms at the T School, the education here is already not autonomous.

Only teachers that have received training and credentials through these official avenues can be recognized as educators at the T School, due to provincial regulation. For the Kwakwaka’wakw peoples, however, it has always been important for older generations to play a central role in education. This reflects the belief that powerful knowledge is experiential, and that ‘old people’ have accumulated a great deal of valuable experience to be shared with younger members of the community. While teachers have old people in the communities lead sessions at the school, and host fieldtrips (e.g. visiting a smokehouse for embodied learning on the process of smoking fish) their inclusion is marginal. The old people, I was told by all four teachers, should be at the epicenter of education and should not be systemically excluded as legitimate educators through this imposed credential process.

A further problem is that, in light of the highly specialized nature of education at the T School, there are very few prepared teaching resources available. Shelly and Donna noted that this means double the workload of a teacher working in a mainstream institution – and that the time required to complete this extra work remains unpaid by the ministry of Education. The T School and others like it depend on the sheer dedication of the teachers.

Despite structural limitations, there is clearly a wise, subversive spirit at the school. I mentioned the problem I had with getting ethics approval to work directly with food during my fieldwork (an issue which I will detail and discuss in chapter IV). Since they quite regularly work hands on with food in the school, I asked if they confront these problems as well. They exchanged knowing glances and Kathy laughed the response: “who is going to come and stop us?”

Eva

Fig. 7 Eva holding a jug of her oolichan oil

Eva's name continued to come up in conversation. She is a natural medicine practitioner in Alert Bay, I had heard – someone with a great deal of knowledge on the plants growing in the region, the food culture and history of the island. If I wanted to meet her, calling Eva seemed like the only option. I was told that she wasn't really leaving the house much these days, so I wouldn't be bumping into her at the Shop Rite like other locals. Using the telephone number I had copied from the post office phone book across the street, I nervously called her with a rehearsed script. She quickly interjected to tell me that she

“promised the old people she wouldn’t share their secrets. Our medicine is the only thing the white people haven’t taken from us”. She asked me for my last name, paused after my response and added that she didn’t know anything that would be useful to me.

I expected that I would confront this response regularly, but the locals I met to this point had shared their knowledge with me with an almost unqualified trust. There was something very special about Eva, and I felt even this brief discussion had taught me something very useful about the nature of educational practice in this community. I could appreciate that for a culture constantly under the siege of colonizing influences, there is a need to be intentional about how cultural knowledge is shared with settler society. I certainly didn’t want to *take* anything from Eva or her traditions, but the academic tradition of ‘research’ does position me as someone who comes to extract information (which is explored in Chapter VI, drawing on the decolonial theory of Smith and Grade). I told her that I agreed with her, and that I was sorry for the bother. While hanging up the phone, I heard her voice coming through the receiver: “can you come here in an hour”, she asked. I went to her house almost an hour to the minute, not quite sure how that tense conversation turned so abruptly into an invitation.

Eva’s home was the large green one that seemed to keep watch of the Big House²³ sitting opposite her driveway. Her voice, through the door, invited us inside. Sitting in a well-worn armchair, and favouring one of her legs that seemed injured, she asked me (with some understandable hostility) to explain my interest in her work. I floundered inarticulately, still standing near the door. As our conversation continued, and I started to find both my words and a place on her couch, Eva’s skepticism softened and soon, we were looking at photos of her grandchildren on the wall.

Eva learned everything she knew about natural medicine, traditional diet and nutrition from her grandmother, mother, and a few other ‘old people’ with specialized knowledge, she said. This way of learning is common practice here – knowledge being deeply familial

²³ A (non-residential) Big House or Long House describes a structure used by Indigenous peoples throughout North America for special gatherings. This is the space where potlatches and other ceremonies such as weddings are traditionally held. They are often constructed out of cedar to have a large, open floor leaving a place for dancing, singing and for fires to be built.

is linked to a powerful sense of loyalty, responsibility and spirit. Developing a nuanced understanding of medicine, she says, is gained through patient observation of skilled elders, then trial and error. Plant identification, the ways in which they are collected, the specific uses of different plants, processing the plant into medicine, identifying illness and providing the correct remedy must be done without the aid of instructive texts as this knowledge remains to be largely unrecorded, she said. “The fact that it’s saved in our memory keeps it safe. We can choose how and when to share it”. This secures autonomy over traditional health practices, and a protection of the resources needed to make the medicine.

The reliance on memory means that if one gains natural medicine knowledge from old people, she cannot merely be a medicine woman, but also a teacher – this dual role is essential to the survival of that particular tradition and is a responsibility that the Kwakwaka’wakw nations tend to honour dutifully. The Western notion of the medical expert, she explains, suggests an authority or command over the elements used to heal. Understanding of natural medicine, however, requires one to develop a relationship of respect, and not mastery over, the natural world, which offers healing. Also, because it cannot be studied on paper, this traditional medicine must be learned in an embodied way. Medicine is centered around the body, and there is a methodological synchronicity to learning with and through the body, unlike Western learning which tends to neglect the body through discipline (i.e. sitting in desks and silently listening or reading). As is the case for most roles in her community, she expressed, the expert must always also be the teacher. Not everyone, though, can be trained for each role. “I select special young people to teach medicine. They need to carry that knowledge and pass it on to the right people in the next generation. It is not universal knowledge, it’s spiritual and sacred. The right person will have enough respect to protect it”.

Though traditional nutrition and natural eating is central to Eva’s lifestyle, she made it clear on several occasions during our first meeting that she didn’t cook. I figured this was due to the pain in her back and leg. So, Barb and I made plans to come back, cook in her kitchen and share the meal together. Before I left, Eva put a small bit of the Devil’s Club plant balm (which she made) on my elbows, after noticing they were irritated. When we

returned a few days later, she took my arm at the door, to see that the redness had gone away.



Fig. 8 Eva's devil's club

Before she practiced natural medicine full-time, Eva used to cook for a living, it turned out. She worked scene boats for years, preparing meals for the all-male crews of fishermen and deckhands. I chopped the vegetables for ratatouille and she told us a story about the last meal she cooked on the boats. It was the meal that made her almost entirely swear off cooking. She recalled putting a special effort into the meal on that particular night. Out of necessity, so many meals were made up of canned food, which she would open, warm and serve. But, this time she had some fresh ground beef, cheese and vegetables since the boat had just been replenished with groceries at the port. She made lasagna, which isn't a small task in a tiny galley, rocking to the ebb and flow of ocean conditions. "I served it and they complained. They wanted their canned food," she said. "So I threw it overboard, and I

didn't cook for the rest of that trip. I wasn't proud of the food I had to cook there. When we finally docked, I quit for good". Hearing about her role in the 2012 Truth and Reconciliation Trials²⁴ in Victoria, and even her reaction to current events in the news, I learned how telling a story this was. It seemed to reflect Eva's way: powerful, strong-willed and unapologetic.

While my cooking was underway, her niece came to the door with an armful of chopped branches. Eva put them on her patio table, explaining to us that it was Devil's Club: "...the plant I use to make that balm you tried," she told me. The Devil's Club came from Kingcome Inlet, and had been harvested by family members during a trip to catch and process oolichan. Because she cannot collect most her plants now, there is a steady flow of family and friends bringing supplies to her door. In turn, she is regularly gifting others with her medicine. In the course of the evening, Eva received three long-distance calls, all orders for her medicine. "Business works mostly through word of mouth", she said, "and when I give medicine to my family and community, it's not business".

As I chopped, stirred and fried our meal, I expressed my surprise that we couldn't find fish in the grocery stores, and she laughed. Each Indigenous family living in Alert Bay puts their names into the fisheries department at the band office, and when the fish is caught it is distributed equally amongst the families, beginning with the old people, she explained. "This is close to the traditional way, though nothing was put down on paper before". She paused and added: "But, I get most of my fish in other ways. Some people trade fish for my medicine, some people give it as a gift and my ex-husband is a fisherman, so he makes sure my freezer is always full." She went into the kitchen to get a glass cider jug nearly filled with grease. "This is a sign of wealth", she told us, holding it up. "It's both medicine and food for us".

Walrus (David)

²⁴ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission held and continue to hold Canada-wide trials to allow Indigenous peoples to voice experiences of abuse in residential schools. In addition to raising public awareness of the abuses, the trials will develop means for reconciliation and reparations to residential school survivors and their families, who have suffered.



Fig. 9 Hand written signs in Walrus' garden on Hanson Island

One afternoon while visiting the carving studio, Beau stopped himself in mid-sentence when he saw someone pass the studio, and asked us to follow him. Barb and I jumped across the little culvert of running water separating us from the two people being intercepted by Beau: a small, wizened man with an unkempt white beard and a heavy wool toque containing a few dreadlocks of hair is introduced as 'Walrus'. The younger man next to him, with long black hair in a top-knot is Walrus' son, Aki. Both wear oversized fisherman's rain slickers. People call Walrus the Lorax after the Dr. Seuss character not just because of his physical likeness, Beau says as part of his introduction, but because he works to save the trees on Hanson Island. Without much discussion at all, it was agreed that we should take a trip to see Hanson Island and Walrus's camp.

Walrus asks if we could be ready in an hour – "you would need to pack enough for two or three overnights, because they don't take the motorboat to Alert Bay often". Unprepared for the weather, we went directly to the Alert Bay thrift store to get waterproof jackets,

sweaters and wool socks. We filled the empty spaces of our bags with groceries and notebooks, and were at his slip in 45 minutes.

From Walrus' motorboat, moored in the Government dock, I fixed my gaze on a network of evergreens. Their breath was white and still in the cold. We loaded the groceries in between the seats, and Aki untied the rope tethering us all to the bull rail. As the distant woods grew nearer, the trees became more like freestanding statues - each carved with a hundred reaching arms, bearing a million coniferous fingers. Wind lifted off the Nimpkish River and sent lashes of freezing air over the edge of our skiff. At our traveling speed, small raindrops that would be unnoticed on land pelted our cheeks like hail. Walrus gently encouraged Aki to show us our current location on the map that was pressed under a thin pane of plastic on the dash, and soon after, we had reached Hanson Island.

Still a few meters from the shore, we reached over the boat to pull up writhing crab traps Aki had set days earlier, while a black bear down the coast over-tuned large rocks to find his own seafood, and watched us quizzically. We cast the females back into the water and kept the males for dinner. On our hike into Walrus' camp with our provisions, we passed a handmade wooden sign with the words "Earth Embassy" carved into the grain. This is where Walrus has lived since 1972, and he is still the only permanent resident on the whole island. When he came to Hanson, he set up a small tent in this spot, he tells us. Over the past forty years, that small tent gave way to a home. We were welcomed by ambers glowing merrily in a woodstove, which was positioned in the very center of Walrus' main cabin. Its warmth was an instant relief to our red and bloated fingers. The cabin is completely handmade to the extent that the wood making up the structure was hand timbered and not milled using machines but with host of carving tools and axes. It was simple, and beautiful in that simplicity. The single room held a desk engulfed in a library (with texts on subjects like Dendrology, Marine Biology and wilderness survival), a hammock where Aki slept, kitchen counters, storage and drying food hanging from the ceiling, and a small loft bed for Walrus. There was a great economy of space and everything was carefully curated on open shelves.

We all took cups of hot water with lemon and honey by the fire, then put our damp rain jackets on again to see the organic gardens that Walrus and Aki had planted there. I was struck by the creativity and mindfulness that has gone into cultivating this space. There's a proliferation of raised beds spilling down sloped pitches and up the sides of small hills and around tree trunks. The beds are full of varieties of kale, garlic, herbs and other edible plants I don't recognize, all peppered with the blue forget-me-nots and glossy Salal which grow by their own force of will. The fences, garden beds, green houses and walkways are made from the surrounding trees in the same handmade way as the cabin – showing the mark of physical work. It smells of the forests behind my childhood home there – a mix of damp moss, decomposing stumps, pines and other familiar vegetation. A small hand painted wooden sign in each bed gives the name of its plants in Kwak'wala, English and Latin. The gardens have a practical use, since the nearest grocery store is in Alert Bay (a 40 min boat ride away), but Walrus suggests that it is also necessary to ensure there is a continuation of native plant diversity. "What grew on its own once, before the industry and development and other environmental devastations, needs a little bit of help now," he explained when we got back inside.

Walrus sat quietly listening to his radio, writing notes and drawing up charts and only left his perch several hours after we arrived to pick greens for our supper. He returned to the cabin with ring cupped saxophony, chives, oriental greens, and kale. and began mixing a dressing of seeds, olive oil, lemon, vinegar and dried seaweed (which he and Aki harvested on the island). He moved slowly - his capable arthritic hands tearing the leaves purposefully. There was a mindfulness and a reflexivity to his food preparation that is rare and beautiful to watch.

We sat around the cabin with plates of crabmeat, rice cooked over the woodstove, and Walrus' salad. As we ate, he discussed his role as a co-founder of Green Peace International. Black and white photographs accompany his stories of the first the anti-whaling initiatives he lead on a ship called "James Bay". The pictures depict a young, upright man with a head full of dark hair, and a huge thick moustache (the reason for his name, Walrus), holding up protest signs. His work now, though, is protecting the old forests on Hanson Island from being logged. These forests are full of Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs), which is an archeological term for trees which have been strategically

harvested by Indigenous peoples to serve a range of purposes: making clothes, tools, hats, jewelry and shelter, for instance. These are important historical records of the Indigenous peoples, that enable land claims Walrus tell us. More than that, though, the CMTs reflect a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw relationship to the natural world. In Walrus' mind those trees reflect one of the most important teachings: take only what is needed with gratitude for them, and in doing so, allow nature to recover and be sustained. He will stay in Earth Embassy, he says, as "a guardian of the trees", because they are the guardians of this vital knowledge.

Concluding Thoughts

Despite reading critical pedagogy, tenants of Radical Change, and deschooling for some time now, visiting Alert Bay was the first time I personally encountered a community where these ideas are actively practiced not as an educational experiment, but for the community's own cultural, spiritual and physical survival.

'Radical' praxis (including radical pedagogy) is often imagined as a "new [...] departure" from old (failed) practices to new (improved) and unconventional ones (Dresang, 1999, p.4). But, radical education or anti-colonial pedagogy (particularly in Alert Bay) cannot be described by this Kantian notion of linear progress. Instead, the transformative spirit of praxis in Alert Bay often lies in reclaiming the denigrated, dismissed, stolen, and appropriated knowledge. Illich, Freire, and Giroux seem to agree that radical education is about stripping away the institutional barriers that problematically separate communities from important knowledge. This pedagogy takes on the *other* notion of radical which Dresang presents: "extremely different from commonly existing views" (p. 4) – and in the case of Alert Bay, pedagogy must respond to the commonly existing views from colonial mindsets. The work of each person introduced in this chapter considers ways to support this subjugated knowledge through creative and critical avenues.

This support, of course, is vital in Alert Bay which still bears the scar of one of Canada's largest and longest standing residential schools – a school that had the explicit goal of extinguishing Kwakwaka'wakw ways of knowing. But, this process of reclaiming subjugated knowledges is a serious challenge. The people I had the chance to speak with

acknowledge that reclaiming traditional practices is an incredibly complicated process that involves an ongoing (re)evaluation of what is meant by ‘traditional’ and ‘Kwakwaka’wakw Culture’ (this is also reflected by Smith’s decolonial work, discussed in Chapter VI) (Smith, 2012). This evaluative practice is necessary because it recognizes that cultures are not static – they undergo internal change (refining technologies, re-inventing language, shifting ideologically, depleting and changing resources, growing or decreasing in population and so on). These new facets of life become woven into old practices giving new textures to tradition. In this sense, it is traditional to change. But, cultures under seizure of aggressive colonialism - like the Kwakwaka’wakw’ peoples – confront not only these natural shifts and changes but also imposed, external changes. In communities like Alert Bay, as in many others, it is never possible to return to traditions exactly as they were practiced by one’s ancestors due to both of these forms of change. There is a need to reconcile ‘the traditional’ with ‘the modern’: radical pedagogy, and radical picturebooks must operate within this space to reflect cultural complexity. As I will explore in following chapters, I hold that this reconciliation of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ often requires intercultural learning.

Engaging with theoretical work on critical pedagogy in the following chapter will allow me to make useful connections with the exchanges I have presented here. This conversation between theory and practice will continue to unfold the way in which I am constructing an anti-colonial pedagogical for picturebooks, or: thinking about picturebooks as transformative texts.

Chapter III -

Theoretical Frameworks: Unpacking critical pedagogy

There is no neutral or natural place in teaching.

–Derrida, 2002, p. 69.

If pedagogy is explained as the study of approaches or strategies that make up a teaching process, critical pedagogy is then a body of thought and praxis aimed at examining the implications and power relations at play in this process, to highlight the complexities therein and advance more equitable, empowering possibilities for education (Darder, Baltodano, Torres, 2008). I have opened with this articulation by Derrida, as it expresses what seems to be a basic and central starting point for critical pedagogy: that education is not just a set of practices to encourage the development of students, but that these practices and the whole educational process is value-laden.

There are many divergent constructions or understandings of critical pedagogy. Giroux suggests that “rather than seeing critical pedagogy as one narrative, it has to be seen as a panorama of narratives” (Giroux, 2006a, p.12). Amongst this panorama, the sense that education lacks neutrality, and that this calls for examination, is a unifying concept in this body of thought. The type of critical examination varies according to the particular power dynamic which is being problematized (e.g. a class analysis might consider the disproportionate resources in different socio-economic areas; ways in which school structures mimic a conventional workplace; or how educational processes driven by credentials commodifies knowledge and reflects a capitalist ethos, and so on) (Illich, 1995, p. 1). Drawing on the works of Freire, Illich, hooks, and Giroux, I suggest that some general lines of inquiry for critical pedagogy include: what qualifies as or what is privileged as knowledge; what is excluded from ‘knowledge’ (or, subjugated knowledge); who teaches and how is this teaching role acquired; how is knowledge conveyed through the teaching process (e.g. drills, dialogue, practice); does the approach to education aid in the empowerment of students, does the content of lessons reflect the lived realities of students and their specific contexts, what is the power relation between student and teacher and what is the setting, structure and strictures of the teaching-learning environment?

Critical pedagogy tends to re-evaluate conventional answers to these questions. A central goal is to find ways of valuing “subjugated knowledge²⁵” - a term Foucault employs in *Discipline and Punish, Power/Knowledge, Society Must Be Defended* and other works, to describe ways of knowing that have become systematically excluded (Foucault, 1980, p.82).

I have presented the exchanges and conversations I had in Alert Bay before beginning this chapter as a way of structurally and methodologically privileging contextual wisdom (since these conversations reflect aggressively subjugated knowledge). I have found in my previous Political Science training and research that theory can often colonize understandings of practice. Theoretical understandings often become the frame of reference that experiences ‘on the ground’ must fit within – and often one looks for scenarios to confirm their already formed set of assumption or conclusions. Having the food workshops I planned fall through (on both the level of the university ethics level [discussed in Chapter IV] and several practical and cultural levels) highlighted the need to learn through the self-representations of locals through Participatory Action Research before applying particular types of analytical tools. This shift was an useful lesson in pedagogy for me.

I am now introducing theoretical frameworks to create another, differently textured conversation, in which theory can speak to and with the Kwakwaka’wakw, Métis and other local thinkers and practitioners I engaged with in Alert Bay. It is my hope that making space for both contextual and theoretical perspectives will elucidate the basis for the pedagogy for anti-colonial picturebooks that I propose.

²⁵ In *Power/Knowledge* and *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault explores ‘subjugated knowledge’ and akin to Illich, suggests that this disavowal of knowledge that falls outside of an enlightenment (rationalist) mode, operates as a way to discipline a public and concentrate power. He states: "When I say 'subjugated knowledges' I mean two things. On the one hand, I am referring to historical contents that have been buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systemizations. [In other words, I am referring to] blocks of historical knowledges that were present in the functional and systematic ensembles, but which were masked, and the critique was able to reveal their existence by using, obviously enough, the tools of scholarship. Second, when I say 'subjugated knowledges' I am also referring to a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as...insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity" (Foucault, 2003, p.7).

In particular, this chapter engages with Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society* (1995), Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000), bell hook's *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) and *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (2003), and a collection of Henry Giroux's from *The Giroux Reader* (2006a).

Illich: Deschooling in an Indigenous context

Humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination.

-Foucault, 1984, p. 85

Illich's work *Deschooling Society* (1995) was one of the first critiques I read on the subject of institutional education or pedagogy. What took hold of me immediately, was his assertion that institutionalizing learning requires a 'schooling out' of critical and creative thought: "The pupil is thereby 'schooled' to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is 'schooled' to accept service in place of value" (p. 1). With this type of disciplined thinking employed by schools, the emphasis is on discipline and not on thinking, he insists. This reflected my own experience in school (particularly grade school), and what I believe often unfolds in picturebooks for children (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 55), and the pedagogy in which these texts are couched. This schooling out of critical and creative thinking, and exclusion of children from social discourse which he highlights, was a central catalyst for my interest in education, picturebooks as transformative texts and therefore my investment in this project as a whole.

Illich suggests that this institutionalization has resulted in a serious dependency, or an outsourcing of knowledge to the expert:

Rich and poor alike depend on schools and hospitals, which guide their lives, form their worldview, and define for them what is legitimate and what is not. Both view doctoring oneself as irresponsible, learning on one's own as unreliable, and community organization, when not paid for by those in authority, as a form of aggression or subversion (Illich, 1995, p. 2).

This connection is made by Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, *The Birth of the Clinic* and other texts, but Illich's more pointed focus on schools enables him to fully consider children more closely (a group largely overlooked in critical works like Foucault's). The

expert figure, Illich notes, positions the masses - but in particular children - as disenfranchised, passive and uninformed figures in the learning scenario. Experts control knowledge production, as they decide what valid and legitimate knowledge is, and how it is acquired and how it is sanctioned. He writes: "Experts and an expert culture always call for more experts. Experts also have a tendency to cartelize themselves by creating 'institutional barricades'" (p. 10). So, a dependency develops and as it does, the student's lack of autonomy deepens.

Not only does this expert culture seek to replace folk, experiential, intuitive and all non-institutional forms of knowing, it frames these other knowledge systems as illegitimate and unreliable (Illich, 1995, p. 16). These ways of knowing and those who rely on them to understand the world become actively oppressed, which connects to the experiences of colonial education articulated in the previous chapter. So, despite his explicit focus on education, Illich is concerned with a pervasive 'schooling' logic in all institutions: "Everywhere not only education but society as a whole needs Deschooling" (Illich, p. 1). He continues: "This process [of institutionalization] undermines people - it diminishes their confidence in themselves, and in their capacity to solve problems... It kills convivial relationships. Finally it colonizes life like a parasite or a cancer that kills creativity" (p. 10).

This 'outsourcing' of knowledge has certainly been the experience of many Indigenous peoples in Alert Bay with mainstream education. Eva discussed the ways in which settlers attempted to strip traditional wisdom regarding health and medicine away from the first peoples by setting up hospitals, prohibiting home births and pathologizing their bodies. Residential schools stripped communities of their right to teach, placing expert educators in the role that old people and other community members held. Eventually these teaching experts themselves required ministry of education experts to write curricula, and experts to allocate government funding, and experts to build the schools, and experts to give teachers their expert credentials. Each stage which deepened this system of expertise sought to take legitimacy away from traditional practices, and strip the culture. In his personal life, Illich worked in South America, starting in Puerto Rico, and he eventually set up a language and intercultural research center in Mexico for North American missionaries (Gajardo, 2000, p. 1). With a concern for Indigenous cultures and protecting their knowledge systems, he

emphasized that the missionary's place is one of visitor – not an authority (ibid). The application of his deschooling theories to my fieldwork in Alert Bay and to developing a pedagogy for anti-colonial picturebooks is therefore a natural one.

Also consistent with teachings from Alert Bay pedagogues is Illich's challenge of Western constructions of childhood. The exclusion of children from political discourse, which I found very problematic (and generally untheorized) throughout my previous graduate studies in political science, is powerfully critiqued in his work. He remarks: "we have grown accustomed to children. We have decided that they should go to school, do as they are told, and have neither income nor families of their own. We expect them to know their place and behave like children" (p. 26). He asserts that this construction of the child is as unnatural and non-neutral (to once again use Derrida's words) as the pedagogy we apply to them – a construction which does a disservice to children: "Growing up through childhood means being condemned to a process of in-human conflict between self-awareness and the role imposed by a society" (p. 27).

Illich draws on Phillipe Aries' *Centuries of Childhood* to make the connection between the historical-cultural construction of childhood in the West (framing children as apolitical or prepolitical beings separate from adult society) and its direct impact on approaches to education. "Only by segregating human beings in the category of childhood," Illich argues, "could we ever get them to submit to the authority of a schoolteacher" (p. 28). When the child is viewed as a *Tabula Rasa* or blank slate as Rousseau recommends, the child is not expected to think or criticize, or dialogue in a learning environment (school) and instead she is treated as a receptacle for knowledge (Lock 1975, p. 14; Rousseau, 1964, 1). What is classified as age-appropriate knowledge in this system is sanitized of social conflict, discussions of privilege and inequality, or forms of violence and filled with 'information' often learned through rote memorization (Illich, 1995; Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 113). This popularized Western conception of the child is a condition of possibility for mainstream schools, and their disciplinary structures.

This 'blank slate' vision of the child partly explains why discussions of colonialism often escape official educational spaces in Canada. As a student of provincially-run public

schools, my introduction to Indigenous studies at the primary level involved mimicking first people's artwork. We made Inuit prints by drawing our renditions of Inuit iconography (copied from a few books found in the library) into Styrofoam sheets. We rolled acrylic paint over top and squished the brittle Styrofoam against white printer paper. There was a disconnect from learning about the people who made this art, what the shapes and forms meant, the significance of the traditional materials used to make such prints, and how the art has often been stolen from villages and treated like a mere curiosity by settler communities or used for commercial purposes. There was no consideration of the sense that, in light of this history, practicing the traditional art works is now not just about technique and finished product for Inuit communities, but is a sacred and emancipatory act. As a young person without any of this critical background, though, our disconnected mimicking lead me to believe that in Canada, Indigenous people were widely-respected and honoured – and that we were honouring them through our imitation. You would only take the time to copy something valuable and valued, I thought.

This education was institutionalized cultural appropriation, which masqueraded as real learning. Busying students with this type of art allowed a distraction from substantive, critical discussion with kids. The year before graduating high school was the first I heard (in a school setting) about the existence of residential schools, or the small pox epidemics planned by settler communities, or potlatch bans. It was not until university that I learned of eugenics practices or forced sterilization of Indigenous peoples in Canada. It was necessary for me and my peers to deschool our understanding of Indigenous relations in Canada from the pretty Styrofoam visions the schools provide to children in this country. I can only assume that those who continue to unthoughtfully appropriate Indigenous culture (e.g. the unauthorized use of Cowichan First Nations knitting patterns for Vancouver's 2010 winter Olympic merchandise) and commit other forms of violence, do this damage because they still operate under this schooled way of thinking about Canada. This partly goes to explain my personal investments in thinking critically about Canada-Aboriginal relations, and my interest in opening these critical discussions up to children outside of the school through picturebooks.

It was useful to spend time in a community with different understandings of childhood than the ones Illich identifies and critiques, and to see what this means for pedagogy. Spending

time in Alert Bay was a way to contextualize Illich's work, and in doing so understand it in a more meaningful way. The apolitical and blank slate child is in sharp contrast to a Namgis philosophy of childhood. Beau explained that Indigenous peoples of Alert Bay and the surrounding Indigenous communities of North West Coast generally understand the natural world and its history as cyclical: when a child is born, she is not void of experience, wisdom or individual qualities; she is a continuation of the ancestors that came before her (and are part of her), he explained. The child has traits from different figures in the spirit world (e.g. raven, or salmon). As a part of the natural and spiritual world, she inherits its intelligence, she builds on this throughout her life and will find ways to honour, communicate and represent this knowledge through becoming adept at important skills like storytelling, dance, song, art, cooking, fishing, gathering, or natural medicine.

Traditionally, children in Alert Bay are treated as valued contributors to the community, and are therefore given serious tasks. Eva stressed that the child is a deeply respected and a prioritized figure in her society, which reflected by the Kwak'wala words *Wis* for 'precious boy' and *Gun* for 'precious girl'. This integration and this valuing is evidenced in the stories that Beau tells children, which are the same ones he tells adults. These stories involve complicated spiritual lessons, emotional conflict, violence, alienation, death, and unresolved endings. It is widely understood that it is important for young people to be involved in this storytelling practice, and there is rarely if ever a sense that they are too young to think about the content. The stories are inherited, and in this sense, each member of the community has a right to them.

Traditional pedagogical practice in Alert Bay reflected what Illich refers to as Learning Webs (an open sourced form of learning) as opposed to what he calls the Learning Funnels of mainstream institutions (Illich, 1995, p. 72). According to Kwakwaka'wakw tradition, as described to me by some members of the Kwakwaka'wakw nations, education is meant to operate in and through deeply embodied daily practice. "Most learning happens casually, and even most intentional learning is not the result of programmed instruction" (Illich, p. 18). As Eva highlighted, learning medicine is done through patient observation, trial and error. It is from seeing, touching, and smelling plants in the environment from which they are gathered that young people learn natural medicine. Knowledge is propelled by actively passing it on to others in a mentorship fashion, with the same inherent respect for the

experience of the teacher (as in Western notions of mentorship) but without the western sense of master/mastery over the topic and the student.

Illich advocates for this very embodied, experiential knowledge:

Education in the exploratory and creative use of skills [...] cannot rely on drills. Education can be the outcome of instruction, though instruction of a kind fundamentally opposed to drill. It relies on the relationship between partners who already have some of the keys which give access to memories stored in and by the community. It relies on the critical intent of all those who use memories creatively. It relies on the surprise of the unexpected question, which opens new doors to the inquirer and his partner (p. 25).

The value of elders in education within Kwakwaka'wakw nations does not come from an intrinsic hierarchy, but the sense that through experience there is a strengthened connection to memory which young people have the honour of learning and holding until they themselves pass it along to the following generations. It is important to note that these understandings of Kwakwaka'wakw pedagogy are not universal among its peoples (many interpretations and practices exist) but are the understandings of those people that met and talked with me.

Another helpful concept central to Illich's notion of deschooling is *conviviality*, which includes skill exchange. Conviviality is characterized by a non-institutional creative intercourse between free but interdependent people (each with valued skills or contributions) (p. 24). For instance, Randy expressed how his knife making improved when he learned how to carve. In this sense, convivial pedagogy works along a feedback loop. The one must shift from the 'teacher' role to the 'student' role within this convivial skills exchange: Randy is a teacher of knife forging and crafting, and student of carving in Alert Bay, but in the context of his home town, he may be a student of knife forging and a teacher of Namgis carving. I feel this embodies the root meaning of the word convivial: an act with life or liveliness. This is in contrast with "the conditioned response of persons to the demands made upon them by others, and by a man-made environment" (ibid). Illich states: "Opportunities for skill-learning can be vastly multiplied if we open the "market." This depends on matching the right teacher with the right student when [s]he is highly motivated in an intelligent program, without the constraint of curriculum" (p. 22).

Illich suggests that one of the vital principles for educational reform is “the return of initiative and accountability for learning to the learner or [the learner’s] most immediate tutor” (p. 24). Otherwise put, learning is driven by personal desire, need and energy to learn (not discipline and desire for credentials) and it is necessary to have autonomy (responsibility) in the learning and teaching process.



Fig. 10: Male Students at St Michael's Residential School

Institutional constraints often mean that “those using skills which are in demand and do require a human teacher are discouraged from sharing these skills with others. This is done either by teachers who monopolize the licenses or by unions which protect their trade interests,” and this is exemplified by the struggles at the T School (p. 21). The Ministry of Education only officially permits certified teachers to hold teaching positions, so uncertified old people cannot take on official roles as educators even in an ‘autonomous’ school: they are rendered unpaid ‘guest speakers’. Expertise in schools is not based on practice, but university qualification. Illich insists that: “most teachers of arts and trades are less skillful, less inventive, and less communicative than the best craftsmen and tradesmen” (p. 22). The credential process that teachers must undergo to teach at this autonomous band school is not only a methodologically unfit way to earn teaching

privileges in Namgis society, but the content and form is also not reflective of Namgis ways, as the T School teachers identified.

Deschooling in communities that have lived through residential schools, like Alert Bay, is a necessity for cultural survival. Since settler society made school compulsory, people have been “schooled to believe that the self-taught individual is to be discriminated against; that learning and the growth of cognitive capacity, require a process of consumption of services presented in an industrial, a planned, a professional form [...] that learning is a thing rather than an activity [-] a thing that can be amassed and measured, the possession of which is a measure of the productivity of the individual within the society” (p. 29). That logic justified (from the colonial perspective) the implementation of St. Michael’s Residential school. While even the most traditional Indigenous pedagogues I met see that some form of school has a place in their modern ‘integrated’ context (where intercultural communication and learning is needed), they emphasize mainstream curricula must not be viewed as subordinate to traditional learning.

So the T School, and others like it, are now tasked with shedding some of the institutional structures imposed through an ongoing colonial process. They are, in no uncertain terms, engaged in a form of deschooling. Limitations imposed by provincial Ministry of Education mean that a complete deschooling (abolishing the school and replacing with alternative structures like learning webs) is not, at this time, an option: change presently takes the form of de- and then re-schooling (replacing the current European model with a new hybrid model). I feel the physical T School itself represents this tension: a yellow bus is parked outside, and the structure is built according to safety codes set by the governing bodies that be, but the hallways are not narrow and quiet – the classrooms not angling its ‘student body’ to the teacher or ‘head of the class’. The space is formed like a big house out of local-cedar, and is full of open spaces meant for meeting, singing, discussing, drawing, or napping. It represents the limits and possibilities for learning in a school.



Fig. 11: T'lisalagi'lakw building (façade)



Fig. 12: T'lisalagi'lakw classroom

Critiques of *Deschooling Society* charge Illich with a lack of academic rigor or grounding for his positions: “Ivan Illich’s writings were founded essentially on intuition, without any appreciable reference to the results of socio-educational or learning research. His criticism evolves in a theoretical vacuum” (Gajardo, 1994, p. 719). I would suggest, though, that relying on intuition or experience is a methodologically sound way to approach his content. The concept of ‘intuition’ and ‘reason’, it can be argued, are both intangible and vague concepts, however this has not prevented the absolute privileging of reason in academia (in

the spirit of Enlightenment traditions). Illich exemplifies what I believe is an admirable refusal to rely on an ‘expert’ to govern his work. Intuition is one such subjugated knowledge that Illich hopes to revive through a de-institutionalized approach to education.

I feel, however, that the extremity of Illich’s argument to abolish schools may not be necessary. Schools and other schooled forms of education (like conventional children’s literature) hold the potential to act as an oppressive *or* emancipatory mechanisms, depending on how they operate. Deschooling (in the sense of challenging authority, power dynamics, conventional knowledge and so on) through critical pedagogy can function within or through schools in powerful ways, as the following discussion of Giroux and hooks will illuminate. I have suggested that the T School is a tangible example of using a school structure creatively and critically, as are the open school structures (which Flora notes in Chapter II) and other alternative models such as Steiner (or Waldorf) Schools and Montessori schools. Further, my experience in school has shown that sometimes a subversive teacher working within the most restrictive institutions can still create emancipatory opportunities and spaces for her students.

Freire and Alert Bay: Pedagogy of the resilient

Freire’s work, in particular *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, helps to develop a strong pedagogy for transformative, anti-colonial learning in a context like Alert Bay. Though this text was published a year prior to *Deschooling Society*, in 1970, I have organized these theorists in a chronology which reflects the path that my reading on pedagogy has taken me. For instance, having encountered Illich before Freire, I believe that I read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, at least to some extent, in relation to Illich and notions of deschooling. Freire’s writing is informed by the political climate of Brazil in the 1960’s, from which he lived and worked. He was concerned with the poverty, illiteracy and general disenfranchisement of the lower classes, and held education or leadership positions with his church as well as other teaching positions, including Professor of History and Philosophy of Education at the University of Recife, in which he worked towards improving these social conditions (Bently, 1999; Freire Institute [www.freire.org]). While put in exile for his political involvement, he continued to work in Chile and then Geneva (through World Council of Churches) with underprivileged and dispossessed communities

(ibid). Though I am applying his work to a very different time and place, the spirit and content of his work continues to have much relevance today for communities (like Alert Bay) experiencing oppression.

Freire states: “To restore the humanity of both [oppressed and oppressor], the *oppressed* must struggle to change their situation but must not become oppressors in the process” (Freire 2000, p. 44). For Freire, then, critical pedagogy is the intentional process of empowering people to take ownership of their knowledge, bodies, labour and so on without relying on the same teaching tools that have enabled their oppression. Freire is suggested to have put pedagogy at the heart of how to negotiate questions of agency, power, and politics. Within this framework of emancipatory pedagogy, the content of any lesson must identify structures that oppress, and explore opportunities for change. The style in which this is taught must reflect the content: not a top-down structure, but a co-operative and participatory one. An approach to teaching and the learning environment itself must structurally reflect a critique of authority, in other words. Action and dialogue can be facilitated by caring pedagogues but must ultimately come from the oppressed community, he suggests (ibid).

Like Illich, Freire critiques the dominant pedagogical approaches of the West, which assert knowledge upon passive learners (a critique which, many years later, is still relevant). In Freire’s terms, this is a “banking model” of education in which “students [as objects] memorize the narrated content and become *receptacles* that teachers *fill* rather than engage” (p. 71-72). Therefore education becomes an act of depositing information, which ensures that the oppressed are incorporated into a suitable social order (Illich, 1995). While children are not passive learners when they enter school, they are disciplined into this role, and rewarded for performing it. Akin to Illich, Freire suggests, “in the name of the ‘preservation of culture and knowledge’ we have a system which achieves neither true knowledge nor true culture” (Freire, 2000, p. 80). This disempowering way of organizing people (and in particular young people), which threatens important bodies of knowledge, has been used as a powerful colonizing tool to strip away culture and assimilate many peoples.

The two key aspects of Freire's theory that are particularly useful when put into conversation with the Alert Bay context and formulating an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks, are his notions of *problem posing* and *dialogue* as alternatives to banking education methods.

Freire's problem-posing method that involves introducing topics or problems to students who take the lead on re-examining the problem and presenting their own thoughts, are ways through which "people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which and in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (p. 64). Teachers engage alongside the students to contribute but not to steer the discussion. This exercise is vital for identifying oppressive structures or practices, then creatively and co-operatively negotiating ways through them. Knowledge is formulated through discourse between students and teachers, who each articulate or represent their experience. "For the dialogical, problem-posing teacher-student", Freire writes, "the program content of education is neither a gift nor an imposition--bits of information to be deposited in the students--but rather the organized, systematized, and developed 're-presentation' to the individuals of the things about which they want to know more" (p. 74).

Dialogue is of course central to this problem-posing process. He suggests that "transformation... must be conducted through utilizing dialogue between the oppressed and those who support them in solidarity" (Freire, 2000, p. 87). Transformative dialogue must take place between people who display mutual respect, with voices that are being valued and for this reason; Freire insists that critical pedagogy must "begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students" (p. 53).

In order to stimulate this meaningful dialogue, teachers must introduce what he calls "generative themes" (p. 87). These are themes that generate dialogue because they reflect the lived realities of students, which they have the interest, language and grounding to speak to in a meaningful and constructive way. Freire observes "many political and educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own

personal views of reality” (p. 94). People come to “feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly”, so dialogue becomes an empowering practice (p. 124). Leaders and educators need to employ the language of the oppressed, he says, so that there are open spaces for dialogue with them to learn *from* these communities. When combined, reflection and action create a radical interaction and can be considered “true words”. He holds that, “to speak true words is to transform the world” (p. 87). In this sense, Freire is noted for his revitalization of the relationship between theory and practice in the struggle for social justice.

I believe this emphasis on problem-posing and dialogue must be central to a pedagogy for anti-colonial picturebooks and informed my approach to fieldwork in Alert Bay (discussed in detail in the following chapter). Investigators, Freire maintains, should hold the role of sympathetic observer while cultivating an understanding of the participants – and intentions of the research must disclose the intentions of their work.

Freire insists that oppressed communities must co-operatively learn new strategies to overcome oppression that is engrained and internalized by oppressed and oppressor. Before visiting Alert Bay, it was difficult to appreciate the extent to which this ‘internalization’ of the oppressors’ power structures poses a challenge to communities. It seemed to me, reading from an abstracted position, that the intuitive response of oppressed communities would be railing against, not reproducing oppressive structures. My exchanges with locals in Alert Bay, though, highlighted greater complexity. Beau’s work as a Namgis artist and carver is an example of this problem Freire identifies. This carving work is emancipatory in many ways: Beau does not rely on a Western type of credential process for qualification, he has learned and teaches in a non-institutional way, he is connected to and keeps alive his peoples cultural identity through his art, he does not have an employer. However, in order to make a wage, he needs to sell his work to people outside of his community. This often means selling to expensive urban galleries that take a percentage of the earnings and who hang the masks, bowls, and paddles on stark white walls in the same way that museums have presented them: disconnected from their purpose. His carvings are not art objects to be preserved, they are masks meant to be danced with, bowls meant to be eaten from, paddles meant to be pushed in the sea – their wood and paint meant to fade, break, rot and burn. Selling his work in this way, he suggested, can be difficult, but is necessary.

Freire's aim for a clean break from all oppressive influences seems to overlook some practical dictates of daily life, for instance the dictates of financial need and other practical obstacles. This may also overlook the potential to take an oppressive structure and reclaim it. A very tangible example of this reclaiming was the way in which Beau, Randy and other carvers that I met used the abandoned site of the residential school as a site for traditional Namgis carving. Where a complete resistance is not always (or, perhaps ever) possible, these acts constitute real and important resistance nonetheless.

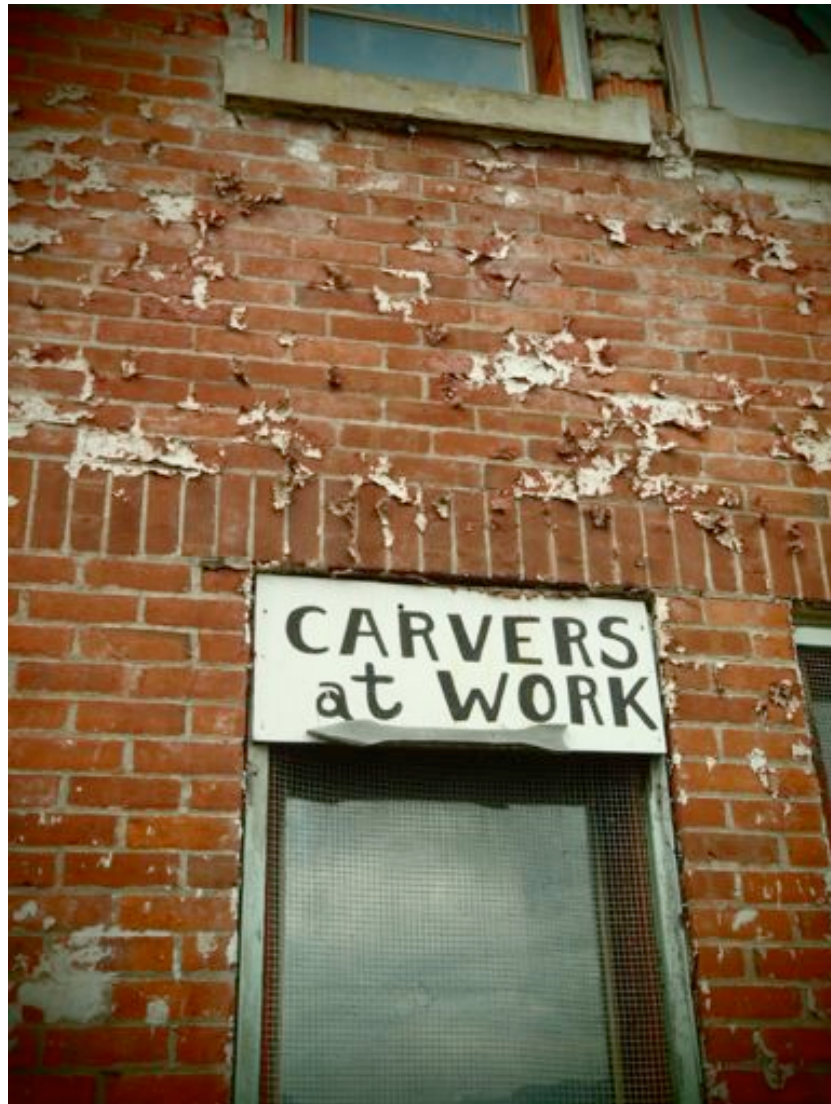


Fig 13: Namgis carving studio in reclaimed St. Michael's building

bell hooks: Engaged pedagogy

Not only has bell hooks embraced the dialogical and emancipatory potentials of the picturebook, as I highlighted in Chapter I, she also offers very focused thinking on critical

pedagogy. Akin to the previous scholars, bell hooks' primary pedagogical focus is how critical pedagogy can function as an emancipatory force to address and overcome oppression, and in particular she focuses on oppression on the grounds of race and gender. She emphasizes that pedagogy must be seen as an ever-changing set of practices, that are constantly under review and reinvented (bell hooks, 1994). She also identifies, critiques and considers alternatives to the colonial nature of education. She thinks deeply about method and, perhaps more than the other thinkers I engage with in this chapter, her writing reflects her method very clearly. For instance: her formulation of pedagogy focuses on the import of experiential knowledge and anti-hierarchical approaches to teaching, and this is reflected by her weaving of personal anecdotes regarding her encounters with education and oppression, and using accessible language, tone and style in her writing. I feel that this ability to synchronize method with form and content is a defining quality of powerful critical pedagogy. bell hooks' notion of 'Engaged Pedagogy', and its emphasis on the joy of learning, is particularly useful to a pedagogy for anti-colonial picturebooks, as picturebooks are a playful medium, engaging multiple senses to excite readers (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008).

hooks' own experiences in school emphasized to her that rigid classroom practices dampen the learner's spirits, and distract from the joy of learning, and that powerful learning happens when excitement and pleasure are made central to the learning process/environment: "to be changed by ideas was pure pleasure", she recounts from her early learning experiences. (p. 3). She insists that students become excited about learning when they are given freedom in the learning process (p. 15). The teacher's role is to facilitate this interest or excitement by creating an encouraging environment in which students can articulate their thinking. To foster this excitement, the teacher must involve the student in a co-operative, non-hierarchical manner: "the classroom is a place that is life-sustaining and mind-expanding, a place of liberating mutuality where teacher and student together work in partnership" (hooks, 2003, p. xv).

Excitement is not separate from the intellectual pursuits of an engaged pedagogy, but built into the ways the class is structured. Excitement is stimulated and freedom is generated when students *see* how information or knowledge can transform their lives (hooks, 1994, p.15). Information is not just conveyed to students for accumulation, but for the knowledge

to be used directly. hooks writes, "Our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students" (p. 14).

Engaged pedagogy is education that does not happen in a way that is disconnected from everyday or 'real' life. Instead it is meant to be a way of life or a way of being in the world. That is: engaged pedagogy is tied not simply to teaching methods and curricular targets, but to a particular cosmology and ontology: it marries the "will to know with the will to become" (p. 19). With learning integrated into daily practice in this way, public and private lives of teachers and students become relevant in the classroom to forge meaningful connection between them and to close the gap of authority.

hooks' particular emphasis on the ways in which literacy is essential to transformative learning, is also useful in constructing a critical pedagogy of picturebooks. She claims that a lack of reading, writing and critical skills excludes people from the political sphere and job opportunities, and can stand in the way of adopting "critical consciousness", a term she borrows from Freire (2000). Critical engagement through reading, she insists, needs to be available to every group, age and ability – hence her interest in picturebook writing. Critical consciousness can be described as an acute awareness of inequalities and injustice, leading people to conduct themselves in a mindful, intentional and proactive manner (through dialogue and action) to address forms of oppression (ibid).

A crucial part of the critical consciousness involves a "decolonization of ways of knowing" (hooks, 1994, p. 3). Schooling, she laments, tends to be the site where students are conditioned or indoctrinated to support "imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (ibid). It is, therefore, easy to see the relevance of hooks' work to this pedagogy this thesis is offering. Schools should function as places where students think critically, and challenge prevailing ideologies. What is perhaps most heartening about hooks' writing is the assertion that school holds both oppressive and emancipatory possibilities (hooks, 1994, p. 207). This emphasizes the need for thoughtful, critical pedagogy, so that the emancipatory possibilities may outshine the oppressive ones.

Even when the form and concept of the school has its roots in colonialism, as in Alert Bay, spaces like the T School exemplify what hooks and others identify as reclaiming which are put into motion by “communities of resistance”:

Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community[...] To build community requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination (hooks, 2003, p. 197).

While literacy is certainly an empowering force, and needs to be made central to critical pedagogy, I would suggest that hooks’ understanding of literacy is too narrow. In *Teaching to Transgress* and *Teaching Community: a Pedagogy of Hope*, she refers specifically to the ways in which reading and writing give way to critical consciousness and expands this literacy to some degree when she speaks about the way one engages with media and technology, but she surprisingly glosses over the power of visual literacy and the power of the image in her formulation of literacy. hooks certainly believes in the importance and transformative nature of images (as she works within the picturebook form and has written on the emancipatory functions of art for the black community [in *Art on my mind: Visual Politics*, 1995]). She writes: “We need to put aesthetics on the agenda. We need to theorize the meaning of beauty in our lives so that we can educate for critical consciousness, talking through the issues: how we acquire and spend money, how we feel about beauty, what the place of beauty is in our lives when we lack material privilege and even basic resources for living, the meaning and significance of luxury, and the politics of envy” (hooks, 1995, p. 124). However, I have not encountered writing in which she refers to engaging with the visual as form of literacy.

The conventional form of literacy she privileges is vitally important and can be used in a myriad of transgressive ways, but it is also the form of literacy that settlers and colonizers in Alert Bay and elsewhere, imposed on Indigenous communities as a tool of assimilation and way of delegitimizing oral history or story telling, visual art (and by that token the artistic expression of song, and dance) as important modes of communicating information. The imposition of this type of literacy in Canada upon first peoples has had the effect of

nearly extinguishing many languages²⁶. Martin Bauers, who does work on social representations and narrative interviews suggests that “The lexicon of a social group constitutes its perspective of the world” (Bauer, 1996, p. 3). In this sense, an engaged pedagogy in contexts like Alert Bay must be mindful of a group’s preferred forms of representation and must not present a Western form of literacy as the only legitimate way to communicate ideas. In the same way that the colonial structure of the school can be reworked so that it holds transformative potential, hooks intends for written language to be reworked and reclaimed through critical practice. However, I hold that hooks not only fails to acknowledge this hierarchy of the written word over the image or spoken word in her promotion of critical literacy, she (perhaps unintentionally) perpetuates it. Giroux’s (2006) articulation of multi-literacy (below) offers an alternative: he suggests moving beyond conventional literacy and recognizing other forms is a way of deconstructing hierarchies and honouring diversity. In this sense, weaving visual methodologies with critical pedagogies may offer a more ethical, intercultural approach (Phipps, 2013). Picturebooks, I would add, are an ideal space to bring this together.

Beau speaks openly about the harm the effects of this colonizing literacy on his life, as I noted in Chapter II. Following his traumatic experiences at St. Michael’s, he has not had any serious interest in reading and writing English as an adult. He writes in thickness and curves of carved ridges on his masks, in shapes of figures and features, in his choice of wood, knife, and paint, in iconography he’s inherited and in creating new hybridized icons or totems. The literacy required to read his work is nuanced and requires practice. This type of reading and writing, which is more interesting to Beau than black and white print, is explicitly for structural, spiritual and cultural freedom of his people. Including, or even featuring these forms of literacy which have been excluded from academia in understandings of transformative learning is vital in my construction of a pedagogy. Not only does this inclusion treat cultural ways of knowing with respect, it also makes a case for mediums like picturebooks, which attempts to combine different forms of representation (e.g. drawings, paintings, and photographs combined with words). As I have noted in Chapter I, the creative use of typography and concrete poetry in picturebooks integrates visuals and words so effectively that it becomes difficult to think of literacy in a

²⁶ Smith notes that though this imposition of English has these oppressive effects on many Indigenous communities, these very communities can use research and writing and theory in the colonizer’s language to reclaim power (Smith, 2012). This is a way of using the language tools against their original purpose to assimilate (ibid).

strictly visual or textual sense.

Giroux: Limits and possibilities

Giroux offers incredibly useful descriptions of what it means, in educational terms and in social justice terms, to engage in critical pedagogy. This formulation resonates with both traditional practices that have been described to me in Alert Bay and the pedagogical efforts being made now by the community to respond to colonial violence and protect cultural practices. He identifies the central problem which critical pedagogy seeks to address. He states: "The critical question [...] is whose future, story, and interests does the school represent. Critical pedagogy argues that school practices need to be informed by a public philosophy that addresses how to construct ideological and institutional conditions in which the lived experience of empowerment for the vast majority of student becomes the defining feature of schooling" (Morales, Pozo & Rahmani, 2006, p. 5). While Illich sees the conditions of the school (and a society caught up in institutional logics) intolerable and calls for a radical deschooling, Giroux in a sense accepts the presence of schools and, like bell hooks, moves forward to think about them as sites for reworking these conditions – sites of possibility.

He suggests that critical pedagogy seeks to create new forms of knowledge by challenging the limits between disciplines and therefore creating interdisciplinary knowledge. I would suggest that this could be described as 'holistic learning' – an approach to learning the Kwakwaka'wakw nations are aiming to recover through spaces like the T School and community practice. When Beau teaches carving, for example, the way a knife moves through wood is just one part of understanding the practice. Often before any carving is done, he tells long stories to explain the importance of the iconography which is both historical and spiritual in nature, he talks about the cedar, how the grain works, which forest it came from and how it fits into that ecosystem, he teaches Kwak'wala terms for totems and carving techniques, among other discussions.

Following from this, Giroux also suggests that critical pedagogy must problematize the distinction between academic knowledge and 'common knowledge' or high culture and popular culture so that curriculum is more responsive to everyday, lived realities (Giroux,

2006a). Part of this lived reality is encountering both privilege and oppression, so it must also be the work of critical pedagogy, according to Giroux, to put these questions of power and inequality at the heart of learning. To this effect he states, "school can be used as a strategic site for addressing social problems and helping students understand what it means to exercise rights and responsibilities as critical citizens actively engaged in forms of social learning that expand human capacities for compassion, empathy, and solidarity" (Giroux, 2006b, p. 6) In the same vein as theorists explored above, Giroux holds that the content of lessons should aim to *empower* students.

In order for schools to embrace this form of critical pedagogy, they cannot function as gated communities that are accessible only to students and teachers. He asserts: "Schools should be seen as a resource for the larger community. In this sense, teachers and members of the community become co-owners of the school and in doing so collectively determine what is taught, how the school is organized, and what role the school might play in the affairs of the community and neighborhood agencies" (p. 7). This is similar to Illich's Learning Webs concept, and the aims of the T School. A focus on community participation makes the responsibility for teaching and learning more diffuse. The spirit of learning in this environment, where sharing ideas is encouraged and seen to be rewarding, is about connection to community rather than competitiveness between students. "Schools should not lose their connection to the neighborhoods they are intended to serve," he insists, because this is a way to ensure that the content of lessons is relevant to students' contexts (ibid).

Another way for educational material to reflect context through is to ensure different forms of representation are available and representative of students' lives. In hooks' work, I identified the way in which her focus on conventional literacy excluded other possibilities of what it is to be literate. Giroux fills this gap with his call for "Multiple Literacies" or multiliteracies. He writes: "Critical pedagogy argues for the importance of developing multiple literacies. We need to develop social literacies that are functional, cultural, and critical. In this sense, we need literacies that both recognize the importance of cultural differences and the importance of individuals communicating across various social, cultural, and political borders" (p. 4). In an interview with Angelo Letizia, (2012) Giroux suggests, "A good teacher works in multiple literacies ranging from print to the visual and

knows how to make knowledge meaningful in order to make it critical in order to make it transformative”.

In addition to making schools more inclusive spaces (inclusive of multiple illiteracies and community members), they should also have structural flexibility in terms of curriculum and teacher’s roles (Giroux, 2006b, p. 5). While Illich claims the teacher has too much power and it must be stripped away, Giroux emphasizes that teachers too are oppressed by a system of rules, which obstructs critical practice and content. He claims: "Schools should provide teachers an opportunity to exercise power over the conditions of their work” (ibid). In order for a teacher to seize this opportunity and employ critical pedagogy, they must be self-aware of their teaching practices, the way in which power works in the classroom and in their community. They must “critically analyze the ideologies, values, and interests that inform their role as teachers and the cultural politics they promote in the classroom" (p. 7). Some key qualities of a good teacher, he suggests, are creativity, reflexivity, and optimism (Giroux, 2006b).

Giroux’s writing on the subject is prolific, so I find his summation of nine principles for critical pedagogy articulated in *Modernism, Postmodernism, and Feminism* (1991) and catalyzed largely by Freire’s work to be very useful in getting to the heart of his work. These principles seem to highlight where my conceptions of critical pedagogy converge and diverge from Giroux’s. He states:

1. *“Education must be understood as producing not only knowledge but also political subjects.”*

While I agree that because it is not a neutral process, education is inherently political, and that the subject is never a static entity but instead always forming and reforming (and education plays a role in this formation), I take issue with the notion that education *produces* the subject. This seems to imply that the student was not a political subject prior to or without education. I would suggest that one is a political subject just by virtue of living in society – it is a relational subjectivity. Education being posed as an influence that produces the subject seems to reduce the agency that a student holds over her own learning within critical pedagogy. I am more comfortable with the notion that students and teachers

continually construct their political subjectivities relationally, through education and through other layered socio-political processes.

2. *“Ethics must be seen as a central concern of critical pedagogy.”*

This resonates deeply. Considering that teaching is a political act, the content and style of the pedagogical approach has political consequences systemically, for students and for teachers themselves. It is therefore necessary to consider how a teacher can approach education in an ethical way within her particular context. The ethics must not be merely procedural or serve as a protection for schools and teachers (as I encountered with the university ethics process for conducting my fieldwork), but it must be explicitly connected to a shared conception of justice. It must hold the intention of respecting the rights, and needs of all participants (Phipps, 2013, p.17).

3. *“Critical pedagogy needs to focus on the issue of difference in an ethically challenging and politically transformative way”.*

Questions of inequality and privilege, this suggests, must always factor heavily into education. Learning should move beyond theorizing difference and towards tangible methods for shifting power to generate more equitable relations and conditions through the students’ and teachers’ daily practices. ‘Difference’ has been and is posed as a threat to a coherent Canadian nationhood (hence attempts to remove this difference through cultural prohibitions of the 1920’s, and other assimilative policies). So, the T School is an example of shifting discourses of difference from a threat to national coherence to a identity-affirming force (through the celebration of culturally specific dance, art, food and so on).

4. *“Critical pedagogy needs a language that allows for competing solidarities and political vocabularies that do not reduce the issues of power, justice, struggle, and inequality to a single script, a master narrative that suppresses the contingent, historical and the everyday as a serious object of study. This suggests that curriculum knowledge not be treated as a sacred text but developed as part of an ongoing engagement with a variety of narratives and traditions that can be re-read and re-formulated in politically different terms.”*

In Chapter VI, I will expand on this notion of solidarity and critical pedagogy in an Indigenous context, using Lynn Gehl’s *Ally Bill of Responsibilities* (2012) and other Indigenous resistance scholars. Giroux’s emphasis on context-specific pedagogy and the sense that knowledge must not be seen as an absolute but as flexible is very relevant to constructing an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks.

5. *“Critical pedagogy needs to create new forms of knowledge through its emphasis on breaking down disciplinary boundaries and creating new spaces where knowledge can be produced.”*

As noted above, this opens a space for holistic and embodied learning, which is more reflective of daily practices and many subjugated knowledges.

6. *“The Enlightenment notion of reason needs to be reformulated within a critical pedagogy. Reason implicates and is implicated in the intersection of power, knowledge, and politics.”*

As I noted in my discussion of Illich, this emphasis on reason has functioned as a way of excluding young people, women and other cultural ways of knowing from the political sphere and separating them from ‘adult or rational society’. Rousseau (1967) and other social contract theorists have suggested there is an ‘age of reason’, which the child must be guided towards. Giroux and other postmodern thinkers suggest that reason diminishes a great deal of complexity and the way in which it functions as an exclusionary mechanism needs to be challenged.

7. *“Critical pedagogy needs to regain a sense of alternatives by combining a language of critique and possibility. Postmodern feminism exemplifies this in both its critique of patriarchy and its search to construct new forms of identity and social relations.”*

Again, he stresses the idea that critical pedagogy must not just identify social issues but actively look at opportunities for action. The world is not a set of facts to learn but realities that are constructed by a set of conditions, which, though powerful, are always subject to change. As these norms, rules or realities are constructed and not natural – so they too can be deconstructed.

8. *“Critical pedagogy needs to develop a theory of teachers as transformative intellectuals who occupy specifiable political and social locations . . . Critical pedagogy would represent itself as the active construction rather than transmission of particular ways of life.”*

He asserts here that teaching must be seen as a creative, not rote practice. Teachers must be given space to engage critically themselves and not just plug curriculum in a restrictive and regimented way. This problem was expressed by Flora’s encounters as an Indigenous

teacher for a provincially-run school, and the institutional boundaries she faced in trying to teach critical context-specific content.

9. Central to the notion of critical pedagogy is a politics of voice that combines a postmodern notion of difference with a feminist emphasis on the primacy of the political.

Like Freire, Giroux considers the importance of meaningful dialogue to critical pedagogy. It is necessary to also make space for different dialogical *forms* (not simply writing, reading, speaking/lecturing) that may be better or more comfortable avenues of expression for some (e.g. theater, dance, art etc).

Concluding Thoughts

In the introduction to this chapter, I outlined a range of general questions guiding the field of critical pedagogy. In employing Illich, Freire, Giroux and hooks, I have presented some responses that I find compelling, and which help to form a pedagogy that is appropriate for my project when read in conjunction with contextual wisdom or grounded practice. To the question ‘what qualifies as or what is privileged as knowledge’ these theorists respond: knowledge is not an absolute, but a shifting and highly subjective notion, and critical pedagogy should strive to honour local, experiential, embodied, intuitive and other forms of subjugated knowledge. For this reason, rigid curriculum and other institutional standards or restrictions, which tend to codify knowledge and ways of teaching it present serious impediments to critical learning. To the question ‘who teaches and how is this teaching role acquired’, they respond that the role of the teacher is occupied by those who stimulate and facilitate learning by beginning with the lived realities of students and presenting tools to critically engage with those realities. As Giroux suggests: “critical pedagogy is not about an *a priori* method that simply can be applied regardless of context” (Giroux, 2006b, p. 8). The teacher participates in the learning process. This is reflected by Freire’s statement: “Faith is a [...] requirement for dialogue. Founding itself upon love, humility and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence” (Freire, 2000, p. 71). Illich and hooks also focus on the question of ‘who is the student’, and problematize the construction of the child as an unformed and socially unaware (or apolitical) being who must be kept separate from adult society. So, to the question: ‘how is knowledge conveyed or shared’, the theorists in this chapter and the pedagogues of Alert Bay suggest: out of a respect for students’ wisdom and capabilities,

and a critique of authority and absolute knowledge, knowledge is shared through dialogue, convivial exchange of skills, or engaged pedagogy and not through banking methods, drills or rote memorization. Powerful teaching is often done through modes of representation that reflect the traditions or practices of the students or the educational context (e.g. visual arts, oral story telling or dance) rather than exclusively relying on academic conventions of reading and writing.

A main goal of critical pedagogy is for education to aid in the empowerment of students, who will be able to use skills and concepts to both participate in and build communities of inclusion. To this effect, Giroux (2006b) states:

[Critical pedagogy] takes seriously what it means to understand the relationship between how we learn and how we act as individual and social agents; that is, it is concerned with teaching students how not only to think but to come to grips with a sense of individual and social responsibility, and what it means to be responsible for one's actions as part of a broader attempt to be an engaged citizen who can expand and deepen the possibilities of democratic public life (p. 245).

Likewise, Illich asserts: "I believe that a desirable future depends on our deliberately choosing a life of action over a life of consumption, on our engendering a lifestyle which will enable us to be spontaneous, independent, yet related to each other, rather than maintaining a lifestyle which only allows to make and unmake, produce and consume [knowledge and goods]" (Illich, 1995, p. 57). Many in Alert Bay reflected on the ways in which institutional education has and continues to encourage a sedentary and removed way of learning, which does not reflect Kwakwaka'wakw pedagogical approaches. A process of unlearning colonial pedagogical conventions that are disempowering, must therefore take place, and this is done both in and outside of the classroom through a form of engaged, embodied learning.

Considering the value-laden nature of pedagogy, it will remain an ethically challenging and complex site of engagement. Though critical pedagogy would like to continually ask and critique "who has control over the conditions for the production of knowledge, values and skills" and draws attention to the ways which "pedagogy is a deliberate attempt on the

part of educators to influence how and what knowledge and subjectivities are produced within particular sets of social relations”, critical pedagogy must ultimately be a creative and not merely critical practice (Babiak, 2006, p. 1). That is, it must not simply help students identify problems of power and oppression but stimulate and create ways through these barriers. hooks writes:

The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom” (hooks, 1994, p. 207)

It is precisely this contested field of opportunity in which picturebooks can operate as transformative texts.

Chapter IV -

Fieldwork: A practice in unsettling

Critical pedagogy is also a discipline. You can go to university and, in everyday classrooms, attain master's degrees and doctorates studying critical pedagogy. But the praxis of critical pedagogy implies action and transformation beyond the individual. True, if your goal is to add more letters behind your name or more framed certificate on your wall, you could do that through the discipline of critical pedagogy. But while critical pedagogy recognizes the importance of the individual and her interests, it also recognizes that the individual and her fulfillment depend on her social relationships with others, inside and outside the classroom.

-Tony Monchinski, 2008, p. 1

To no longer be prey to [oppressive] force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.

- Freire, 2000, p. 51

Introduction: Why fieldwork?

Chapter II detailed some important conversations that were formative in generating a critical pedagogy suitable for this project, chapter III looked at some theoretical perspectives for critical pedagogy, and now I would like to open up the specific research design I constructed for fieldwork in Alert Bay, and how it took shape in practice. I will outline the ways in which this design aims to reflect Freire's notion of Participatory Action Research (PAR). Part of this discussion will illuminate the ways in which the goals of this research design did not always match up with its practical application. I will discuss approaches I took to help the research design remain flexible and adaptable in the context of fieldwork. I will begin with these research design goals, then describe the actual unfolding of the three workshops I facilitated and the other informal research lead by local participants which took place. An anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks, I suggest, can be applied in three ways: selecting and identifying transformative picturebooks; making transformative picturebooks; and facilitating or teaching with these transformative picturebooks. This chapter will concentrate on the latter of the three applications.

Fieldwork was not part of my initial vision for this project, however; critical pedagogy is an explicitly grounded notion, which is not meant to be theorized in isolation from practice (note Monchinski's words in the opening epigraph). In this spirit, it seemed important that this project did not just offer a deconstruction of institutional education and didactic approaches to children's literature which exclude young people from social discourse, but also a *creative, positive contribution that strives to actively engage real children in discourse on colonialism*.

In addition to making a picturebook, I considered fieldwork as another important way of making a positive (and not simply critical) contribution: it takes ideas about pedagogy and critical engagement outside of the bounds of theoretical texts and the university. That is, research through fieldwork does not begin and end with theorizing about oppressed communities and pedagogy, but involves hearing self-representations and participating directly in this learning process in ways that will be outlined below. In the absence of this grounded work, I would need to rely on other's finding, contradicting the spirit of critical pedagogy which sees the vital importance of context, personal investments of the teacher and student, and a self actualizing process that comes through praxis. Further, I sought the joy and challenge of interpersonal work. For me, the emotive, sensory and energetic nature of real conversation, reading aloud and embodied learning has been more meaningful than reading texts in isolation. The guiding generative themes for my fieldwork were picturebooks and food. As food is a shared experience and need, I believe it represents an important avenue into appreciating other cultures, their histories and perspectives. As Barbara Cranmer expressed in our discussions: "Our food is a way through which [one] can learn about all facets of culture".

"Into Places of Considerable Ontological Risk" (Phipps, 2012)

I had and have serious reservations about fieldwork and the potential for causing some harm. Working with Indigenous communities requires a particularly strong ethic and sensitivity. Alert Bay has been the subject of many anthropological and other social science research projects since contact. It became clear through my discussions that the general experience of locals with researchers and the research produced has been negative. What has resulted from these studies is more a historical marker of how settlers perceive(d)

Indigenous groups than an accurate depiction of life and practices there. As Linda Smith²⁷, in her work *Decolonizing Methodologies* suggests “Knowledge and culture were as much a part of colonialism as raw materials and military strength. Knowledge was also there to be discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed” (Smith, 2012, p. 58). Problematically, Smith suggests, there is a history of social science research being produced by non-locals which was not intended for Indigenous people (not written or depicted in a manner that reflects and respects traditional ways of knowing and often not even made available to these communities), but rather intended for academics and their communities, which turned Indigenous communities into subjects of study, over which they could develop ‘expertise’ (*ibid*).

I feared repeating this harmful extractive approach to research, but Freire’s model of Participatory Action Research (PAR) resonated because of its ability to address many of the problematic elements of interviewing, researcher-researched relationship and it emphasizes the need for research to remain flexible to the content of study and the context of fieldwork: “By maintaining commitment to local contexts rather than the quest for truth, PAR liberates research from conventional prescriptive methods, and seeks to decentralize traditional research” (MacDonald, 2012, p.36). Further: “It is impossible to talk of respect for students, for the dignity that is in the process of coming to be, for the identities that are in the process of construction, without taking into consideration the conditions in which they are living and the importance of the knowledge derived from life experience, which they bring with them to school” (Freire, 2000, p. 62).

Freire stresses the import of praxis in understanding and utilizing transformative teaching and learning. He describes praxis as the "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 28). Not only the student but also teacher learns and self-actualizes: “The self, striving to transform the world creatively according to an emerging vision based on its own values, actualizes itself as it actualizes its vision” (*ibid*). Theory and Praxis function on a feedback loop and are incomplete without the other.

²⁷ Though Smith writes from the context of New Zealand and her experiences as a Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou iwi (both Māori tribes), she emphasizes the pervasiveness of colonial methods applied to research with or on Indigenous peoples throughout different time periods and places. Her work is very relevant within the Canadian context.

Initially, I was interested in meeting with several Indigenous bands in various locations on Vancouver Island. My thought was that this would aid in creating a more well-rounded view of Indigenous food practices and pedagogies – one that avoids generalizations about all Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast (which has been a harmful feature of settler discourse on Indignity) (Smith, 2012). Instead, I hoped to consider the specificity of individual bands and their unique set of practices tied to the unique geographies. But, in completing my research design and forming a method, I considered Freire’s PAR model further, as well as the Association of Social Anthropologists *Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice* (1999), which stress the need to conduct slow, community-lead research and maintain meaningful and ongoing relationships with the participants. In light of this, I decided it was important to narrow my scope. It would be difficult to conduct considerate research at the initial pace that I had set for my fieldwork. It would be more productive and meaningful to consider the specificities of just one community and acknowledge all that I was leaving out in doing so. It is not possible to achieve a comprehensive representation of this subject, so it is necessary to make choices and consider that any research design requires exclusions – and to then explore the impact of these exclusions.

As I have suggested in previous sections of this thesis, I chose Alert Bay as a field site for a number of reasons: it has a small population with a notably cohesive and thriving Indigenous community. Being situated on a small and rather remote island gives way to this kind of closeness. I had visited Alert Bay as a child and developed an appreciation for the stories, food, song, dance and the history. It also represents four important channels of education along the colonial to anti-colonial spectrum: non-institutional traditional learning (pre-contact), colonial residential and day schools (following contact), provincial education (present-day), and autonomous band school (present-day).

Ethics: The procedure and the principle

The application form for ethical approval (College Ethics Committee for Non Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects EAP1), is a necessary step one must undergo at the University of Glasgow before engaging in fieldwork. This process was a challenging and in many ways problematic process (http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_212131_en.pdf). While some post-grad students I spoke with were able to complete the application in a day or two, I found myself turning it over in my head and on my computer screen for over a

month. The premise of an ethics process at the university level, to assure high-quality and mindful research, is an excellent one. However, I found the structure of the application, and some of the underlying assumptions served to protect ethics from a procedural, liability standpoint and was harmful to ethics as a principle or process. For research to be considered ethical in the context of Alert Bay, and all contexts for that matter, it must be anti-colonial. Effective ethics must consider the ethical code of the participants as well as the researcher's personal ethics - not just that of the university's (Smith, 2012, p.5). In presenting its ethics as neutral, the application structure dismisses the possibility of ethics being a subjective and contentious concept, which needs to be flexible. These ethical guidelines are universally imposed on all research projects despite context of the fieldwork and content of research.

The application necessitates that the researcher assume an authoritative position in the research. In pedagogical terms, they are positioned as the teacher or pedagogue. This is not fitting with a PAR approach, which first and foremost places value on local, experiential knowledge of participants (Freire 2000, 2005). In order to complete the EAP, the researcher must dictate activities, and guide questioning and investigation (EAP1, 2.3A). She must have a clear idea of how she will recruit participants (EAP1, 2.7D), how many participants (EAP1, 2.7C), as well as a clear schedule of activities. She must have clear goals for what information to collect, how it will be collected, and how it will be analyzed (EAP1, 2.3B). This must all be decided before visiting the field site. She must treat encounters as data, and individuals as 'data-holders'. She must conflate relationships of trust and respectful communication with a sanitized consent process – in which participants read a Plain Language Statement and sign a form allowing for the exchange to be included as data (EAP1, 2.4A). She must impose notions of 'appropriate age' to give consent - "18 and older" (EAP1, 2.7A). Once consent is given, she must treat the data as private and as an entity she protects – and therefore she must have pre-established methods for storing data (EAP1, 2.4B). She must ensure all dealings live up to the university's health and safety standards – but there are no assurances that the health and safety standards of the community or participants being researched are protected or even considered (EAP1, 4).

The University of Glasgow ethics application is largely informed by the standards set by the Data Protection act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act Scotland (2002). Part 1

of the Freedom of Information Act states that it: “provides for the general right of access to information held by Scottish public authorities and specifies the conditions which need to be fulfilled before an authority is obliged to comply with a request.” These acts glaringly fail to reflect the context of Alert Bay or my personal ethics, as they are legalistically designed for official Scottish contexts. Both acts use gendered language, and reify the researcher’s power over the subject (referring to individuals or communities at the heart of research projects the “data subjects”). Setting the parameters for engagement (or, defining ethics), like the ethics application process does, establishes what Smith (employing Edward Said’s phrasing) refers to as “positional superiority” (Smith, 2012, p. 59).

I found it necessary to challenge and subvert restrictive aspects of these university ethics frameworks and find creative ways of privileging those of the ‘host’ community. For me, this meant speaking with people about the research that had been conducted in their community in the past, how it was destructive or productive; what research would be useful for the community, and most importantly; how members of the community carry out research and inquiry.

My first application for ethics approval was denied. I did not adequately identify risks, because, I did not believe it was risky for Indigenous peoples to handle raw fish and other local food like they have for generations. In my first application I wrote: “The health and safety implications are minor, and do not exceed the health and safety risks of daily encounters with cooking and eating food. However, any possible risk will be managed in a way that is respectful to the community’ approach to safe practice.” Some of the food-related ethical concerns held by the Indigenous community in Alert Bay include the respectful collection of food (e.g. releasing the first salmon while fishing as an act of thanks or *maya’xala*, and only taking respectful quantities as a responsibility to ancestors, community, and the physical and metaphysical worlds) and respectful distribution/consumption (e.g. giving food away as a gesture and celebration of wealth or abundance). The ethics process, however, made it *structurally difficult to privilege other knowledge(s) and conceptions of ethics*. Drawing on Marilyn Strathern’s work, and her own experiences as a graduate supervisor Alison Phipps (2013) succinctly articulates key limitations of university ethics procedures:

I have become aware of the gulf between three key poles of research: (i) the

normative nature of methods taught (qualitative; interviews as a default for qualitative research) and their compliance with a range of institutional codes all ensuring ‘methodological hygiene’ to borrow Deborah Cameron’s phrase (1995); (ii) the intercultural subject in all its complexity as colonial, hybrid and decolonizing subject; (iii) the increasingly legalistic frame-works at work in ethics committees and the recourse to laws on data protection and intellectual property, which force and reward normative methodologies peer review, ethics committees, promotions, funding bodies, research assessment regimes (p. 18).

Further, Tracy Skelton (2008) argues, such ethics procedures adopted by universities is an adultist construction that fails to consider ethics suitable for young participants: “Current ethical guidelines and protocols within universities and linked institutions are problematic because they have not evolved from a child centric perspective nor (usually) from a social sciences framework” (p. 23). Specifically, the use of informed consent, which is typically handed over to guardians to approve or reject, overlooks the child’s agency and is harmful to relations (between ‘researcher-participant’ and ‘participant’) within a research project (p. 31). She laments: “The notion of children as competent actors is watered down somewhat when it comes to the rules around consent” (p. 27). “In cases where children have been part of writing ethical research practice guidelines” Skelton observes, “there are certainly differences” (Skelton, 2008, p. 26).

This conflict of ethical practice excited important reflection on the methodology and pedagogy of anti-colonial research, and the space permitted for such research within the institution of the university (further explored in Chapter VI). While re-writing my ethics application for re-submission, I considered the way in which these conflicts are reflective of the negotiation that takes place in inter-cultural learning (which is, after all, what I am doing as a non-Indigenous woman of Jewish heritage doing research in the Indigenous community of Alert Bay). Rather than building the ethical foundation of this work around Indigenous methods alone, I am required to put the two distinct systems into conversation with each other and acknowledge the bias, for lack of a better word, of my own training, background, and methods. While I would like for participants to set the terms of ethical research, this conversation between distinct systems reflects the reality of modern life for Indigenous people of Alert Bay – one that takes place between the federal/provincial government and its Indigenous band council during treaty negotiations, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and Indigenous fishermen, the village office (municipal) and the band office (self-governed), and in daily exchanges between the Namgis and their non-

native neighbors. An inter-cultural research project like my own needs to acknowledge this reality and confront the contradictions (Phipps, 2013).

The ethics process generally operates as a silent and unacknowledged component of research – a mere stepping stone which enables fieldwork to take place and become integrated as part of a larger project. The application itself is approved and rarely surfaces again – it takes a silent role in forming research – despite the way it informs the method and results of research. However, I would like to give it mindful attention as a part of a discussion of my fieldwork by including sections of this application below. In addition to highlighting the limitations of the ethical parameters, the inclusion of relevant sections of the ethics application in this chapter allows me a succinct way of presenting my research design. Juxtaposing the application content with descriptions of how the fieldwork actually unfolded is also useful in illustrating the disjuncture between the planning and execution stages of research.

Planning a Method through the Ethics Application

2.2. Justification for the Research:

Despite its centrality in our lives, meaningful engagements on food are peripheral if not absent in mainstream education and children's literature. My research challenges this by celebrating food as not only practically but also discursively and intellectually important - it will creatively contextualize food within a larger socio-political framework. Focusing on Indigenous Canadian food practices, specifically, presents an opportunity to unsettle the colonizing practice of reforming first peoples through education. It does so by acknowledging these communities as educators, possessing vital and valued knowledge that can inform emerging ethical-food movements and strengthen Indigenous health. Chronicling this research in a picturebook makes this educational exploration accessible to new audiences. ASA V(1)

2.3A Method of Data Collection:

-Questionnaire; Online Questionnaire; Interview; Participant Observation; Audio or video-taping interviewees or events (with consent); Focus Group; Other

Other. Data will be collected through embodied-learning skills exchange workshops, and recorded within reflexive journals and using participant contributions.

2.3B Research Methods

Explain Reason for the Particular Chosen Method

In keeping with the work of Paulo Freire, I will employ the methodological approach of Participatory Action Research (PAR). Meaningful and transformative education, Freire asserts, must reflect lived experiences and realities of students. Being a universally-shared experience, food presents rich opportunities for learning, vital to well-being. Not only the content, but also the form or method of learning must reflect lived experience, therefore, embodied and participatory food workshops are methodologically key. This project takes action by creating the possibilities for exchanging and building food knowledge, which can be put into daily practice to position communities as empowered producers and consumers of food, and celebrate the long-suppressed food knowledge of Indigenous peoples.

A qualitative analysis of this research will be done through the Reflexive Journals, containing reflections on: my personal participation; observations about the workshops and other participants; continuous dialogue with participants, supervisors and mentors; and, a diverse range of documents. This will be done through a variety of written (e.g. personal narrative, prose-vignette, expository etc) and illustrative styles. As PAR necessitates, this data analysis will be employed as an ongoing practice, making it possible to: identify methodological, practical and ethical challenges; connect theory with praxis as a means of processing/working through these challenges; make productive adjustments in light of these reflections; and, consider the interplay between learning and teaching in the PAR process. ASA I(8) Appendix 1 offers some further explanation:

Appendix 1: Methods

Embodied Learning	<p>Embodied Learning suggests that it is not productive to isolate the body from the learning process by 'sitting still' to 'receive a lesson' in lieu of physically engaging to 'practice the lesson'. As Michel Foucault's term 'biopower' highlights, we are governed through our bodies (one can point to very overt ways that this manifests itself in Canada educationally: until the 1980's Indigenous children were physically removed from their homes and placed in Residential Schools where their hair, hygiene practices, dress, diet, posture, gestures and so on were altered through a very colonial form of embodied pedagogy. In somewhat less overt ways this functions through contemporary national health discourses, practices and policies and in mainstream schools. A transformative embodied pedagogy insists that in the same way one is governed through the body, one can also utilize it as a vehicle for her own empowerment.</p> <p>A lesson about food (without touching, smelling, and tasting) denies us of our most rudimentary connection food: its relationship to our bodies. Otherwise put, since food has a concrete, physical (and not merely abstract) significance to us all, it is methodologically fitting that one approaches learning about food in a concrete, physical manner (by engaging in the practical acts, like cooking, that can be applied in daily life).</p> <p>Embodied learning will take place within the workshops through: foraging walks (that include locating and identifying edible plants but NOT collecting or consuming them); engaging with/preparing ingredients; cooking food; and eating food (as well as dialogues taking place throughout these activities, and written/illustrative activities as reflections on activities).</p>
Recording data	<p>My method for recording the data, arising from the activities, will be the use of Reflexive Journals. My journals will include various styles of recording/reflecting data: expository, prose-style and poetic written accounts, illustrative accounts, personal 'artifacts' [e.g. receipts, newspaper clippings]). The learning taking place in these activities will also be recorded by participants themselves, through the foraging maps, food narratives (prose/poetic/other), and unguided personal reflections. These voluntary submissions will be accepted and considered as part of my data collection, with the informed consent of participants. A picturebook will be a large component of my thesis. The variety of forms and formats used to record data will be methodologically important for creating a picturebook (that employs techniques like pastiche [collage-like layering different of media], and multiple narratives).</p>

2.5 Access to data/Dissemination

The participants will have the ability to review my reflections and add their own feedback which might mean highlighting discrepancies or adjusting their initial input. The 'analysis' is meant to be an ongoing, participatory part of the project - it is another means of reflecting on food practices, and co-educating, which is a central goal. ASA III(3)

2.7 Participants

2.7 Participants

2.7A Target Participant Group Please indicate the targeted participant group by ticking all boxes that apply.

Students or staff of this University	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adults (over 18 years old and competent to give consent)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Children/legal minors (under 18 years old)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adults (over 18 years old who may not be competent to give consent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young people aged 16 – 17 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

2.7B Will the research specifically target participants with mental health difficulties or a disability?

YES NO

(if YES, please explain the necessity of involving these individuals as research subjects (no more than 50 words)):

2.7C Number of Participants (if relevant give details of different age groups/activities involved)

20 PARTICIPANTS

2.7 Participants
This project takes action by creating the possibilities for exchange and building food

2.9 Informed Consent

In Appendix 2: Food Index, and Appendix 3: Edible Plants, I outlined possible risks and risk management for eliminating them.

The work with food, within these workshops, is meant to highlight Indigenous knowledge on the subject. Asserting Western standards of health and safety is therefore problematic in this setting. Following with P.A.R. methods, and the spirit of this project will utilize a co-operative practice (involving discussion, demonstration and facilitation) for maintaining communal health standards (in addition to the risk management outlined in the Appendices). ASA I (2).

Meaningful Methods: Participatory Action Research

As I have indicated, I designed my research method in the spirit of Freire's Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The researcher is positioned as an equal in the process

(all involved are ‘participants’). Formulations of PAR share the common idea that research and action must be conducted ‘with’ people and not ‘on’ or ‘for’ people (Freire, 2000, 2005). PAR can be imagined as the point at which participation (engaging with community), action (addressing needs of the community) and self-actualization meet. Participants decide together how research will be conducted, which means developing shared understandings of ethics, safety, consent and other perimeters deemed significant. It is: “a philosophical approach to research that recognizes the need for persons being studied to participate in the design and conduct of all phases (e.g., design, execution, and dissemination) of any research that affects them” (MacDonald, 2012, p. 38). The purpose of PAR is to “foster capacity, community development, empowerment, access, social justice, and participation” (ibid).

As PAR necessitates, data analysis should be characterized by a holistic and ongoing practice, making it possible to: identify methodological, practical and ethical challenges; connect theory with praxis as a means of processing/working through these challenges; make productive adjustments in light of these reflections; and, consider the interplay between learning and teaching in the PAR process (which is in line with ASA I [8]). I am interested in a research model that stresses cyclical rather than linear approaches, which challenges the positivist approach to research that has been so troubling in Alert Bay and elsewhere: “PAR is considered democratic, equitable, liberating, and life-enhancing qualitative inquiry that remains distinct from other qualitative methodologies (Kach & Kralik, 2006). Using PAR, qualitative features of an individual’s feelings, views, and patterns are revealed without control or manipulation from the researcher” (p. 3). It is meant to be empowering and educative: “a collegial relationship that brings local communities into the policy debate, validating their knowledge” (iisd.org). Action research is therefore concerned with an “agenda for social change that embodies the belief of pooling knowledge to define a problem in order for it to be resolved” (ibid). Researchers participate as facilitators not leaders – with a respect for contextual, historical, and cultural knowledge of all participants.

The Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) ethical guidelines were fitting with a PAR, and have also been formative in generating a thoughtful design for conducting fieldwork. I referred to these guidelines in preparing my ethics application, citing specific sections in relation to particular activities or approaches.

Facilitating Workshops

When I realized that my plan for food workshops and foraging walks were not possible in the context of Alert Bay, not only due to constraints imposed by the ethics committee but also due to the dictates of local practice: that one must acquire food like salmon through gift or trade (as explained by Eva in Chapter II), I reassessed my approach. The PAR model suggests that research in any community must avoid ‘taking’ information, and instead share and build knowledge together. The ASA stresses there must be a benefit to the wider community, and I also kept Illich’s insistence on convivial skills exchange as a pivotal component of transformative learning in mind. I therefore decided to lead picturebook workshops (two sessions for young people and one longer session for young adults and adults). In light of my interest in learning local food narratives, sharing my skills and knowledge on picturebooks with these participants helped to develop or strengthen another avenue for expression for these narratives. This was an opportunity to engage with young people and develop a more intimate understanding of the interests that local kids have in picturebooks and in thinking about food. Otherwise put, the children’s workshops were an important way of determining what food issues are important to the participants, and which forms of picturebook representation resonate most. This experience was useful in practicing anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks as well as developing the picturebook component of this project.

When designing the workshops, I imagined a few fictitious conversations about picturebooks that I might have with young readers. Where I sensed that there might be need for explanation, interjection, questions and room for play in this imagined conversation, I created an activity that would allow us to dwell in that space, and allow us to continue the conversation with a few new tools. Conversation as a pedagogical framework seemed useful, as it hinges on exchange and not banking information. It also allows for content flexibility: I avoided approaching the group with a set of important facts I wanted everyone to learn about picturebooks and food narratives, rather my role was to offer ideas as a response to interest reflected in the conversation with participants. I therefore prepared several activities, knowing that I would be using only a few. Following the approach taken in the Visual Journeys research projects, I provided only general or open-ended prompts like ‘what do you notice about the letters on these pages?’ (Arizpe,

Colomer and Martínez-Roldán, 2014). Planning and facilitating the workshops was a challenging exercise in combining picturebook theory, critical pedagogy theory, and local pedagogy, and putting it into practice. Below is an outline of how these sessions took shape in practice.

Children's Workshop I

Picturebooks supplied:

Black and White, David Macaulay; *Voices in the Park*, Anthony Browne; *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book?*, Lauren Child; *The Sad Book*, Michael Rosen (Author) and Quentin Blake (Illustrator); *The Arrival*, Shaun Tan; *Mirror*, Jeannie Baker; *Shadow*, Suzy Lee; *The Rabbits*, John Marsden (Author) and Shaun Tan (Illustrator); *Duck Death and the Tulip*, Wolf Erlbruch; *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*, Oliver Jeffers; *Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*, Jon Scieszka (Author) and Lane Smith (Illustrator); *Where the Wild Things Are*, Maurice Sendak; *Zoom*, Istvan Banyai; *Rezoom*, Istvan Banyai; *Tuesday*, David Wiesner; *The Red Tree*, Shaun Tan; *Eric*, Shaun Tan; *Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type*, Doreen Cronin (Author) and Betsy Lewin (Illustrator); *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, Crockett Johnson; *Rosie's Walk*, Pat Hutchins; *Window*, Jeannie Baker; *A Lion in Paris*, Beatrice Alemagna.

Participants: 18

Ages: 5 to 12

Setting: The Art Loft (Alert Bay)



Fig 14 Participants at the Art Loft, workshop 1

The Art Loft is a community space located above the Alert Bay public library in the center of the small village, on Front Street. It is an open space with local artwork displayed on white walls, and a stock room spilling over with art supplies, stacks of chairs and folding tables. The window facing the sea floods the room with light and expansive views of the tide as it reaches out to the mouth of the Nimpkish River. Situating the tables into a square, and spreading picturebooks across them, I welcomed participants to flip through the pages while the room filled up. Among the picturebooks were some borrowed from Pat, the librarian: *Where the Wild Things Are*, *The Hungry Caterpillar* and some brought from Scotland: *The Rabbits*, *The Arrival*, and *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*. That Friday happened to be a holiday for the local schools (so teachers could complete a day of professional development – a ‘Pro D Day’, for short) and the kids from ages 5-12, from Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous backgrounds came to the workshop for their own sort of ‘development’. Participants were recruited through both of the local schools, where I spoke to teachers who invited their students and distributed informational flyers. I also advertised on community bulletin boards at the public library and grocery store, and spoke to a number of children and their parents/guardians directly.

The workshops were designed to provide foundations for the culminating activity, in which participants create their own picturebook-style double-page spread on food narratives. Prior to working on the double-paged spread, we did a number of exercises to encourage some thoughtful examination of picturebooks (and what it takes to make a narrative of this type) and to consider food miles/local food/food narratives.

I began by facilitating an introductory exercise in illustration called blind drawing, which I find equalizes participant’s skill levels (because in blind drawing, one does not benefit from any formal technique), which was ideal considering the wide range of ages. Blind drawing (drawing which requires the artist to make undivided eye contact with the subject being drawn – meaning the pen moves blindly across the page) requires the illustrator to trust her senses and relinquish any desire for perfection or conventional standards of beauty. In my previous visual arts training, I noticed there is a major emphasis on ‘drawing what you see’. Artists are conventionally meant to master an accurate and representational view of the subject before moving towards abstractions. When drawing in this realist manner, though, the artist attempts to quiet the body – she is still, serious, ignoring other

senses and the environment and regulating the movement of her eyes and hands. But, blind drawing traces the path of the eye and relies on a muscle memory in the hand and arm. It does not represent what the artist sees but, instead, the embodied experience of seeing. The nature of blind drawing amplifies the bodily encounter with the subject – disorientation, confusion, tension, and fluidity are reflected in the line, which is less regulated. I consider this to be an exemplary practice of embodied learning. The participants' reaction to this unfamiliar lack of control in a familiar activity of drawing was met with laughter, excitement, and at times some 'cheating' (with younger participants).

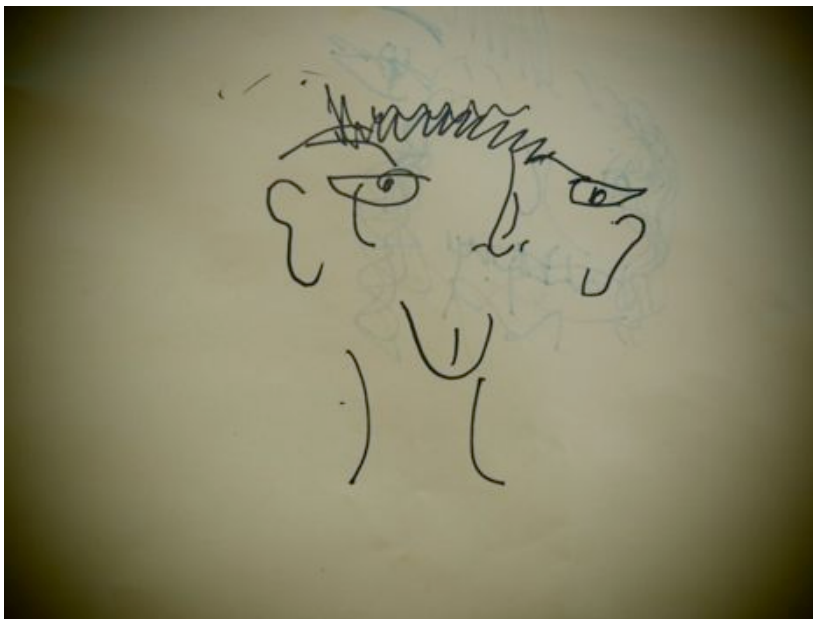


Fig. 15 & 16 Participant's Blind Drawings

Following this warm-up activity (in which I also participated), we began a discussion on different ways to tell stories. Participants brainstormed and came up with: stories told through writing, illustration or other visual art, song, dance, film, orally, video games, theater and so on.

Holding up *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book*, I indicated that picturebooks combine illustration or other visual media with words to tell stories and I asked participants 'how do authors make these two (visual and textual) ways of story telling work together in a picturebook?'

To respond to these questions, participants offered their intuitive thoughts and also looked through the picturebooks I provided on their tables to find examples for ways in which that the author/illustrator made the two media work together on the page. Most participants seemed to focus on the positioning of images and text. They noticed text wrapped around an image, text at the bottom of the page, text at the top, and text integrated into the image. Others noticed the way that the two modes communicated with one another: minimal text to highlight and make a strong statement about the image, a lot of text to highlight the written narrative and to give important details that were not showing in images, text which adds new details to what is in the image, and text which adds conflicting information to the image. These last observations tended to be made by older participants. Many offered opinions on which style they preferred and several agreed that the conflictual or ironic relationship between text and image to make a joke was the favoured approach. They shared and laughed at examples in *The Stinky Cheese Man*, and *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book?* among others.

After writing the vocabulary word "Typography" on the flip paper, we opened up a discussion of the word's meaning and found examples in the picturebooks. I then asked participants to find ways of writing the following words: tall, short, dark, light, angry, sad, happy, scared in such a way that the shape/colour/texture/size/boldness of the lettering reflects the meaning of the word. This offers a concrete way of thinking about and practicing typography. I then gave participants 'vocab pockets' designed like a miniature picturebook they could open up, with small envelopes glued to either side, and blank slips

of paper in the pockets. With the blank strips of paper, they wrote this first vocabulary word ‘Typography’ and illustrated or wrote a description of the term. In the spirit of the Visual Journeys research work, through which I learned the value of reader response annotation exercises, I asked participants to identify interesting examples of typography and draw or write their reflections on adhesive notes surrounding the example on the page (Arizpe, Bagelman, Devlin, Farrell & McAdam, 2014, p. 313). Older participants offered their help to younger participants to complete this activity, and we then shared our findings with the group. A focus on these elements of typography and multiple story-telling modes were useful to apply during the final double-page spread on food narratives activity.

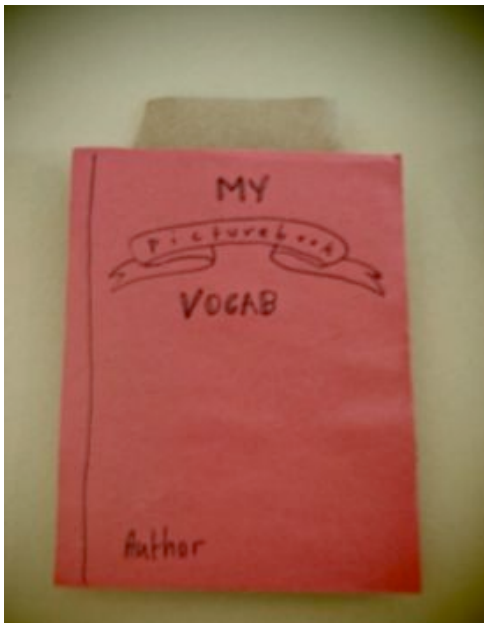


Fig. 17 Vocabulary Pocket

I suggested to the group that a popular way of telling stories to children is to make animals and other objects look and act like people, and I asked them if they could think of any examples. Many of the examples given were from Disney or other animated movies, and some were from local mythology like stories of Raven. We discussed why this has become a common way of telling stories, with a range of explanations coming from the group: it's funny, it's imaginative, it's more interesting than stories about people, it helps us care for animals, it helps us relate to animals, and so on.

I wrote ‘Anthropomorphize’ on the flip chart, and explained that this is a vocabulary word, which means making non-humans look and act like humans, like we just discussed. Students again wrote the word on the slip of paper in the second vocabulary pocket and

drew or wrote their own definition for the term, and we spent some time finding examples in the picturebooks provided.

I took several bananas and cardboard cut-outs of salmon that I prepared, and scattered them across the tables. I suggested that we all try to anthropomorphize these food items. We can do this by thinking what their human names, ages, jobs, and lifestyles would be like based on places from which the food came. The students knew salmon came from the oceans and rivers around Alert Bay, but they were less certain of the banana's origins. I asked students to check the produce stickers on the bananas for some information, and they found the location: Ecuador. Searching the Internet on my computer, some of the older participants discovered that Ecuador is roughly 6,493 miles from Alert Bay.

I filled out these details onto a food miles chart I had prepared in advance as a teaching tool. We briefly discussed the idea of 'food miles' (e.g. the energy/fuel it takes to transport food from where its origins to where it will be sold and eaten). Many participants expressed both a pride about their local salmon and surprise that bananas (which are one of the most commonplace/familiar fruits in the average Canadian home) come from such a long way away.

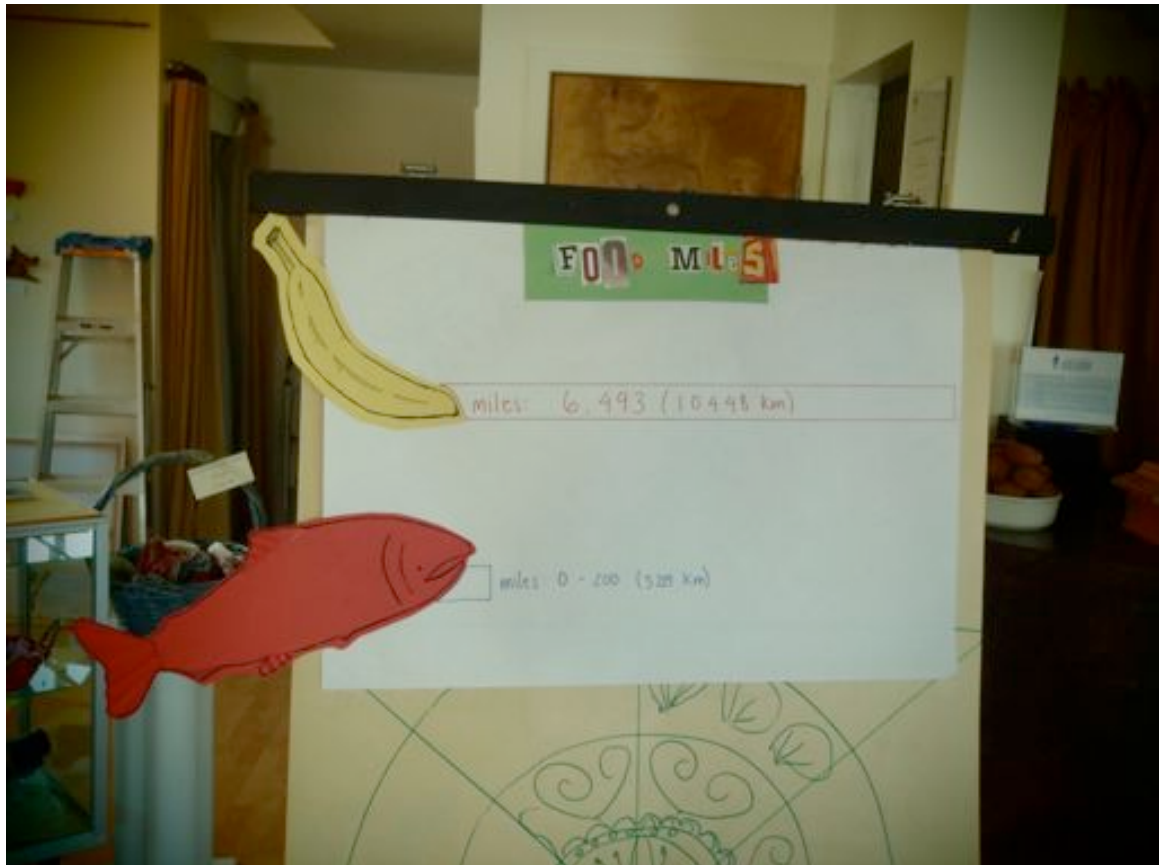


Fig. 18 Food Miles Chart

When brainstorming names and other qualities of their anthropomorphized food, the ideas for a salmon character poured out with ease: local food proved to be an excellent generative theme. It became clear quite quickly that my knowledge of salmon was not nearly as extensive as the children's. Many thought of Kwak'waka names to give the salmon character, or used the names of friend - some drew on traditional mythology of the salmon to develop its character. Many participants could describe their homes in detail (e.g. the Nimpkish River) adding funny fictional elements (one participant wrote 'I live in a mansion made of kelp and get around on my Orca Whale limo'). Some participants used technical terms for salmon's stages of development (e.g. I am a fry [baby] or smolt [teenager]) to indicate the age of their salmon character. The group struggled to do the same for the imported banana, as they had very little knowledge of Ecuador (e.g. what kind of terrain is common, the climate or what language is spoken) or how bananas grow. Some of the older students crowded around my laptop to look over a Wikipedia article about Ecuador and gaining a few facts that they shared with the group, each participant imaginatively filled in the gaps. Most of the hilarity during this brainstorming was in the students trying to dream up scenarios where the banana and salmon would be interacting together (for the purposes of their story). While a few had them meeting at the grocery

store, another had a banana falling off a ferryboat and getting rescued by a heroic salmon as it plummeted to the ocean floor, or competing at a bowling alley or a bingo game (both popular pastimes in Alert Bay).



Fig. 19 Food Narrative Brainstorm

Participants were then given a table full of art supplies and we made colorful drafts of double-page spreads by including their notes/ideas from the brainstorming. Especially for younger participants, the illustrative aspect of the brainstorming allowed for more fluid expression, reflecting what Salisbury and Styles (2012) observe: “what children can’t always express in words, they can often demonstrate in their visual work” (p. 78). This observation not only speaks to the success of visual methods in reader response, but the way in which picturebooks’ use of images make for particularly powerful mediums to relate concepts and meaning to young people (Arizpe & Styles, 2003). They used these drafts and notes for their final activity of the double-page spread.

As the first workshop came to a close, I suggested that we all continue thinking of our food narratives, and characters. ‘How will we present the story, keeping in mind what we

learned about typography', I asked. I also suggested we look at the stickers on the fruits and vegetables at the Shop Rite (the island's only grocery store) to see how many are from British Columbia and how many are imported and how far they have traveled.

Children's Workshop II

With the bananas from the previous workshop, I made us a few loaves of banana bread that everyone could share. As I portioned out the loaves, a particularly keen participant, Brennen²⁸ (11 years) mentioned what he noticed in the grocery store before I had even remembered to raise the subject. He produced a piece of paper on which he had affixed several produce stickers and a drawing of the fruit or vegetable they came from below. One Mango sticker indicated the fruit had traveled from Pakistan, which seemed especially dramatic to me given our position on a remote island on the northwest coast of Canada. The students gathered around Brennen's work, which stimulated an exciting discussion through crumbling mouthfuls of banana bread. Others added what *they* had found at the grocery store: produce from Mexico, India, China, and Spain. Carmen (6 years), Brennen's younger sister mentioned that her favourite fruit (blackberries, salmonberries, and huckleberries) are free and have zero food miles because they grow around her home. Collecting berries is something families have done together long before mangos and banana made an appearance in Alert Bay.

As another pre-teaching activity on different illustration styles, we looked through picturebooks and discussed ways illustrators made their images: paint, woodblock prints, ink illustration, cut outs, collage, photos and so on. I asked if the group was interested in an illustration exercise, and they were unanimously eager - most of them were drawn to the workshop because of their interest in art. Demonstrating the activity on flip paper, I drew 3 canoe shapes (one below the next) and under that, 3 squares (one below the next). I asked the group to decide where we should put the sun in our drawing (left, middle or right) and we chose to draw a sun on the top left hand side of the paper, above our 6 canoe and square shapes. We talked briefly about how shadows appear on the opposite side of the sun, and I demonstrated a way to indicate a shadow the first canoe and first square by filling in the space alongside the edge lightly with pencil and smudging it with my fingers (basic

²⁸ Using consent forms, participants and their guardians agreed to have their first name and photos used in my research, after reading a Plain Language Statement that I provided.

shading). On the second canoe and second square, I shaded with small dots (pointillism). On the third canoe and third square, I shaded with lines crossing each other (crosshatching). I pointed out how the curve of the canoe and the sharp flat lines of the square meant that I had to shade differently on each shape. Everyone tried these three ways of illustrating a shadow, some adding new shapes to shade and new techniques for shading. I asked participants to identify these techniques in the books provided, and share their findings with the group.

I suggested that if one chooses to illustrate a double-paged spread with pencil, pen or paint, we can try to use these shading tricks as well as the typography tricks we practiced in the last workshop.

As a final illustration activity before starting the spreads, everyone was given an outline of Cormorant Island and a stack of magazines to experiment with collage (and I displayed a few picturebooks using collage illustration [e.g. *A Lion in Paris*]). I suggested that we all use small pieces of colours and textures we find in the magazines to fill the shape of the island. The colours and textures can reflect a feeling they have for certain parts of the island (e.g. a rough texture for forested areas, a green colour for the provincial park ‘Gator Gardens’). This was a simple way of bringing discussions of place, which is directly linked to the generative theme of food, into the workshop.

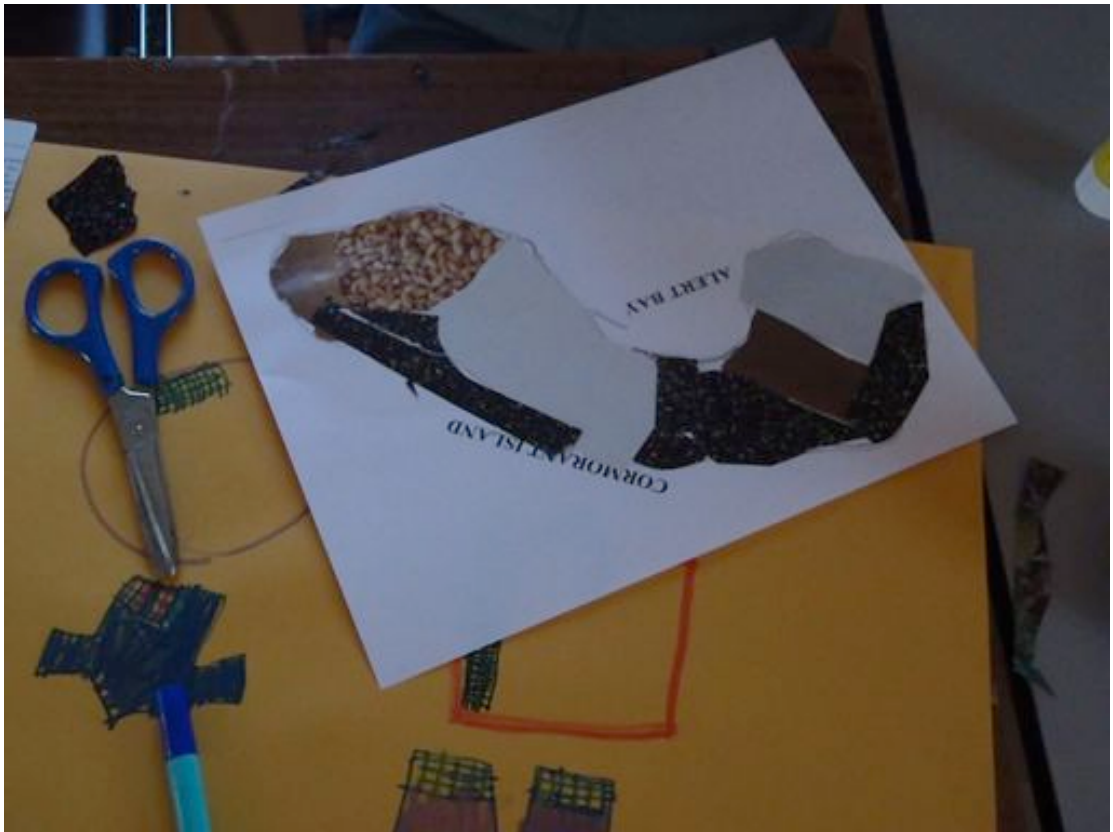


Fig. 20 Alert Bay Collage

Using large white paper folded in the middle, to represent the gutter of the picturebook, participants started on their double-paged spreads. Some much younger participants chose to glue the card cut-outs of salmons and bananas I had prepared and embellish them. Other slightly older participants did their own drawing and used a fair bit of text or dialogue, looking at picturebooks to get a sense of layout.



Fig. 21 Participants working on DPS

Findings

Some of the most useful findings to come out of these sessions were the participants' reflections on what made a successful picturebook. This took me away from picturebook theory, and critical pedagogy theory, allowing me to expand my knowledge through direct

reader response. The success of this approach has become evident through learning about and taking a small role in the Visual Journeys projects, which puts reader response at the center of investigations of picturebooks. Lawrence R. Sipe (1999, 2010) and Sylvia Pantaleo (2008, 2009, 2012) have also investigated the importance of reader response extensively. This approach also fits with Freire and Illich's notions of praxis through dialogue.

Participant feedback on picturebooks and our discussions of techniques used by authors to tell stories reflected Dresang's notion that radical change principals or features make texts more engaging for young readers. For instance: as Dresang posited in *Radical Change*, the children reflected a shared enthusiasm for complex, ironic and sarcastic content in books (when for example the text said one thing, and the image said another – or typically 'bad' figures are represented as 'good'). Scieszka's *Stinky Cheese Man*, which we discussed, is riddled with examples of this irony. This was favoured over obvious jokes like physical humor in books such as *Rosie's Walk*. Dresang among others would explain that this is because the ironic and sarcastic content requires some meaning-making on behalf of the reader – they are engaged more meaningfully (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 209). The complex joke is in a sense 'earned' and relished as a result (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 82). Participants also responded favourably to subtle visual tricks or clues and a combination of different media (pastiche). All of these techniques, it became clear, are valued by readers because they provide space to play within the textual gaps (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 75).

Many seemed interested in the concrete use of typography (where, for example the word big would be presented in big lettering) and liked to have their attention drawn to these elements (Pantaleo, 2012). Learning about elements of the texts and then finding them independently enriched their reading experiences (ibid). Likewise, having new vocabulary for talking and thinking about the books was very enriching (Arizpe, Colomer and Martínez-Roldán, 2014). Given the emphasis of dialogue in transformative learning, as Freire, Giroux and hooks in particular highlight, new words provide new avenues for expression – new routes of empowerment. Freire's (2005) approach of using a generative theme, after all, is grounded in identifying powerful words, and using them as a catalyst for increasing socio-political consciousness.

Participants demonstrated a serious interest (and personal investment) in local food, food miles, food politics, and food sovereignty. I was surprised by the eager response to the grocery store exercise, which was done on participants' own time. Many of these young people were incredibly knowledgeable about local food (e.g. salmon, oolichan, berries, and kelp), and this was contrasted by an almost entirely lacking knowledge of imported foods. This seemed to reflect not only exposure to, but also cultural importance of local food and traditional food practices.

Anthropomorphizing allowed children to visualize the journey that the food had taken to arrive at the store rather than simply identifying the food as 'imported'. It was my intention to 'teach' the concept of food miles, but the grocery store exercise was an excellent way for participants to teach *themselves* about food miles and the differences between local and imported food. I found this to be consistent with Illich's (1995) sentiments that the most profound learning happens outside of the classroom, when people take responsibility over their own learning. This is an important practice of autonomy and freedom, he emphasizes. Going to the grocery store with a heightened attention to these often-overlooked details – or a critical outlook on a routine task– was a small but powerful example of unsettling common practices. This unsettling must be at the heart of any transformative learning. In a place like Alert Bay specifically, which has been aggressively settled by outside forces, 'unsettling' reflects an important double entendre.

Anthropomorphizing was useful not only to facilitate an understanding of food politics but also to foster participants' expression while we created our food narratives. It allowed for a comfortable weaving of factual and imaginative details – as the process of food importing is generally veiled and the consumption of exotic produce from the grocery store has become naturalized, we are all required to fill in the gaps of knowledge. This is an important critical practice.

The Art Loft space was structured in such a way that participants could sit, stand, or move throughout the workshops, avoiding the conventional structure of teaching environments. A simple but useful approach to engaging participants in an embodied way was turning the bananas we examined in the first workshop into banana bread, which we ate the next day

while creating our food narratives. Eating while thinking about food allowed participants to experience the direct impact of food on their lives. As O'Loughlin suggests, introducing other senses into the learning environment emphasizes the role of the body in learning, which is more meaningful, as every learner has and *is* a body (O'Loughlin, 2006).

Adult and Young Adult Picturebook Workshop

Same selection books from the children's workshop provided

Participants: 8

Ages: 14-60+

Setting: The Artloft (Alert Bay)

Attending this workshop were a number of local teachers, artists, the town's librarian, a professional puppeteer, a retiree and a teenaged boy. Teachers received informational flyers that I distributed to both local schools, and I also advertised the workshop with posters at the library, grocery store and through word-of-mouth. We opened with introductions of ourselves and our interest in picturebooks, wherein I discussed my work at the University of Glasgow and my research interests in Alert Bay specifically.

As with the previous workshops, using blind drawing as an opening activity created an environment of comfort and light-heartedness. With the room in a relaxed and jovial state, we started a discussion on the different ways to tell stories: orally, digitally, illustrated, written, through music, photography, film, videogames, dance and so on.

I then invited a discussion on what makes picturebooks a special form of storytelling: I suggested that picturebooks are unique in the way they combine written and visual storytelling. The combination of these two media also makes picturebooks a useful tool for EAL students, reluctant readers, learning disabled readers, visual and tactile learners and makes for a useful critical tool (Arizpe, Colomer & Martínez-Roldán, 2014). We explored different perspectives and experiences, for instance: one of the teachers, Kathy, noted how the use of graphic novels had been beneficial for her students and she gave examples of specific texts used with special needs students, or students with learning differences.

We discussed that because many picturebooks are read aloud by adults to or with children, there is usually an oral story telling element (that comes through not just in reading the text but in improvising the story). This sort of intervention into the story, where the readers participate in meaning making and build on what is present on the pages, I mentioned, is often termed ‘co-authoring’. All stories have gaps filled in with our imagination in this sort of co-authoring manner, which helps us make content relevant to our personal realities. Those gaps and how we fill them is one of the key ways that the reader becomes engaged in the story (Iser, 1978; 1989).

We discussed the ways in which there are gaps in visual content of a picturebook (what is not in this illustration, what happened between this illustration and the next?) and gaps in the written content (what is the character feeling or thinking, what does the author mean when she writes X, what is being left out of the descriptions and plots?). I indicated that in picturebook theory, these are generally referred to as ‘textual gaps’ or ‘readerly gaps’ (ibid) (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p, 75). I suggested that what makes picturebooks particularly rich is that there are the gaps in the visual *and* gaps in the written as well as the textual gaps that exist *between* the visual and written when you encounter them together on a page as they combine to tell a story (ibid).

I argued that conventional picturebooks were generally written in a didactic manner which aimed to seal off all of those gaps in the story and tell children quite directly what they should be taking from it: ‘the moral of the story’. This was up for debate and everyone offered examples of didacticism from their childhood reading experiences. This also opened up a conversation of whether or not participants felt their realities were reflected in the picturebooks they had access to when they were young. We asked: did characters look like us – did they reflect our race/age/culture/understandings and feelings?

I then suggested that much of contemporary/critical children’s literature mindfully creates gaps so readers develop the skills to make moral choices/judgments deliberately, thoughtfully and independently and make meaning from the reading more independently. We all looked through Browne’s *Voices in the Park* as an example.

We then began an activity that used the picturebooks I provided and adhesive index cards to flag examples of interesting textual gaps, or, conversely moral didacticism. On the cards I invited participants (myself included) to provide annotations in the books to describe what we saw functioning on the page, and to then share these reflections.

After completing this first set of annotations and sharing them with the group, we continued with the same annotation activity – but looking for these elements:

1) Typography – I introduced this by suggesting that letters carry obvious information when they are combined to form a word – but the aesthetic way the letters take shape, and the way they are presented will affect how that information is understood. Typography therefore plays an important role in creating meaning within a picturebook (Lewis, 2001; Dresang, 1998; Pantaleo, 2012). Contemporary examples have used this more creatively than in the past. We then discussed the example of *Voices in the Park*, where each character’s voice is presented in a different font to reflect something of their character.

2) Intertextual Connections – This, I suggested, is the way authors make references to other pieces of art, literature, history, films, pop culture (and so on) in their books to make the text richer. It allows the reader to connect a full set of information or memories that arise out of the reference with the text in front of them, giving way to a new understanding or manner of viewing the text. It can be playful, add insight to the story, set a tone, or provide educational nuances. We discussed Anthony Brown’s *The Shape Game* (which references famous art) and Shaun Tan’s *The Arrival* (which references the Titanic, among other important connections) as exemplar cases.

3) Visual Techniques - There are many ways to create a visual narrative. We can look for examples of authors using “found items”, Pastiche, clay illustration, paper cut and so on, I indicated.

I opened the second half of the workshop by discussing my interest in food narratives, suggesting that we all have experiences with food, and therefore we all have food stories or narratives to tell. I expressed that because food is a universal experience, key to our wellbeing, food is a way of engaging people and even using it as a jumping off point to speak about other social issues through picturebooks. I discussed my particular interests in Alert Bay food narratives, and how the young participants in my other workshops learned

about food miles by anthropomorphizing salmon and bananas, and visiting the local grocery store.

As a group, we shared our strongest food memories from our childhood, and as a final activity, I suggested that we use some of these elements we've turned our attentions to so far (textual gaps, typography, intertextual connections, visual techniques) to make a double-paged spread on any powerful food narrative important to our lives. Pat, for instance, created a double page spread reflecting her first experiences of planting a vegetable garden with her grandmother, and the feeling of joy she felt seeing the early sprouting signs of life come up from the beds. Kathy recounted her first memories of smoking and eating salmon, a process which involved her extended family and community.



Fig. 22 Adult workshop participants' DPS

Findings

Participants in this group were particularly interested in the shift away from didactic children's literature and towards critical or postmodern children's literature. The group wanted to focus in on notions of textual gaps and techniques to achieve these gaps, such as multiple perspectives, unresolved endings, and irony. Many suggested that they were only familiar with quite morally instructive picturebooks (there were many personal childhood memories attached to this type of book), and were therefore heartened to learn of and see examples of contemporary picturebooks that offer more complex and creative material to readers. Some of the older participants in particular bemoaned the failure of picturebooks during their childhood to reflect their realities (characters were often Caucasian and settings were often foreign to them). Seeing the changes picturebooks have undergone was especially empowering for these participants in terms of diversity being represented in newer books. The annotation exercises were a pedagogically effective way of dispersing the 'teaching' role in the workshop, as each participant was given the time to reflect on their book, then guide others through that text by sharing their annotations with the group.

All of the participants expressed their interest in the author's process, for instance how the visual techniques, characters, settings, typography and so on are developed. Some authors like Scieszka, Tan and Child are quite transparent about this process and make it accessible to readers in their picturebooks (Scieszka famously uses characters to introduce components making up a book - like the chicken introducing the title page, we noted). I considered this interest in author transparency, or interest in metafiction when creating the picturebook project, as Chapter VII will illuminate.

There was an ease and eagerness in thinking and talking about food. Participants had many powerful food narratives to share, and most decided to represent a food narrative from their childhood. These early memories, they suggested, were very formative in their understanding and appreciation of food.

Concluding Thoughts

Unsettling settler logic by taking the time with a community to hear self-representations, by emphasizing the value of traditional pedagogy (particularly those around food), and thinking about local and international food climates also involved unsettling my initial

vision for the fieldwork, and feeling personally unsettled in a space where I was a visitor with limited knowledge and with a great deal of dependency on the generosity of others.

The emphasis, in this research, is on unsettling not settling on a truth through collecting data and analyzing it factually. The disjuncture between the planning at the ethics application stage and grounded praxis highlights the sense in which this fieldwork was not a process of overturning of data which was waiting to be collected, as we imagine an archeologist uncovering bones might, but a sensitive and clumsy process full of missteps, revisions, and surprises. Elements which, for me, were the most crucial in doing meaningful research, like building a trusting relationship, cannot be structured or planned - making the ethics application a problematically short-sighted, and over-simplifying framework (Phipps, 2013, p. 20). Nonetheless, it was useful to me to engage with the university's construction of ethics in the sense that it delimitates the guidelines for conventional research that has been harmful to communities like Alert Bay, and therefore highlights some a-critical pitfalls I hope to avoid.

In working with both adults, young adults and children, I found that the methods and principles of an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks (first outlined in the introduction) can be supported by:

- Providing readers with new language tools
- Creating a de-centered or de-schooled learning environment
- Encouraging participants to freely parse and question aloud while reading
- Encouraging participants to identify and voice concrete connections between themes being explored in critical picturebooks and their experience
- Inviting embodied learning
- Identifying and discussing specific tools/devices (like metafiction) used in critical picturebooks through annotation exercises,
- Encouraging participants to create their own self-representations using techniques/tools identified in picturebooks

The overwhelming finding from these workshops was that giving new tools for self-expression, and giving generative themes like food to excite new dialogue is very empowering and engaging. A goal for such work is to develop tools and exchange knowledge so that members of communities like Alert Bay will be writers and illustrators of their own histories, as Smith advocates (2012). The knowledge and creativity is already available to do this in Alert Bay, but setting aside the time and placing value on self-representation or forming narrative by using a generative theme like food is an important catalyst.

Chapter V -

A Body of Work: Elaborating on embodiment and fieldwork

I lay claim to having a body, while also acknowledging that in some fundamental and irrefutable sense I am a body.

-Marjorie O'Loughlin, 2006, p. 1

In Chapter II, I outlined some formative discussions I had with participants throughout my fieldwork, and in Chapter IV, I outlined the workshops I conducted, but my fieldwork also included many other forms of embodied learning activities that were not planned or facilitated by me directly. In the spirit of PAR, the participants lead much of the work and offered their own self-representations on food and other areas in a largely unmediated way. I will briefly sketch these experiences below, which had a profound impact on my understanding of anti-colonial research, anti-colonial pedagogy, and helped me build a great deal of 'source material' for the picturebook project which speaks to this community.

Embodiment and Pedagogy

Before unfolding the details of these activities, I would like to present some useful theoretical reflections on embodied learning, which go to explain the value of these activities. Embodied learning approaches break from conventional institutional education and are central to critical pedagogy and PAR approaches. Marjorie O'Loughlin's text *Embodiment and Education: Exploring Creatural Existence* (2006) and a selection of articles she has written on this subject offer a particularly useful exploration of key concepts and arguments on this way of learning. Here, she identifies the problematic thinking that has justified the exclusion of embodied learning in classrooms conventionally, and identifies why this is a grave error:

'Discursive consciousness' as I use the term here is a product of a way of thinking in which a generalized system of representation has rendered thought or cognition independent of specific human action. It is this kind of fetishism of abstraction which I see as privileged in much educational theorizing. [However] Meaningful human action, which is the domain of practical consciousness, is intimately concerned with the socially situated body-subject in a dynamic of trust and anxiety in relation to its physical environment and in terms of its intersubjective relations (p. 2).

This “Practical Consciousness” she describes relates nicely to Freire’s explanation of praxis discussed before: when engaging meaningfully, there is such a continuum of learning/thinking and doing/acting and the two become indivisible (Freire, 2000, p. 51). O’Loughlin challenges the way in which “genuine knowledge” (particularly in education) has become about “transcendence, or overcoming of the particular and of perceptivity, in order to arrive at a position that is beyond any carnal dimension, any felt bodily depth or lived emotional experience” (O’Loughlin, p. 2). This transcendence, she insists, is impossible. When I was lucky enough to see Sir Ken Robinson speak at Glasgow’s Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, he joked that academics think of their bodies as “the thing that gets their heads to meetings” (2011). In its exaggeration, his joke speaks to the ways in which many privilege a “Discursive Consciousness”, grounded in a Cartesian Split between mind and body (O’Loughlin, 2006, p. 2). In this formulation, the mind is connected to intelligence and the body, as Robinson indicates, is often sidelined in academia or institutional education, or worse, treated as a distraction. In conventional education, this often means that academic learning is done through quieting the body and cultivating the mind (hence the disciplinary structure of sitting still at a desk), and meanwhile Physical Education is limited to a class of jogging around the track and playing group sports.

“Practical consciousness on the other hand” O’Loughlin suggests, “refers to those very complex but often overlooked facets of situation involving awareness of and attention to the relation of an embodied subject to others' and to its own habituated space” (5). Freire’s notion of critical pedagogy, which aims to cultivate and deepen critical consciousness through praxis, joins up with O’Loughlin’s reflection on consciousness and embodied learning: “[...] To better understand consciousness and its development by means of education we need to come to a renewed understanding of how the senses can teach us about the world – human and non-human, animate and inanimate” (ibid).

O’Loughlin offers a very poignant reflection on the importance of emphasizing and not obscuring the body in education, which Robinson’s joke touches upon in far fewer words. She writes:

The traditional arrangement of the body [in education...] de-emphasizes the reality that professors are in the classroom to offer something of ourselves to the students. The erasure of the body encourages [students] to think that [they] are listening to

neutral, objective facts, facts that are not particular to who is sharing the information. We are invited to teach information as though it does not emerge from bodies. Significantly, those of us who are trying to critique biases in the classroom have been compelled to return to the body to speak about ourselves as subjects in history [... so that] professors [may] join their students in the learning process. We must return ourselves to a state of embodiment in order to deconstruct the way power has been traditionally orchestrated in the classroom [...] By recognizing subjectivity and the limits of the teacher as authority figure, we disrupt that objectification that is so necessary in a culture of domination (p. 3).

It is transformative, then, to teach and learn in a way that recognizes the role that our bodies (which are indivisible from our minds) play in the process.

Foucault suggests that one of the most powerful modes of discipline and control in the modern state is exerted over and through the body: he calls this biopower and biopolitics. Prior to the nation state, he explains, monarchs and other heads exerted power through the right to kill (“a right of death”) (Foucault, 1990, p. 133). Citizens were not expected to do anything specific with their bodies and their time, rather it was a matter of what they could *not* do (steal from the king, do harm to the king, or fail to pay taxes). Power was therefore deductive – it was premised upon what those in power could prohibit and take away when these rules were violated (e.g. taking away freedom and life). In the modern state, he suggests, power has shifted towards a “right of life” in which people and their bodies are governed according to what they should do. ‘Thou shalt not’ was replaced with ‘thou shalt’, which is framed as “positive power” (Foucault, 1990). This positive power is a misnomer, however, as it is a more restrictive modality according to Foucault. This “power over life” is concerned with the health of the nation state (productivity, security), which is only possible through the ‘health’ of individuals (p. 134). So, as a result, bodies have become highly regulated through sexuality, reproduction, discipline within institutions and so on. This is congruent with O’Loughlin’s characterization of a Rationalist view of the body (noted above).

Biopower goes to explain the colonial approach to education at St. Michael’s Residential School, which involved a control over physical appearance (hair, clothing), physical behaviors (posture, body language, forbidding traditional dance, sitting still at desks) and physical conditions (no access to fishing, hunting and foraging sites, no access to family members or home, no access to traditional diet). Colonial education today continues to

discipline the body in often less-visible, more insidious ways, many argue (Smith, 2012). Embodied education poses a threat to the kind of order and discipline that biopower exerts.

Pewi, the language and dance teacher I met at the T School (and introduced in Chapter II) ensures that traditional pedagogies, which engage the body in the learning process, is revived and maintained (even though now it often takes place in a school setting). Her methods are exemplar of O’Loughlin’s vision of embodied pedagogy. ‘Total Physical Response’ (TPR) is an approach she uses to teach the Kwak’wala language. As I noted previously, TPR uses a certain motion – like touching the head or lifting arms (and in Pewi’s classroom: traditional dance moves), is linked with a particular word. The body builds muscle memory so when the motions are repeated the words associated with them become more powerfully internalized than if the student was static. It also allows students to release physical energy and think of language in a lively, interactive way not in the abstract context that ‘talk and chalk’ methods tend to offer.

Astra Taylor’s documentary, *Examined Life* (2008), presented a number of conversations with a few influential theorists like Judith Butler and Martha Nussbaum. She decided to present each of these encounters in motion. Some theorists talk while walking through an airport, while others are navigating a wheel chair over city streets, canoeing or riding in the back of a taxi. Observing this way of interviewing was formative for me. I appreciated the way in which the voice was not divorced from the space and the way of being in that space. I appreciated the way in which the activity of the body while talking made the interactions more human, more resonant, and more engaging. I appreciated the way it could “disrupt the objectification that is so necessary in a culture of domination” (hooks, 1994, p. 139). Making space for less structured and more embodied ways of engaging in my own fieldwork meant that I could hear people on their own terms, and in contexts that made sense for our respective conversation. This gave way to a much more rich set of exchanges. Below are some just examples of this embodied learning in Alert Bay.

Out Trips

Dave, Oolichan Oil and *The Princeton I*

I met Dave Lewis outside of the grocery store on a weekday before noon. He was leaning sturdily against his rusted-out truck with a smoke, talking to Eugene the tree planter and surveying the street. Eugene called us over and Dave greeted us without all the niceties and small talk that usually prevent real conversation at a first meeting. Not long after, he invited us all to his shop (which could be seen where we stood, through a few rows of trees). Dave is a Mariner. On land, though, he builds rare, classic cars part-by-part in his shop. His hands bear witness to all of his work – a sort of calloused curriculum vitae: the tough skin is marked with a series of deep cuts filled with the black stains of engine oil, and yellowed from cigarettes. His shop was constructed almost exclusively out of ‘found’ materials he collected throughout his travels around the little islands of the Northwest Coast on his ships. “All of the things I love are old and heavy,” he told us.



Fig. 23 Journal Entry

After learning a great deal about the significance of oolichan oil to Alert Bay, Dave offered to share some of the grease he had been given in exchange for labour. Barb and I visited his house and prepared a dinner together to eat with the grease. Tasting grease for the first time was a memorable experience, which I recorded in a journal entry above (fig 2.14). Given its strong, fermented flavor, the grease is best on a bit of smoked salmon or in soups, we were told, but this time we ate it on the bread I had baked and brought to Dave's house.

Taking small pieces of the bread and dipping them into the canning jar, which seemed to glow with the yellow contents, Barb and I tried Eulachon grease for the first time. As I had been warned, it was a challenging taste: sour, fishy and potent. He brought out another canning jar, filled with pickled kelp. The bull kelp had been collected on the shores of Hanson Island, sliced into ½ inch rings and pickled with cider vinegar, mustard seeds and peppercorns. The little green rounds were velvety in texture and much like a pickle in flavour. While this is not a traditional way of eating bull kelp, locals have used seaweeds in their diet long before contact.



Fig. 24 Writing on *The Princeton I*

After numerous dinners, coffees and discussions in his shop, looking at maps, and even helping to burn piles of pruned branches and deadfall in his yard, he invited me and Barb to take a trip on his boat and see some of the surrounding islands: “A lesson in local history”, he said. We packed our overnight things and, when on board, found our positions on the ship. We wound our way through the waters of the northwest coast, learning the names of small islands that are vitally important to many Indigenous people in the area, but often omitted from or unlabeled on maps. On the first afternoon, we anchored near a

shipwreck close to part of a coastline called Robson Bight, which is famous for being the highest-traffic area for Orca Whales. We took his skiff to the low tide beach and dug for clams with old garden spades and big metal pails for several hours. There were razor clams, butter clams, varnish clams and other large cockles. I learned later that night to clean the clams by submerging them in salt water with oatmeal flakes, which they mistake as food then siphon out, and in doing so, they siphon out the inedible sand. Dave pulled up some of his crab traps a few meters down the shore and we ate a feast of seafood that first night.

We arrived at a special island the next afternoon, which I had been reading about: Mimkwamlis, or Village Island, home of the Mamalilikala people (one of the Kwakwaka'wakw nations). Before settler communities came, this island was an important living space and meeting point for many Indigenous people. As we approached I noticed the ivory shores which are coloured by the clam and oyster midden from mollusks collected, processed and eaten there many years ago. The structures currently standing, but incredibly weathered, are the Anglican hospital, and a few wooden settler homes, which mostly housed nurses. We circled the island on the ship and dropped an anchor so we could go ashore. People describe the island as abandoned, but it is important to note that most did not leave by choice, but were driven away. Children were taken from families here, and brought to Alert Bay where they were held at St. Micheal's Residential School; resources became exploited, and; autonomy was stripped away by settler communities. No one lives on the island now, and the quiet felt more solemn than peaceful as we walked some of the over-grown paths, through the rotting colonial buildings and along the white shores peppered with unusual flotsam.

Visiting Earth Embassy on Hanson Island

In Chapter II, I began to describe the setting of Hanson Island and Walrus, someone who embodies a great deal of grounded knowledge, and who has had a serious impact on my understandings of critical pedagogy and local food practices. In this chapter, I am interested in detailing some of the embodied learning that we did together.

When I first arrived to Walrus' camp with Barb which he named Earth Embassy, there were still several hours of daylight left. He and his son Aki gave us a tour of their organic, Indigenous garden, explaining where each plant would traditionally grow, how grafting and transplanting was done to grow the plants in their garden, the traditional food uses of the plants (and some medicinal uses), Kwak'wala names, and seasons and soil conditions for growing. I was given a shovel to dig into the bull kelp that they collected from local beaches and fermented in large piles. This is used as a traditional, organic fertilizer. While digging into it, I was able to feel the difference in density and see the colour changes (the bottom being more fermented and nutrient rich was a shiny, dense black, where the less fermented kelp on the top was green and porous).

With distaste for the roles of host and guest, Walrus has a thoughtful ethos for sharing the camp. He hopes for people to feel equally comfortable to eat from the garden as they are planting the food, as comfortable sitting by the woodstove as they are to stoke it. The person who comes to stay is not guided through the space passively, but actively participates in how the space takes shape. Before a full hour had passed since our arrival to Earth Embassy, Barb and I were turning over new beds of soil, removing their stones and roots, mixing in kelp fertilizer and planting root vegetables. As we did, I became aware of some intricacies I did not see when just walking through. Notably: there was a very different sort of order to the gardens than the gardens to which I was accustomed. There were not neat rows of like plants, but clusters of growth dispersed next to companion plants, mimicking the diversity found in wild growth patterns. Companion planting, Walrus later explained, improves pollination, provides better spacing of root systems and makes better use of nutrients in the soil. This also reflects a Kwakwaka'wakw reverence rather than a mastery over the natural world, which Walrus of course considers methodologically important to the spirit of his work. We wandered through the expansive gardens again, collecting greens for salad, trimming salal, taking photographs and tasting herbs until it was time for a late dinner of fresh crab, brown rice and vegetables.

The following day, we packed a lunch and took a day-long hike, traversing the rainy woods of Hanson. I collected small pieces of deadfall in a waterproof envelope as a way of mapping the walk that I could look over more closely later that night. We looked at the old growth trees and in particular, the culturally modified trees. I noted briefly in chapter II

that these are trees which bare the marks of ancient cedar stripping by local Indigenous peoples for art, food preparation, tools, clothing and shelter. These trees have been important politically to the bands of this area in land disputes and treaty negotiations, as they are a virtual date-stamp of their presence on the territory. They are magnificent in their size but even more so in their ability to heal from the stripped bark. The tree appears to slowly fold the scar into its body and grow new, harder, more resilient bark around it. Through this healing, they take unusual, burly shapes. It is difficult to avoid projecting the human qualities of resilience and will on these striking red-brown figures as you stand beneath them.

When we reached the farthest distance from the camp, we found ourselves at Big Bay. Aki and Walrus wanted us to see this spot, because of its cultural and spiritual significance for local Indigenous carvers. Many generations of locals have used this as an important site for canoe carving. Trees are chosen from the dense, healthy woods engulfing the shores, and are brought down to the open space of the beach to chip away at and carve. Beau set up a small camp there where carvers can sleep, and keep their tools, clothes and food dry when taking their carving trips to the island.

Canoe Trips

James was a visitor to Alert Bay like Barb and I. He came to stay for a few days, and ended up staying for months, he told us. He had canoed great distances, often in protest of governmental and corporate plans for oil pipelines and against other issues concerning environmental degradation. He came to see what he could learn about Namgis canoe making, and ended up doing an informal apprenticeship with Alert Bay's reputed carving community, notably: Beau Dick, Bruce Alfred, and Wayne Alfred. Eventually, he made his own canoe from scratch. In his canoe, he paddles the waters around Alert Bay and follows environmental activist movements by tuning into the radio and pouring over newspapers. Accepting his invitation to go paddling, we rose early one morning and cut through the island's heavy fog to find him at the government dock. He told us about the process involved in making the canoe, from dealing with timber to carving iconography on the exterior walls. He pointed out the migration of salmon beneath our boat as we paddled, and identified other smaller fish. We learned the pacing of group paddling that is used by

Namgis people: some furious and quick strokes punctuated by long and slowly paced strokes.



Fig. 25 Barb at the canoe's bow

On our second canoe trip, James invited us to join a group of 4 others in his boat, who were staying at the Namgis Substance Abuse Treatment Centre. He has made a ritual of taking patients out onto the water a few times a week as a form of therapy. James used the canoe as a vehicle for embodied learning with this group, who shared their thoughts, struggles and desire for change with us as we propelled the boat forward together.

Visit to Local Schools

I felt fortunate to explore the hallways and classrooms of the autonomous band school (the T'Lisalagi'Lakw School) when class was in session. The design of the space, which I had been appreciating from afar, made even more sense when I saw it in use: muted sounds traveled out of the top of the ceiling-free classrooms into the main corridor enclosed by one very high cedar and glass ceiling – it feel more like a large home than a school. One teacher, Kathy, allowed me to look through a Namgis picturebook project her students were completing, which was an opportunity for students to make new stories using traditional mythology and iconography. I was able to get a sense of the organization of lessons, free time, out trips and other elements of the schooling there. Pewi showed me the dance room simulating a big house, and demonstrated sections of her language lessons.

When I visited Alert Bay Elementary School, I was toured around Tidi's 5th grade classroom. She showed us the food research project her students had been conducting. Each student researched a particular food item to learn about the use of pesticides, genetic modifications, hormone use and so on. To pair with this project, the class was conducting a digestion project in science class. The objective was to see how successfully natural (non-chemically prepared/preserved food) was digested compared to highly refined foods. They did this by placing different foods in sealed plastic bags with an imitation digestive aid, and churning it with hands to simulate the digestive process in the stomach. Tidi also showed me the Indigenous arts projects (totem masks made of cardboard). Though the space was organized like a conventional school, there is a strong emphasis on cultural education.

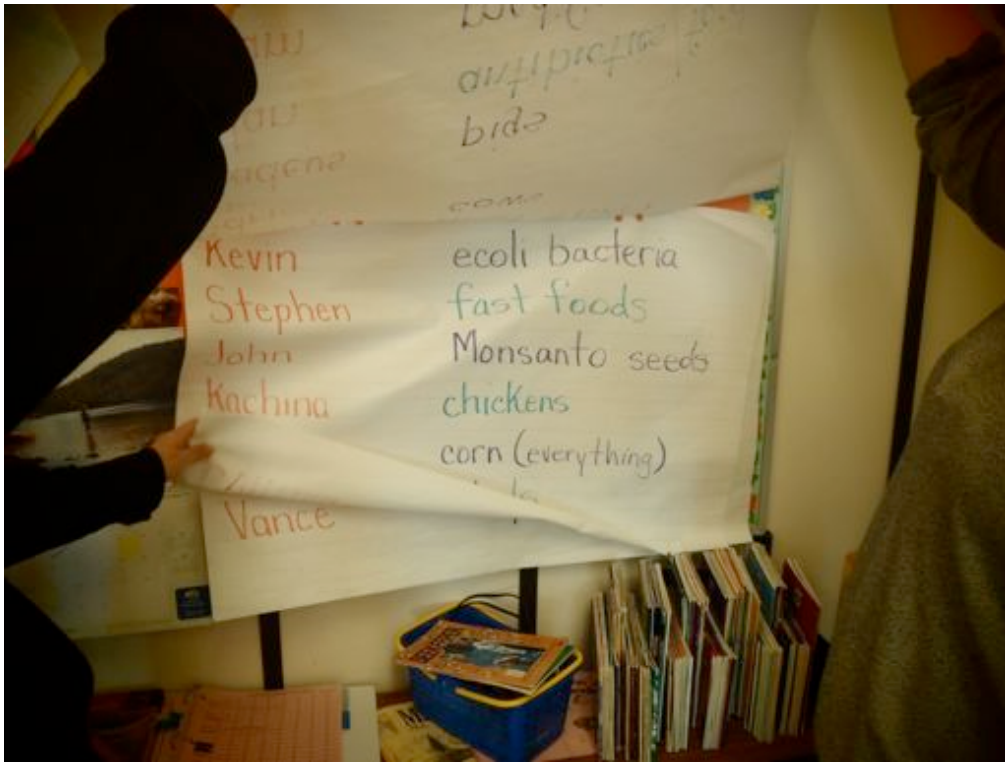


Fig. 26 Alert Bay Elementary School – food research project

Cooking and Eating

As my ethics application mapped out, my initial vision for this fieldwork included food workshops and foraging walks, in which community members would lead skill sharing sessions and discuss local food narratives. The ethics process made this challenging (with its imposition of Western health and safety standards), and as I spent time in Alert Bay I realized there were other cultural dimensions to consider, which highlighted the problematic nature of this plan. As I have noted, the key food item I had hoped to use (salmon) could not be purchased at the grocery store in Alert Bay. It was clear that dealing with food would only work in more intimate settings. I needed to adapt my approach towards working with and learning about food with the community. It was important for me to treat not just a food item as a gift but to regard the food knowledge as a gift as well. I realized that I too could assume the active position of gifting or offering food and food knowledge that reflect my own experience. This arrangement perhaps reflects the spirit of PAR more than my initial plans, because it emphasizes the agency and comfort-levels of hosts and emphasizes my place as a visitor and a participant myself.

Dinner with Eva

Fig. 27 Dinner with Eva - halibut and Challah bread

The first opportunity I had to work with food was with Eva, who I introduced in Chapter II. After our first discussion in her house, we agreed to meet again and I offered to come with groceries and cook her dinner.

When I returned to her home, I handed Eva a Challah loaf I had just taken from the oven before walking over. I explained that the bread, which has three sections of dough braided together, is traditional Jewish baking that I learned from my dad (who learned from my bubbe). We ate it with some baba ganoush, a smoked eggplant dip that I made earlier in the day. The baba ganoush was a Lebanese recipe my other grandma learned growing up there. She taught my mom and my mom taught me. The warmth of the challah allowed the oils in the baba ganoush to sink right into the bread. We ate it silently, standing over the cutting board in her kitchen. “I’ve never had this before” she said, “but the baba ganoush reminds me of hummus”. Hummus is another common Lebanese dish, I said, it was another one that my grandma loved to make. “She always added more garlic, parsley and lemon than the store-bought kind”, I explained, “and that’s how I like it now”. With two

paper bags of groceries that Barb and I picked up in Port McNeil's larger grocery store (a 30 min ferry ride away), full of fresh dandelion greens to steam, vegetables to make ratatouille, and yams to bake, I got cooking. Eva wanted to contribute a large piece of halibut that had been gifted to her by a community member. She sat at the dining table resting her sore leg on the seat nearest the stove and we talked while I poached the white fillets in lemon juice and white wine. Barb and I steamed dandelion greens, prepared a colourful salad, and roasted some yam fries and seasoned the ratatouille.

The conversation was more comfortable than before – in part because it was our second meeting – but also because we were not inert. We were tasting, touching, smelling, listening, and looking at the food – activities that carried through and animated our conversation. We exchanged recipes and food narratives from our experience, which quickly shifted to other discussions of childhood, tradition, medicine, education, culture, language, and colonialism. We ate for what seemed like hours.

Oolichan with Pat and Marty



Fig. 28 Marty Cooking Oolichan

Alert Bay's librarian, Pat, invited Barb and me for dinner after recognizing my interest in local food (an interest shared by her husband, Marty). Marty, who was a professor of Marine Biology and who has worked to advise local organizations, is regularly gifted with the seasonal catch. When we entered their kitchen, fresh baked bread and roasted vegetables in hand, I saw a clear bag of fresh, shrink-wrapped oolichan sitting next to the stovetop. Marty had thoughtfully waited for us to arrive so we could see the fish perfectly intact, and learn to cook them. We heated the cast-iron pan, pooling with olive oil, then placed the small fish in (whole) while he told us about Kingcome Inlet. This was the area where the Beans family had caught these oolichan. He explained how the fishing of oolichan is still done with a traditional netting system. Later, over dinner, Marty shared a great deal of knowledge about the clam beds found in Alert Bay and along other North West Coast shores. These are shallow pit-like formations made by Indigenous communities in the sand repeatedly in the same locations over hundreds of years to collect clams for collection and consumption. Given the repetition of the digging, these clam beds have made a permanent mark on the landscape, which has been a subject of study for marine biologists, archeologists, anthropologists and historians alike. Like Culturally Modified Trees, they serve as a date-stamp of Indigenous land use, which is information that supports land claims. After eating, we watched footage Marty shot of several local families cutting, cleaning and canning or smoking salmon.

Food Gifts from Randy

It was mid-way into my stay in Alert Bay when I found the box of Scottish gifts I brought to give away, buried in the depths of my luggage. I brought some of the shortbread, teas, flapjacks and oat cakes with me when I visited Randy and Beau in the carving studio that afternoon. Later that day, Randy was at my door with two jars of salmon which he had caught, cut, salted and canned recently – “make salmon burgers”, he told me as he passed them over. While I had given these small gifts in appreciation for all of the thoughtful time Beau and Randy were setting aside for me each day (to do story-telling, take me for walks, or allow me to practice carving) I didn't realize I had incited a gift-giving cycle. Traditionally, wealth and good standing is determined not by accumulation but by how much one can give away. This was only the first of a number of gifts to come. The most special of them was a paper bag of his homemade bannock or ‘fry bread’, which is unleavened bread that has a long history in Canada. The delightfully gluttonous bread combines resources like flour brought by European settlers (especially the Scottish), with

food preparation techniques and food resources used by Indigenous peoples. There are also descriptions of similar ‘breads’ made before contact, using ground roots and other materials in place of flour.

The butter in Randy’s bannock seeped through the brown paper bag, which radiated with warmth. It seemed like a wonderful, salty doughnut as it dissolved in my mouth.

Food Gifts from Beau

There was a knock on my door one afternoon, while I took notes on one of Donna’s Cranmer’s documentaries”. Beau was standing in the doorframe with a vibrant green sprig of plant life in his hand. “The salmonberry sprouts are out now” he said, handing the clipping to me. In July the salmon berry bushes would be producing red and orange thimble-like fruit that I remember collecting from the forests behind my childhood home. But it was spring, and in preparation for the berries, new shoots grew from the tips of the bushes. I never noticed these sprouts before, nor was I aware that that they are edible. I accepted it graciously, equally delighted by the thought as I was the bit of food. I ate it right there, experiencing for the first time the plant’s soft texture and sweet, grassy flavour (almost like the sugar cane I tasted in Hawaii once, I told him). He returned to his carving, and as I closed the door I laughed to myself, thinking about the health and safety assurances I needed to make for ethics approval. The Ethics Committee’s feedback I received (following their rejection of my first application), expressed concern over picking and eating wild plants during the proposed foraging walks. I added appendix 3 and ensured the committee that no plants would be collected and consumed, but simply identified and discussed to decrease risk. The health and safety restrictions, which I believe fail to privilege the authority of locals, were subverted in this surprising moment – they were subverted in accepting this simple gift.



Fig 29 Salmon Berry Sprouts

Carving

After visiting Beau and Randy's carving studio several times, I was grateful to have the opportunity to use some of the tools. Learning some techniques on how to hold the knives, the direction and pressure to make certain cuts, and how to work with the grain of the cedar was a wonderful way to simultaneously learn more about each totem, its story and its cultural significance.

Foraging Walks

Grassy Point

Though I abandoned the idea of group foraging walks after the ethics committee restricted the consumption of wild plants, I was very fortunate to have Randy guide me along the coast and to an area called Grassy Point. On this slow, meandering walk, Randy quietly pointed out the edible salmonberry sprouts, nettles, berries and seaweeds. We stopped at

the community smoke house near St. Michael's Residential School and the Umista Cultural center, which is free for anyone to use. It is a narrow and tall building constructed out of local cedar, with a fire pit in the middle and racks for fish. Randy explained the process of smoking salmon as we stood inside the small structure.

Gator Gardens



Fig. 30 Walking in Gator Gardens

While meeting with Eva, she showed us clippings of a number of important medicinal plants she had at her house, and the balms, teas and other medicine she made from them. She suggested we go for a walk through the island's nature reserve, Gator Gardens, to see if we could identify any of the plants she introduced to us. She and some other locals also mentioned that in the forests and boggy lands there, some used to harvest wild rice. Barb and I went through the trails, which were silent and striking in the middle of the day. After leaving the park, Barb and I collected some nettles, which several locals had encouraged us to do given their abundance. We finished our day with cups of earthy, bitter but warming nettle tea, and a nettle stir-fry.

Concluding Thoughts

These experiences with embodied learning was a meaningful way to take the role of participant in this research. Privileging embodied learning was also a practice in ‘unsettling’ the Western and colonial approaches to education which have been asserted in Alert Bay – ones which necessitate a disciplining and quieting of the body. Through this, I gleaned a great deal about pedagogy, local food, and many other local practices, which have been formative in developing an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks and for writing *Grease*.

The following chapter will explore Indigenous approaches to research and research ethics and decolonial pedagogy through the work of Indigenous theorists. Namely, it will consider the articulations of Linda Smith (*Decolonizing Methodologies*), Leanne Simpson (*Dancing the World into Being*), and Lynn Gehl’s *Ally Bill of Responsibilities*.

Chapter VI -

From Mining to Mindful Methods: Indigenous thinkers on decolonization

It is a strict law that bids us dance. It is a strict law that bids us distribute our property among our friends and neighbors. It is a good law. Let the white man observe his law, we shall observe ours. And now, if you are come to forbid us to dance, begone; if not, you will be welcome to us.

-Chief O'wax_a_laga_lis (Alert Bay) greeting anthropologist Franz Boas, 1886

I learned that experience is far from self-explanatory; that language and the ability to name one's experience are precursors to emancipation.

-Sandy Grande, 2004, p.6

Settler voices have and continue to dominate social, cultural and political theory. This chapter therefore makes a point of considering transformative methods and pedagogies from an *Indigenous theoretical standpoint*. These voices speak directly to navigating the tricky spaces of academia while asserting Indigenous knowledge and identity in its complex and varied forms, and offer a necessary response to the non-Indigenous critical theory that I have presented in Chapter III.

I will focus on the works of Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy* (2004), Linda Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012), as well as Lynn Gehl's *Ally Bill of Responsibilities* (2013), and Leanne Simpson's insights expressed through an interview led by Naomi Kline: *Dancing the World into Being* (2013). I will also draw on Western New South Wales Department of Education and Training's (WNSWDET) *8Ways* teaching resources. Conventional theory, research and writing, Smith and Grande suggest is grounded in Western forms of rationality (by non-Indigenous scholars). They suggest, however, that engaging in theory by using Indigenous methodologies can be highly advantageous in the process of de-colonizing. I hope that this chapter will illuminate the nature and need for anti-colonial methods, and therefore further explain why this project focuses on building an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks.

Decolonial or Anti-colonial?

I will begin this chapter with a consideration of some important terms. The Indigenous scholars who I explore in this chapter generally self-identify as 'decolonial theorists'. The

term decolonial has increasingly replaced ‘post-colonial’ in academia (Smith, 2012). Post-colonial has been criticized for its wrongful implication that colonialism is no longer an active phenomena. ‘Decolonial’ insists that there is no time that could be identified as taking place ‘after colonialism’, since the impacts of colonialism are continuously experienced, and are simply asserted in new ways. ‘Decolonial’ stresses that certain practices (theory and practice) can begin to challenge, lift or alleviate colonial impacts. The idea is to de-center and de-link Indigenous cultures from colonialism. Decolonial acts involve a deconstruction of power and reconstruction of some autonomy and more balanced power relations.

While this process of denaturalizing colonial power is crucial, I feel the term decolonial overstates the possibility for ‘undoing’ colonial frameworks. Many of the impacts of colonialism are irreversible (such as the deaths of small pox victims; potlatch goods stolen and never returned; logging of old growth forests; and, physical, spiritual and psychological harm endured by residential school students, just to name a few examples from British Columbia). I favour the term anti-colonial, and identify my work in that vein. ‘Anti-colonial’ acknowledges the continuous nature of colonialism, but does not de-link itself from colonialism. It stresses that resistance is a relational act – and that radical texts and acts are inexorably related to that which they resist. The term anti-colonial stresses that a relationship is maintained (in the sense that Anti-colonialism must be in conversation with colonialism), and makes clear what position it takes in the relationship (that is: a strong position against colonialism).

Decolonial Aims

I will suggest that both Smith and Grande, and much of decolonial theory, has two central aims. The first aim is to identify the positivist (and extractivist) grounding of colonial thinking and offer a critique of positivism (to expose its violences). The underlying assumption being that the lens through which settler societies see or understand Indigenous peoples inform their actions and tactics. The second aim is to propose alternative frameworks (or: methodologies) in response to this colonial paradigm. I focus on two central pillars of alternative frameworks:

I) Alternative education/critical pedagogy

II) Alternative theory/Indigenous methods in academic research

After exploring these aims, I will conclude this chapter with an exploration of ‘ally’ relations (particularly those between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers) and the responsibilities of an ally when working within the realm of Indigenous research/pedagogy. This consideration of ally responsibilities will help to illuminate the position that I take as an ally within this research project, and more broadly. Discussing an ethic for ally researchers highlights productive spaces for intercultural learning (or: room for developing inter-cultural pedagogical approaches). I will explore both Smith and Grande independently, as well as their shared theoretical aims.

Smith and “Decolonizing Methodologies”

Smith is a Maori woman from New Zealand (Ngati Awa being one of the Maori tribes to which she has ancestral links). Her work *Decolonizing Methodologies* stresses the role that research has played in constructing a colonial mindset. She suggests that research has shaped a colonial imaginary about Indigenous peoples that in turn has profound material affects on the history and lives of Indigenous peoples the world over: “research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized” (Smith, 2012, p. 7). It is therefore necessary for Indigenous peoples to claim space in institutions like universities and assert their own voices within research, theory and writing. Considering the role that research ‘on Indigenous peoples’ has played in the cultural violence inflicted on Indigenous peoples, a central aim of her text is to offer a specific critique or politicization of positivist research, the knowledge it produces, and the effects it materializes. This decentering or unsettling of Western research is a responsibility of non-Indigenous researchers as well as Indigenous academics, she emphasizes. Her second aim is to offer alternative methods for conducting decolonial research – primarily lead by Indigenous peoples and secondarily lead by non-Indigenous peoples on Indigenous terms. Her books is for “those researchers who work with, alongside and for communities who have chose to identify themselves as Indigenous” (p. 5).

She aligns herself with the Feminist paradigm and some other streams of critical theory, and acknowledges they offer useful tools for transformative Indigenous research, though she also emphasizes the inherent biases of most critical academic thought (the fact that it is grounded in a Western system of knowledge production). She sees the need to co-opt, adapt, and revise existing theory, to create theory not currently represented in academia to

give way to Indigenous methods. These methods can provide Indigenous communities with frameworks to lead their own research for decolonial ends.

She identifies not just research but *research, theory and writing* as a triad that inscribes settler power. The triad embodies a host of assumptions that become taken-for-granted (e.g. notions of human nature inherent in social contract theory, which presents humans as agents who act upon [and are not a part of] nature). These assumptions are *so* taken-for-granted that Smith (drawing on Foucault) claims it forms a sort of ‘archive’ or foundation (p. 44). This archive was formed by approaching knowledge (e.g. knowledge of Indigenous peoples) as a resource to be mined or extracted, and in this spirit, Indigenous peoples and their knowledge have become commodified. The commodity this research produces benefits settler communities: “At a common sense level”, Smith writes, “research was talked about both in terms of its absolute worthlessness to us, the Indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument” (3). To borrow a Derridian term, as long as research, writing and theory draws on this archive, it is already in “*ruins*” long before it sets out to collect data and present findings (Derrida, 1993).

She also considers education to be a central site of oppressive colonial power:

We have often allowed our ‘histories’ to be told and have then become outsiders as we heard them being retold. Schooling is directly implicated in this process. Through the curriculum and its underlying theory of knowledge, early schools redefined the world and where Indigenous peoples were positioned within the world” (Smith, 2012, p. 33).

The institutional structure of schools allowed and still allows for the knowledge produced through research, writing and theory to form a discipline (in the Foucaultian and academic sense of the word) and to be disseminated to the masses. Education is able to cement colonial mindsets established by research, and in doing so, present Western ways of knowing as ‘valid knowledge’ and actively dismiss other forms of knowing. To succeed in academia, she laments, Indigenous peoples have been forced to assimilate into this framework of knowledge (or: internalize oppressive discourses), and reproduce it through their research. Education has thus often been an alienating rather than an empowering force for Indigenous communities, she suggests.

Smith stresses “[T]here can be no ‘postmodern’ for us until we have settled some business of the modern[...] there is unfinished business” (p. 34). It is a necessity to do some ‘researching back’ and ‘writing back’ before critical theory will be successfully transformative for Indigenous peoples (p. 7). She writes,

[...C]onstant efforts by governments, states, societies and institutions to deny the historical foundations of such conditions have simultaneously denied our claim to humanity, to having a history, and to all sense of hope. To acquiesce is to lose ourselves entirely and implicitly agree with all that has been said about us. To resist is to retrench in the margins, *retrieve what we were and remake ourselves*” (p. 4).

Literature about, on, and by Indigenous communities has gotten stuck at the ‘retrieving’ stage, but must also focus on ‘remaking’: “Despite the extensive literature about the life and customs of Indigenous peoples, here are few critical texts on research methodologies which mention the word Indigenous[...]” (p. 5). Otherwise put: transformative methods require a connection between the past (retrieving) with the present and future (remaking) (ibid).

Grande and “Red Pedagogy”

Sandy Grande is a Native American scholar from the United States, and identifies with the Quechua Indigenous group. While she shares many aims with Smith (e.g. challenging the foundations of Western knowledge and the subsequent representations of history that still define settler-Indigenous relations), she places a stronger emphasis on the role of education in ongoing oppression but also as a site of transformation. In her introduction, she identifies the central concerns that she deals with in *Red Pedagogy* (2004):

[...C]ritical theorists have failed to recognize and, more importantly, to theorize the relationship between American Indian tribes and the larger democratic imaginary. This failure has severely limited their ability to produce political strategies and educational interventions that account for the rights and the needs of American Indian students. To compound this issue, American Indian Scholars have largely resisted engagement with critical educational theory, concentrating instead on the production of cultural monographs, ethnographic studies, tribally centered curriculums, and site-based research. The combined effect of external neglect by critical scholar and internal resistance among Indigenous scholars has kept matters of American Indian education of the margins of educational discourse (p. 1).

In her book, she addresses the shortcomings of Western critical theory and the lack of Indigenous scholars participating in critical discourse (which leads to a failure to identify and deal with major gaps in “Indian education”). Her title “Red Pedagogy” says much of her context and political project. Firstly: ‘red’ has been a colonial term used to describe

Native Americans, so in using this derogatory term as a Native American woman instead of a term like ‘Indigenous’, which can obscure historical violences, she emphasizes the oppressive nature of the relationship between first people and settlers. Secondly, red is closely associated with revolution. Grande’s work sees this *speaking truth to historical and cultural violence* as a foundation for revolution, and decolonial pedagogy as the site of transformation or revolution itself. Red Pedagogy embodies both explanatory frameworks (to “understand the complex and intersecting vectors of power shaping the historical-material conditions of Indigenous schools and communities”) and creative frameworks (new theoretical frameworks for regenerating/developing richer research/education) (Grande, 2004, p. 29). She summarizes: “the quest for a new red pedagogy is thus, at base, a search for the ways in which American Indian education can be deepened by its engagement with critical educational theory and for critical theory to be deepened by Indian education” (p. 28).

Like Smith who identifies the need for *retrieving and remaking* in transformative theory (to connect the past with the present and future and think outside of linear Western progressive schemas), Grande writes: “[...] what distinguishes Red pedagogy is its basis of hope. *Not the future-centered hope* of the Western imagination, but *rather, a hope that lives in contingency with the past*” (p. 28).

While Smith focuses on the oppressive role of positivism in Western research and thought, Grande identifies liberal democratic ideology as particularly harmful to education and Indigenous-state/Indigenous-settler relations. She argues that “[w]hile all societies may work to shape the biology and consciousness of children, modernist societies and their attendant institutions shape consciousness in ways that are profoundly destructive and unsustainable.” Grande claims this approach to learning is unsustainable because it emphasizes:

Independence [lack of community in the learning process]; achievement [the end of education is to increase individual worth] – lack of learning *for* the community [learning with the end of contributing and giving back], Protestant work ethic; humanism [individuals as masters of own destiny and everything is intelligible], spirituality as irrelevant to knowledge; detachment from sources of local and personal knowledge; detachment from nature (p. 70-71).

She suggests that the failures of modern education and critical pedagogy to adequately address the structural oppression of Indigenous peoples and needs of Indigenous learners hinges on liberal democratic frameworks. She writes “[...] liberal models of democracy, ‘founded upon discourse and practices of structural exclusion,’ have given rise to liberal models of education that are deeply inadequate to the need of American Indian students”, and even more pointed, she states: “[...T]he deep structures of American democracy and its attendant institutions, including schools, have been designed for the express purpose of extinguishing tribalism” (p. 47). I find her critique to be consistent with Foucaultian analysis of freedom, in which he suggests ‘inclusion’ cloaks oppressive power as “positive power” (Foucault, 1980, p. 139).

Her work employs a “Limited use of narrative and autobiography, its theoretical focus, its integral use of non-Indian scholars to assist in the explanation of American Indian experience and its refusal to engage and replay the micropolitics of tribal-centric discourses all transgress prevailing codes of ‘mainstream’ Indigenous writings” (Grande, 2004, p. 3-4). She suggests that her methodological choices break with “whitestream” appetites for a “traditional”, apolitical Indian, which completely fails to reflect her sense of self and her reality (ibid).

Shared Aim: Problematizing positivism

Imperialism [is] more than a set of economic, political and military phenomena. It is also a complex ideology which has widespread cultural, intellectual and technical expressions.

- Linda Smith, 2012, p. 22

The Indigenous authors I draw upon in this chapter identify the harmful tradition of research into their communities as being grounded in a positivist paradigm (born through the Enlightenment and consistent with contemporary liberal democracy). The term positivism represents a larger epistemological structure that runs through most engagements with Indigenous peoples according to Smith:

Western research is more than just research that is located in a positivist tradition it is research which brings to bear, on any study of Indigenous peoples, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, difference and completing theories of knowledge, highly specialized

forms of language, and structures of power (Smith, 2012, p. 42).

A Positivist tradition, Smith and Grande suggest, holds that research is an objective and value-free activity that can make sense of human and natural realities. Positivist methods are important for decolonial work to assess, both theorists suggest, since the methods reflect a set of conventions on how knowledge is gathered and codified. In Positivist research, “An anthropologist comes out to the Indian reservation to make observations. During the winter period, these observations will become books by which future anthropologists will be trained, so that they can come out to reservations years from now and verify the observations they have studied” (Chilisa, 2012, p.14).

This Positivist research reflected and continues to reflect the assumptions held by the researcher, and an imposition of certain truths they hold onto researched peoples, they suggest. Smith articulates: “Travelers’ stories were generally the experiences and observations of white men whose interactions with Indigenous ‘societies’ or ‘peoples’ were constructed around their own cultural views” (Smith, 2012, p. 8). This approach aims to extract ‘data’ from a community for the academic community’s benefit. This was the experience of many people in Alert Bay. Many had been disappointed by prior work done in their home – work that was never made available to the community and work that never had a practical use for locals. Smith and Grande agree a central quality of positivist research is this desire to extract knowledge/wisdom, images, and ‘artifacts’ from the community for the benefit of the researchers and those who will access the ‘findings’: that is, extraction expressly to serve ends of the study. Edward Curtis, a noted Ethnographic photographer, and filmmaker famously visited Alert Bay in 1914 (which was followed by several subsequent visits). He ‘captured’ many locals in camera stills and motion picture. Shots were often taken after a great deal of staging, to generate the most ‘Indian-looking’ subjects. Though passing his photographs off as ethnographic representations of daily life, Curtis in fact paid many of his ‘subjects’ to wear garb that he planned, positioned, and embellished to make people look as ‘primitive’ as possible (Dhakar, 2007, p.29). This example stresses the way in which extraction is violent (dismissive of ethics and cultural protocols), results are designed for the consumption of others, and the product often reflects violent and inaccurate representations. Extraction is, in this sense, a bit of a misnomer, because positivist research does not simply take material that naturally exists from a field site and present it back to others. Instead they take from a field site to create

realities, and bring back a very altered material or a doctored snapshot sorely lacking in context.

In her interview with Kline, Leanne Simpson, a female Indigenous activist and academic from the Anishinaabe band in Canada, highlights the extent of settler extraction: it is extraction not just of ideas but natural, spiritual and cultural resources on traditional land like lumber, fish, children, spiritual freedoms and land rights (extracting the land itself from first peoples):

Extraction and assimilation go together. Colonialism and capitalism are based on extracting and assimilating. My land is seen as a resource. My relatives in the plant and animal worlds are seen as resources. My culture and knowledge is a resource. My body is a resource and my children are a resource because they are the potential to grow, maintain, and uphold the extraction-assimilation system. The act of extraction removes all of the relationships that give whatever is being extracted meaning. Extracting is taking. Actually, extracting is stealing—it is taking without consent, without thought, care or even knowledge of the impacts that extraction has on the other living things in that environment. That’s always been a part of colonialism and conquest. Colonialism has always extracted the Indigenous—extraction of Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous women, Indigenous peoples[...] every part of our culture that is seemingly useful to the extractivist mindset gets extracted (Kline, 2013, p.3).

Often, this extraction has been cast in a positive light, as if settler society is adopting a concept or practice from Indigenous culture as an act of inclusion or appreciation. When this is done in the positivist mode of extraction, however, the focus of this inclusion is not *how will it benefit the Indigenous communities* and outside communities (to build a symbiotic relationship) but rather, how it will benefit the extractor (a parasitic relationship). Kline gives the example of the Indigenous concept of ‘Seven Generations’ – which has been a way of thinking forward to the future (the ‘family-to-be’) and acting in a way that protects/prepares the land for them - and the way that this concept has been appropriated by the *Seventh Generation* company, which sells household products like dishwashing liquid. Simpson replies, “the extractivist mindset isn’t about having a conversation and having a dialogue and bringing in Indigenous knowledge on the terms of Indigenous peoples. It is very much about extracting whatever ideas scientists or environmentalists thought were good and assimilating it” (p. 4).

Speaking to the damaging nature of this extractivist research, Smith states: “The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a

powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized people[...] This collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about Indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West" (1), she continues, "[research] told us things already known. Suggested things that would not work." (Smith, 2012, p. 3).

Smith and Grande identify Positivist traditions as: totalizing, universalizing, chronological or linear and linked to development or progress. Part of the progressive schema is to create a body politic made of self-actualizing subjects - subjects who "can be in total control of their faculties" Grande, 2004, p. 30). This approach presents history as a coherent narrative; history as a discipline is presented as innocent. It organizes truths into binary categories, it uses patriarchal foundations to validate knowledge/history; it considers literacy as paramount to development/intellect; and, it privileges rationalism/individualism/capitalism (Smith, 2012, p. 30-32; Grande, 2004, p. 80-81). They both suggest it is necessary to consider how this mode of thinking pervades critical thought as well.

Shared Aim: Decolonial methods

After identifying some of the problems with this type of colonial research and pedagogy which has been and continues to be carried out on traditional lands, Smith, Grande and others suggest a number of possible avenues for claiming space in research and theory, and empowering Indigenous communities through education. The constant in these methods is that good research begins with an ethical code and methodological approach based on cultural philosophies and practices that are established by the communities that are researched.

1) Transformative Theory:

Theory at its most simple level is important for Indigenous peoples [...] It gives us space to plan, to strategize, to take greater control over resistances[...] If it is good theory it also allows for new ideas and ways of looking at things to be incorporated constantly without the need to search constantly for new theories

- Linda Smith, 2012, p.38

Central to the decolonial methods put forth by Smith and Grande is the use of academic theory. They suggest that developing spheres of well-defined Indigenous theory, which rearticulate or denounce existing theory, helps to establish counter methods for empowering research and education. As I have noted above, many communities have written off academic theory as a colonial tool, which not only fails to represent Indigenous ways of thinking or communicating, but also oppresses communities. Smith adds that the difficult living conditions that most Indigenous people face (including disproportionate substance abuse, poverty, and health problems) make theory seem like a less immediate way to address the needs of Indigenous communities. She remarks: “Within these sorts of social realities, questions of imperialism and the effects of colonialism may seem to be merely academic; sheer physical survival is far more pressing. The problem is that constant efforts by governments, states, societies and institutions to deny the historical foundations of such conditions have simultaneously denied our claims to humanity, to having a history, to all sense of hope” (Smith, 2012, p. 4). In the same vein, Grande remarks: “restorative projects that affirm and sustain the value of Indigenous languages, cultural knowledge, and intellectual history are a first priority – against such immediate needs, engagement in abstract theory seems indulged – a luxury and privilege of the academic elite. Further, theory itself is viewed as definitively Eurocentric – inherently contradictory to the aims of Indigenous education” (Grande, 2004, p. 2).

Both agree, though, that identifying these historical foundations with theory is a way to gradually overcome these social and living conditions, and is crucial to emancipation: “The project of creating is about transcending the basic survival mode...to dream new visions” (p. 158). Rather than continuing to accept the dominance that Western voices have taken in the realm of academic theory, they both urge that Indigenous academics must add their counterpoint by “researching back, ‘writing back’ ‘talking back’” (Smith, 2012, p. 7). There is a need to make Indigenous voices heard within the academy, which influences policy and ideological landscapes. Theory, which asserts a powerful position and not a victim position, Smith says, is an effective channel for these voices. Theory is a tool that both Smith and Grande employ to not simply represent their experiences as Indigenous women but to communicate decolonial methods for doing Indigenous research or research on Indigenous cultures.

Theirs is an inherently pedagogical project in the sense that their work provides the tools for others to learn, teach and apply alternative methods. Theory is important in terms of

asserting autonomy and self-representation: "We don't need anyone else developing the tools which will help us to come to terms with who we are. We can and will do this work. Real power lies with those who design the tools - it always has. This power is ours" (p. 38). Smith introduces the concept of "Kaupapa Maori" as a way of thinking about Maori Indigenous research. "We have a different epistemological tradition which frames the way we see the world, the way we organize ourselves in it, the questions we ask and the solutions we seek," she writes. She is primarily concerned with encouraging research that has a strong anti-positivistic stance and that focuses on issues of social justice relevant to the Maori community (Smith, 2012, p. 188).

Despite the Eurocentric way that theory has often been wielded, Smith, Grande and others agree it is not productive to allow a cultural monopoly over theory. They insist that Indigenous communities can learn to co-opt and rework previously oppressive ways of thinking, add their voices into discourse, and negotiate with the academy:

As the sociocultural geography of Indian country expands, so too must the intellectual borders of Indigenous intellectualism. While there is nothing inherently healing, liberatory or revolutionary about theory, it is one of our primary responsibilities as educators to link the lived experience of theorizing to the processes of self-recovery and social transformation (Grande, 2004, p. 3).

The methods they present for Indigenous theory helps to cement Indigenous people as the researchers of their own cultures and realities, and not simply 'the researched' – which transforms power relations: "Questions [in Indigenous theory] are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, people participate on different terms" (Smith, 2012, p. 193). Indigenous methods and research help to shift what is deemed 'legitimate knowledge' which for too long has been defined by Western academy (Grande, 2004, p. 173).

Both thinkers offer highly critical perspectives on the notion of tradition and what it means to be traditional and write traditional theory or practice traditional method. They consider the ways in which flows of new knowledge and experience colour one's inherited knowledge. Therefore, Indigenous knowledge and experience is constantly shifting and growing. When they speak of traditional philosophies, pedagogies, theories or methods, they do not suggest an uncomplicated return to pre-contact ways. Instead, tradition for them reflects the complexity of cultural practice in new, often hostile, contexts. Grande

draws on Taiaiake Alfred's approach to this subject, which advocates for a "self-conscious traditionalism" for Indigenous communities (Grande, 2004, p. 57). He suggests Indigenous peoples must accept the contradictions in their (modern) lives and practice this 'self-conscious traditionalism' which is an "intellectual, social and political movement to reinvigorate Indigenous values, principles and other cultural elements best suited to the larger contemporary political and economic reality [...] firmly rooted in the ever changing experience of the community" (ibid).

Indigenous Pedagogical Tools for Decolonization

Transgression is the root of emancipatory knowledge, and emancipatory knowledge is the basis of revolutionary pedagogy.

– Sandy Grande, 2004, p. 5

Grande emphasizes that "the western form of education completely eliminated the other through all means of dominance; [education is] a central strategy of colonization" (Grande, p. viii). This speaks to the need to focus efforts of decolonization or anti-colonization through pedagogy and educational practices. Again, part of the effect of positivist research was its definition and classification of true knowledge and devaluing of other ways of knowing as mere folk wisdom - this has been a way for researchers to assert themselves as knowledge holders and the researched are mere subjects.

Given the connection between knowledge and power, Grande and others consider the role of educators as a potentially radical one. Colonial education, Grande illuminates, is part and parcel of the extractivist and positivist approach in which the goal has been to replace traditional wisdom with Western ideals in order to extract a trained, disciplined workforce:

Indian education (by settlers) was never simply about the desire to 'civilize' or even to deculturize a people, but rather, from its very inception, it was a project designed to *colonize Indian minds as a means of gaining access to [or extracting] Indian labour, land and resources*. Therefore unless educational reform happens concurrently with analyses of the forces of colonialism, it can only serve as a deeply insufficient (if not negligent) band aid over the incessant wounds of imperialism" (Grande, 2004, p. 19).

Grande reflects on how alienating the material and structure in public education was and how mainstream schooling often puts Indigenous students at a disadvantage: "school children are encouraged to develop as progressive, competitive, rational, material,

consumerist, and anthropocentric individuals” (p. 71). This contradicts many traditional values, in her experience, and prevents meaningful engagement (ibid).

Grande stresses that successful educational reform, which for her is at the heart of decolonization, must not only reassess alienating and irrelevant content of lessons but also the form through which they are delivered. She writes: “It is not only necessary for educators to insist on the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and praxis in schools but also to transform the institutional structures of schools themselves” (p. 6). The T School in Alert Bay exemplifies this revolutionary move towards autonomy over education, which she discusses. Within formal school settings, learning requires a static body, quiet, obedient pupils and linear tasks: “appropriate on task behavior is measured by the degree to which students behave as if they were in solitude, even though they are not” (Grande, 2004, p. 71). This is troublesome for many children, but in particular for many Indigenous children whose cultures often emphasize the importance of embodied learning, she suggests. The process of decolonizing through education, which involves reassessing the basic structures of the school, requires critical methods or critical pedagogies to identify and deconstruct the operation of power in classrooms and institutions, and then rebuild a more empowering model. Grande writes:

Critical theories require that ‘symbolic formations’ be analyzed ‘in their spatio-temporal settings, within certain fields of interaction, and in the context of social institutions and structures so that teachers have a greater sense of how meanings are inscribed, encoded, decoded, transmitted, deployed, circulated and received in the arena of everyday social relations (p. 82).

Through a pedagogical structure that provides methods for change, and not simply a “spirit of resistance”, can people “disrupt the continuing colonization of their land and resources” (Grande, 2004, p. 88).

In addition to the example of the T School, another excellent case of disrupting colonial practices through critical pedagogical methods is the use of ‘teach-ins’ during the Idle No More movement. I feel the pedagogical models operating behind teach-ins offered three distinct forms of resistance. First, it claimed a physical space for community learning, either outside of educational institutions in places like town halls, or in institutional spaces like university lecture rooms. Like a sit-in, this demands public (media) attention. Secondly (and unlike a sit-in), the teach-ins were not merely about occupying space to

make a political statement, they were about disseminating important information and creating spaces of support for Indigenous communities to share ideas on resistance. Thirdly, teach-ins were about educating the non-Indigenous communities on Indigenous concerns and social realities (through self-representations of issues and not merely media representations), hence educating others on their specific needs for support, and educating to build empathy. Not only was the dialogue that was engendered during these teach-ins invaluable to Indigenous and ally-settler communities, the ideas developed in these sessions fuelled various ongoing activist efforts.

If education is identified as a key site for transformative action, what are some specific pedagogical tools that can be used on the ground? I have found that Smith and Grande did not offer a comprehensive set of tangible techniques that can be used by educators – their analysis focuses on indentifying the need for pedagogical reform. This is both a strength and a weakness of their texts. It is a strength because their audience is a broad one (all Indigenous scholars spanning many different cultures and those working in solidarity) so in not suggesting particular techniques and materials, they encourage communities themselves to determine what will be successful in their specific contexts. Smith writes she is not providing a “how-to manual” – more like “series of accounts and guidelines” (Smith, 2012, p. 9). This is a strength not only because it avoids the generalization (a tendency of the positivist tradition which they have critiqued) but also because it empowers communities (teachers and learners) to claim authority over the application of Indigenous learning – it empowers communities to take the theoretical work and adapt it or fill in the blanks. The lack of direct techniques is a weakness because outlining the ‘historical foundations’ of oppression, and laying out the systemic problems with the current academy and public education results in a fairly overwhelming theoretical text. The works may be debilitating to an educator if she is not also given some practical direction in the text. As I noted in previous chapters, teachers at the T School identified the dearth of resources for Indigenous teachers that can be used on-the-ground to support Indigenous education. T School teachers were forced to teach full course loads, while also creating their own curricula – which they described as an incredibly demanding experience. In light of this, I feel it important to include some pointed pedagogical guidelines for developing and integrating Indigenous form and content into learning spaces (coming from Indigenous educational thinkers and practitioners).

Grande asks: “How can schools – which are deeply embedded in the exhaustive history of colonization – be reimagined as sites of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination” (Grande, 2004, p. 47), and Smith suggests this is partly achieved through pedagogical tools such as: claiming, testimonials, story telling, intervening, revitalizing, connecting, reading, writing, representing, gendering, envisioning, reframing, restoring, returning, democratizing, networking, naming, protecting, creating, negotiating, discovering, sharing celebrating survival, remembering, and indigenizing (Smith, 2012, p. 13). The Western New South Wales Department of Education and Training (WNSWDET) develops these potentials for teachers’ and students’ use. The resource, most of which they make available for free online (<http://8ways.wikispaces.com>) is called *8 Ways*. I will give a brief description of their work here, which partly addresses some of the gaps I have identified in Grande and Smiths texts.

8 Ways

I would like to note here that it is not my intention to essentialize learners and ways of knowing based on their ancestry. This is not my objective in presenting *8 Ways*. Even in pre-contact Indigenous communities, there were disputes and differing values (and governing bodies were set up, in part, to negotiate these conflicts). My goal is not to universalize the Indigenous learner and what she needs. Instead, I am incorporating *8 Ways* into this chapter to provide a more detailed expression of some strong, tangible guiding principles for Indigenous education that are always up for negotiation. I was compelled by this resource, because while it was created in Western New South Wales, many of the principles reflected quite closely the pedagogical principles I had been shown or taught in Alert Bay. While there is a great deal of inter and intra cultural distinctiveness, there is also a great deal of unity. I believe both the distinctiveness and unity are promising for pedagogical change: learning about Indigenous communities as non-homogenous cultures contradicts colonial representations, and the points of unity allow for resource sharing, empathy building and solidarity movements like *Idle No More*.

Like Smith, WNSWDET identify the following characteristics of successful Indigenous approaches to teaching and learning: Story-based, Flexibly-planned, Values-based, Transformative, Nature-centered, Adaptive, Communal, Connected, Independent, Emotional, Responsive, Place-based, Holistic, Cooperative, Spontaneous, Inquiring, Reflective, Creative, Experiential, Problem-based, Imitative, Person-oriented, Auditory, Visual, Non-verbal, Imaginal, Kinesthetic, Trial and error, Repetitive, and Oral methods.

WNSWDET clearly articulates why Indigenous education is transformative for communities, and what is needed to fuel this transformation:

- culture impacts on optimal pedagogy for all learners
- explicit Aboriginal pedagogy is needed to improve outcomes for Indigenous learners
- there is common ground between Aboriginal pedagogies and the optimal pedagogies for all learners
- the work in this field to date has been inaccessible and culturally divisive
- a practical framework is needed for teachers to be able to organize and access this knowledge in cultural safety
- and finally that a reconciling interface approach is needed to harmonize the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal pedagogical systems.

The *8 Ways* or methods are identified as: 1) Deconstruct/Reconstruct, 2) Learning Maps 3) Community Links, 4) Symbols and Images, 5) Non-Verbal, 6) Land-Links, 7) Story Sharing, and 8) Non-Linear. WNSWDET suggest these 8 methods are central to Indigenous learning and should be included in educational approaches. I would suggest that research could also be built around these principles. I have found these guiding principles to be very useful in developing the picturebook project. They offer brief descriptions of each method:

Deconstruct/ Reconstruct

The idea here is to begin with macro concepts (generalities/big picture) and once that is understood, to zoom into micro concepts (the details). The report suggests that there is a broad consensus in related pedagogical literature that the Aboriginal learner “concentrates on understanding the overall concept or task before getting down to the details.” (Hughes and More, 1997)

Learning Maps

This approach keys into spatial learning skills in order to organize thoughts and objectives in lessons. “In optimal Aboriginal pedagogy, the teacher and learner create “a concrete, holistic image of the tasks to be performed. That image serves as an anchor or reference point for the learner.” (Hughes and More, 1997)

Community Links

Learning should never be in isolation from ones surroundings, so this means that the lessons are not only place based but also people-based. Tools to strengthen co-operative practices, communication, and practical application of knowledge in a social context are all vital. The report suggests: “Aboriginal pedagogy [is] group-oriented, localized and connected to real-life purposes and contexts. In Aboriginal pedagogy, the motivation for learning is inclusion in the community. Aboriginal teaching refers to community life and values” (Stairs, 1994).

Symbols and Images

This suggests that it is important to include abstract images into pedagogical approaches – as they make excellent learning tools that connect young people to traditional iconography. It develops a specific visual literacy that can be applied farther afield. (Bindarriy et al, 1991). The report clarifies that this “is different from the pedagogy of Learning Maps, in that it focuses on symbols at the micro level of content rather than the macro level of processes” (ibid).

Non-verbal

This emphasizes the need for embodied learning. There tends to be an emphasis on verbal teaching and learning in western paradigms, this report suggests that there must be a space for the non-verbal/physical application of learning in silence: “Kinesthetic, hands-on learning is a characteristic element of this Aboriginal pedagogy (Robinson and Nichol, 1998). Another element is the role of body language in Indigenous pedagogy (Craven, 1999) and the use of silence as a feature of Aboriginal learning and language use (Harris and Malin, 1994). But this element is more than just the idea of language being reduced in Aboriginal instruction due to a predominance of imitation and practical action as pedagogy (Gibson, 1993). Wheaton (2000) gives an idea of the scope of this pedagogy, when she talks about the way Aboriginal learners test knowledge non-verbally through experience, introspection and practice, thereby becoming critical thinkers who can judge the validity of new knowledge independently.”

Land-links

This method focuses on how the lessons derive from and implicate the land. It asks: how can knowledge strengthen one’s relationship with the land? “Aboriginal pedagogies are intensely ecological and place-based, being drawn from the living landscape within a framework of profound ancestral and personal relationships with place” (Marker, 2006).

Story-sharing

Teaching through stories is very central to traditional pedagogy. This embodies many of the other targets (e.g. land links, community links, non linear). This way of learning harnesses well-documented Indigenous teaching methods that make use of personal narratives in knowledge transmission and transformation (Stairs, 1994). It has long been observed that Elders teach using stories, drawing lessons from narratives to actively involve learners in introspection and analysis (Wheaton, 2000). This element is about grounding school learning in all subject areas in the exchange of personal and wider narratives. Narrative is a key pedagogy in education for students of all cultural backgrounds (Egan, 1998).

Non-linear

As opposed to problem to solution or beginning middle and end, non-linear strategies permit students to wander through a number of possible avenues in developing their learning on a subject(s): “a complex cycle of learning composed of processes that occur continuously [is needed] (Wheaton, 2000). Linear approaches in Western pedagogy have been identified as a key factor in marginalizing Aboriginal people and preventing us from constructing our own identities” (Wheaton, 2000).

It is interesting to note the similarities that these pedagogical tools have with Dresang’s Radical Change principles, explored in Chapter I. Dresang suggests that printed books that embody ‘radical’ approaches, and which successfully engage readers, should reflect the

realities of young people in a ‘digital age’. WNSWDET aims are different: to make education inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing that have been excluded in schools to make schooling more meaningful and empowering for Indigenous children, not simply in printed books but in all pedagogical practice. However, the methods are similar. Dresang advocates “changing forms and formats” of children’s books so there are non-linear stories, and non-sequential formats (which is consistent with WNSWDET’s ‘*deconstruct/reconstruct*’ and ‘*symbols and images*’, and ‘*non-verbal*’ approaches). Dresang highlights the need for “changing perspectives” the inclusion of previously unheard voices, and multiple perspectives, which is embodied by WNSWDET’s ‘*story-sharing*’ and ‘*community links*’ goals. Lastly, Dresang’s characterization of changing boundaries, including subjects and settings previously overlooked, connects with WNSWDET’s ‘*land-links*’ method).

This confluence is not surprising, considering that each project seeks to respond to normative modes (modes which fail to reflect the realities of learners) with creative and transformative pedagogical methods. These two sets of guidelines, and how they can work together, are formative in my notion of a *picturebook pedagogy*.

Guidelines for Allies:

I have continually asked myself during my research and while reading this theoretical work: what is my place in all of this as a Jewish woman visiting a largely Indigenous community and meditating on colonial education?

Smith indicates that “Indigenous researchers critically engage its colonial power by practicing Indigenous methodologies: an act that also implicates non-Indigenous people in challenging the settler academy“ (Smith, 2012, p. 1). I feel that challenging settler academy involves not only identifying harmful academic traditions but also choosing to research in solidarity – choosing to conduct this research on the terms established by the community needing support.

I believe that an important facet of Indigenous theory is its description of ally responsibilities in conducting ethical research. Smith and Grande propose some ethical codes for responsible research of Indigenous peoples engaged in research into their own communities or cultures, however I feel their work does not pay adequate attention to ethical guidelines and intellectual frameworks for non-Indigenous allies conducting research. Smith suggests it is important to establish a set of responsibilities for researchers and cites the Association of Social Anthropologists (p. 119), even though many ethical concerns cannot be prepared for in advance, as my own research has shown (p. 10). The list of questions Smith poses to researchers is useful: “1. Whose research is it; 2. Who owns it?; 3. Whose interests does it serve?; 4. Who will benefit from it?; 5. Who has designed its questions and framed its scope?; 6. Who will carry it out?; 7. Who will write it up?; 8. How will its results be disseminated? These questions are simply part of a larger set of judgments on criteria that a researcher cannot prepare for such as: is her spirit clear? Does he have a good heart? Are they useful to us?” (ibid). However none of these suggestions assert a clear ethical code (for outsider researchers) that is grounded in her particular thought and practice.

Contemporarily, Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people live together in (involuntarily) shared spaces – so I feel we also need shared politics, shared methods, shared projects and co-operative work. This academic sphere is an important site for building healthier relationships.

Lynn Gehl, a leader in the Idle No More movement emphasizes the need for this solidarity approach, so she generated productive guidelines for allies who want to support communities ethically and on the community’s own terms. Part of Idle No More’s strength as a social movement was the active inclusion, and education of allies. At several demonstrations I attended, the phrase ‘this is not an Indian problem’ was raised by Indigenous activists. Because the movement responded to the omnibus bill C-45, which threatens Navigable Waters Protection Act (or, the right to unobstructed and safe access of rivers lakes and ocean waters and the right to safe unpolluted drinking water), there was an overwhelming sense that there were individual and collective stakes in making change. While Gehl released this during Idle No More to guide allies in participating in activism, she (like Smith and Grande) includes academic research in the scope of activism. She

outlines 16 guidelines for responsible allies, and I have highlighted some key points.

Ghel writes that responsible allies:

1. Do not act out of guilt, but rather out of a genuine interest in challenging the larger oppressive power structures;
4. Are aware of their privileges and openly discuss them. This action will also serve to challenge larger oppressive power structures;
5. Reflect on and embrace their ignorance of the group's oppression;
6. Are aware of and understand the larger oppressive power structures that serve to hold certain groups and people down;
7. Constantly listen and reflect through the medium of subjectivity and critical thought versus merely their subjectivity;
9. Ensure that a community consensus, or understanding, has been established in terms of their role as allies. Otherwise, the efforts of the people will be undermined due to a lack of consultation and agreement;
10. Ensure that the needs of the most oppressed – women, children, elderly, young teenage girls and boys, and the disabled – are served in the effort or movement that they are supporting;
11. Understand and reflect on the prevalence and dynamics of lateral oppression and horizontal violence on and within oppressed groups and components of the group, such as women, and seek to ensure that their actions do not encourage it;
12. Ensure that they are supporting a leader's, group of leaders', or a movement's efforts that serve the needs of the people;
14. Do not take up the space and resources, physical and financial, of the oppressed group; and,
16. Accept the responsibility of learning and reading more about their role as effective allies.

The Western New South Wales Department of Education (working to advance Indigenous education for people living continents apart from Gehl) interestingly offer a similar set of responsibilities that they call the “Cultural Interface Protocols for Engaging with Aboriginal Knowledge”:

- 1) Use Aboriginal processes to engage with Aboriginal knowledge;
- 2) Approach Aboriginal knowledge in gradual stages, not all at once;
- 3) Be grounded in your own cultural identity (not “colour”) with integrity;
- 4) Bring your highest self to the knowledge and settle your fears and issues;

- 5) Share your own stories of relatedness and deepest knowledge;
- 6) See the shape of the knowledge and express it with images and objects;
- 7) Build your knowledge around real relationships with Aboriginal people;
- 8) Use this knowledge for the benefit of the Aboriginal community;
- 9) Bring your familiar understandings, but be willing to grow beyond these; and,
- 10) Respect the aspects of spirit and place that the knowledge is grounded in.

The 7th protocol is especially worth highlighting, as it is not only a considerate and caring way to approach any research, it is also inherently anti-colonial (positivist frameworks have considered relationships to be harmful to the objectivity of study, and hence maintained a divide between the researcher and the researched). Developing personal relationships during my research engendered more meaningful exchanges than could be expected in highly structured research contexts.

To return to Kline's interview with Simpson, Simpson remarks that there is a responsibility of Canadians to "extract themselves from an extractivist thinking" (Kline, 2013). She continues:

There are lots of opportunities for Canadians, especially in urban areas, to develop relationships with Indigenous people. Now more than ever, there are opportunities for Canadians to learn. Just in the last 10 years, there's been an explosion of Indigenous writing. That's why me coming into the city today is important, because these are the kinds of conversations where you see ways out of the box, where you get those little glimmers, those threads that you follow and you nurture, and the more you nurture them, the bigger they grow (Kline, 2013).

When Kline asks Simpson what she considers to be an alternative to extractivist frameworks, Simpson answers: "The alternative is deep reciprocity. It's respect, it's relationship, it's responsibility, and it's local. If you're not developing relationships with the people, you're not giving back, you're not sticking around to see the impact of the extraction" (Kline, 2013). Doing effective anti-colonial work through activism, research, writing, theory and education, and in daily practices requires a consideration of these guidelines for responsible allies, and requires researchers to ask individuals and communities what respectful engagement looks like for them (while accepting that there will at times be difficult or conflicting answers to this question).

Challenges with "Decolonizing Methodologies" and "Red Pedagogy":

Smith and Grande offer strong critical analysis of colonial research, and highlight the material impacts that this research has had upon ‘the researched’. They make a case for Indigenous thinkers to claim a strong position within academia by not only critiquing Western methods but also putting forth their own culturally specific, culturally beneficial ones. This helps both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples re-read the research on Indigenous peoples and consider the tools for doing more ethical and holistic research in the future. As I noted, Smith and Grande both hint at solidarity work, however there is a lack of attention paid to intercultural methods. Smith is clear that her work is not focused on supporting ally researchers and pedagogues but Indigenous ones: “the book is written primarily to help ourselves” (Smith, 2012, p.17). Both theorists take pains to suggest that the academy can be used as a site of transformative change, but I feel they fail to acknowledge the extent to which non-Indigenous allies can serve an invaluable resource for this transformation. Non-Indigenous peoples will continue to do research with and into these communities, and forming explicit methods or guidelines for these researchers could be highly beneficial. Though it is not thoroughly developed in her work, Smith does recognize the potential growth in what she calls “bicultural research, partnership research and multi-disciplinary research” and she notes these approaches have been rather successful in the New Zealand context (Smith, 2012, p. 17). Grande, too, suggests “The foundation of a new Red pedagogy is defined as that which emerges from a collectivity of critiques and solidarity between and among Indigenous peoples, other marginalized groups, and peoples of conscience” (Grande, 2004, p. 8). Having certain issues represented through an *inter-cultural* lens through research writing and theory can prove to be very relatable for non-Indigenous audiences who (many Indigenous communities agree) need to build upon limited understandings of Indigenous knowledge and realities, or who need to unlearn harmful colonial (mis)understandings that result in a great deal of violence. A greater focus must be placed on how both Indigenous-lead research and non-Indigenous research with Indigenous communities can provide different but highly productive roles.

I believe there is also a need to discuss ways to make emerging Indigenous theories flexible to intra-culture and inter-culture differences amongst Indigenous communities themselves. Both Smith and Grande indicate the importance of intra-cultural difference, but I would like to emphasize this point further. I became aware in Alert Bay that there were a number of people who identified as anti-governmental and interested in hereditary leadership, where others supported the band system and band leadership. This was just one

obvious chasm that existed, amidst many other more nuanced differences. It is therefore very problematic to suggest that an Indigenous person can represent ‘Indigenous interests’ through their research, as there are a multiplicity of often conflicting interests at play. At the very least, I feel there is a need for research to clearly acknowledge its particular intra-cultural exclusions, something that is somewhat lacking in their exploration of ethics.

Concluding Thoughts

Again, Smith insists “Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized,” (Smith 7) and Grande identifies education as a primary site of colonial oppression: “The western form of education completely eliminated the other through all means of dominance; [education is] a central strategy of colonization” (Grande, 2004, p. viii). Both agree that colonial power needs unsettling through Indigenous methods for doing transformative writing, research, theory and critical pedagogy. These methods must involve what Smith calls “researching back, writing back, talking back” (Smith, p.7) and creating new frameworks that reflect new realities – frameworks for subversive thought and action.

The basis of Western research, which Smith and Grande identify as colonial and extractive in nature, has positioned Indigenous peoples as the subjects of study - it “positioned Indigenous communities as powerless and research as disempowering [to Indigenous peoples]” (Smith, 2012, p. 118). Smith and Grande stress how vital it is for Indigenous peoples to turn the tables by becoming the researchers, writers, theorists and pedagogues themselves, on their own terms. Non-Indigenous researchers, writers and theorists must extract themselves from extractivist thinking and, I would add, support emancipatory aims by offering their skills and other resources. Smith suggests that “some shifts in some social science paradigms [...] have created space for better research relationships” (Smith, 2012, p. 118). In problematizing positivism, Indigenous theory points to the ways in which some (Western) ways of thinking have come to monopolize what qualifies as ‘knowledge’ while actively excluding Indigenous ways of knowing: “The knowledge conveyed in school is usually the knowledge of those who have accepted and benefitted from the tenets of the modern worldview” (Grande, 2004, p. 71). Problematically, Grande continues, “children

and the reservoirs of local knowledge with which they come to school are not perceived as sufficient or valid foundations of real or universal knowledge”. The methodologies presented in this chapter suggest ways of redefining what counts as knowledge through research, writing, theory and pedagogy.

Smith and Grande note that some Indigenous people consider Indigenous academic discourse to be a frivolous engagement in light of more pressing material needs experienced by Indigenous communities (e.g. needs for safe shelter, healthy food, employment). However, I agree with their reply that theory/research/writing that works towards developing Indigenous methodologies are not removed from practice, or separated from material experience of Indigenous communities, instead: “Indigenous methodologies [...] disturb the metaphysics of colonial rule, not only in the academy, and model a way of life that draws Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in interrelationship to work for decolonization by marking, crossing, exceeding, and disrupting the colonial conditions of knowledge production” (Morgensen, 2012, p. 806).

My project suggests that picturebooks offer an excellent space to apply the sort of critical methodologies which Smith and Grande discuss (in addition to Freire’s, Illich’s, hooks’, Giroux’s and others). I argue picturebooks can create space to “disturb the metaphysics of colonial rule”, and function as transformative texts in other social justice dimensions as well (ibid). I hold that critical picturebooks and a supporting anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks that embody the methodological traits explored in this and earlier chapters can make important fissures in a colonial institution (like the school). “We must engage the best of our creative and critical capacities to discern the path of social justice and then to follow it” (Regan, 2011, p. 66). Picturebooks represent an under-utilized creative and critical capacity for change.

Simpson suggests that transformative thinking and action have always been a part of Anishnabeg communities, and it simply needs to be continued with the intention of decolonization. She states: “One of the things birds do in [Anishnabeg] creation stories is they plant seeds and they bring forth new ideas and they grow those ideas. Seeds are the encapsulation of wisdom and potential and the birds carry those seeds around the earth and grew this earth. And I think we all have that responsibility to find those seeds, to plant

those seeds, to give birth to these new ideas [...] That's the process of regeneration” (Kline, 2013). Though they have different ways of articulating regeneration, Smith and Grande share this sentiment. The work they and other Indigenous writers/researchers/theorists generate in an act of finding and planting seeds that give way to new methods or ideas, and in taking time to understand and practice these methods respectfully, allies can support this growth.

Though it was uttered in 1886, I believe Alert Bay Chief O'wax_a_laga_lis' words to Boaz, which opened this chapter, are still very relevant to building just relations and just research methods. In many ways, these words reflect the work of Smith, and Grande. It suggests that, foundationally, an ethical relationship necessitates that visitors will not assert their ways on the communities that they visit. Generously, Chief O'wax_a_laga_lis also offers that locals will not assert their ways on visitors. “Let the white man observe his law; we shall observe ours”, he says. When local practices are respected, this suggests, a multiplicity of beliefs and approaches can co-exist. From the time he spoke, there has been a long history of this basic respect *not* being upheld by settler communities. Constantly working and reworking ethical research methods is therefore necessary to establish the conditions that make this mutual respect and co-existence, which Chief O'wax_a_laga_lis envisioned, possible. An anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks must reflect this. The picturebook component of this project, which I discuss in the following chapter, tells the story of my experience as a visitor to Alert Bay, and pictures one possible way that respectful co-existence can play out. From an ethical and pedagogical standpoint, the book demonstrates, this means that the visitor is in the position of listening or learning and as a part of this listening: reiterating.

Chapter VII -

On Making a Picturebook: Method, content and style

[...] To work at a children's book is the most serious thing one could do, but also the most exciting one, the one which I can throw all of my self and of my skills, keeping in touch with the world around

-Fabian Negrin, 2012, p.160

This chapter will unpack my methodological decision to include a picturebook project in my work, and the specific thought process behind the picturebook, *Grease*, itself. So, in a sense, this chapter is a set of annotations on *Grease*. As I noted in Chapter IV, in relation to the picturebook and food narrative workshops, the *Visual Journeys* research project illuminated the success of annotation exercises to both facilitate and make record of reader response to picturebooks. Through annotations, participants included their personal reflections on illustrations, composition, themes, diction and so on in each book (Arizpe, Bagelman, Devlin, Farrell & McAdam, 2014, p. 311). I also used this practice in the picturebook workshops, which encouraged readers to slow down and become attentive to details making up the narrative (ibid). Adopting a variation of this practice to reflect on my own picturebook has been similarly useful process.

I will discuss the source material I used to develop the story, which include fieldwork, archives, and academic resources. A further source I will discuss is Marsden and Tan's *The Rabbits* (2012). I will explain how *The Rabbits* serves as both a productive and problematic example of a transformative text on colonialism, and the ways in which a close reading of their book was useful research for my story-writing process. I will discuss the specific themes that *Grease* explores: environment, food, medicine/health, and language, among others. I will also explore certain devices the *Grease* employs to tell this story: multiple narrative, intertext and intratext, pastiche or collage, typography, an unresolved ending and so on. These will be descriptive and explanatory goals of this chapter, which will illuminate the ways *Grease* became an assemblage of the theory and practice outlined in previous chapters.

A Method for 'Picturing Transformative Texts'

Before beginning this research project, I felt that writing and illustrating a picturebook would be a meaningful way of engaging in and understanding the medium. The graduate programmes offered by the University of Cambridge, which has its Children's Literature students study with illustration professors, and vice versa, was an inspiring interdisciplinary example, which incited me to combine the two spheres in my research and writing. Creating a picturebook is a way to do "research *through* practice rather than research *into* practice" (Pantaleo & Sipe, 2008, p. 24). I wanted to picture transformative texts not only in the sense of imagining them and writing a pedagogy for thinking about this literature, but also picturing texts in the literal sense of creating a visual landscape to reflect that intellectual work. Both components of this project, the thesis and the picturebook, have presented their own theoretical and practical challenges. For instance in writing the thesis I have been confronted with the challenge of balancing varied forms of local knowledge from my fieldwork with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous theorists to generate a *pedagogy for picturebooks* that can address colonialism and stimulate social transformation through picturebooks. Each of these voices has distinct practical and theoretical aims, which are at time at odds with the others. In writing and illustrating the picturebook, I have encountered different challenges: how do I create a book that is relevant and engaging for an audience of Kwakwaka'wakw readers, non-Indigenous readers, and non-Canadian readers? How do I visually and textually represent suffering alongside representations of resilience? How do I discuss and celebrate cultural knowledge in a narrative without claiming it as my own knowledge?

Methodologically and pedagogically, I believe the picturebook project and thesis make a natural pair. I have followed a PAR model while leading workshops and being lead through both conversation, and embodied learning in Alert Bay. This model suggests research should be a benefit to the community (it should not be extractive, but reciprocal), and it insists that the research is communicated or returned to the community. The picturebook is the way I have chosen to represent my experiences back to Alert Bay. Giving copies to the local schools and library will be a way of addressing the vast under-representation of Canadian Indigenous children in picturebooks (and other literature) that Flora identified. Working towards publishing *Grease*, and making the work available outside of Alert Bay will address the need for increased awareness and protection of both the environment and Indigenous cultural practices that Barbara emphasized.

Critical pedagogues and Indigenous theorists stress the importance of accessibility, or the need for research and theory reach beyond the confines of the university (Illich, 1995; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 2006a). In particular, work on oppression needs to be made relevant and available to the communities that lie at the heart of the research. In addition, I feel it is vital that my project (being concerned with picturebooks, and children's critical engagement) involves children directly.

Source Materials for *Grease*: Filmic, textual and visual research

In addition to drawing on conversations and embodied learning in Alert Bay to write *Grease*, Donna Cranmer's MA thesis (*Kwakwaka'wakw Dzaxwan: The Development and Evaluation of a Cross-cultural Oolichan Fisheries Curriculum* [2009]) and Barbra Cranmer's documentary (*T'Lina: Rendering of Wealth* [1999]) were excellent resources. In her words, the Donna Cranmer's MA thesis aims to offer a "cross-cultural" resources on grease "using information gained from interviews with knowledgeable elders that have participated in the annual trips to work with dzaxwan (ooliochan) and the rendering of t'lina (oolichan oil)" (Donna Cranmer, 2009, p. 1). She suggests that it is cross-cultural in the sense that it aims to engage both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners, but also in the sense that it combines "Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Wisdom (TEKW) and Western Modern Science (WMS)" (ibid). Her work not only addresses Indigenous teachers' needs for methodologically-appropriate teaching material, but is an excellent record of food practices relating to grease in Alert Bay. Barbra's documentary offers an informative and moving visual representation of this Oolichan fishing and grease knowledge.

My research process also involved regular visits to the BC archives at the Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM) in Victoria. I used the microfiche to view reels of articles not yet digitized or put online. Here, I read B.C. curricula from 1929, which is the year that St. Micheal's residential school opened, and I came across one lesson written for grade 3 Social Studies classes that I found particularly telling. The lesson was called *People of Other Lands and Times*. The first unit discussed "Primitive Man", the second on "Indians". What were the other lands and other times that 'Indians' were thought to occupy, I wondered. This resource seems to embody, in a very succinct way, the colonial mindset.

“The Indian” is seen to be from other lands – the ‘undeveloped’ pre-contact lands of Canada – the land with clam beds and not large farms, the land with old growth forests, and not with school buildings. To be from Canada, Indigenous peoples must assimilate and become Canadians in a post-contact context. In this colonial mindset, the “Indian” is seen to be from other times – in the sense that they are imagined as traditional and not modern people (traditional and modern are held at odds with one another). In many ways, education continues to perpetuate these understandings today (Donald, 2011). To create the residential school illustration in *Grease* (DPS 7), I scanned the spine of this curriculum text and collaged photographs of residential school students to show them standing on the spine. One of the pages from the curriculum text forms the illustration’s background (behind my ink drawing of St. Michael’s Residential School).

I also retrieved many photographs or visual records to include in (or to inform) my illustration. Sitting at the archives, I saw a number of individuals and families come to access visual genealogical records. I noticed how the process of accessing the archives to be overly-bureaucratic, but it struck me as particularly problematic that Indigenous peoples are asked to register, state their research interests and pay for photocopies of images that visual anthropologists or other visitors took of their relatives (often without proper consent). My illustrations have collaged images of St. Michael’s residential schools, fishing, collecting food, stolen potlatch items, potlatch events, and bits of articles on potlatch bans. This is partly an effort to take these images outside of the confines of archives, to make them accessible.

Lewis suggests that postmodern picturebooks celebrate the fact that “the boundaries [between high and pop culture] have dissolved, inviting a promiscuous mixing of forms. In such a climate, parody and pastiche flourish too as the cultural forms of the past become accessible and available to all” (Lewis, 2001, p. 90). While there are stringent copyright laws controlling the reproduction of these archival images, collage is an interesting way to circumvent this ‘ownership’. Taking only a part of a larger image (like cutting out one part of a dancing mask from an archival image and altering it to use in a new context (painting over, and positioning in a certain way to create a scene (e.g. DPS 11) tends to qualify as ‘fair use’, and not as a violation of copyright. Combining drawing and other media with collage also helps create a visual landscape that shows continuity between old and

new/traditional and modern. Lewis speaks to the conceptual function of this layered approach:

Rather than attempting to pull everything into shape, at the last minute and create an illusion of order where none in fact exists, the postmodern artist or writer is likely to let the ends remain loose and visible: indeed they may well be moved to foreground to emphasize that wholeness and completeness are not honestly achievable. Collage with its juxtaposition of disparate elements, is thus a favourite postmodern method” (Lewis, 2001, p. 87).

In this sense, the use of archival images in collage not only makes them accessible, but unsettles them, and gives them new meaning.

The Rabbits: Stimulating anti-colonial dialogue

Be clear on your vision from the start. Use good examples of kid’s lit as a guide

-Flora

Though it is not in my purview to offer a literature review of relevant children’s picturebooks on the topic of colonialism, I would like to spend some time in this chapter to parse *The Rabbits*, because it demonstrated to me the ability of picturebooks to approach this subject, and also highlighted some problems or difficulties with representing colonialism. In this sense has been the most formative picturebook to my story-writing process.

I consider *The Rabbits* to be an exemplar picturebook in part because it speaks to the extent of colonial violence in an uncompromising way: rabbits are shown holding contracts as their pens drip red like blood, for instance, while the natives’ children float away (DPS 18/19). This no-holds-barred approach reflects a faith in the young reader’s ability to explore serious and complicated themes, which I hold is a requisite of any critical picturebook, but according to Nikolajeva continues to be somewhat rare (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 55). Marsden and Tan provide visual and textual cues in the story to indicate its setting: the presence of Union Jack flags, and the mention of Billabongs among other cues, but the intelligent use of allegory broadens the story’s relevance beyond Australia itself. This is another noteworthy strength of the book. The allegorical approach allows readers to think about how this type of cultural violence and dispossession is not isolated, but is rather a common experience of Indigenous and other marginalized peoples throughout the

world. The potential for this book to build empathy is therefore broadened. While sharing the book in Alert Bay, for instance, each reader was able to make an immediate connection between the story and personal experiences of colonialism. While I have not made use of this device in *Grease*, the generative themes it explores (in particular, food) allow for a broad audience to access and relate to the material in a similar way.

Interestingly, Marsden writes *The Rabbits* from the perspective of the colonized Aborigine in Australia, yet is himself a Caucasian Australian and great-great-great-great nephew of colonial Anglican clergyman Rev. Samuel Marsden. He has an intimate link to the topic of colonialism, as his ancestors were some of the ‘Rabbits’ who “came by water” and “stole [the] children” (DPS 5/11). Especially in light of his background, I believe Marsden’s work is a powerful example of inter-cultural solidarity. As Donald articulates: “If colonialism is indeed a shared condition, then decolonizing needs to be a shared endeavor” (Donald, 2011, p. 102). This information on his family history, however, is not made evident anywhere in the book or even his website. I feel it would be useful for Marsden to include this history, or relationship to the subject, in a brief biography somewhere in the book’s peritext, as it could open up a productive conversation on inter-cultural understanding, and provide readers with new insights into the work. In the same way that metafiction draws attention to the ways form and content are constructed to generate the story, transparency about the authors who write and illustrate a story, and their personal investments, is another valuable way to invite readers to explore a story’s construction. hooks emphasizes that this “confessional narrative” or interweaving of a pedagogues personal life into work with student is vital to generate a balanced of power in a learning environment. She stresses that the ‘teacher’ must is also involved in the vulnerable “self-actualization” process involved in learning (hooks, 1994, p. 21). It is worth noting here that Tan achieves a subtle degree of autobiography/metafiction by integrating his fingerprints²⁹ into many of the illustrations (in this and other works), leaving his physical mark on the page. With this in mind, I have chosen to include biographical information on myself in *Grease*. On the back cover of the book, I included a post card I bought in Alert Bay. A post card –something sent by visitors in an attempt to relate the experience of being

²⁹ While the use of fingerprints in Tan’s work is an interesting autobiographical and metafictional element, it also, perhaps unintentionally, points to a dual notion of belonging. The fingerprint tethers us to family, but it is also used in official capacities (read: state biometrics) to confirm or deny belonging (read: citizenship). Tan’s ability to use fingerprints freely in his work suggest a certain security in his citizenship, which is not the case for many others such as refugees, or asylum seekers. For these communities, the fingerprint is often carefully guarded, to avoid identification leading to regulation, persecution and often rejection.

in a place – is a literal and visual way to emphasize my position as a visitor to Alert Bay. I also used this as a space to offer the reader some autobiographical information some intentions underlying the story. I also included a filmstrip that shows me entering a photobooth, holding up the same post card, and leaving.

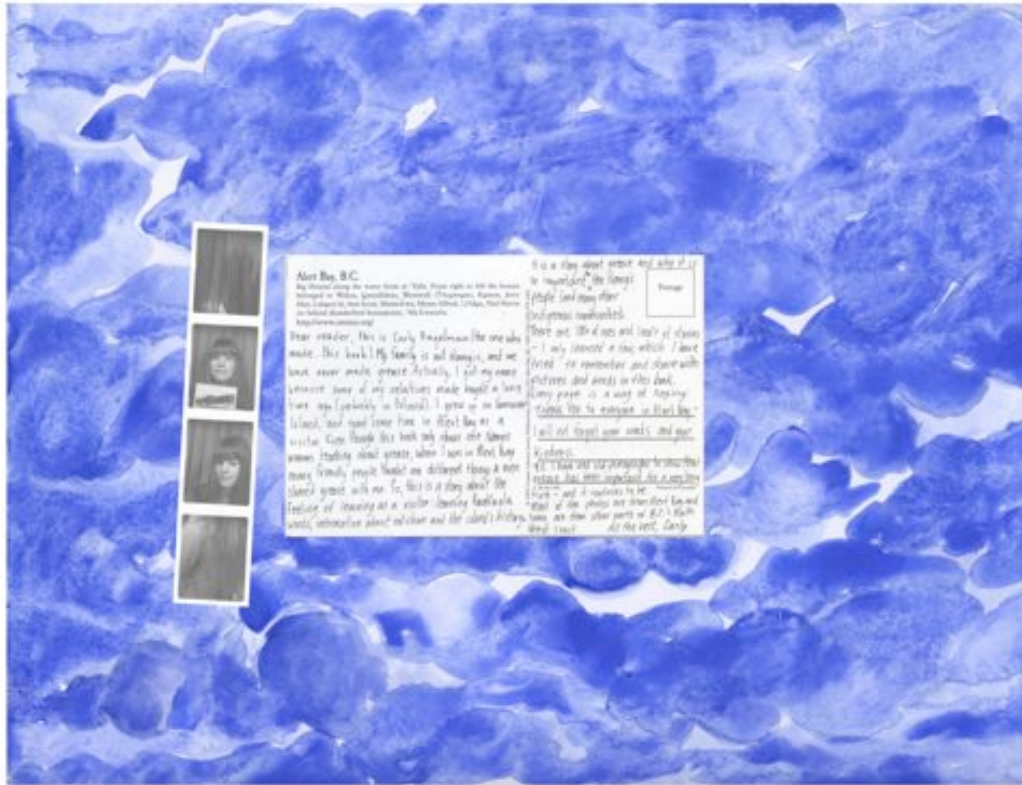


Fig. 31 Back cover of *Grease*

Marsden's decision to write a picturebook on colonialism is a meaningful act of solidarity, however, his choice to write from the natives' perspective in some ways fails to respect the necessary right of colonized communities to self-represent their experiences. Freire, Giroux, hooks and others emphasize the ways in which emancipatory pedagogies work towards making space and providing tools for marginalized voices and self-representations to come to fruition, and never try to *speak for* these groups. *The Rabbits* has allowed me to consider these pedagogical issues, and influenced decisions I made in writing *Grease*: as I will explore in the *Narration* section of this chapter, I have intentionally written the book from the position of a visitor.

As a concern for the environment is a major theme in *Grease*, it was useful to consider Marsden and Tan's depiction of nature or environment in *The Rabbits*. The image of birds

reoccurring throughout the book (notably depicted on the first and last pages, providing a frame for the narrative) seems to reflect the state of the environment. Birds static in the water (on the title page) indicate tranquility, while birds in flight (recto of the 2nd DPS) indicate a disturbance in the environment. Again, the birds are in flight on recto of the 4th DPS, juxtaposed to the Rabbits' ship which, ironically, has an artificial white wing outstretched from its prow and large white sails. Both harness the wind in contrasting ways.

In the first DPS, tribal marks (similar to hieroglyphs) appear on the stone formation on the verso. The markings are figure drawings of the native creatures, with curled tails and three marks on their backs. I found this to be a thoughtful and nuanced addition to the environmental landscape, as such markings are used in land disputes to indicate dates of dwelling or existence on the land. It also reflects land use without (or with minimal) harm. While the native creatures cling to trees and seem integrated in the natural surroundings, Rabbits first appear as sharp figures in a carriage, clashing with the landscape. There is no visible mark of the natives on the ground, but the Rabbit's carriage instantly leaves a scar on the earth, killing wildlife in its wake.

The 5th DPS has a layer, or frame running along top of the pages shows natives hanging in trees above the Rabbits' developments. This illustration is a pointed reflection of the dispossession of land. Similarly, the 6th DPS presents the agricultural development of the Rabbits. The use of layers in this image represents the difference in perspective on the environmental changes. The agricultural development is presented on the verso layer as colourful, and abundant – while the recto layer presents a dreary, damaged and lifeless looking version of the same scene. The text reads: “they brought new food and other animals. We like some of the food and we liked some of the animals, but some of the food made us sick” (DPS 6). This theme was of particular interest, given my concern for the connection between food and colonialism.

A later page reads: “They chopped down our trees and scared away our friends” - the birds are again shown flying away from the Rabbits' logging (DPS 10). Marsden continues: “The land is bare and brown/and the wind blows empty/across the plains” (DPS 13). Here,

the complete absence of birds in the sky reflects the extent of the Rabbit's destruction. Near the end of the book, the narrators ask: "Where are the great billabongs alive with long-legged birds?" (DPS 14).

The book ends with what seems like total environmental devastation. On the 27th DPS, a small image is presented inside a thick black frame, in which a Rabbit and a native huddle around what is left of the natural resources (a small puddle of water). There is pollution and wreckage strewn across the landscape, and both creatures are forlorn.

I believe this picturebook's ability to indicate the link between colonialism and environmental harm is very valuable. However, I wonder what room their conclusion leaves for thinking through possibility for change? Kamala Platt, who works at the intersections of poetry, children's literature, ecology and human rights, emphasizes the need for books that "[c]reate a distinctive trajectory that not only includes but goes beyond 'the relation between literature and the physical environment' ecocritics identify[...] books that advocate[...] social justice honed by ecological concerns and environmental issues tempered with those of social justice" (as cited in Dobrin & Kidd, 2004, p.196). In order to generate such texts for children, it is essential, Platt holds, to pose these issues as fluid and not definite. The literature must engage the reader in a problem to generate creative thinking through and around it rather than presenting problems as irreversible, he suggests (ibid). There are, it must be noted, changes to the environment (for instance the deforestation in B.C) that cannot be undone (McIntosh, 2011). These, too, I would argue, are cases for ecocritical picturebooks to take up: the devastating and irreversible state of BC forests (to continue with this example) highlight the fact that new approaches must be taken towards resource extraction in the future. It also implores readers to think about ways of living in these changed environments, which are a reality. While old growth forests cannot be replaced over night (or possibly ever), other facets of the ecosystem impacted by this clear-cutting, like the oolichan, are struggling but not beyond hope. I propose that connecting 'the irreversible' to 'the hopeful' may be a more useful point from which ecocritical books can proceed than avoiding 'the irreversible' all together as Platt suggests. Still, I agree with Platt's underlying concern for engaging children in meaningful and empowering environmental discourse, "how [can] children's literature portray the troubling reality of our world in order to address social issues and to promote a path

towards productive resolutions without shattering a sense of hope, without [...] destroying ‘the green’ and replacing it with ‘gray’” (p. 192). She suggests that this is accomplished “in an ecocritical literature that is accessible and appealing to children and broadens their critical thinking about their world of nature and people” (p. 196).

The authors also make the connection between science, technology and colonialism. In Marsden and Tan’s book, we see the Rabbits use tools and specific knowledge systems to analyze the landscape (itemizing it with numbers or figures). They experiment on wildlife and make records. Natives are made into subjects of study too (marked as fig. a and fig. b). It is interesting to connect this to the work of Smith, Grande, Simpson and other decolonial theorists (explored in Chapter VI), who are concerned with the connection between Western epistemology grounded in positivism (a scientific approach to understanding Indigenous peoples and land that served as an internal justification for violent assimilation). Rabbits attempt to bring order to ‘the wild’ and this order makes the wilderness intelligible to them in the positivist fashion.

To illustrate this, though, Rabbits are presented as highly technologized and the natives are problematically presented as virtually without technology or tools. While rabbits have ships, compasses, maps, sophisticated building techniques, logging machines, aircrafts, agricultural technologies, and guns, the natives are only presented with three ‘tools’: insufficient looking spears, shields and axes (DPS 4). This depiction fails to recognize the innovation that the natives must have to live, create and thrive, and instead focuses on use of technology for defense or bare survival (an assumption many settler communities and colonial literature has made to discredit Indigenous peoples). Native cultures in Australia (and elsewhere) of course have *extensive* technologies with tools often utilizing resources’ natural properties in complex ways. I believe it would have been positive to see the illustrations teasing out different cultural approaches to technology, rather than presenting one group as technologically advanced (though using the technology negatively) and the other as non-technologized peoples.

The Rabbits stimulates important dialogue on the violence involved in colonial nation building, and there is much to be taken from this text. The approach I take with *Grease*,

however, is in some ways a critical response Marsden's last line: "who will save us from the Rabbits?" (DPS 15). This line is problematic in a number of ways, first: the idea of being saved positions Indigenous peoples as non-agential, and in need of external intervention. Second: in addition to being protected from harm, the notion of being 'saved' is intimately tied to evangelical Christian discourses – its etymological roots are in Late Latin *Salvare* (to save) and Latin *Salvator* (Saviour). Christianity, however, was not a theological view held by the first peoples of Australia at contact (the time period that this book takes place). Though there are important exceptions to this historically, several evangelical missions (alongside government agencies) have been noted for extreme acts of violence in Australia, for instance the removal of children from their families, which is addressed in the book (<http://www.nsd.org.au/stolen-generations>). Third: these words suggest that a solution will involve a removal of or separation of the natives from the Rabbits. This final line leaves no room for co-operation, inter-cultural understanding, settlers taking responsibility for abuses of power, or settlers and Indigenous communities working together to challenge colonial frameworks and rebuild ethical relations.

In the spirit of Freire, Illich, hooks, Giroux, Smith and Grande, I feel the transformative power in opening up a dialogue on colonialism or cultural violence is to not only generate empathy, but to provide scope for action. Marsden and Tan focus on struggle and neglect survival and resilience. As the previous chapter highlights, decolonial thinkers like Smith stress the need for both *retrieving* (reading back and writing back) and *rebuilding* (shifting power structures and relations). This need to emphasize possibilities for action or change is consistent with Platt's criteria for successful ecocriticism, noted above. The following discussion will illuminate the ways in which *Grease* responds to the strengths and problems I observed in *The Rabbits*.

100 Uses – 1000 Stories: Writing *Grease*

The verso of the first DPS in *Grease* suggests that there is a special oil that has "100 uses" and can tell "1000 stories" – but the reader only learns a few of its uses and stories throughout the course of the book, which I believe "disturbs the expectation of the reader" in a positive way (Lewis 92). The incomplete nature of the stories indicates to the reader that she is only seeing a small part of the overall picture. The book intentionally leaves many textual gaps that might be partially satisfied through a reader's critical engagements

(e.g. through asking questions and undertaking her own research). Filling in textual gaps involves the reader in a co-authorship process. Lewis discusses Barthes notion of 'writerly texts' in stating: "The more that authorities dissolve and the more authors and artists abrogate responsibility for leading readers and viewers towards sense and meaning, then the more readers have to write the text they read" (Lewis, 2001, p. 91). It is especially important for the non-Namgis reader finish the story feeling as though they have incomplete knowledge on this subject, since she lacks the grounded experience and history of those who rely on grease for their physical, cultural and spiritual survival. My approach to writing *Grease* reflects what Lewis identifies as a "refusal to tie up loose ends" (2001, p. 87).

Unfurling three of these '1000 stories' (the story of the residential school, the story of the potlatch bans, and the story of the grease trails), *Grease*, conveys a complexity about the way that stories are told. This allows for an exploration of "the nature of fiction and the process of storytelling", which Lewis suggests is characteristic of postmodern fiction (Lewis, 2001, p. 94). The multifarious nature of *Grease* aims to reflect what Pantaleo and Sipe identify as a "disintegration of traditional narrative structures, polyphony, intersubjectivity [...] narrative fragmentation and discontinuity, disorder and chaos, code mixing, [and] openness" (Pantaleo & Sipe, 2008, p. 3). It is my hope that *Grease* will "encourage a critical, active stance that celebrates a diversity of response rather than an unequivocal response" (ibid).

This multiple narrative was also done in the spirit of Margaret Somerville's story-telling methodology, which uses feminist post-structural concept of 'storylines'. She explains that in hearing and telling stories, one "allows each story to generate other stories in an iterative process whereby each story is read with, and against, the grain of the other stories" (Somerville, 10). She indicates that nationalism or gender are common examples of 'storylines' – the storyline is the way these notions are not only constructed but articulated and rearticulated until subjects adopt (or reject) those stories as their own. "Storylines are collective, they are made and changed in community, but the task of generating alternative storylines that have the power to displace the old is extraordinarily complex" (Somerville, Davies, Power, Gannon, de Carteret, 2011, p. 5). The narrative glue that '3 names, 100 uses and 1000 stories' provides was a way for me to articulate an alternative to the colonial storylines, which often presents Indigenous peoples and practices as being from "other

times and other places” (British Columbia Social Studies Curriculum - 1929, p. 239).

The cover and the last page of the book, with a painted outline of a grease jug filled with a collage of archival photographs, is meant to illustrate this notion that there are ‘stories within stories’. It also reflects the ways grease is more than a food item: it is implicated in emotional and physical healing, cultural identity, cultural survival, environment, colonialism, history, spirituality, and family, among other facets of life. Donna Cranmer writes: “The dzaxwan – oolichan and t’lina - oolichan oil was and continues to be a staple of the diet and much more. [It’s] used for medicine, trade and there is a ceremony that is dedicated to the giving away of t’lina, called t’linagila (2009, p, 96).

As the workshops I led in Alert Bay highlighted, food is an engaging generative theme, which increases a critical consciousness of production, consumption, environment, health, wellbeing and so on. The Romantic construction of childhood (which I feel persists in many ways) presents a child and a child’s world as simple and innocent, while the adult and an adult’s world is complicated or complex. As Salisbury and Styles put it: “We may be living in a so-called postmodern age where romantic and idealized representations of childhood still appeal to adult nostalgia, and are still represented in many picturebooks” (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 75). Protecting this imagined innocence requires an exclusion of children from adult worlds. Perhaps, sensing this exclusion, many children seem to relish in the opportunity to examine complexities. Participants of the workshops delighted in asking: ‘what stories can a salmon tell?’, and, ‘what set of events gave rise to this banana in our grocery store?’ Participants seemed to feel there was a lot at stake in asking these questions because they were directly implicated (as consumers of local and imported foods). I hope that using this generative theme in *Grease* will catalyze a similar response. Being implicated in these questions and being able to navigate them creatively suggests to young people that complexity does not belong to adults. Maurice Sendak writes: “Children will tolerate ambiguities, particularities and things illogical; will take them into their unconscious and deal with them as best they can” (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 75). The *Visual Journeys* research project takes complex picturebooks into diverse classroom settings to consider serious themes such as migration and belonging. It demonstrates, among other things, the capacity of young readers to comprehend, deconstruct and critique

difficult material (Arizpe, Colomer, Martínez-Roldán, 2014, p. 37). As I have suggested, transformative books text must treat young readers as capable, creative and critical.

Who can tell this story?

Ownership and authorship of stories is not straightforward. Folk stories like Little Red Riding Hood, for example, have been told and retold in many ways. Sandra L. Beckett's *Recycling Red Riding Hood* (2009) reflects on a handful of different versions, and reader responses, to this story alone. This re-articulation process that takes place in storytelling suggests that ownership or authorship is determined by the particular *way* of telling or interpreting. But, the question of who can tell a story becomes more complex when the material discusses a community seriously impacted by colonialism. Marsden's choice of narration, which I explored above, points to this complexity.

The question 'who can tell this story' is one I explored in Chapter VI through Indigenous academic work on research and pedagogy, which discusses representation and self-representation. Smith (2012) and Grande (2004) suggest it is even difficult for an Indigenous writer to suggest her writing represents the 'Indigenous perspective', considering the many intra-cultural distinctions at play within any community. Following an ethical code, set by the Indigenous community in question, several decolonial theorists suggest, is a way for a non-Indigenous to approach this work (ibid). The outsider's fear of misunderstanding seems to often result in a complete disengagement (Donald, 2011, p. 92). Donald insists this mindset stands in the way of intercultural learning, and building more ethical relationships. He argues we must "contest the assumption that the experiences and perspectives of aboriginal peoples in Canada are their own separate cultural preoccupations" (Donald, p. 92). He continues: there is an "ethical imperative to see that, despite our varied place-based cultures and knowledge systems, we live in the world together with others and must constantly think and act with reference to these relationships" (Donald, p. 104).

The story I feel I can tell is the story of a visitor developing a meaningful appreciation for and desire to support or protect cultural practices that have been, and continue to be, harmed by settler influences in which I am implicated. The reader, too, is put in the position of visitor. The term of ‘visitor’ that I’m employing is not to be read as a neutral one. Visiting Alert Bay on research is of course complicated. As a visitor, I had to reconcile with questions such as: am I invited and welcome to visit? Who can invite me? Does visiting imply a ‘host’? What is the power dynamic between a visitor and host? How have visitors before me (e.g. other researchers) informed what it means to visit Alert Bay? These uncertainties are in some ways reflected by the near-silence of the narrator, and dominance of the Namgis Woman’s voice in *Grease*. While in Alert Bay, I found myself mostly listening and reiterating in conversations.

Grease mostly recounts what I learned from locals during my visit. Considering the legacy of colonizing through education (violently dismissing Indigenous knowledge and forcefully replacing it with Western knowledge), I believe it is important to hear a narrative of a *visitor who comes to learn, not to teach*. This reflects a need to actively shift the position of authority in this place. Demonstrating this dynamic (or shift) requires an intercultural dialogue between the Indigenous knowledge holder and non-Indigenous visitor (Donald, 2011). A sentiment repeated frequently in Idle No More literature, teach-ins and demonstrations was: ‘these are not *Indian issues*, these are human issues - these are environmental issues’. The sense was that it is incredibly important to not alienate non-Indigenous peoples from these debates and social action, but to give people license to act as considerate allies.

There is a call for Indigenous narratives about, by and for Indigenous peoples, and there is also a call for narratives that present Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples living in the same landscape, since this is the case in our daily lives. There is a need for books which present Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in dialogue, developing empathy and understanding together. Marsden is evidence that people from a range of social positions can compellingly tell a story on dispossession and colonial violence with the mind of stimulating discourse and awareness.

Again: to tell the story *Grease*, I recalled the narratives and information I gleaned from a number of locals I met during my fieldwork and rearticulated them as a different narrative. Grease having “3 Names/100 Uses/& 1000 Stories” was a narrative frame I created to pull seemingly disperse bits of information and stories together within a guiding theme of grease. The connection between St. Michael’s residential school and *Grease* was not a connection made explicit by anyone I met. However, I learned that Kwakwaka’wakw children were unable to eat their traditional food in the school. Eating Western food was an intentional part of their assimilation, on behalf of those who run the school, which is made evident by the inclusion of agriculture in the curriculum, and the large vegetable garden behind the school in which students worked. The colonial approach to food, which largely persists today, is to ‘educate’ Indigenous peoples on good dietary practices (read: Western dietary practices). The line “No mom. No Dad [...] No grease” is therefore factual, as it was one of the food items withheld from the children, but it is also a synecdoche for all of the other cultural foods, goods, and practices that were withheld. I felt it was helpful to draw the connection between deprivation and grease specifically (given its significance) to emphasize the assimilative violence of the residential schools. I felt it was important to include this history in the picturebook.

Similarly, I drew the connection between potlatch bans and grease. Flora mentioned the bans and cultural prohibition in our discussions: when she was young they were not able to dance, so she took up roller-skating. Eva taught me about the T’linagila – and while watching Barbra Cranmer’s documentary (1999), I saw beautiful footage of grease being poured on the flames during one of these celebrations – the fire would momentarily double in size and deepen in colour. Though no one explicitly identified these years as a threat to grease during our discussions, this seemed like a powerful image to include in the story. Given that grease is so important to celebration and trade that occurs during any potlatch, banning the potlatch directly impacted the use of grease.

I also wanted to include the story of how grease is made. I developed an intense respect for the process and the grease makers and I was struck by the way it connects directly to pressing environmental concerns.

Themes in *Grease*:

Environment

The process of oolichan fishing, touched upon in the grease trail double-page spread, speaks to Namgis traditional and ongoing relationship with the environment. Discussions with locals, Barbra Cranmer's T'lina documentary and Donna Cranmer's MA thesis illuminated some nuances of this relationship. Donna Cranmer writes on "mayaxa'la" which is a Kwak'wala word meaning "respect for the land, water (both fresh and salt) and the resources, such as the dzaxwan – oolichan that were found in [the] territory" (Donna Cranmer, 2009, p. 96). She writes, "part of this respectful engagement with nature includes uttering words of thanks before fishing and while dipping the net (or, Taga!) [...] This is one of the most important Kwakwaka'wakw teachings[:] treating others, nature, plants and animals and all things the way you would like to be treated, non Kwakwaka'wakw use the word respect" (p. 72-74). Mayaxa'la necessitates a keen awareness of fishing sustainable amounts of oolichan during the process. It means that every bit of the oolichan is used with intention or appreciation, and there is an active prevention of waste.

Donna quotes Chief Roy Cranmer explaining how environmental changes threaten the oolichan population, and hence the ability to continue grease making practices. He states: "because of all the trees that have been taken out of the valley due to logging, that the river rises almost immediately. He went on to say that there are a lot of log jams in the river that never use to be there [...]he size of the glacier at the top of the river has changed in size, it is getting smaller" (Cranmer, 2009, p. 74-75).

When I asked Barbra: "who is the documentary [*T'lina: Rendering of Wealth*] for"? She said it is for her community (to see themselves represented positively and to have this record of their history, but it is mostly for others (outsiders). "We know all of the information in the film already. Others may have never heard of our *Grease*, so it is an education. Through this education, there is a better chance of [these traditions] being respected. If others respect it, they might feel compelled to protect it. Our fish are dying. We need that support."

For this reason, presenting the clear cutting of the forest with the linoleum stamps of stumps (DPS 14) and the text “I don’t know if the oolichan will survive”, was an important place to end *Grease*. As Platt urges, it does not present environmental change as irreversible and hopeless, but change that is worth our attention and change that requires action (as cited in Dobrin, Kidd, 2004).

Narration

Initially, I considered using a different narrator in the picturebook to introduce each use of grease, and each story it tells. After storyboarding this, I decided instead that two narrators would be the most effective. First, there is the voice of the visitor who narrates her experience of meeting a Namgis woman, and then there is the Namgis woman (storyteller) who narrates her stories to the visitor. What this “Namgis woman” offers is a singular and personal account of her traditions, and therefore avoids (at least to some degree) making claims to a comprehensive representation of all Namgis people.

The relationship between the “I” in the story and the “Namgis woman” introduced on the first page, reflects an intercultural exchange in which the local guides the visitor. This distinction between the local and visitor is subtly indicated throughout the story (for instance, when the Namgis woman says “where I’m from, there is a special oil”).

the visitor, positioned as a listener, is not an authoritative voice – rather it is the voice that recounts what the Namgis woman has offered and reflects the way in which stories are shared and retold. In a sense, *Grease* tells the story of how I came to learn this story.

Food

I started the story with the nutritional uses of grease: “we stir it in our soup” (DPS 4). I made this choice because I believe food is a visceral and simple way to engage the reader. I feel it is helpful to open the story with something that links us all across cultural bounds: our experience of food. The reader is immediately able to find her point of access to the story. Just reading about food is a spectacularly (often surprisingly) embodied experience:

perhaps the reader will wonder what grease smells like – what it feels like – what it tastes like. I can remember my mouth would actually start watering when my mom read Sendak's *Chicken Soup with Rice* or Robert McCloskey's *Blueberries for Sal*: food featured so centrally in all of my favourite childhood books.

Food was the focus of my fieldwork, so it is probably unsurprising that this is how I would start the story, but this starting point also reflects the way local's taught me about grease. I was first taught grease is an important food source. I was given full, fried oolichan, and the grease to try in various ways. I heard many anecdotes about the making and eating of grease. It wasn't until later that I learned of its other uses. As I learned of these other facets, the image of grease that was being painted became increasingly complex: it is medicine; it is currency; there are specific potlatch ceremonies just to celebrate grease; it has various names (though grease tends to be the favoured one); walking the grease trails is like a pilgrimage (there are spiritual swims on the way to the fishing site, there are prayers spoken and sung, there is an enhanced feeling of connection to nature and spirit worlds during this work); grease-makers earn an elevated social status and so on.

Conversations with documentarian Barbra Cranmer was formative in my picturebook writing process. Grease, it became clear, is a highly political subject: it is wrapped up in environmental politics, band politics, and family politics. "Food is a window – through which we can see many other cultural, historical, political, spiritual facets/nuances", Barbra said.

In the kid's workshops, where we discussed food miles and the difference between local and imported foods, we looked into ways in which 'food tells a story'. As I have noted in Chapter IV, children created narratives with a salmon and a banana character meeting for the first time (the former representing local food and the latter, imported foods). Through the picturebook project, I am engaging in a similar challenge as I write and illustrate *Grease*, which is an extension of the PAR approach.

Medicine

I should emphasize that making the distinction between food and medicine is a bit false, since many traditional foods are regarded to be medicinal – but for the purposes of illustrating the different cultural roles of grease, I consider the two separately in the picturebook.

I found the medicinal use of grease, which Eva and Barbra discussed during our exchanges, was beautifully symbolic. It is powerful to think about the ways in which traditions are internalized in memory, and spirit and, in the case of *Grease*, internalized physically as well. As the story suggests, it can be rubbed into the skin to heal sores. Including this in the book is quite a literal way of conveying the sense that food traditions are an important healing force (specifically for those like the Kwakwaka'wakw nations who have faced violent assimilation).

Language

Officially, Canada is a bi-lingual country (*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 1982). However, a multitude of Indigenous languages were spoken before English and French people ‘discovered’ and settled in the land that would become Canada. The official bilingual status, enshrined in the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms (under Pierre Trudeau’s government), set out to protect the equal linguistic rights of English and French speakers, failing to grant equal protections to Indigenous languages, or acknowledge their importance to the linguistic landscape of the country. In this sense, language rights in Canada have been a zero-sum game. Indigenous languages were not only denied equal status, they have been actively oppressed through a range of institutional and social structures (one of the most powerful being mainstream curriculum/education). In Alert Bay, the T School and many individuals are making a big effort to bring Kwak’wala back into daily life.

Considering that language, meaning and culture are so saturated with one another, it is not surprising that many English words fail to reflect Indigenous practices or experiences. Partly for this reason, *Grease* uses a few important Kwak’wala words: Namgis, T’lina, Wis, Gun, Potlatch, and T’linagila. At a few points, the visitor repeats words phonetically (Gleet-nah; Gleet-nah-gee-lah) to both provide readers with a pronunciation guide, and to

indicate the process of intercultural exchange, which often requires a practice of re-iteration. In particular, I wanted to highlight the vulnerable, clunky and wonderful experience of speaking new words.

Lewis suggests that “much art is now conceived in terms of performance and participation, the role of the onlooker or participant in the process being deemed as important as any product” (Lewis, 2001, 91). As I suggested in Chapter I, picturebooks are a particularly performative form, as they are typically read aloud and animated with questions, or analysis. So, in addition to these elements, I hope that providing the phonetic pronunciation of these words in *Grease*, and describing the experience of speaking them invites the participation of the reader to repeat the words aloud along with the narrator. Will ‘T’lina’ feel like silky oil when they say it? Will ‘T’linagila’ dance out of their mouth?

Illustrating:

A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design

-Barbara Bader, 1976, p. 1

As I started to draft some illustrations, I remember Flora’s reflections on the children’s books that were available to her when she grew up in Alert Bay. She lamented that she never saw herself in any of the characters when she was young (and still today) – and that in the 1980’s when she was a teacher, there were new “ethnic characters that looked like white people with darker skin tones”. This was an alienating experience for Flora. What features need to be represented, then, to create a relatable portrayal of her culture, I continued to ask myself.

I feel the faces I illustrated are simplified amalgams of a number of different people I met in Alert Bay. They reflect Eva’s distinctive Buddha-like earlobes, Ryan’s (Beau’s grandson’s) eyes, and the full and rosy cheeks of the kids populating the T School hallways and my workshops.

I have also asked myself: in what time frame do I present the characters? I am conscious of this element of representation in light of the problematic Western tendency to present Indigenous peoples as non-modern peoples. In discussing residential schools, in which colonial tactics of cultural assimilation functioned through education, I felt it was important to represent a Namgis child in her pre-contact or pre-residential school form. This takes some imagining, of course. But, I also want to reflect contemporary state of this culture (or: culture as an everyday practice) and children within it. When I illustrate the child holding a grease cloth to her chest (DPS 6) is a very, markedly, present-day-kid (surrounded by her backpack, a copy of *The Rabbits*, and school supplies). This makes her familiar and relatable to many contemporary readers (Indigenous and otherwise).



Fig. 32 Soup Illustration for *Grease*

While I love to draw and paint and illustrate, making *Grease* was my first attempt at creating a picturebook. I confronted a number of technical and design difficulties and needed to make a number of compromises. For instance, initially I wanted the text to lie over the most of images, but I found it difficult to do so without obscuring the letters. I also found it difficult to import scans of my image into the page layouts offered by the book printers, as large sections needed to be cropped and image quality was often distorted. When I received the printed copy, I noticed a significant difference between the colour quality on the screen and the colour quality on the paper. For these reasons, what resulted is what I would consider a first draft of the book, to which I would like to make a number of changes. To create the illustrations, I used a combination of watercolour paints, ink (pens and calligraphy quills), handmade linoleum stamps (e.g. berries on DPS 2, and clouds on DPS 7), paper cut (e.g. verso of DPS 7), collage (e.g.: picture frames on DPS 1, and girl's clothing on recto of DPS 6), and Photoshop. I have found the illustrations of Beatrice Alemagna and Sara Fanelli very inspiring and there are hints of their playful cutting and pasting style in some of the images (particularly, DPS 6).

Despite the time-consuming nature of hand-lettering the text for the story, I made this choice because hand-lettering helps to stress the personal nature of this story. The lines of text are not straight and precise, the letters are not identical in size or shape like a computer font, but are instead a literal mark of the story-teller. These qualities are also more illustrative than computer fonts (reflecting a synergy between text and image that Dresang and others discuss).



Fig 33. Linoleum stamps in progress

Intertextuality and Intratextuality

I included an intertextual reference to *The Rabbits* (on DPS 6) by including an ink drawing of the book near the child's bed. This allusion indicates a connection to decolonial narratives – and speaks to the influence that Marsden and Tan's work have had on the making of *Grease*.

Grease also uses intra-textual connections to build a rich visual landscape. This allows the reader to think about the ways in which the same images take on different meaning when positioned next to other images and text. Making these connections requires active reading and deconstruction.



Fig. 34 Example of intratextual connection

I have used a number of archival images to create intratextual connections within the book. On the first page, the image of the three girls in cedar hats (in frame on the storyteller's wall) reoccurs on the page discussing the cultural prohibition and potlatch bans (DPS 11). On the first page, the girls have their hats and blankets, and in the second, their regalia has been cut out of the photograph (appearing in a pile on the bottom of the page).

Settlers took our dancing masks, gifts and
GREASE bowls to stop us from celebrating.



Fig. 35 Example of intratextual connection

The collaged jug of grease on the book's cover contains a number of images that are repeated throughout the book: the girls with cedar hats, the potlatch dancing mask, and the photos of St. Michaels' residential school. The jug with the collage itself shows up a second time on the last page of the book. Intratextuality is useful as it offers foreshadowing and encourages readers to reinterpret an image (or word) in different

contexts. A very subtle use of foreshadowing also occurs on the page with the four trees and the phonetic spelling of ‘weese and ‘ghoone’ reaching above the treetops (DPS 8). The grass in this image is made up of archival newspaper articles about the potlatch ban and cultural prohibition, which the story has not yet discussed at that point.

Concluding Thoughts:

This chapter has reflected on the story-writing process, and how it became a practice in synthesizing the theoretical and practical work of this thesis. *Grease* has been a way to play with the transformative possibilities that picturebooks permit (outlined in chapter I), and utilize some of Dresang’s (1998) radical change characteristics. It brings together knowledge I gained in the field (through conversations, embodied learning and workshops) on oolichan, grease and beyond. It puts into practice the Critical Pedagogy theory of Illich, Freire, hooks and Giroux, explored in Chapter III. Specifically, the picturebook project has been a chance to employ the idea of generative themes, engaged pedagogy, and multiliteracies. It also attempted to reflect Indigenous theorists understandings of ethical Indigenous research and pedagogy, and the ethics of solidarity work (Chapter VI).

Further, I have suggested that making a picturebook offered a methodologically sound way to fulfill the PAR model, which emphasizes that research must benefit, and be returned to the communities with which it engages. Including a picturebook in a thesis about picturebooks is also in keeping with a critical pedagogy method, which necessitates grounded theory, or praxis. It addresses the lack of representation of these stories and communities (a concern expressed by Flora), and the need to raise awareness and support in young people outside of this community (a concern expressed by Barbara). I hope that reading this chapter alongside *Grease* will give context and enrich the words and images on its pages.

A Concluding Peritext

This thesis was born out of a concern for the *exclusion of children from social discourse*. While some didactic picturebooks construct and perpetuate this exclusion, I have suggested that critical picturebooks have the potential to not only transform this exclusion but also transform daily practices of readers and their social relations. In particular, I have suggested that critical picturebooks can play a role in *unsettling settler relations*, or: shifting Canada-Aboriginal relations towards more ethical ones. The research question from which I have launched this project is ‘how can picturebooks function as socially transformative texts’, and from it, I have formed an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks. I suggest that this work is relevant to teachers, parents and guardians, decolonial scholars, picturebooks theorists, critical pedagogy theorists, those concerned with visual literacy, those living within colonial contexts and ultimately: to young people.

In this thesis, I have asserted that the distinction between picturebooks as aesthetic *or* educational texts is problematic one, which fails to consider their ideological impacts. Even those picturebooks conventionally classified as aesthetic involve meaning-making, problem posing, and other ideological content, which I believe call for close examination. There is, in other words, a need to consider the pedagogical nature of these critical books and their transformative implications. To address my research question, I suggest that a tailored *pedagogy for anti-colonial picturebooks* is needed because, while critical literacy or critical pedagogy lenses are useful, they do not speak directly to the picturebook medium and the ways learning functions in and through them.

An Anti-colonial Pedagogy for Picturebooks: Basic principles

This pedagogical framework, which holds at its core that “teaching is a responsibility and an act of kindness viewed as a movement towards connectivity and relationality”, is comprised of methods and practices for engaging with picturebooks to not only challenge the subjugation of knowledge (subjugation which leads to unjust relations) but respectfully celebrate this knowledge; to invite complexity and multiplicity in narratives; and, to empower readers to picture and enact equitable relations in their daily lives (Donald, 2012, p. 102). Throughout the thesis’s seven chapters, which I summarize below, I have suggested that an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks must:

-Begin with an understanding of the reader as a ‘reader/thinker’, who is able to deal with complex form and content (e.g. alinear stories and previously taboo subject matter)

The reader/thinker is not merely formed by the text but forms it through interpretive and co-authoring processes. It is therefore important to engage with picturebooks that reflect this faith in the reader/thinker.

-Take time to consider the context in which the books are being read, and how that impacts the reading in complex ways

This will allow for more meaningful approaches that relate material to the lived experiences of the readers, and make engagements relevant to their immediate environments.

-Avoid overly-determined approaches to understanding the meaning of images and words that make up a critical picturebook, such as Kress and van Leeuwen’s Visual Grammar approach.

More interpretive approaches allow for a multiplicity of readings, which can celebrate different socio-cultural ways of knowing, seeing and reading.

-Dwell in the textual gaps available in composite texts

I have highlighted, as do many children’s literature theorists, that both the visual and the textual each offer their own opportunities for critical interrogation, but the picturebook, which combines these modes, allows for another level of engagement or rumination: viewing these two modes in relation to each other. There can be, in this sense, three or more textual gaps operating on a page. Critical picturebooks suited for this pedagogy are those that keep these gaps open for readers’ exploration.

-Employ generative themes

Employing words and concepts can emphasize the connections between the narrative and the reader’s life and generate meaningful participation. Drawing on Freire’s (2000) work and hooks’ (1994) articulation of “Engaged Pedagogy”, material must be connected to students’ experience to excite joy of learning, self-actualization, and critical engagement. If there is a disconnect between content and experience, readers will not have opportunities to bridge the learning into practice. Likewise, I have suggested, it is useful to consider the experience of the picturebook’s author, which can highlight the subjective nature of narrative.

-Consider how not only the content but also the form of picturebooks are vital sites of critical exploration

Readers are encouraged to ask how form (e.g., typography and other compositional elements) impacts the narrative and how interrupting conventional form can create new narrative possibilities (Dresang, 1998; Lewis, 2001; Pantaleo, 2012).

-Celebrate the melding of different genres and media

Multimodal possibilities are a special strength of the critical picturebook, which allow readers to consider how meaning shifts or is enriched when images/words are put in new positions or juxtapositions. For instance, Chapter VII describes how *Grease* uses pastiche or collage to generate complexity.

-Stress the importance of multiple narratives or perspectives

As Chapter VI indicates, colonial violence or assimilation involves a dismissal of Indigenous perspectives, and an assertion of the positivist perspective. A pedagogy, which is concerned with transforming these inequitable relations, must therefore present multiple ways of understanding or knowing.

-Celebrate multiliteracies

Chapter 2 acknowledges the value of hooks' emphasis on literacy for transformative learning (1994, 2003), however, she largely overlooks the way in which lauding conventional literacy (which is culturally specific) can often over-shadow or dismiss other, equally valid, forms of representation. Critical picturebooks can challenge this exclusion by offering opportunities for visual literacies, and (often being read aloud) audio literacy, in a way that can avoid privileging one over the other.

-Increase or support critical consciousness of readers

Teasing out generative themes in picturebooks allows readers to make connections between relations being represented (e.g. the colonizers and natives in *The Rabbits*), and how these relations play out in their own lives. While readers may already have an awareness of the problems a critical picturebook presents, it may serve to remind and bring these things to the fore in new, creative and possibly more engaging ways.

-Catalyze further dialogue and self-representations of readers

A critical consciousness stimulated by critical picturebooks can shape the actions or daily practices of readers. Critical consciousness involves 'retrieving' (considering how relations and events inform current climates) and self-representations as well as other forms of action involve 'remaking', to use Smith's terms (2012). As Chapter 5 indicates, Smith insists both retrieving and remaking are necessary to a process of critical engagement (and especially a process of decolonizing). Young people engaging through this anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks use visual and other narrative methods to retrieve and remake with their own narratives. In addition to self-representations, 'remaking' involves putting ethical relations into practice.

Supporting a Pedagogy for Critical Picturebooks:

The workshops that were a part of my PAR in Alert Bay, discussed in Chapter III, were an opportunity to bridge the theory and practice of this pedagogy. In a sense it was a way of confronting how these goals outlined above can be applied or supported in an actual learning environment (an environment greatly affected by colonialism) and what tools are needed for this. Employing a critical pedagogy for picturebooks, I have suggested, requires a careful consideration of the particular context in which readers live. In Alert Bay, I applied this pedagogy by:

-Providing new language tools

This can be as simple as introducing vocabulary words (in the case of the workshops: typography, anthropomorphize, double-page spread, food miles, imported food and local

food). This suggests to participants that they are regarded as capable reader/thinkers and able to use complicated terms. It offers new opportunities for expression. Demonstrating a faith in participants' ability in these small ways is empowering and goes a long way to establish equitable relations within the learning environment.

-Creating a de-centered or de-schooled learning environment (Illich, 1995)

This means the teacher is not positioned as an expert in discussions of picturebooks, but a facilitator (who problem poses) and participant (who ruminates and dialogues). This also means restructuring the physical space of the learning environment to foster conversation as opposed to instruction. In the Art Loft, participants moved freely around the classroom; children were leaders in discussions about local food and I facilitated discussions on picturebooks.

-Asking participants to freely parse and question aloud while reading (not to simply read the text)

Some productive questions I encouraged were: what are other ways of telling the story? How has the typography and the image established a tone together? How do words become images and images become words (e.g. concrete poetry)? Participants looked through piles of picturebooks to find and explain examples, and were encouraged to make links to pop culture.

-Encouraging participants to identify and voice concrete connections between themes being explored in critical picturebooks and their experience

As we considered the theme of local vs. imported food through food narratives, the grocery store activity (discussed in Chapter IV) encouraged participants to identifying and voicing connections. They were able to discuss this and other experiences (like family practices of berry picking) in relation to our picturebook and food discussions.

-Inviting embodied learning

One powerful way of making material relevant is to consider how it affects their physical, embodied realities, and to include (rather than silence and discipline) the body in learning (O'Loughlin, 2006). For the workshop's initial food miles pre-teaching activity, I brought bananas from the grocery store as a 'teaching aid' to illustrate imported food. The follow-up grocery store activity had participants physically interacting with food in their town, and collecting produce stickers to indicate the food's origins. In the following workshop, they discussed their reflections while eating banana bread I made from the 'teaching aid', which emphasized the relevance or direct impact of our activities and discussions on our bodies and physical wellbeing.

-Identifying and discussing specific tools or devices (like metafiction) used in critical picturebooks through annotation exercises

Readers can utilize these tools while making their own double page spreads. This was a way for participants to synthesize this understanding of devices, narrative styles, new language tools (e.g. vocabulary), and generative theme of food in their own self-representations.

-Offer open-ended activities (such as a double-page spread activity) that facilitate the expression of self-representations

These self-representations can be a place to combine reflections on personal experience, new language tools, and tools or techniques identified in picturebooks, and most importantly, encourage participants to ‘speak’ for themselves.

Constructing Pedagogy Through Theory and Practice:

To generate the above principles and tools, my thesis has drawn on picturebook theory, critical pedagogy theory and Indigenous theory as well as conversations, embodied learning and workshops. I will now provide a brief review of how my thesis has explored this content:

Chapter I - Picturing Transformative Texts responded to my research question by outlining five specific qualities that critical picturebooks can exhibit to give way to transformative learning: 1) the flexibility of the form enabling it to cross generic bounds 2) the accessible nature of composite texts 3) the textual gaps permitting co-authorship and critique 4) the dialogical or performative nature, and 5) the independence from institutional education (or: creative freedom). I also identify Dresang’s Radical Change characteristics (or devices) which help to fulfill these five qualities: 1) Changing Forms and Formats (e.g. words and pictures reaching “new levels of synergy”) 2) changing perspectives (e.g. narratives with multiple perspectives, and previously unheard voices) and 3) challenging boundaries (e.g. inclusion of “subjects previously forbidden”, new settings, and unresolved endings). This chapter also considers some of the limitations of the medium to incite transformative learning: 1) didactic or limiting mediation 2) the force of an institutionalized logic restricting the freedom of texts 3) material problems hindering access, and 4) reductive visual grammar. These limitations drew attention to facets that a pedagogy for picturebooks need to confront and challenge. Following chapters suggested a few ways through these problems.

Having discussed the potential for picturebooks to function as a transformative texts, *Chapter II - Contextual Wisdom* explored details of my fieldwork in Alert Bay, where the spectrum of pre-colonial, colonial, and anti-colonial pedagogy has taken place. This chapter introduced key figures who, through generously sharing their time, contributed to my understanding of colonialism, food knowledge or practices and local pedagogies. I explored this through the use of vignettes, which unfold the exchanges with each of these

locals and their important insights on grounded pedagogy. These conversations, mostly stimulated by the generative theme of food, became an exploration of locals' encounters with colonialism and their anti-colonial pedagogical methods. This chapter, therefore, gave a sense of the context in which my fieldwork took place. Themes that emerged from these vignettes included: the pedagogical importance of embodied learning, story-telling, self-representations, solidarity work for empathy-building, multiple literacies, holistic learning, teaching and learning as a cultural responsibility, and knowledge seen as shared or communal with the end of supporting community and the environment. These locals identified a set of impediments to fulfilling their pedagogies. These challenges include: methodologically-unfit training for teachers of Indigenous pedagogy, the lack of appropriate teaching resources for Indigenous learning aims (e.g. lesson plans), a lack of Indigenous representation in children's literature, exclusion of elders as 'teachers' in institutional education settings due to credentials processes, and ongoing subjugation of cultural knowledge (e.g. food practices) as non-academic/intellectual. This chapter, therefore established setting of Alert Bay and unpacked some grounded approaches to transformative pedagogy, dictated by this context, its history and culture. This informed my engagement with Critical Pedagogy theory in the following chapter (which was read through the lens of grounded practice), the research design for workshops in Alert Bay, and the tone of the picturebook project.

Chapter III – Theoretical Frameworks: Unpacking critical pedagogy considered the connections and divergences that exist between the contextual wisdom on pedagogy (explored in the previous chapter) and theoretical perspectives on critical pedagogy. In particular, it engaged with the insights of Illich, Freire, hooks and Giroux. While acknowledging the diverse ways of framing critical pedagogy, I identified some shared concerns for the following questions within this vast body of thought: what qualifies as or what is privileged as knowledge; what is excluded from 'knowledge' (or, subjugated knowledge); who teaches and how is this teaching role earned; how is knowledge conveyed through the teaching process (e.g. drills, dialogue, practice); does the approach to education aid in the empowerment of students and community, does the content of lessons reflect the lived realities of students and their specific contexts, and what is the setting and structure of the teaching-learning environment? Illich (1995) highlights problems with institutionalized education (outsourcing knowledge to 'experts', owning and commodifying knowledge through credential-ization, delegitimizing

traditional/inherited/intuitive/embodied knowledges). Similarly, Freire (2000) critiques ‘banking knowledge’ systems and makes a case for the use of generative themes in education that reflect lived realities of students, which also requires dialogue to raise a critical consciousness. While Illich calls for the abolishment of schools, Giroux (2006) explores their capacity for transformative learning, which must involve strong ties between schools and communities. Opening schools to different forms of knowledge by integrating community means students will need multiple literacies. I also add hooks’ powerful formulation of ‘engaged pedagogy’ (1994) to this conversation – which gauges a successful pedagogy by its ability to excite students. Only when learning is joyful will students feel empowered and see how knowledge can transform their lived realities (and material will only excite when it is relevant to lived realities), according to hooks (ibid). As Chapter I suggested, critical picturebooks can be a productive site for this critical pedagogy or transformative learning.

Chapter IV – Fieldwork: A practice in unsettling described the research design I developed for doing fieldwork in Alert Bay, and explains the changes it went through when put into practice. This chapter was organized into two parts. Part 1 explained the methodological and ethical dimensions behind the fieldwork. Here, I outlined Freire’s Participatory Action Research method (2000, 1982), and how its emphasis on embodied learning, reciprocal knowledge-exchange, and research benefitting the community was fitting for this project. I explored the university’s ethics application process and the problems it posed within the context of Alert Bay. I then proposed local conceptions of research ethics by contrast. Part II outlined the picturebook workshops that I facilitated with children and, separately, with young adults and adults. In these workshops, we explored the composite narrative structures of critical picturebook, looking at elements of form and style such as typography and page-layout and common literary devices like anthropomorphizing. As food was a guiding generative theme for these workshops, we then discussed food miles and participants made their own food narratives, exploring their relationships to imported and local food, in the form of a double-page spread. These workshops allowed me to put critical pedagogy theory into practice, and to see young people engage directly with transformative picturebooks.

Chapter V - A Body of Work: Elaborating on embodiment and fieldwork discussed the importance of embodied learning to this pedagogy, drawing on the work of O’Loughlin, who makes a distinction between discursive and practical consciousness (2006, p. 143). The latter, she explains, is “the realm of the body and emotion” wherein meaningful learning takes place – an assertion also reflected by the PAR method, and the theorists explored in Chapter III (ibid). Considering the clear connection between bodies and the generative theme of food, central to my fieldwork, I placed an emphasis on participating in embodied learning not only through the workshops outlined in Chapter IV but also through activities such as cooking, eating, canoeing, carving, hiking, crabbing, clam digging and gardening, which this chapter explores. These activities allowed me to look at local pedagogy in practice, which helped me to develop an anti-colonial framework.

Chapter VI – From Mining to Mindful Methods: Indigenous thinkers on decolonization discussed the ways in which Indigenous theoretical perspectives (from Indigenous thinkers) frame ethical research and critical pedagogy on colonialism. I focused primarily on Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012), and Grande’s *Red Pedagogy* (2004). I teased out two of the guiding aims of decolonial work: 1) identifying the positivist and extractivist basis of colonial thinking and offering a critique of positivism (to expose its violences); and, 2) proposing alternative frameworks (or: methodologies) in response to this colonial paradigm. I then highlighted two key sites that Smith and Grande insist must be decolonized: education, and theory/research methods. In both sites, they stress that Indigenous communities must take on the role of pedagogues and researchers of their own homes. I also stress that it is productive for these communities to set the ethical standards and methodologies for non-Indigenous teachers and researchers working in solidarity with them. Indigenous academics counter colonial logics by “researching back, ‘writing back’ ‘talking back’” or ‘retrieving’ of subjugated knowledges (Smith, 7). The next step is ‘remaking’ frameworks and institutions (e.g. schools, thoughtful literature) so they empower communities in the present (ibid). To illustrate a powerful example of this ‘remaking’, I drew upon the Western New South Wales Department of Education and Training’s *8 Ways* resource. Considering Indigenous Theory in relation to this practical resource was helpful in developing an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks. I closed this chapter with an ethical exploration of inter-cultural solidarity work, from an Indigenous

perspective, which elucidates my role as a researcher in Alert Bay – or as a researcher of anti-colonial pedagogy.

Chapter VII - On Making a Picturebook: Method, content and style served as a type of annotation for the picturebook, *Grease*. I discussed the methodological reasons and pedagogical motivations for including *Grease* in my research and suggested that making a picturebook is a way for me to do “research *through* practice rather than research *into* practice” (Pantaleo & Sipe, 24). I indicated that the picturebook project is consistent with the PAR model used in my fieldwork. Providing Alert Bay’s schools and library with copies is a way to bring my research back to the community, take my research outside of a university setting and address what Flora identifies as a vast under-representation of Indigenous children in picturebooks. Working towards publishing *Grease*, and making the work available outside of Alert Bay will aim to address Barbra’s concern for increased awareness and protection of both the environment and Indigenous cultural practices. Additionally, I expressed that it is important for my project (being concerned with picturebooks, and children’s critical engagement) to involve children directly. In this chapter I also unpack *The Rabbits*. Though it was not within the purview of this project to offer a comprehensive literature review of relevant children’s picturebooks on the topic of colonialism, I engaged with this particular example because was very formative to me (especially while writing *Grease*). The last section of this chapter explained the form and content of *Grease*, for instance: my choice of narrator for the story, the use of multiple narratives, the representations of nature or environment, and the use of collage). As I have demonstrated, the theoretical and practical dimensions of this research project came together in making *Grease*, which itself was another form of practice. While this thesis explored ways in which picturebooks can function as socially transformative texts, making *Grease* applied these concepts directly and was an experiment in generating such a text.

Future Work:

As PAR is a longitudinal or ongoing practice, which involves sharing the results of one’s research, my work with Alert Bay will continue. Specifically, the first steps I will be taking to develop this project beyond the thesis, and to relate material to fieldwork participants is to work with the picturebook (*Grease*) in Alert Bay (and elsewhere on Vancouver Island).

I would like for as many participants from my fieldwork to read, discuss and offer annotations on *Grease* in both group workshop and one-on-one sessions, recorded with audio equipment. This reader response process will allow for further ruminations on anti-colonial pedagogy and the potentials of picturebooks to stimulate transformative dialogue and action. I intend to write an article about this experience of writing and sharing the book, making direct use of the voice recordings (reader response), and look to have it published in a relevant Social Science journal. Not only will discussing and analyzing *Grease* with participants, and reworking the book so that it reflects this feedback be an ethical way of working with the material, it will also allow me to move ahead with publishing and distributing a book that the community supports.

Further, the process of discussing and annotating *Grease* will serve as a springboard to developing participants' personal food narratives. After parsing *Grease*, I will hold storyboarding workshops, in which participants can create a basic narrative structure (which I will pre-teach storyboarding by showing the storyboards I created for *Grease*). I intend like to connect the participants who develop storyboards with visual artists in the community, like Beau, or with their peers. Some may also choose to work on their own. The goal will be to create short visual food narratives. I will encourage a zine³⁰ approach to putting together these stories, because this requires very few material resources, and zines stress the use of unpolished techniques (like cutting and pasting magazines or recipe books, and photocopying found objects or doodled images), which make for quick and manageable projects to produce. One of the sessions I will lead will be on simple bookbinding techniques using needles and thread, so the participants will develop the skills to create similar works in the future, with only a few dollars. This will hopefully indicate the ease with which one can create and share a narrative to represent personal experience, and how composite texts are particularly powerful sites for this representation.

Following this work in Alert Bay, my long-term goal for extending this work is firstly through generating anti-colonial resources for (primarily) Canadian schools and secondly providing professional development for mainstream educators. The resources will aim to

³⁰ Zines are short and often unpolished booklets of self-published work, in someways reflecting a magazine structure in its use of images and text. They have been widely utilized by social movements such as the the Riot Grrrl movement (a movememnt which emerged at the intersection of punk music and 3rd wave femininism) to widely distribute a range of visual, political, social, cultural and popcultural content.

engage young people in discussions on colonial history and current events on Canada-Aboriginal relations. Through problem posing and employing generative themes appropriate to the educational context, the materials will aim to stimulate dialogue with young people in an interdisciplinary manner (for instance: interweaving news media and photojournalism on relevant current events, with picturebook and other visual narratives). In addition to addressing the lack of critical education on Indigenous relations, politics and culture in Canada's mainstream schools, it will also aim to support students' visual literacy skills, critical thinking skills and provide new tools for students' self-representations. This builds upon both previous work with the critical thinking consortium and the work I began to put into practice through fieldwork for this project. The methods used through the Visual Journeys project will continue to serve as a valuable touchstone for using visual methods with young people.

I am interested in providing professional development for B.C. teachers to support the use of anti-colonial methods in classrooms generally, and, specifically, to support the use of the resources I will develop. Through this, I hope for teachers to learn how to critically assess the learning context (or the lived realities of their students) in order to identify and discuss generative themes, problem pose, and promote and support visual literacy. Training will identify problematic pedagogical approaches to Indigenous content (i.e. treating historical violence and contemporary inequalities as taboo, or failing to engage with Indigenous perspectives), as well as problematic colonial methods (failing to acknowledge and use multiliteracies, a lack of embodied learning, hierarchical classroom structures, positivist approaches to building knowledge and so on), which I suggest operate more subtly through all curricula than does the former.

This thesis, and the work which will follow, addresses the exclusion of children from social discourse and specifically, the problematic taboo surrounding colonialism. It holds that the picturebook is a potentially transformative medium, which can unsettle this exclusion and taboo. Growing up in Canada, where I received an inadequate education on our colonial history and current relations, and an lacking education on Indigenous peoples and their living cultures, I have identified this as a vital ethical and educational need. Again, as Donald suggests: "If colonialism is indeed a shared condition, then decolonizing needs to be a shared endeavor" (p. 102). This project has largely been an effort to 'share'

this endeavor by thinking about how picturebooks, a medium that has always inspired and compelled me, can stimulate meaningful dialogue and action. I have therefore offered an anti-colonial pedagogy for picturebooks and a picturebook, which aims to reflect this pedagogy.

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