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Significant Life Experiences and Long-term Orientations to the Seashore

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Why do some people take the view that all of creation is connected and sacred and therefore should be respected and protected, or the view that humans are the experimenters, dominators, and controllers of the seashore? While others see the seashore as an ecological system of interconnected plants, animals, water, etc., that should be preserved for the sustainability of the planet. Why do some people take the view that humans can harvest the seashore for their own benefit even at the expense of environmental degradation, or that nature is to be admired and protected for its integrity and beauty? Yet others see nature as primarily a source of recreation, relaxation, and enjoyment?

Some of the above phrases are more reflective of a Eurocentric worldview, while others are more reflective of an Indigenous worldview. Some phrases are reflective of an Indigenous spiritual orientation, while others reflect a Christian orientation. Some phrases reflect a Western scientific orientation, while others reflect a utilitarian or aesthetic or recreational orientation. The way we view the world is a product of the sum total of our life experiences.

A question one might consider regarding the 'Yalis study, is why do the students (and adult participants) view the seashore differently? What significant life experiences in their teenage and adult years contributed to the creation of different orientations? How stable are orientations over the long term? What life triggering events would provide an impetus for some of the participants to re-evaluate their career choices?

As described in chapter 4, in 1982 I interviewed a class of Grade 6 students in 'Yalis, located on the North Coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, using metaphor interviews to describe the students' orientations to the seashore. The metaphor interviews enabled the identification of six students: the student with a preferred science orientation to the seashore (Dan), the student with a preferred spiritual orientation to the seashore (Luke), the student with a preferred aesthetic orientation (Mary), the student with a preferred utilitarian orientation (Jimmy), the student with a preferred recreational orientation (Anna), and the student with no preferred orientation to the seashore, but a combination of several strong orientations (Sharon). Because orientations were thought to be deeply rooted aspects of our conceptual system, it was assumed that there would be a certain stability of orientations over time (Snively, 1986, 1987, 1990).

In 2001, nineteen years after the Grade 6 study, I located and interviewed five of the six participants in an attempt to describe and analyze their adult orientations to the seashore. The intent of the longitudinal

study was not to determine their long-term recall of science instruction and the retention of marine ecology concepts, but to describe the stability of the participants' orientations to the seashore into adulthood. In addition, the adults were asked questions related to personal aspirations, life experiences, and career choices. I wanted to know if there would be a relationship between their childhood career aspirations and their adult career choices.

In this chapter, I focus on the adult orientations of Dan, Luke, Mary, Jimmy, and Anna. Sharon, a student of European ancestry, moved away from 'Yalıis shortly after the 1982 study, and I was not able to locate anyone who knew where she or her family had moved.

Significant Life Experiences

When adults are asked to reflect and comment on the path taken to reach their current place in life, the response often involves the recounting of an important life experience that had special meaning. This type of incident is referred to as a "significant life experience" (Tanner, 1980; Chawla, 1998, 2001). Similarly, "critical incidents are life events that have a great impact on a person and that appear important to an outsider" (Shuman & Ham, 1997, p. 29). "The phrase 'formative experience' is also used to describe an experience that had a profound effect on a person's life direction. "Chance encounters with other people may also affect a person's life path" (Ottvad, 2002, p. 10). These unexpected experiences can act as catalysts that alter the course of one's life.

As we shall see from the analysis of the 'Yalıis study, a myriad of additional factors described in this research as "external life-altering circumstances," such as seriously declining salmon populations, the state of the local economy, pressures of supporting a family, a university education, the Christian church, and cultural changes in the community can also affect one's adult orientations and choice of career.

Methodology

In 2001, I travelled to 'Yalıis to interview and tape-record the adult participants using the same metaphor questions that I employed in the 1982 study. I transcribed the tapes and analyzed the metaphor responses to identify their adult orientations. I then interviewed the adults again to determine if they agreed with my interpretation of both their 1982 and 2001 orientations. This was the first time that the construct of orientations had been described to the participants. In addition, I asked questions related to their career choices, life experiences, and personal aspirations.

When I visited Yális in 2001, the community had changed a considerable extent. Most notable were far fewer commercial fishing boats in the harbour, especially the very large seiners. The salmon and herring fishery had both experienced serious decline. One of the big, old fish cannery buildings along the waterfront had been torn down and in its place a boardwalk constructed. A second cannery on the reserve is still there and used as a fishnet loft where fishermen make, repair and store nets; and where the Elders and knowledge holders fast freeze elk, fish and other food products to distribute throughout the community. The beautiful new band-operated T'lisalagi'lakw School is decorated with First Nations art, carvings, and photography. Although the old brick Anglican St. Michael's Residential School building still stood, many Elders and community members discussed the possibility of tearing down the building as it was a reminder of "a very dark time" (it was demolished in February 2015). The old 'Namgis Traditional Big House that served as the social and cultural centre for the community burned down in 1997, the work of an arsonist, and was replaced in 1999 by a new Big House with ornately carved and painted red cedar poles and figures (Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1 ▲ Front of Namgis Big House, Alert Bay. Photo by A. Davey. CC-BY 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/adavey/4666465323>

The new Big House, considered one of the largest and most impressive structures of its type on the West Coast, continues to host important ceremonial events—marriages, burials, and winter ceremonies complete with elaborate regalia, ancient dances, songs, and stories (Figures 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4).



Figure 6.2 ◀ Natalya Child, Tlakwetlgenaxw and Kiara Child, Tlakwagila'ogwa, 'Salmon Twin Dancers, Kwakiutl Bighouse, Tsaxis, Fort Rupert, BC. Photo by J.R. Rardon (2013).



Figure 6.3 ▲ Mark Isaac, Hoylikala Dancer, Yq̓l̓is (Alert Bay) Bighouse. Photo by Sharon Eva Grainger (2018).



Figure 6.4 ▲ After the potlatch ban was lifted, the Kwakwaka'wakw could hold potlatches as formerly. The T'sasala Cultural Group sing and dance in the big house, and tell their stories. Traditional Kwakwaka'wakw dances are performed by the T'sasala Dance group

The 'Umista Cultural Centre continued to work towards the preservation and celebration of the traditional Kwakwaka'wakw culture (Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.5 ▲ The mandate of the U'mista Cultural Society is to ensure the survival of all aspects of the cultural heritage of the Kwakwaka'wakw. U'mista Cultural Centre entrance. Photo by Brian Burger. CC-BY 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wirelizard/27005400>



Figure 6.6 ▲ U'mista Cultural Centre [back of building]. Photo by Roger Meike. CC-BY-NC-ND 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rogermeike/3913708749/>

The heritage buildings, U'mista Cultural Centre, Big House, impressive totem poles, cultural events and whale tours encourage a growing tourist industry. Despite an often-difficult history with government, residential schools, fisheries, and church issues, the 'Yalis community continued its history of both Indigenous and “pioneer” or European and Asian newcomers living side by side in relative harmony.

Adult Orientations to the Seashore

Luke's Adult Orientations

For the longitudinal study I traveled to the metropolitan city of Vancouver to interview Luke. The results of Luke's metaphor interviews show that he continued to prefer a spiritual orientation to the seashore, as evidenced by the greatest proportion of his responses reflecting the spiritual beliefs of the traditional Kwakwaka'wakw people, followed by a mix of aesthetic and utilitarian orientations. For example, when asked to choose his favorite metaphors from the entire set of metaphor questions, Luke chose "painting" and "garden" and offered the following responses:

A garden. On the spiritual aspect, I would say garden because I listen to the wind blowing by the sea breeze. I listen to the seagulls and the waves splashing on the shore ... and I try to hear whether they are trying to communicate.... Especially recently in January, I lost my grandfather, and he composed a song about the seagulls. So, when I see a seagull, I think of him and it's like it's his spirit in the seagull watching over me.

It would be a painting. I don't draw as much as I used to, but every now and then I pick up a piece of paper and doodle on it. So, painting ... a lot of traditional artwork—birds and whales.... I have some prints put away right now and I'll study them and try and make my own designs.

Of all the metaphors that show a relationship to the seashore, which one would be Luke more than any other?

I would have to say the listener is to a story. I would be a listener and the seashore would be the story. It was difficult for me growing up and I had to excel at so many things. So yes, I'm a listener. I had to excel in education. I had to excel at Kwak'wala, my Native language. Learning the dances—we had our dance class, learning our dances, the songs, what song belonged to what dance, what village the song and dance came from. So, it was quite tedious for me.... Looking back today, it was my own doing because I am what is considered a white Native because I am not as dark as the rest of my family. So, to prove that I was a member of my village I had to push myself to learn the ways of my village. But looking back today, it was mostly my doing. To a degree, I am glad I did when I look at the closeness I have with my family....

And then I learned to live in the big city. Its rush here and there, but still, you have to take time and smell the roses, or smell the exhaust....

I was taught at a very early age to accept people for what they are, and we all have our talents. So, when I realized that this is my family I didn't really have to push myself so hard to prove myself as an Alert Bay Native descendent [sic].

If there is one metaphor that is you more than any other, which one would be your favorite—the one that really encompasses Luke?

I'd have to say town ... 'cause I came to realize it's not just me you know. We all have something to learn from each other ... like I've learned from other cultures.... I hope I was a blessing to someone else ... to teach something to someone else and so I would have to say town.

Could I just ask if you were to teach something to somebody else, what would you want to teach?

That two different cultures can harmonize with each other you know. It's like what I just said. I know more about you. You know more about me, and it's just harmony with each other.

When I told Luke that I had interpreted both his Grade 6 and adult metaphor responses as having a preferred spiritual orientation to the seashore that stressed the traditional spiritual beliefs of the Kwakwaka'wakw, Luke smiled and said, “Yep, that's me!” When I said that I had to a much lesser extent interpreted responses that reflected Christian spiritual beliefs, Luke again smiled and said, “Yep, that's me too!”

When I asked Luke about his work history and aspirations, he explained that he was attending a Bible College that is associated with the Foursquare Church in Vancouver and run by a former pastor. The Bible College has a Native Studies program that is geared for First Nations people who want to help other First Nations people. During his spare time Luke works at *Mission Possible*, an outreach program for street people. Luke explained:

I spend a lot of time on the streets in Vancouver and I talk to people down on skid road. We all know who we are, but skid road people have forgotten who they are. I talk to these people to help them remember who they are, these First Nations people who are the forgotten people.

I asked Luke to explain his reasoning for integrating the First Nations spiritual stories and beliefs with Christian beliefs. He explained:

It has something to do with Christ being the same as the Great Creator. It has something to do with the way Native people pray and the way the church prays. We recognize the Great Creator who the church calls God and we recognize the Great Spirit who the church recognizes as the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God. And we recognize that we are not evolved creatures, as evolutionists perceive. And the Great Spirit gives us our knowledge and our wisdom.

In attempting to understand how Luke’s spiritual orientation is grounded in both Indigenous spiritual beliefs and Christian beliefs it is important to recall that Luke was raised by his Granny in ‘Yalıis. The school principal described the Granny as “a very traditional Native,” who “attends the Pentecostal Church in ‘Yalıis” and “has a very strong influence on Luke.” Thus, it is not surprising that Luke’s spiritual orientation would be grounded in both traditional First Nations beliefs and fundamentalist Christian beliefs, and that these beliefs persisted into adulthood.

Mary’s Adult Orientations

For the longitudinal study, I interviewed Mary in ‘Yalıis. Mary’s long-term metaphor responses show a significant proportion of responses reflecting a scientific orientation, followed closely by a mix of recreational, spiritual, and aesthetic orientations. For example, when asked to choose her favorite metaphor choice, Mary chose family and necklace:

The family. Having to live with one another and trying to do it successfully. You know, everything having to live together, everything being dependent on everything else—like you would your family members.

The necklace. You know a necklace is a perfect circle or an oval when you wear it, and if you took something out of the necklace, then it wouldn’t be complete. You’d be missing something—it wouldn’t work.... It would be broken—the chain would be broken.

Of all the metaphors that show a relationship to the seashore, which one would be Mary more than any other?

The bead to a necklace. A bead is just a part of a necklace—a part of a perfect circle. It’s a part of the circle of life. And if you take a bead out, it affects the rest of the necklace—it changes it—it falls apart.

After describing my analysis of Mary’s Grade 6 orientations, and her preferred aesthetic orientation she was quick to say, “That’s me, definitely yes, there’s a connection.”

When I described how I was inferring spiritual responses in the 2001 metaphor interviews that appeared to reflect a First Nations spiritual orientation, and that I had not seen a spiritual orientation in the 1982 data, Mary did not hesitate to reply:

Yes, that’s correct. When I was a young girl the only time I felt Native was when I was with my Native grandparents. It’s been only the last three-years that I feel more Native. Once I started teaching school and had my own kids I’ve been going more to Native activities. I’ve been working at the First Nations House. I have more of a thirst for it,

wanting to find out more. Yes, it's been a definite change. Even in the last little while, my dad and uncles and lots of people, they're trying to connect more with their culture.

Recall in chapter 4 that Mary's Kwakwaka'wakw dad and non-First Nations mother divorced, so Mary was raised by her mother. Thus it is not surprising that the only time Mary felt Indigenous while growing up was when she was with her Kwakwaka'wakw grandparents. But 19 years later, Mary had become a part-time cultural teacher at a nearby elementary school and wanted to teach her students and her own children more about the Kwakwaka'wakw culture, "so they can be proud of who they are."

At first, I inferred that Mary chose the necklace metaphor to stress the concepts of the food chain and its inter-dependencies, as in the post-instructional Grade 6 interviews. However, it was explained to me by the Elders that the phrase "circle of life" is commonly used by First Nations peoples to describe ideas associated with natural cycles such as seasonal changes; life cycles (birth, growth, and death); balance and harmony; reciprocity; and our human relationship to nature. It seems likely that Mary's recent acknowledgement of the traditional First Nations culture enabled her to stress concepts consistent with both Western Science (ecology concepts) and Indigenous Science—the traditional knowledge and wisdom of First Nations peoples. Nevertheless, the fact that Mary continued to use "necklace" and "jewelry" metaphors to stress concepts associated with the circle of life, inter-connections and interdependence is undeniably striking.

Jimmy's Adult Orientations

In order to interview Jimmy, I traveled to Campbell River, a coastal town located 195 kilometres south of 'Yalis, at the southernmost part of the Kwakwaka'wakw traditional territory. Jimmy's long-term metaphor interviews showed that he continued to have a preferred utilitarian orientation as evidenced by the greatest proportion of utilitarian responses, followed closely by a large proportion of responses consistent with a scientific orientation, and a smaller proportion of responses reflecting aesthetic and spiritual orientations. For example:

The seashore is a jewel. We get food from the seashore: clams and crabs, and other shellfish. A jewel because people make their living clam digging for money and some guys do pretty good on that.

Of all of the metaphors we just talked about...which one of those is the one you would say is mostly Jimmy?

A fishing boat. You can catch fish and put other people to work. It's a nice thing to do. I enjoy doing it.... I just like being out on the water and catching fish for commercial and food fishing to eat.... I've done it all my life and probably will do it for the rest of my life.

If you were anything that you wanted to be at the seashore, what would you most want to be?

A salmon. A sockeye or a nice fish, there's 3-4 different runs of them. Some runs are small and some of them are big. Some runs are early summer, and some are late summer. The Stuart run is usually the small run—the Adams is late. This year is the Stuart run, next year is the Adam one and it will be the big fish.

Importantly, some responses made connections to utilitarian, spiritual and ethical considerations, for example:

I'd be the deckhand and the seashore would be the boat. The deckhand because you could help the shore by cleaning it up and looking after it, so you can keep the water clean and not let it get polluted. And then you won't be able to get any resources from it anymore.... We make our living off it, so we got to look after it, or it ain't going to keep looking after you.

The above metaphor response makes reference to pollution, stewardship, and a traditional spiritual reciprocal relationship with the seashore, “we got to look after it, or it ain't going to keep looking after you.”

Several responses expressed an aesthetic and spiritual orientation, for example:

I'd be a raven because it goes back into my culture and its one of our Native masks—so the raven, and there's lots of legends around it. It's like a spiritual bird and it's basically birds in our culture.

When I told Jimmy that I had interpreted both his 1982 and 2001 metaphor responses as having a preferred utilitarian orientation to the seashore, he grinned and said, “Yep, that's me, definitely all the way.” When asked about his job history and aspirations, Jimmy explained that he had continued to work over the entire nineteen years since Grade 6 as a commercial fisherman. At the time of the interview, he was working as an engineer on his father-in-law's boat. I asked him to tell me what it had been like being a fisherman over the past several years:

It's been pretty tough. In the last three years we've gone fishing with the seine boat about 5 times. And there's been no fish when they let us fish and tough for guys that own the boats, and own nets and everything. A lot of Native fishermen have lost their licenses. I'm hoping that next year the salmon runs will pick up and the remaining boats are going to do quite well.

Did you say you have a herring license?

Yeah, my father had one, but somebody's got it and won't give it back. Somebody else has it and has had it for four or five years now and my dad never got a cent from it. We're looking into going to Fisheries and trying to get it back.

So, your boat sits in the dock the whole rest of the year?

Yeah, so you see how it's tough on guys who pay moorage. You're looking at probably \$1500.00 a month. That's just for the boat, and then you have to store all your nets and stuff in the net loft and that's another two or three thousand dollars a year. And to lease a license it could cost up to \$200,000.00 just for the season. So, it's not cheap now to stay in the business.

Yes, it's obviously pretty tough. So how do you plan to survive?

The guys that are left are banking on the fishing picking up. There's lots of herring now. That's a good sign.... One of the older Native guys, he had to sell most of his boats, but he said, 'never give up cause the fish will always be around.' So I fish for other guys commercially and for my own family. We get sockeye for canning and go get chums in the fall for smoking.

Remarkably, in spite of the near collapse of salmon and herring fisheries in the 1980's and 1990's, Jimmy had successfully pursued his childhood dream of becoming a commercial fisherman. Interestingly, Jimmy's increased proportion of science responses reflect an increased knowledge of the ecology of marine organisms and habitats, and is consistent with the type of knowledge that might be expected of a successful commercial fisherman.

Dan's Adult Orientations

To interview Dan I travelled to 'Yalis. The results of Dan's longitudinal interviews showed that he continued to have a preferred scientific orientation to the seashore, as evidenced by the greatest proportion of science responses, followed closely by a recreational orientation, and then a smaller proportion of aesthetic, spiritual, and utilitarian orientations. For example:

A barnacle is a fisherman because they reach out with their little rods and they cast out and grab whatever they find.... They're grabbing plankton—small marine life. We're

looking at them under the microscopes out at the farm. Some of them get into the fish and bother the fish. I think they're baby prawns and crabs, and mussels.

The sun would have to be the factory. Because about 99 percent of all life on the planet comes from the sun—from the photosynthesis that it creates, unless we're talking about the little upwelling creatures out in the ocean that we don't know a whole lot about. But you know that the sun is what provides for everything here.

Seaweed is a garden. It's sort of like your lower plant life.

A clam is a vacuum cleaner. What are they called? Bivalved mollusks? ... They suck in water. They're getting the same things as the barnacles and I really don't know how many different species reproduce by the same way.

When asked to respond to the relational metaphor questions, he said:

I guess I could be a thorn for the blackberry bush. If the seashore or the bush ever required defense, that's what a thorn is all about, to keep the blackberry bush intact. If I had the opportunity or if the need arose, I would be defending the seashore on its behalf. So, I could see myself more as involved there, protecting it. If there were environmental concerns locally that might be destroying the seashore, I would be certainly concerned and feeling like I would want to defend it in that respect which is the biggest issue in our land these days—preserving what we had here—seems to be the way everybody's thinking around here.

Dan's metaphor responses show that he continued to have an understanding of the concepts habitat, plankton, life cycle, photosynthesis, conservation, taxonomy (the terms "species" and "bivalved mollusks"), and an awareness of a Western scientific framework of classification; e.g., the reference to "the lower animals."

In addition, two of Dan's recreational responses reveal important aspects of a rapidly changing lifestyle for 'Yalis students:

The seashore is a gift. You know I really enjoyed growing up living on the seashore. It was the best childhood experiences. When I was a kid it was entertaining...and you're learning and participating down there. We were always playing games and we weren't playing with each other there, we were sort of getting along on the beach, turning over rocks and just having a good time. I mean I look at the kids now and its video games. It's a nightmare. In 'Yalis where everybody should be down on the beach like we were when I was a kid, but it doesn't happen. One of the big things in my life was playing on the beach between 6 years and 15.... Most kids today expect to be entertained.

The seashore is a dance. You just sit around and watch what's happening.... Yesterday I was watching some bears on the beach. It was quite a performance watching them dig around and get mad and look around.... It was fun to watch. They were digging and a rock fell. The bear ran away, and then he turned back to doing what he was doing. There was a couple of us sitting watching him, chuckling away at it while we were having coffee.

Such metaphor responses provide a stark contrast between how Dan experienced the seashore during the 1970's and early 1980's as a form of entertainment, the learning he received out on the land, and how as an adult he sees how the youth are unable to entertain themselves. Video games serve as a major form of entertainment instead.

When I described my interpretation of Dan's preferred scientific orientation in both the 1982 and 2001 studies, Dan readily agreed that he viewed the world from a [Western] scientific perspective, and so did his Dad. When asked about his job history and aspirations, Dan revealed that he had tried commercial fishing for several years, but couldn't make a go of it because of rapidly declining fish populations and the cost of owning a commercial seiner. Then he worked for a few years delivering supplies to fish farms. Finally, with the help of his dad, he saved enough money to purchase a barge, "a really big barge!" He hires himself out to fishers and boaters who have capsized or need to be towed, or who need something hauled a long distance across the water. He makes good money supplying fish farms with nets, feed and equipment. He would rather be a commercial fisherman, but said:

Given the choices with the lack of fish and all, I feel pretty successful. I'm on the water and I enjoy cruising around. I cruise along and look at pretty nice beaches.... I see lots of animals ... and I really enjoy myself.

It's interesting to note the different attitudes of Dan and Jimmy towards salmon fish farms and managing the wild fish stocks. Jimmy is strongly opposed to fish farms because our West Coast farms raise Atlantic salmon, a species that is not indigenous to BC. Atlantic salmon pollute the water around fish farm pens and are known to escape in such large numbers that they are breeding in our BC rivers and competing with our wild Pacific salmon for food and habitat. By sharp contrast, Dan views the wild stocks as "so endangered that they will become extinct over the long term." Like his father, he sees fish farms as "the way of the future." What is interesting about the two opposing viewpoints is that Jimmy takes a utilitarian and traditional spiritual view towards conserving the wild salmon for future food and job opportunities that is consistent with the stand taken by the 'Nāmgis Band Council in 'Yális. By contrast, Dan views fish farms (a Western scientific form of production and management) as the solution to the problem.

Anna's Adult Orientations

I travelled to Burnaby, BC, located in the greater Vancouver metropolitan area, to interview Anna who was living in an apartment complex and taking courses in teacher education at Simon Fraser University.

Recall that Anna had moved to 'Yalis from the Philippines in Grade 3. Anna's long-term metaphor interviews show that there was a shift from a preferred recreational orientation to the seashore to a preferred spiritual orientation to the seashore. Anna's spiritual orientation was followed closely by a recreation orientation, and then a mix of scientific, aesthetic, and utilitarian responses. For example, several responses made reference to Christian beliefs, as well as being peaceful and reflective:

I would be a sunflower sea star.... I think I'd like to teach how much we are affected by the seashore.... It can be a place where you can do some reflection. A place for solace. For me, I'm a Christian and I just find the whole seashore as majestic, and whenever I get that feeling I am so thankful for it.

The seashore is a gift. It's beautiful, it's a gift because it keeps on giving.... We take from it peace just by looking at it or just by being there.

The seashore is a legend. You have stories to tell. One important story to me is feeling peace at sea.... If you concentrate on yourself and just the sea and the sand around you, you sometimes feel like there's nobody else there.... The tides are kind of faint and reflective.... The feeling can be profound.... Problems that I may have had to deal with during the week are no longer there.

Anna's spiritual orientation was followed closely by a recreational orientation:

The seashore is a painting. I would love one day to be able to snorkel so that I could enjoy those tropical fish that are so bright.

I would be a sandy beach. There can be different types of sand ... and that can signify different emotions. If you go down to the Caribbean the sand could be white.... Other sand is a little bit brown.

I would be a sailboat. One of the things that I love to do is sail even though I haven't done it much.... It symbolizes freedom ... people come to see tourist attractions ... like Haystack Rock on the Oregon coast.

Several responses reflected an aesthetic orientation:

The seashore is a gift. It's beautiful.

The seashore is a painting. At first glance, it may just seem like one colour, but when you get close up there are so many colours and so many hues it's just amazing.

I would be a fish. A rainbow fish.... Although I value inner beauty more than outer beauty, I would still like people to see me as beautiful all over.

Three responses reflected a scientific orientation:

I would be a sandy beach. There are different types of sand depending on northern hemisphere or southern hemisphere or tropics vs. Vancouver.

The seashore is a jewel. You have to treat it properly. You can have an oil spill, but eventually there will be a renewal and that's as long as you clean it up...the sea has the capacity to eventually build up the life that was destroyed.

Only two responses reflected a utilitarian orientation:

The seashore is a gift. It's a gift because it keeps on giving. We take food from it.

The seashore is a garden. If you treat it properly it will bloom. If you don't treat it properly it will start to deteriorate.

When I told Anna that I interpreted her adult metaphor interviews as having a preferred spiritual orientation followed very closely by a recreational orientation, and that I had not observed a spiritual orientation in her grade 6 metaphor interviews, she did not hesitate to reply:

That's right. I am definitely more spiritual now ... more religious.... When I was in high school my best friend got killed in a car accident. It was terrible. I had a very hard time.... It was then that I started to regularly go to church. It was my pastor who helped me a lot to get through that really difficult time. Ever since that time I've been very active in my church, but I hadn't been active before.

Anna was the only participant who showed a changed set of preferred orientations, from a clearly preferred recreational orientation in Grade 6 to a preferred spiritual orientation 19 years later. Anna's adult spiritual orientation stressed "reflection," "feeling peace at sea," being "thankful for being Christian," while her recreational orientation stressed travel and tourist attractions to faraway places such as Oregon and the Caribbean. It would appear that in the case of Anna, a significant life experience, such as the death of a best friend in high school and a compassionate pastor, had a profound effect on her life direction and triggered a major shift in her adult orientations.

Significant Life Experiences and Orientations

When the adults were asked to reflect and comment on the path taken to reach their current place in life, their responses often involved the recounting of an important life experience that had special meaning. Perhaps the clearest example of a “significant life experience” (Tanner, 1980; Chawla, 1998, 2001) and a “chance encounter with another person” (Ottstad, 2002) triggering a change in orientations can be seen in the case of Anna. It would appear that the death of a best friend in high school and a compassionate pastor held special meaning for Anna and prompted a change in preferred orientations, from a preferred recreational orientation to a preferred spiritual orientation.

In the ‘Yális study, it was not so much a “significant life experience” or “chance encounter with another person,” but a combination of multiple “life-altering circumstances” that resulted in a change in orientations or a change in career choices for some of the adults. Dan’s childhood first career choice was to become a commercial fisherman, but this career choice was impacted by seriously diminished salmon runs, the rising cost of purchasing and maintaining a commercial fishing boat, and eventually by the economic responsibilities of raising a family. Even then Dan tried unsuccessfully to pursue commercial fishing for several years before purchasing a large barge and tugboat to deliver food and equipment to fish farms and to assist boaters in need of help—a choice that is consistent with his preferred scientific orientation to the seashore. Nevertheless, in keeping with his childhood dream of never leaving ‘Yális, he was able to find a means of income that enabled him to live in his beloved home territory, “out on the ocean,” “cruising along,” “looking at pretty nice beaches,” and “really enjoying” himself.

It would seem that Jimmy’s childhood dream of owning his own fishing boat would prove to be not financially viable, but Jimmy tenaciously followed his dream and was one of the very few remaining fishermen earning a living out on the ocean by working on his father-in-law’s commercial seine boat, a childhood career choice consistent with his preferred utilitarian orientation. What is interesting is that both Dan and Jimmy tried their hand at commercial fishing, indicating that the goal of becoming commercial fishermen was firmly ingrained into their career aspirations in Grade 6.

Mary’s childhood career aspiration was to become a “hair stylist and a cosmetician,” which was consistent with her Grade 6 preferred aesthetic orientation. Instead, becoming a culture teacher at a nearby elementary school, parenting her own children, having more contact with her First Nations family combined with a resurgence of traditional ceremonies, art and culture in ‘Yális, and pride in being First Nations in recent years has held special meaning for Mary. It became more acceptable and desirable to view the seashore from a spiritual orientation based on the traditional beliefs and values of the Kwakwaka’wakw peoples.

Thus, it is clear, that in addition to “critical incidents” and “chance encounters with significant individuals,” a myriad of “external life-altering circumstances” such as the economy, the near collapse of salmon

populations, the loss of natural resources, the state of the environment, pressures of supporting a family, a university education, the Christian church, and cultural change in the community also affected the adults' orientations to the seashore, as well as their choice of career.

The Categorizing of Orientations to the Seashore

There may be additional orientations that have yet to be identified. For illustration, in 1984 I gave a workshop on the metaphor interview at the University of Hawaii, attended by adult science and social studies teachers and university professors from the Pacific Rim countries. Not surprisingly, a large proportion of the participants' metaphor responses reflected international and political aspects of the seashore:

The seashore is a painting. Like a mosaic of many nations and cultures trading with one another.

The seashore is a battleground. It's a battleground to fight wars and for power—like the war in the Pacific, Pearl Harbour, World War I and World War II.

The above metaphor responses represent a political orientation to the seashore. A political orientation had not been encountered from the five pilot studies, and hence I did not include metaphor questions such as, “The seashore is a courtroom” or “The ocean is a judge” to highlight a political orientation in the ‘Yālis study. Importantly, a political orientation was likely not a significant component of these young students' conceptual system and especially not for First Nations students grounded in their traditional culture. Since the Grade 6 students wove their own preferred orientation into the great majority of metaphor choices, a politically minded student would have woven the political aspects of experience into his or her metaphor responses, at least in part, had such a student been present.

Just as there may be orientations to the seashore not yet identified, there may be aspects of metaphor responses in future research projects that at first appear to be orientations, but fall short of the definition of an orientation defined in chapter 4. For example, during the five 1982 pilot studies, I identified several metaphor responses that led me to include a health and safety orientation to the seashore. Hence, I included metaphor questions such as, “the seashore is a battleground,” “the seashore is a pin cushion,” “a barnacle is a thumb tack.” The following illustrates a typical response:

The seashore is a pin cushion. There's the barnacles and sea urchins that could poke you if you were to fall on them.

I would be a lock to a necklace. A lock could pinch, just like a crab could pinch. Like that clam closing on my fingers or how that big red crab can cut you open with its pinchers.

The seashore is a battleground. Like the eel [blenny] that can give you an electric shock.

Looking back, I would not include a health and safety orientation in future research related to seashore orientations. The participants' responses reflect a painful or fearful relationship with the seashore based on experience and certain knowledge (or misinformation), but their responses do not reflect the values component of an individual, social group, or culture. Many of the students' ideas and fears were addressed during instruction. For example, the "eel" is really a harmless elongated fish called a blenny that looks like an electric eel, but is incapable of delivering an electric shock. Blennies can be picked up by the hands and when viewed in a classroom aquarium, is often a favourite entertainer. After instruction there were far fewer health and safety responses, and these responses were almost absent in the long-term adult interviews.

Inferring Indigenous Orientations to the Seashore

When describing the orientations of Indigenous populations, it is important to acknowledge the holistic nature of Indigenous worldviews. All things are related and interconnected. Thus, concepts of wholeness, spirituality, reciprocity, self-knowledge, and how people relate to others and to nature are a necessary aspect of attempting to infer an Indigenous scientific, spiritual, utilitarian, aesthetic or recreational orientation. It is crucial to consider that because Indigenous people come from diverse backgrounds and home-places, there is no single Indigenous worldview. Nevertheless, there is a shared worldview in which humans are inextricably connected to the natural world (Cajete, 2000). Similarly, orientations are broad intellectual and emotional commitments, and must be inferred in light of the person's life history, family dynamics, culture, and home place.

Table 4.1 in chapter 4 represents the five orientations as described in the 1982 study, and attempts to take into account the orientations of both First Nations and non-First Nations students. After completing the longitudinal study, I felt that an attempt should be made to describe the orientations of the First Nations people of 'Yá'lis more clearly (see Table 6.1 chart below).

Kwakwaka'wakw Orientations to the Seashore

Table 6.1 presents an attempt to describe the orientations of the Kwakwaka'wakw culture towards the seashore. The orientations represent a synthesis of the participants' (both student and adult) metaphor responses, communications with Elders and community leaders, as well as readings on Northwest Coast First

Nations culture. There are no clear boundaries between orientations, for example, the spiritual aspects of an experience are an integral and inter-related aspect of each orientation:

Table 6.1 Kwakwaka'wakw Orientations to the Seashore	
Scientific	A body of knowledge, experience, observation, experimentation, practice and belief. All things are related and interconnected at all times. All of creation is sacred, and should be respected and protected. Indigenous Science, rather than just being knowledge, is a way of life and is the actual living of that life in a good way.
Spiritual	Everything of Mother Earth possesses a spirit. That spirit is conscious and has awareness—the wind, rocks, plants, animals, etc. Nature has a voice. Humans cannot place themselves before or above other life forms. The winter ceremonies are a time of individual spiritual and cultural renewal.
Utilitarian	Humans can harvest nature for their practical use (berries, root vegetables, cedar planks, salmon, clams, seaweeds, bear, deer, moose, etc.). Humans have a reciprocal relationship with nature—they can harvest nature for their own use, but if the person behaves in a way that harms nature, then their negative way of being can turn on them. Respect is expressed in words of gratitude, and must be shown towards the natural world—the plant or animal before, during and after harvesting.
Aesthetics	Artistic expression can be seen in crests bearing art forms such as totem poles, house fronts, ceremonial robes, headdresses, masks, bentwood boxes, basketry, and textiles. Items made from cedar, for example, represent sacred objects believed to contain the life force of the living tree. Art forms often display inherited rights and kinship, and rights to names, songs, dances, and crests. A carving "comes alive" through the life-giving power in the carver's hands. The gift of carving ability can be recognized even in childhood. Stories, crests, songs, dances, and names can function as deeds to tribal and family territories and associated rights.
Recreational	Singing, drumming, art, storytelling, games, canoe journeys and feasting are forms of relaxation, enjoyment and recreation that are an integral part of healthy community preservation.

In the study, analysis of the participants' metaphor responses depended on a general understanding of the physical, economic, social, and cultural environment of 'Yalis as well as the traditional First Nations culture. As the researcher, I needed to have a general knowledge of the potlatches, ceremonial dances, and customs, as well as a close collaboration with Elders and knowledge holders. The participants' orientations have a high degree of validity, as exemplified by the fact that all of them readily agreed to my inferred interpretation of their preferred orientations, by variously responding, "Yep, that's me!"

When working with Indigenous orientations, the holistic and inter-related quality of Indigenous knowledge systems gradually emerge; most Indigenous people know this, most non-Indigenous researchers do not. Researchers should always recognize that just as there are many interpretations of natural phenom-

ena, there are as many different ways that humans can see patterns in seashore life. It is intended that researchers attempting to explore the construct of orientations with Indigenous communities will need to modify the above descriptions according to the experiences of respondents, the interpretations of Elders, knowledge holders, and the community.

Metaphor Interviews and Orientations

The metaphor interview is one possible assessment tool that takes into account the linguistic and socio-cultural background of the child—a method that may be used in large urban centres, rural settings and isolated coastal fishing, as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Metaphor interviews can be modified to explore orientations towards the forest, lake, mountain, prairie or city. They can be linked to a sampling strategy to provide important qualitative data that is holistic and episodic, and be used in cross-cultural studies. Acknowledging the holistic nature of orientations suggests that the analysis of data is not a simple statistical coding schedule that can be picked up in a 30-minute training session. Additionally, a coding schedule seems unlikely because it would require an understanding of complex situations and careful examination of the contributions of context to the respondent's metaphor responses.

The typology of orientations consisting of scientific, aesthetic, spiritual, utilitarian, and recreational contributed insights over and above those to be obtained by studying only beliefs about seashore relationships. In the overall study, as described in chapters 4, 5, and 6, the typology was useful in four ways: (1) in identifying the students' pre-instructional orientations to the seashore, (2) in developing instructional metaphors that were interesting and appealing to students with different preferred orientations, (3) in assessing the effectiveness of instruction, and (4) in accounting in large part for the respondents' adult orientations, behaviors, career choices, and personal aspirations.

The discourse of students struggling to increase their understanding of seashore relationships and the discourse of adults revealing their current relationships to the seashore, has the potential to add rich descriptions and humanistic understanding to both qualitative and quantitative research. The respondents' metaphor responses shed light on the person's recall of an event, which could be different from someone else's recollection. Metaphor interviews provide a window into the respondent's unique memory of what was significant and meaningful to them; and a connecting place for the respondents' feelings and emotions to be entered into the research data.

The use of metaphor interviews to describe orientations rests on data collected through a small interview sample, the need for more extensive research is obvious. As such it suggests that researchers, curriculum developers and teachers in all subject areas need to explore this emerging research frontier.

Reflections

The lives of Dan, Luke, Jimmy, and Mary reflect the struggles of growing up as a First Nations person, living in a small coastal fishing community during the 1970's and 1980's. Each in his or her own way was influenced directly or indirectly by the beliefs and values of their family (parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles), the community, the Christian church, the devastating ripple effect of parents who were taken from their homes and attended the residential school, and the beliefs and values of the traditional Kwakwaka'wakw culture.

When I conducted the initial study in 1982, salmon, halibut, herring, cod, oolichans, as well as clams, scallops, crab, and shrimp (although declining) were still relatively abundant. It seemed that almost every boy in 'Yalis wanted to be a commercial fisherman when he grew up. During the 1980's and 1990's we can see how the young adults in this study, in particular Jimmy and Dan, were faced with significantly diminished salmon returns, as well as seriously diminished halibut, herring, and oolichan runs. The decline of traditional harvests affected the ability of the community to offer the usual wide assortment of abundant traditional foods, and to give away precious oolichan grease during the winter feasts.

Although important Chiefs, Elders, and knowledge holders struggled, often successfully, for many decades to keep the traditional culture alive, it was nevertheless a community in which many members largely felt shame for having lost their language and sometimes even for identifying as First Nations. In the words of Donna Cranmer (2016), principal of Wagalus Elementary School in Fort Rupert:

There are Kwakwaka'wakw who have had the benefit of the old people who continued to practice their ways during the dark years when our cultural ceremonies and ways of doing things were outlawed by the government of Canada. There are Kwakwaka'wakw whose old people rejected their culture when the government created laws that made the practice of our way of life illegal. With the introduction of the English language and Western ways of thinking, a breakdown in language and cultural traditions has occurred. In some families, many traditional teachings are not taught to the young. (p. 181)

Importantly, during those “dark years” people did not stop holding secret potlatches, practicing their culture and giving witness to family dances, songs, titles and stories. Thus, it is not surprising that Luke has a preferred spiritual orientation based on traditional Indigenous beliefs mixed with Christian beliefs, or that Mary's set of orientations did not include a spiritual orientation based on the Kwakwaka'wakw culture during her childhood years.

It raises the question, of why Mary did not show any spiritual beliefs based on traditional Kwakwaka'wakw teachings in grade 6, and then a significant proportion of traditional spiritual beliefs as an adult? It becomes

important to understand that there has been a resurgence of the traditional Kwakwaka'wakw culture over the past several decades. This resurgence was led by Chiefs and Elders, and often spearheaded by a new generation of young knowledge holders who worked hard to continue the potlatch and the giving of gifts. Significant efforts were made to teach the Kwakwala language and traditional customs and values in the school and by holding community feasts and ceremonies. After the potlatch ban was lifted people could freely and openly hold potlatches, tell their stories, sing and dance in the big house, and feel pride in the Kwakwaka'wakw culture.

As a Eurocentric newcomer, I can only imagine the deep cultural and economic loss that the Kwakwaka'wakw continue to endure with regard to significantly diminished salmon and other fish runs. According to the traditional creation story, it was salmon runs that gave birth to the Kwakwaka'wakw, and the reason why they call themselves “the salmon people.” The Nimpkish watershed is the largest on Vancouver Island and sustained the community for thousands of years. Legend has it that the river was placed there by the Creator to support salmon runs, “for as long as the days shall dawn on the world.” Yet, in spite of great pressures from European settlers to give up their traditional life-ways, the Kwakwaka'wakw have to a large extent retained their traditional ways and have remained close to the land and ocean.

It is my hope that this research might foster a better understanding of the trials and triumphs of the Kwakwaka'wakw, and of Indigenous peoples generally. The metaphor responses express the adult participants' particular qualities of experience: Jimmy and Dan's struggles to fulfill their childhood dreams of becoming a commercial fisherman during a time of seriously diminished fish returns; Mary's newfound spiritual orientation based on traditional Kwakwaka'wakw teachings; and Luke's ability to merge Christian beliefs with the traditional spiritual beliefs of the Kwakwaka'wakw.

In Yalis, the First Nations students (Kindergarten through Grade 7) are currently taught by, primarily First Nations teachers. Three of the five teachers at Alert Bay School (the public school) and all of the teachers at the T'lisalagi'lakw School (the band-operated school) are First Nations. From Grade 8 onwards, the Alert Bay students catch the ferry to Port McNeil and are bussed to North Island Secondary School. At present, in most First Nations communities in BC, First Nations students are still taught by non-First Nations teachers. Clearly, all teachers need to be aware of the community, the culture and to some extent the biographies and histories of the students and families where they teach and live. This understanding is critical to our efforts to reformulate our teaching objectives in ways that will benefit First Nations students and their communities. I am hopeful that research involving metaphor interviews and the construct of orientations has the potential to help us all (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers) develop curricula and programs that are culturally appropriate, challenging, and beneficial to students of diverse cultural backgrounds. It is time for each of us to engage in a personal and professional journey of truth and reconciliation. If we travel this journey together, the possibilities are greater than we can imagine.

Questions for Discussion

1. In a small group explore the relationships between students' orientations and their social and cultural background. For example:
 - Explore how a utilitarian orientation for a student of Eurocentric background might be different for a student of Indigenous background.
 - Within the category of a scientific orientation to the seashore, explore similarities and differences between a Western Scientific orientation and an Indigenous Science orientation.
 - Within the category of a recreational or aesthetic orientation to the seashore, explore potential similarities and differences between a person of Eurocentric ancestry and a person of Indigenous ancestry.
2. With regard to orientations, how might individuals from within a Eurocentric background differ? How might individuals from within an Indigenous background differ?
3. How might knowledge of Indigenous orientations affect curriculum and program development?

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