

To Fish as Formerly: A Resurgent Journey back to the Saanich Reef Net
Fishery

by

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Bachelor of Science, University of Victoria, 2000

Master of Arts, University of Victoria, 2003

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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University of Victoria

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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According to W̱SÁNEĆ oral history, the W̱SÁNEĆ people have lived on their territorial homelands back to the time of creation. The W̱SÁNEĆ way of life has been passed on to each succeeding generation through an educational way, centered in large part on the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net Fishery. This fishing practice formed the backbone of W̱SÁNEĆ culture and society. Despite being protected by the Douglas Treaty of 1852, over the next 163 years of colonization, the knowledge, ceremony, practice, and educational way of the S̱XOLE (Reef Net) was nearly lost. Using a framework for Indigenous Resurgence, this dissertātiō or path focuses on the revitalization and restoration of the S̱XOLE. This resurgent path

described herein tells the story of how the “researcher” pulled together the disappearing knowledge of the S̱OLE, reinvigorated cross border cooperation between the W̱SÁNEĆ and their Xwelemi relatives, and how after being named C̱WENÁLYEN, or the Reef Net Captain through ceremony was able to coordinate the community based creation and fishing of the first S̱OLE on Canadian waters in 100 years. This resurgent path is just the beginning of a long and endless journey forward by looking backward, where the W̱SÁNEĆ people can be a proud people of the S̱OLE once again.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Preface.....	ix
Acknowledgments	xiii
Dedication	xv
Chapter 1 ČXOLETEN	1
The Douglas Treaty and the WSÁNEĆ People: Implications for education	23
The Oral History of the Douglas Treaty.....	36
Story of PKOLS	43
The Oral History of the Saanich Indian School Board.....	45
A Story of the Flood as told by Earl Claxton Sr.	45
Chapter 2 KENOLES	54
Literature Review of Indigenous Education.....	54
WSÁNEĆ Reef Net Fishery.....	69
Literature Review of the Reef net	89
Chapter 3 SWÁLET	114
Chapter 4 SXOLE: My own learning, or more appropriately unlearning... 138	
To Fish as Formerly	140
My prayer for our people	144
How it all started	146
Uncle’s Teachings and Instruction.....	149
Colonial Correspondence as a History	154
This is the Story of the Revitalization of the Reef net System	155
Spiritual nature of the SXOLE	155
The Reef net	159
The Reef net Fishery: Explained.....	164
SWALET: Reef net Fishing Locations	165
Revitalization of the SXOLE	171
Construction of the Ceremonial Reef net.....	172
Visiting Lummi for reef net Ceremony and to view net	179
Construction of the full size reef net	182
The Reef net Ceremony.....	188
Reef net fishing	190
What I learned about Reef netting.....	193
WSÁNEĆ Philosophy, worldview and connection to land as education.....	196

Chapter 5 SHELI – Visioning: towards an authentic W̱SÁNEĆ education system for W̱SÁNEĆ Resurgence	202
Bibliography.....	223
Appendix	240

List of Tables

Table 1

68

List of Figures

Figure 1 Trajectory of Aboriginal Education.....	59
Figure 2 Saanich Territorial Map	79
Figure 3 SKÁU LFE - The Natural Laws of the WSÁNEĆ People	84
Figure 4 Locating Myself as a Researcher	118
Figure 5 Lummi Nation Ceremonial Reef Net.....	158
Figure 6 - 29 Reef Net Locations in WSÁNEĆ Territory.....	168
Figure 7 - SXIXTE Reef Net Location at Pender Island BC	170
Figure 8 - Willow Stand	174
Figure 9 - In the Classroom.....	175
Figure 10 - Inner bark of Willow	176
Figure 11 - Twine Construction	177
Figure 12 - Lummi Reef Net at Cherry Point.....	180
Figure 13 - Lummi Reef Net Model.....	181
Figure 14 - Lummi Reef Netters	182
Figure 14 - Lummi Reef Net	182
Figure 16 - Reef Net Hanging	184
Figure 17 - SHELI - Ring of Life.....	188

Preface

According to Western history, my people, the W̱SÁNEĆ People, have been living on their traditional territory on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf and San Juan Islands for many thousands of years. According to W̱SÁNEĆ oral history, our existence here goes back to the very beginning — to the time of creation.

The W̱SÁNEĆ people lived sustainably, peacefully, and in prosperity, guided by the teachings of XÁLS the Creator. The SX̱OLE, or Reef Net Fishery was at the core of this existence, it was the ‘backbone’ of our W̱SÁNEĆ society. As a knowledge system, the Reef Net in many ways defined our existence and relationship to our homelands, and to one another as a people, and as a nation. This knowledge system was demeaned, degraded and dismantled through legislation, coercion and the effective colonizing assimilationist tools of western education and schooling.

This dissertation began as a conventional academic project, with me, a university based W̱SÁNEĆ community member researcher assessing and

collating the current state of Reef Net knowledge in the W̱SÁNEĆ community. This dissertation became a resurgent Indigenous project when I was named the ØENÁLYEN in a community based ceremony (the one with the inherent rights and responsibilities to the specific Reef Net location). As ØENÁLYEN I lead the construction and fishing of the S̱OLE or Reef Net. I also took the lead in revitalizing and strengthening our relationship and cooperation with our Lummi relatives, with whom we fished side by side for generation after generation before being separated by an international border.

The S̱OLE was nearly lost after being outlawed by the Colonial Government of Vancouver Island roughly 100 years ago (Poth, 1983). The process of revitalizing of the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net Fishery has shown great potential in informing the future directions of education in our community. This resurgent Indigenous dissertation tells the story of my own and my community's/nation's journey along a path of cultural resurgence. This dissertation became so much more than an academic research exercise directed towards a degree.

My writing process and this project of resurgence have taken on the natural rhythms of the seasons, like our seasonal round, as the Reef Net fisherman would have experienced on the land/water for millennia. This project, and my writing are sacred, just as the Reef Net is sacred. To honour the sacred Reef Net technology, I have chosen to structure my telling of this story of resistance and project of resurgence using elements of the Reef Net technology as the headings of the major sections of the written portion of this dissertation. In the written portion of the dissertation I use two writing traditions: the first reflects my W̱SÁNEĆ oral tradition with the repetition and cadence natural to SENĆOŦEN where appropriate (in italic); the second, is guided by the western academic tradition with a structure that maintains the typical components of a mainstream doctoral dissertation for academic readers.

ĆXOLETEN is the whole lead of the net; it introduces, and leads the salmon to the net; this is my introduction section. KENOLES are the main anchors, the literature review; they 'anchor' my project of resurgence in the existing academic and documentary terrain. SWÁLET is the physical fishing location. Positioning the Reef Net at carefully selected locations is

how the Reef Net worked; this is my methodology section. The S \dot{X} OLE is the net proper; it is where fish were caught. Just as catching fish is the result, this is my Results section. Finally, the SHELIS is the ring of willow in the bunt of the net. It is woven there to give life. The discussion section of my resurgent dissertation is provided to give life to the future of the Reef Net and to education; it is therefore the SHELIS of my paper. The cooperative community based creation and fishing of the S \dot{X} OLE was the path or dissertātiō that lead to the ultimate destination of this dissertation.

Acknowledgments

I would firstly acknowledge the land, the ancestors, and the future generations. I would like to acknowledge the W̱SÁNEĆ community members who came forward, to support and/or participate in the project; Gord Elliott Sr., Pena Elliott, Gordie Olson, Adam Olson, Joni Olson, Romaine Underwood, Guy Tom, Chris Tom, Scott Sam, Charles Claxton, Lindy Underwood, and Eric Pelkey. I would like to acknowledge the financial support of Dave Howe and Derek Masselink, without their support our Reef Net would not have been *fished as formerly*. I would like to acknowledge my cultural knowledge teachers: Louis Claxton, Dr. Earl Claxton Sr. and Dr. John Elliott Sr., you have taught me everything. I would like to thank the students in John Elliott's SENĆOTEN Language and Culture class at the LÁU,WEL,NEW̱ Tribal School during the 2013/14 year. I want to acknowledge and thank the Lummi Nation Reef netters for sharing their knowledge and experience with us as we walk together on our journey back to the Reef net. I want to acknowledge my parents Louis and Adelynne, and grandparents for their constant support and

encouragement, without them none of this was possible, thank you for instilling a dream. I want to acknowledge and thank my committee: Dr. Mike Emme and Dr. Honore France. I hold my hands up in thanks to my supervisor Dr. Jason Price for supporting and sharpening my vision.

Finally, but most importantly I want to thank my wife Trish and my children: Charles, Darian and Kaleah. They have been both my support and my inspiration.

O SIÁM NE SCÁLEĆE

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to the very few W̱SÁNEĆ people who knew what it meant to Fish as Formerly and to the many more who now know, and to all the future generations of W̱SÁNEĆ reef netters, language speakers and traditions keepers.

Chapter 1 ĆXOLETEN

SNITCĒĒ – The home of the Blue Grouse

Blue Grouse was very plentiful at one time here in WSÁNEĆ (Saanich) territory, and it was most plentiful at SNITCĒĒ (known as Tod Inlet today). Our Saanich ancestors could go out to gather the Blue Grouse just with a basket and a stick; because there was so many that they had become tame and wouldn't even fly away. An abundance of Blue Grouse is a sign of a healthy environment. SNITCĒĒ is very important because of its location. Protected from all winds, the water is calm even throughout the winter and bad weather season. SNITCĒĒ became the doorway to the winter deer hunting grounds at WMÍYEFĒN (known as McKenzie Bay and Mt. Work area today). The shores at SNITCĒĒ are calm and steep; harvesting can be done even on a small tide. Spring salmon return to the small stream WEĆÉĆE (little awakener) at the head of the inlet. WSÁNEĆ people trolled to SNITCĒĒ

by canoe for fresh food in the winter months. If you ever have the opportunity to go to SNITC̱E̱L by canoe or boat, do it. It has a way of closing in on you as you enter this nice little inlet, it's a special feeling. This place was also a special training ground for young warriors. SNITC̱E̱L is one of the oldest Saanich village sites. It is the original village site and it is protected by the Douglas Treaty.

Story as told by STOLC̱E̱L

This is dissertation of W̱SÁNEĆ Resurgence, therefore it is a political dissertation. Dissertation, in Latin is *dissertātiō*, which means "path". This dissertation is inspired by prophecy, guided by ceremony, informed and supported by the land, language, ancestors and spirits of the W̱SÁNEĆ territory. This is also project of active participatory transnational decolonisation, a sacred project for and by the W̱SÁNEĆ present, past and future. A project more about supporting informed community based actions, than documenting and dissecting data. This dissertation is the documentation of our path back to the SXOLE in W̱SÁNEĆ.

This project is firmly situated in and guided by the principles of

Indigenous Resurgence. The process of Indigenous Resurgence, according to Taiaiake Alfred (2009) involves a collective community effort to achieve the following:

1. The restoration of indigenous presence(s) on the land and the revitalization of land-based practices;
2. An increased reliance on traditional diet(s) among Indigenous people;
3. The transmission of indigenous culture, spiritual teachings and knowledge of the land between Elders and youth;
4. The strengthening of familial activities and re-emergence of indigenous cultural and social institutions as governing authorities within First Nations; and,
5. Short-term and long-term initiatives and improvements in sustainable land-based economies as the primary economies of reserve based First Nations communities and as supplemental economies for urban indigenous communities. (p. 56)

Further to this, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson discusses Indigenous Resurgence, and points out that “Indigenous Knowledge is critical” to it (Simpson, 2009, p. 75). She further outlines four key points for Indigenous Resurgence:

1. Confront “funding” mentality – It is time to admit that colonizing governments and private corporations are not going to fund our decolonization;
2. Confronting linguistic genocide – There is little recognition or glory attached to it, but without it, we will lose ourselves;
3. Visioning resurgence – The importance of visioning and dreaming a better future based on our own Indigenous traditions cannot be underestimated;
4. The need to awaken ancient treaty and diplomatic mechanisms – Renewing our pre-colonial treaty relationships with contemporary neighbouring Indigenous Nations.

This project will use Indigenous Resurgence as defined by Taiaiake Alfred and Leanne Simpson as the theoretical framework, which guided my project as a community based resurgence project.

I am going to formally begin paddling this dissertation with the reader, the same way as I would begin an oral presentation, as if I was addressing an audience, perhaps at a conference, or if I were talking within my community. It is a proper protocol in many Indigenous communities to introduce oneself in your Indigenous Language (though it would be more proper to speak only in our ancestral language). I make it my practice to introduce myself in SENĆOŦEN, the language of the W̱SÁNEĆ. It is important to remember that our language was passed on orally, and that it is transforming into a written language.

“JÁN ÍY, ØENS TÁĆEL HÁLE. XEMƑOLTW TƑE NE SNÁ. ĆSE LÁ,E SEN ET STÁUTW. NIŁ W̱SÁNEĆ TƑE NE ÁLEŦENEØ. JÁN U ÍY ŚWĶÁLEØENS I AXEN ÁŁE E TƑE NE ÁLEŦENEØ LƑE”.

What is written here translates roughly into this; “It is good that you have arrived, welcome all. My name is XEMƑOLTW. I come from Tsawout, and W̱SÁNEĆ is my homeland. I am very pleased to speak to you from my

homelands.” I follow this practice of introducing myself in my ancestral language, and I am using it in this dissertation to illustrate some very important characteristics of what I consider to be the essence of a traditional W̱SÁNEĆ education. Our W̱SÁNEĆ Elders have said that when one introduces him or herself in SENĆOŦEN, that it conveys a great deal of important information. The SENĆOŦEN language conveys which nation we belong to, as well as the homelands we belong to, that is to say the land we come from. It has been said that it is our language that defines who we are. As W̱SÁNEĆ people, our language, homelands, knowledge, beliefs and connection to land is the essence of our identity and nationhood. Conversely, education, particularly a mainstream education (and arguably an Indigenized one too) does little towards maintaining or revitalizing W̱SÁNEĆ culture, knowledge, practices and nationhood.

My name X̱EMFOLTW was passed on to me from my Grandfather on my mother’s side. I share this name with my maternal Uncle. This name carries with it an important history, as well as important cultural teachings, and cultural responsibilities. This name is said to have originated in Qualicum. This name is an ancient name. It was passed on

to my Grandfather, probably from his father or grandfather. It is difficult to say exactly how old it is, but our oral history tells us that it goes back to our creation. When I say that my name is XEMFOLTW, one will automatically know my family lineage and history. In our teachings, one must have a hereditary right to a name. Names are only one component of a hereditary knowledge, and it is important that this knowledge be passed on. Passing on knowledge like this to younger generations is essential to the resurgence of the W̱SÁNEĆ. W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge is not being passed on to the younger generations through the existing educational opportunities to our nation, and has been pushed to the margins of our society in some sense. Educational ways, systems and research such as this must play a role in the resurgence of Indigenous knowledge.

One important feature about W̱SÁNEĆ names like mine is how they get passed on from generation to generation. This process highlights a key characteristic of an W̱SÁNEĆ worldview, which in turn informs me on what I believe should be one of the fundamental purposes of an education, and more specifically, a W̱SÁNEĆ education. This is that names like mine

are ancient and continuous. This name precedes my existence, and it will outlast me too. I do not own this name but rather I belong to it. I have a responsibility to it, to my ancestors and to the creator to uphold this name, teachings and history that go along with it. I have a responsibility to pass all of this on to the future generations. The responsibility of each us as WŚÁNEĆ people is to ensure that our knowledge and beliefs are passed on to the future WŚÁNEĆ people.

This teaching of this sense of responsibility to the future generations is similar to how we view our homelands. In the WŚÁNEĆ worldview, we do not own the land, rather we belong to it, and we have a responsibility to relate to it, care for it, and to pass it on to the future generations. This is an important characteristic of a WŚÁNEĆ worldview. This worldview is what WŚÁNEĆ peoples should be, and continue to be educated in. Similarly, as it is each generation's responsibility to uphold this important knowledge, I would argue that it is also our responsibility to support an education system that is consistent with and helps to foster WŚÁNEĆ ways of being and knowing.

In this dissertation, I am attempting to walk in two worlds, or paddle from two canoes. As a dual-tradition scholar, I locate myself first as a W̱SÁNEĆ person, and secondly as a scholar. In this dissertation, I have explored the Reef Net from both locations. I have followed the W̱SÁNEĆ protocols of inquiry when exploring and tying together the rich and spiritually charged oral history that intersects the technological, political, cultural and economic lines of the Reef Net. As a university based scholar I have used western knowledge to inform and structure much of the written component of this dissertation.

My overarching goal has been to enact a W̱SÁNEĆ education system rooted in our land, language, beliefs and traditions, and to ultimately support W̱SÁNEĆ resurgence in my W̱SÁNEĆ nation, through the revitalisation of Reef Net knowledge, the reestablishment of the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery, and the restoration of cooperation with the Lummi Nation.

In Canada, the development of effective and appropriate Aboriginal/First Nations/Indigenous Education curriculum, instruction and systems is an important one. Considering the incredible diversity of

First Nations peoples in Canada, the development of Aboriginal/First Nations/Indigenous education systems, arguably, must also be diverse, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and community driven. In theory and in practice, there can never be one-size fits all approach to Indigenous education. This project is about envisioning an authentic W̱SÁNEĆ education system, centered on the traditional practice of Straits Salish Reef Net fishery. By looking backwards to the past, it may be possible to look forward to the future, a future where the W̱SÁNEĆ people can remain W̱SÁNEĆ people in the face of ongoing assimilation and cultural genocide.

I would like to acknowledge that some of the knowledge that is shared in this dissertation is spiritual and sacred in its nature. The focus of my dissertation, the SXOLE (Reef Net) is spiritual and sacred, as it was a gift from the Creator. It is important to acknowledge this. While this dissertation is presented in part in the form of an academic research thesis intended to inform (and hopefully inspire other Indigenous peoples to take on resurgence projects), it is first and foremost for the W̱SÁNEĆ community, of which I am a proud member. This is why I feel that it is

both appropriate and necessary to acknowledge the spiritual and sacred nature of some of this W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge. Some W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge is sacred because of its connection to XÁLS (our Creator and Transformer) and his laws and teachings. Some of this knowledge is not openly talked about, but only in certain ceremonies or practices. However, the sacred and spiritual knowledge must be reflected in our W̱SÁNEĆ educational way. It is important and educational to understand this and bring it forward. It is relevant to the field of education. Given the fundamental role of education in the revitalization and resurgence of Indigenous nations, the struggle for “Indian control of Indian education” remains to be won, community-by-community, and nation-to-nation. The W̱SÁNEĆ people are currently in this battle, and we are taking our cultural territory back.

This project, the resurgence of the knowledge and practice of W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishing technology is about focusing, mobilizing and motivating the W̱SÁNEĆ community around an ancient and authentic way of life. It is about connecting our children, youth and other community members to the W̱SÁNEĆ way, the worldview of our ancestors. This dissertation tells

the story of an authentic grounded approach to decolonizing education, and the resurgence of an Indigenous knowledge system. It will decolonize a system of education provided to my people that has historically, and currently continues to focus on cultural assimilation, economic and political co-optation.

There has been much effort in our W̱SÁNEĆ communities to try to solve the problems that colonization has inflicted on us. The harms of colonisation that have been inflicted upon Indigenous communities in Canada are well known and documented: alcoholism, drugs, family violence, poverty, unemployment, nepotism and corruption in community Indian Act governance, and low rates of graduation to name just a few. Local, regional and national efforts by First Nations and allies in government, law, economics, and even education have attempted to alleviate the problems brought on by colonization, but all have essentially failed. All of these problems continue to persist. The Indian Act governance system has failed to allow our nations to thrive and become the healthy vibrant communities they were previous to colonization. The self-government movement of the 1980's and 1990's

have also failed to achieve an end to the colonial relationship between First Peoples and the GOC.

Perpetuating this problem, the legacy of education in First Nations communities in Canada is not a good one. It has been used as a tool of assimilation, to educate the Indian out of the child (Tittley, 1986). The latest strategy in Canada is to target First Nations for economic development, and to view Aboriginal peoples as integral members of the Canadian labour pool, crucial to Canada's global competitiveness. This strategy may relieve some of the symptoms of extreme poverty temporarily through injecting short term money into First Nations communities, but it is not the long term solution needed to address the cultural issues related to the loss and dispossession of language, culture and land which drives the cycle of depression, addiction and lateral violence on first nations communities (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005).

Colonization has inflicted harm on Indigenous peoples and nations that is often not completely understood. It is only over the last couple of generations that Indigenous nations have been disconnected from their homelands, it has created a state of confusion in the minds of our

people. Jobs, education, self-government, money, materialism, consumerism all do nothing to address the loss of language, culture and identity. The real problem is the dispossession and disconnection of our Indigenous peoples from their lands and waters. It is that clear and simple. The imposition of economic development policies will exacerbate the alienation of the people from the land. Indigenous nations, who develop the land, without really understanding it from a culturally strong position, are likely to still feel and suffer the same loss as if the land was just taken away. Economic development changes the land forever, and changes our relationship to it. Economic development initiatives on First Nations reserves are becoming very common, including in my home community. They reflect an alien commodified view of the value of the land, rather than the authentic W̱SÁNEĆ value of the land. The character of the relationship to the land is the core value that is lost in these transactions. One of elders that I interviewed at the outset of this project stated, “our W̱SÁNEĆ language is the voice of the land” (Personal Communication). What he meant was that our W̱SÁNEĆ language and the land are inseparable, and together it comprises the

W̱SÁNEĆ identity, laws and worldview. Through the language, the W̱SÁNEĆ worldview refers to lands and animals as relatives. This is a core W̱SÁNEĆ value.

The centrality of Reef Net knowledge in W̱SÁNEĆ education, which this dissertation explores, is an example of the revitalization and resurgence of a traditional knowledge system needed to heal our people so that we once again thrive as the Saltwater People. The Reef Net was integral to our identity, and our education system. As W̱SÁNEĆ people we have a responsibility to our W̱SÁNEĆ children, to develop, and revitalize our own education system.

As a W̱SÁNEĆ scholar I have two responsibilities; to maintain the academic integrity of the university, but more importantly, I have a responsibility to serve my community, for the current generation, as well as future generations and the ancestors of the W̱SÁNEĆ. In this dissertation I strive to be a W̱SÁNEĆ scholar who is directly connected to, immersed and rooted in a W̱SÁNEĆ worldview. While this dissertation is a part of the process of obtaining a doctoral degree at the University of Victoria, my main focus, intent, and motivation for this work is to bring

the Reef net fishery knowledge system back to be at the heart, the centre of the W̱SÁNEĆ community, as a vibrant living educational system.

While first and foremost a W̱SÁNEĆ person, my work is also a scholarly activity. My academic work and my community work are equally important. Universities are widely regarded as important places of knowledge production and dissemination. Universities represent the epitome of Western learning and teaching. Objective scholars and rigorous scholarship are highly regarded. Even in my community, our leaders often turn to 'outside' experts for guidance, and for direction. Many intellectuals are sought, most often lawyers and professors, to come and advise our leaders. Ironically, therefore, in part, my purpose in pursuing the PhD is to try to become accepted in both the world of the academy, and within my own nation, and the broader Indigenous community, as one of these experts, with the purpose of advocating for a W̱SÁNEĆ education rooted in local tradition.

W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge has been in existence much longer than any university, even the World's oldest universities. It feels like that I am striving to become a professor and philosopher walking in two distinct

knowledge systems, through the same process. This is the challenge, but it has been done before, and I recognise the courage, deep intelligence and spirit of Indigenous academics and intellectuals who have blazed a path before me.

We are taught that the land is our teacher, our relative, and our inextricable relationship to it, is what it means to be W̱SÁNEĆ. This work is about the liberation of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation through a resurgence of a W̱SÁNEĆ educational way. It is not about collaborating with or indigenizing the current education system (which is also important, but not the focus of this work), but rather it is about the liberation of our Nation through the revitalization and resurgence of our life ways through our own authentic education. It is about restoring the W̱SÁNEĆ worldview and deepening our relationship to our homelands. Ultimately, it is about ensuring that our children today and in the future can become more and more W̱SÁNEĆ.

In a broader context, this work is about rejecting the notions of Pan-Indigenism in education, which perpetuates the notion all indigenous peoples as the same. My project is about supporting the resurgence of

an authentic W̱SÁNEĆ lifeway and educational way. “If knowledge is power, then understanding is liberation” (Aluli Meyer, 2011). It is both the W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge with the understanding of our relationship to the land through our ancient educational way, the Reef Net fishery, applied to today’s context that has the potential to heal and revitalise our culture, language and communities.

This dissertation is not only the culmination of my doctoral studies at the University of Victoria, but it also reflects my lifelong learning. This research and writing is about much more than earning a doctoral degree. This is about the gathering and recollection of knowledge of the original peoples of this land (where the University of Victoria is now situated), and making it a living, vibrant, knowledge system and understanding once again. My work also has a purpose beyond me; it is for my family, my community, my Nation, and all Indigenous Nations in BC, Canada, and beyond. It is also to bring awareness that W̱SÁNEĆ wisdom is rich and deep and immensely valuable. Vine Deloria (1988, P.11) explains that the “outlook of his people was not of abstract science but of simplicity and mystery”. Further he states that Indigenous people produce wisdom

while their colonizers produce knowledge, and then use that knowledge as a commodity to deprive others (eg. National Energy Board process, or in fact all natural resource based economic activities). What Deloria means is that 'wisdom' is deeply rooted and connected to the land, philosophically and spiritually.

Let's consider the purpose and intent of education. The Latin root for the word education means "to draw forward" (Orr, 2004, pp. xii). In our W̱SÁNEĆ language, education is about EĒ TELNIW̱T or 'making a whole person'. Therefore, a W̱SÁNEĆ education must then draw forward the knowledge and wisdom based on an existence and relationship to a land. Our people are not whole, without the land and our distinct relationship to it. In stark contrast, while bringing our children to (public) school on the first day following the winter break, my wife and I noted that the students were walking to school, as if they were drones. You could see in their faces and body language, that school was something they had to attend, not wanted to attend. When you think of students in the school system as if they are worker drones, it suggests that students are part of

a larger societal structure, one of hierarchy and domination and subordination, not about a relationship and identity that is of this land.

When we think about our sustainable existence on the planet, we are all facing a questionable future. I think as a modern society, we are educated to believe that we need to find our place in the economic system. It is the settler state's economy. As Orr (2004) states, the "problem is not in education" but perhaps its more appropriately the "problem of education" (p. 26). In terms of Indigenous scholarship in education, there has been a great deal of work on pedagogy, that is, how things are taught (Williams & Tanaka, 2007; Cajete 1994; Grande 2004). There is some visionary work on Indigenous knowledge (Deloria 2006; Alfred, 2005), and there is some work on how to research Indigenous knowledge (Smith 2012; Chilisa 2012; Wilson 2008). Yet, the predominant discourse seems to be about improving the academic achievement and performance of Indigenous pupils in the mainstream school system, and similarly to improve the education system on reserves so that meshes with the approaches and goals of the mainstream system (while attempting to be more relevant). The fundamental task at hand;

that synthesizes all of this work is to rebuild, recreate, revitalize and support the resurgence of Indigenous nations and Indigenous ways of education that reflect, teach and perpetuate the Indigenous knowledge's that have existed since the beginning of time. Taiaiake Alfred (2005) among many others suggests that Indigenous peoples must have a strong cultural foundation in order to successfully engage with mainstream societies. A truly Indigenous educational way would ensure that Indigenous nations have strong cultural foundations. Understand that what I am talking about is not one Indigenous education system for all Indigenous nations, but rather that there are likely as many Indigenous education systems as there are Indigenous nations. In BC alone there is an incredible diversity, indicated by the fact that 60% of all Indigenous languages in Canada can be found in British Columbia (FPLHCC, 2014).

As Indigenous people who are leaders/scholars, we have a responsibility. It is our responsibility to restore the land and to teach our children how to live and relate to the land as our ancestors did. This is

the responsibility, and it leads us to explore the potential of a decolonized and authentic Indigenous education system.

Economics, politics, law, education have been and continue to be mechanisms for disconnecting Indigenous peoples from the land. As my people, the W̱SÁNEĆ have lost their lands, they have lost medicines, foods, and relatives. The health of the land and the health of our people go hand in hand. Our nation has lost much of its access to traditional foods as a result of being alienated from home territories. It is culturally, spiritually and physically necessary for Indigenous nations to relate to, and rebuild their relationship to their homelands. This is where authentic Indigenous education systems rooted in Indigenous knowledge have great potential to decolonize. This dissertation demonstrates the possibility for restoration and resurgence in dual tradition scholarship. This project which began primarily as a traditional academic project seeking to collect, collate and analyse data related to the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net Fishery, catalysed a movement in the community which saw the development of a school based activity with students that resulted in the construction of a Ceremonial Reef Net, that further inspired the

researcher to work with the community as a leader on the construction and fishing of a Reef Net by the community for the first time in 70 years.

The Douglas Treaty and the W̱SÁNEĆ People: Implications for education

“Our language is the voice of the land.

We honour the land with the words of the language that we

use.

We acknowledge the beautiful land with the words of our

people.

Language was given to us from the beginning. It tells us how

we can care for the land and each other.”

John Elliott –W̱SÁNEĆ Nation

In essence this dissertation is about the recovery and revitalization of an W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge system, particularly as it applies to education and the environment. The goal being to move us closer to rebuilding our Nation, to become self-determining within our own homelands, and to promoting a just relationship and peaceful co-existence with other nations (including BC and Canada), such as was embodied the intentions

of our W̱SÁNEĆ leaders at the time of the signing of the Douglas Treaty. The W̱SÁNEĆ People have lived on our homelands for tens of thousands of years, if not longer. Archeological studies are beginning to show the extent of our presence here (Kenady et al. 2010; Waters et al 2011). Our W̱SÁNEĆ oral history informs us that we have been here since the beginning, and it was the Creator XÁLS, the sacred one, that put us here, and provided us with all of the teachings, and everything we needed to live a prosperous meaningful live on our homelands. It was with our traditional knowledge, practices, philosophies, beliefs, laws and worldview that the W̱SÁNEĆ people lived on/with our homelands in peace and prosperity since time immemorial.

The W̱SÁNEĆ territorial homelands, or ÁLEŃENEØ in our language; included what is now known as Southern Vancouver Island, the San Juan Islands, the Southern Gulf Islands, and the waters in between that span across to the Fraser River. The W̱SÁNEĆ ÁLEŃENEØ included as much of the marine environment as it does the terrestrial environments (see Fig. 1 of territorial map). Our elders often say that our territory is well defined by place names in our language, in which our relationship to the territory

is encoded and embodied. The W̱SÁNEĆ territory included so much of the marine environment that we often refer to ourselves as the 'Saltwater People'. Within our ancestral language, enforced by our teachings and beliefs and reflected in the territory itself was a strong relationship between the W̱SÁNEĆ people and the ÁLEŃENEØ. This was how the W̱SÁNEĆ lived, since time immemorial, since the beginning.

It is only over the last 160 or so years that things have changed. Contact and colonization over this recent history has had a devastating and detrimental impact on the W̱SÁNEĆ ÁLEŃENEØ, the W̱SÁNEĆ people, and the relationship between them. One of the significant and defining events that has served to dispossess the W̱SÁNEĆ people from our ÁLEŃENEØ and to open our homelands to settlement was the signing of the Douglas Treaty of 1852. The Douglas Treaties, signed between James Douglas as Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company (charged with establishing a colony) and the W̱SÁNEĆ people, had a significant effect on our relationship to the land. From the W̱SÁNEĆ perspective, the Treaty was meant to solidify the relationship between the Crown and the W̱SÁNEĆ people, the original peoples of this land. Evidently from the

colonial perspective, it served to open the territory freely to European settlement. Learning and teaching about the truth of the Douglas Treaties and the true history of this land poses a great opportunity not just for the W̱SÁNEĆ people, but for all people of BC. A clearer understanding of the treaty relationship will surely help the W̱SÁNEĆ people, and it should be a core part of the education system.

The educational opportunity is in thinking about and coming to an understanding about our relationship to the land, and this goes for all people, but for purpose of this chapter, I will focus on the W̱SÁNEĆ people. Traditionally the W̱SÁNEĆ people lived in a relationship with the land, in which the land, language, beliefs and people were all inseparable, until the Douglas Treaty and the colonization of the W̱SÁNEĆ homelands. Learning and teaching about this history will contribute to the revitalization of the traditional W̱SÁNEĆ life ways, and to hopefully a restructuring and rebuilding of the W̱SÁNEĆ people to the settler colonial state. Education about this should be incorporated and implemented at all levels for all people, but particularly for the W̱SÁNEĆ people. This

chapter will represent a useful starting point for this process, as my own learning has been on this journey for many years now.

In terms of thinking about a relationship to the land, it is necessary to first consider how we define ourselves. Are we WSÁNEĆ First Nations, Aboriginal, Indigenous, Indian or Native? What do we call ourselves? How we define ourselves has great implications for our relationship to the land. It is not just how we define ourselves, but how others define us, for example 'First Nations' in Canada most often subscribe to the idea that we are defined as 'Indians' under the 'Indian act'.

The origin of the name 'Indians' in Canada originates with a mistaken identity (King, 2012). When Christopher Columbus arrived on the shores of Turtle Island/North America, he was searching for a route to India as a part of the spice trade. When he arrived here, he had thought he found his way there, and that the original peoples of this land that he encountered were 'Indians'. This fallacy is perpetuated in the Indian Act of Canada. This is an Act of the Canadian Government that was first passed in 1876, and is still in existence today.

The Canadian State continues to oppress Indigenous peoples by defining the original peoples of Canada, through the Canadian Constitution. In the Constitution, it defines the “*Aboriginal peoples of Canada*” as First Nations, Inuit and Métis of Canada. In this dissertation I am going to use these terms interchangeably, with an effort to use W̱SÁNEĆ as much as possible as the focus. Again, this definition of *Aboriginal* recognizes all of the original people of this land under this one all-encompassing definition. This definition in effect encourages a ‘pan-Indigenous’ understanding and approach to the original peoples of this land that implies we are all part of the same group, and more importantly, a part of Canada. The Constitution, and this legal definition ignore the nationhood status of the original peoples of the land. As long as we subscribe to this definition, and furthermore, teach it, it perpetuates this ongoing injustice and assimilation process.

The definition of ‘aboriginal’ and ‘aboriginal peoples’ comes from Constitution Act of 1982, where Section 35(2) states, “in this Act, ‘Aboriginal Peoples of Canada’ include the Indian, Inuit and Metis peoples of Canada”. Further to this, the definition of ‘Indian’ comes from section

91(24) of the Constitution Act of 1867, where the Federal Government was provided with the legislative authority over “Indians and lands reserved for Indians”. Essentially, all of these definitions have been constructed by the Canadian State, to serve its own needs and laws. In his book *Wasáse, Taiaiake Alfred* (2005) articulates the problem of using of the term ‘aboriginal’. He states, the term is a “social, political, and intellectual construction” and it “reflects the prevailing colonial mentality in its redefinition of Onkwehonwe away from our original languages, because it fashions the people as a symbol and concept constructed on, and totally amenable to, colonialism”. Further to this, Alfred (p.24, 2005) states that “being Aboriginal, once the implications are fully understood, is repugnant to anyone who desires to preserve the Onkwehonwe ways of life”. It is clear that the problem with this term is that it is an arbitrary, legal definition of one group of people to serve the needs and desires of another. In the context of education, the assimilationist policy of the residential school system, and the further continued assimilation of Indigenous peoples into Canada, through legalism and aboriginalization is not the solution. Alfred rejects aboriginalism by using his own

language to define his identity and nationhood. Similarly, in W̱SÁNEĆ, it is far better to identify as W̱SÁNEĆ rather than aboriginal. The word W̱SÁNEĆ, which means “raised up, or rising up” or “emerging”, and refers to our creation story and to the land where we come from. Recall my introduction, where I say “NĪĒ W̱SÁNEĆ TFE NE ÁLENEŅEŅ”. This expresses it all, my people and my homeland. Our land and our identity is one in the same and cannot be separated. An education that does anything less than educating its Indigenous students solidly into their language, and an identity that is rooted in the land is assimilationist and aboriginalist.

The term ‘First Nation’ is commonly used, and is often used instead of ‘Band’. For example, I am a member of the Tsawout First Nation or Tsawout Band. Again, this is problematic in that its use reflects and comes directly from the Indian Act, though there is no legal definition of ‘First Nation’. Though it may be more preferable for some to use First Nation rather than Band, but again it can be problematic. The Indian Act is divisive and upholds Canada’s legal power and dominion over Indigenous peoples. Let me explain; the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples have been

divided into the four bands of Tsawout, Tsartlip, Tseycum and Pauquachin. Using the term 'First Nations' implies that each of these bands are autonomous nations in and of themselves, whereas historically, we were, and still should be one nation, the W̱SÁNEĆ people. Further to this, when one hears 'First Nation', it necessitates a second more recent nation under which the first nation is subjugated to the rule of a higher, or second, more recent nation (the Canadian State). The Indian Act upholds this. Again, this term is not appropriate or suitable. This ideology in education is also unsuitable.

Indigenous is a term that is used more and more widely. The website www.dictionary.com defines Indigenous as "originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country". From my perspective, using 'Indigenous' is more appropriate, in that it reflects a connection to the land. It is in line with the SENĆOŦEN word 'W̱SÁNEĆ' which speaks also our connection to the land going back to the time of creation. Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel (2005, p. 597) in their article Being Indigenous state that

Indigenusness is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism. The communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centers of empire. It is this oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world.

In this way, to be Indigenous rejects the statist definitions that aim to assimilate Indigenous peoples and justify the ongoing extraction of resources on stolen lands. I consider that using the term 'Indigenous' is more appropriate in that it reflects a connection to place or connection to land. What does that connection mean? This is where an Indigenous education is vitally important.

Within the constitutional definition of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, it refers to First Nations. This is what we often see our own people referring to themselves as today. For example, my community of SXÁUTW, refers to itself as the Tsawout First Nation, which is a Band under the Indian Act. In this way, my community, with its elected Band Council Leadership and Administrative Structure is in reality, not a Nation. In pre-contact times, while the WSÁNEĆ people were a Nation, SXÁUTW (or Tsawout) was a permanent winter village. The WSÁNEĆ as a nation had other winter villages that together comprised the Nation (Tsawout, Tsartlip, Pauquachin and Tseycum). All of these communities traditionally shared one same language, culture, law, spiritual beliefs, societal structure, education system, and importantly, we all Reef Net fished. If we as WSÁNEĆ people continue to subscribe to the mentality, understanding and definition of the settler state, then we as a WSÁNEĆ people will continue to live under the oppression of the state and in dispossession from our homelands. Again, an education that is founded on the true history of this land is a necessity, and can help to reverse this situation for us as a WSÁNEĆ people.

Settler colonial definitions that apply to W̱SÁNEĆ and all other First Nations people are inadequate, and tend towards derogatory. A common definition that is often used in Canada is 'native'. This refers to someone or something that is originally from a place, and having special rights perhaps because of this, but it does not imply a nation-to-nation status. The word 'native' also has undertones of being primitive, less civilized, less than, and is generally considered to have negative undertones (Carr, 1996).

Finally, there is a term that is more recently widely used, and is gaining popularity in academic settings, and that is 'Indigenous'. This definition is more appropriate as it is a term that reflects a connection to the land in a way that it is naturally or originally there, that is always been there. This view is consistent with our worldview that we have been here from the beginning, and the sacred one, the creator, put us here. This definition is most appropriate, though it does specify or distinguish individual nations. I questioned my late Uncle Earl Claxton Sr. once about this, I asked him what he felt was the most appropriate definition. He responded, "We are W̱SÁNEĆ, we belong to W̱SÁNEĆ. It is far better if

we continue to call ourselves the W̱SÁNEĆ people” (Personal Communication, 2010).

This name, W̱SÁNEĆ, relates to our creation story, and it reflects our true identity as a nation. It is with this perspective, as a nation, that we must consider and reflect on our relationship to BC and Canada, through the Douglas Treaty. It starts with the individual, then moves through familial ties to the community and the nation that the identity is formed and maintained. This is why learning and teaching about our history, and the Douglas Treaty is vital, and should be a fundamental part of education in W̱SÁNEĆ. It is our responsibility as a people and a nation, to return to and remain a nation of eSÁNEĆ people, education was accomplished through an interconnected and complex system that involved the SENĆOŦEN language and place names, and W̱SÁNEĆ hereditary rights and responsibilities. This was a system of relating to our homelands that stood for thousands upon thousands of years. While W̱SÁNEĆ people say that we belong to the land, rather than we own the land, this complex system did involve what western law would consider ‘private ownership’ of areas for harvesting wild food. For example,

edible camas beds were very important to the W̱SÁNEĆ people. While many of those camas sites were commonly owned and openly accessible, some sites were privately owned and passed on through our hereditary system. Examples of specific camas bed locations, which were privately owned, included Mandarte Island in Haro Strait, which was owned by three people, and an islet south of Sidney Island, which was owned by a single person. This complex and sophisticated system of land ownership and governance must be remembered, and considered, particularly in articulating and enacting any treaty relationship.

The Oral History of the Douglas Treaty

The territory of the W̱SÁNEĆ people at the time the European explorers first arrived in the mid 18th century, consisted of towering temperate coastal rainforests of Sitka Spruce, Douglas–Fir, Western Red Cedar, Grand Fir, Amabilis Fir and Western Hemlock. At the higher elevations, great stands of Yellow–Cedar, Mountain Hemlock and Subalpine Fir were found. There were also great stands of Red Alder, Black Cottonwood, Pacific Crabapple and bigleaf maple, and garry oak

meadows to be found in our territory. In all of these ecosystems, there were thousands of other plant species to be found, and all were culturally significant and had immense importance and utility. Traditionally in W̱SÁNEĆ it was taught that all living things were once people, and shared with us a special knowledge about how to live. These were sacred teachings that connected us to this land. In these days, the land provided everything we needed. All the wood we would have ever needed was provided naturally by deadfalls. The W̱SÁNEĆ rarely had to cut down a living tree. With all of these great trees, the W̱SÁNEĆ people had all they needed, from materials for canoes, houses and clothing. The territory also consisted of various ecosystems such as wetlands, streams, rivers, lakes, meadows, shorelines, tidal marshes, and estuaries and the intertidal and sub-tidal marine environments. With all of this there was the associated animal life too. The land, sea and people were all connected. Out of this came the lifeways, belief systems, language and culture of the W̱SÁNEĆ people. When James Douglas and his men arrived, he thought that this land was a 'perfect Eden', and perfect for settlement.

The motivation of securing valuable land was the impetus for the signing of the Douglas Treaty.

At the time of the signing of the Douglas Treaty in 1852, the traditional and ancestral ways of life, the language and culture of the W̱SÁNEĆ people was still very much intact and strong, and without influence from the European contact. There was both a strong sense of ownership and relationship to our homelands and territory for the W̱SÁNEĆ people. According to the oral history that the Elders shared with me during this research, James Douglas met with the W̱SÁNEĆ people atop a significant mountaintop, which the W̱SÁNEĆ call PKOLS (Douglas later renamed PKOLS to Mount Douglas, after himself). The two parties pointed outwards from that vantage point, where the W̱SÁNEĆ people clearly pointed out the extent of the W̱SÁNEĆ territory, and it is said that Douglas agreed to this so that the W̱SÁNEĆ people could 'roam free and not be bothered', which of course included all of the important seasonal activities of the W̱SÁNEĆ such as Reef Net fishing. It is said that the Douglas Treaty arose in part because of rising tensions between the

ᵂSÁNEĆ people and the colonists, it was also considered to be a peace agreement.

The mountain where Douglas and his men met with the ᵂSÁNEĆ SIÁM, was at PKOLS. PKOLS was a spiritually important place, a SᵂÁNET (a high mountain place). The name refers to important history. It was appropriate for this important event to take place there. In September of 1840 Douglas was named the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and in 1841 relocated to Southern Vancouver Island to set up a HBC trading post. It was during his tenure that an unfortunate event occurred. Here I will draw upon the work of Janice Knighton (2004), who also researched the ᵂSÁNEĆ oral history of the Douglas Treaty by interviewing a number of ᵂSÁNEĆ Elders. According to Knighton (2004), tensions arose when a 14-year-old ᵂSÁNEĆ messenger boy was shot by one of Douglas' men. Tensions continued to grow further when Douglas' men were cutting down a stand of particularly straight cedar trees in Cordova Bay to use as masts for their sailboats (Knighton, 2004). These two incidents lead the ᵂSÁNEĆ leaders to order their warriors to take their cedar canoes to Cordova Bay to confront Douglas (Knighton, 2004).

The actual date is not clear, but these events happened after 1841 and leading up to 1852 when the treaty was signed.

Right after this happened, the W̱SÁNEĆ agreed to meet James Douglas on top of PKOLS. Many W̱SÁNEĆ warriors gathered there, and it was the intention of the W̱SÁNEĆ people to get revenge for the murder of that young W̱SÁNEĆ boy. It was said that the W̱SÁNEĆ people vastly outnumbered Douglas and his men. It was on this day in 1852 that James Douglas attempted to concede in good faith to meet the W̱SÁNEĆ people, to engage in peaceful relations. Initially the W̱SÁNEĆ people rejected to conduct any business with Douglas, because they saw how he conducted business within the W̱SÁNEĆ homelands (eg. unauthorized logging).

On the day the treaty was signed, Douglas and his men saw they were outnumbered, and retreated (Knighton, 2004). The W̱SÁNEĆ soon after asked to meet Douglas in Victoria, and when they met, were expecting a peace agreement since they had recently spared the life of Douglas and his men (Knighton, 2004). Douglas offered the W̱SÁNEĆ leaders blankets and money and asked them to sign a blank piece of

paper with a cross (Knighton, 2004). They saw the gifts as a peace offering and the cross on the document as a sign of the Christian cross, another sign of peace (Knighton, 2004). The Douglas Treaty, to the W̱SÁNEĆ people was only ever considered a peace agreement. The settler colonial government seemed to believe that it essentially stripped the W̱SÁNEĆ people of their land.

There was one individual that played an important role; he was a priest, though he learned some SENĆOŦEN, so he was able to act as a translator. He spoke to the W̱SÁNEĆ SIÁM about how Douglas and his men were also spiritual people, and felt remorse for the fatal incident. He expressed how Douglas also desired peace and placed great value in building relationships with the W̱SÁNEĆ.

The W̱SÁNEĆ leaders heard the priest's words, and discussed amongst themselves, stating that they felt that Douglas believes in God the same way that the W̱SÁNEĆ believed in XÁLS. They felt that they could trust that James Douglas could keep his word, his promises. The W̱SÁNEĆ were peaceful and spiritual, and valued respectful relations between families, communities and nations. The W̱SÁNEĆ SIÁM felt that this

gesture by James Douglas was promising that the settlers and the W̱SÁNEĆ could co-exist on this land, and that Douglas would leave the W̱SÁNEĆ to live as we always had since time immemorial, and to *fish as formerly*.

As the relationship between the W̱SÁNEĆ and the settlers developed, Douglas took the opportunity to draft a treaty, based on the principles of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. By doing this, he perpetuated further misunderstanding, and through the stroke of the pen, he took the land, opening the way for European settlement, including the mountain where the treaty was signed. He renamed much of the local territory to reflect his presence, including Mount Douglas and James Island.

Mount Douglas was established as a Government Reserve in 1858, and was originally known to colonizers as “The Hill of Cedars”, Mount Douglas was transferred to Saanich parks in 1992 (District of Saanich, 2012). The current terms of it’s protection are laid out within the Mount Douglas Park Charter. The first sentence states, “The lands known as Mount Douglas Park are hereby reserved in perpetuity for the protection

and preservation of the natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public” (District of Saanich, 2012).

Story of PKOLS

This story of PKOLS goes all the way back to the time of creation. It’s spirit and presence is found in our language, stories, beliefs, laws, spirituality, and practices that formed our life ways. Embedded and inseparable were W̱SÁNEĆ laws and beliefs. Both W̱SÁNEĆ laws and beliefs are reflected in the story of PKOLS.

When the creator arrived by canoe to the shores of STÁUTW, he disembarked from his canoe there, on the shore. On the shore there, you can find many beautiful black shiny stones, called QENDOLES. He picked up one of those black shiny stones and threw it in towards the land, and nothing appeared. He stooped over and picked up another one. This second one he threw again, and where it landed it grew into a mountain. From this time forward, these stones became sacred to our people. That high mountain became a sacred place.

XÁLS filled a basket with all of those sacred stones and he walked to the top of that mountain, with all of the W̱SÁNEĆ People. When they arrived to the top of the mountain, he threw those black stones around. PKOLS, where the Douglas Treaty was signed, grew from one of those sacred stones. He threw the remaining stones all around the territory, to form all of the high places, the mountains throughout the W̱SÁNEĆ territory and homelands. This was the Sacred-One's work. He threw stones, white granite stones, one to white rock, one to Sechelt, and one here at PKOLS. These were markers for the territory. At that time, the sacred one also grabbed some of the W̱SÁNEĆ people, and threw them out into the territorial waters, and these people formed the islands. The creator instructed the people as he threw them out, to take care of W̱SÁNEĆ, and in turn he instructed the W̱SÁNEĆ to take care of the islands.

When Douglas took our territorial places, he disregarded the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples' deep, spiritual and historical connection to these places, a connection that was there since the beginning of time and expressed through the ancient W̱SÁNEĆ language and in our oral stories, such as

the story of PKOLS. According to our oral histories, the W̱SÁNEĆ SIÁM felt that this is what was being acknowledged and recognized by the peace agreement. To the W̱SÁNEĆ it was not understood as a land cession agreement, as is how Douglas intended it. It was the perspective of the W̱SÁNEĆ people that this agreement was an agreement of peace, between two nations. Douglas did not use the word 'treaty', however the courts have ruled that the treaties were, and remain to be valid treaties. A treaty, by definition, is an agreement between two sovereign nations. Simply put, as a sovereign nation we then have jurisdiction to (re)create and maintain our own educational way. The backbone of that way was an immersion in the WSANEC Reef Net Fishery, a fundamental piece of the W̱SÁNEĆ society and educational way.

The Oral History of the Saanich Indian School Board.

A Story of the Flood as told by Earl Claxton Sr.

One day a long, long time ago, the waters began to rise.

The people began to worry as the waters rose up to their homes.

They collected their belongings and went to their canoes.

As the water rose, they paddled to the highest mountain.

When they reached the top, one of the men made a long anchor rope of cedar bark.

The waters rose to the top of the mountain.

The people were anchored there for a long time, but were well prepared and had lots of dried salmon to eat.

As they were tied up there, a raven came and landed on the bow of the canoe: It seemed to be telling them something.

So finally one of the men pointed out to the far distance and said, "NI QENNET TTE W̱SÁNEĆ!" Look what is emerging!

So then they knew this is what the raven was telling them.

They knew the flood was over.

As the tide went down, they gathered in a circle and gave thanks to the mountain that saved their lives. They said from now on this place will be called LAUWELNEW, the place of refuge, and we will be called the W̱SÁNEĆ People.

We are still called the W̱SÁNEĆ people today, the emerging people.

Those ancestors had visions for our people; this is one of those visions.

This is the oral history of the Saanich Indian School Board (SISB) as I have heard it from my father. He has been a part of the elected leadership of the Tsawout community for many years (over 40 years in all), and a part of the leadership that formed the Saanich Indian School Board. The history of the SISB is an important history to remember and share. It is a history that reflects the vision for the future of education in W̱SÁNEĆ. It also reflects how the W̱SÁNEĆ people have held the development of an education system that honours W̱SÁNEĆ values and beliefs as a top priority in the community. The development of the SISB was a community response to the gradual imposition of mainstream schooling in the W̱SÁNEĆ community. It was in the 1930's when a little school was built on the W̱SÁNEĆ community. At this time, the W̱SÁNEĆ children who attended this school still spoke SENĆOŦEN as their first language, including my father. It is important to understand that those children were still strong W̱SÁNEĆ people at that time, and not yet influenced by European ways. Many of the W̱SÁNEĆ people at that time were fluent in both SENĆOŦEN and Hul'qumi'num languages (a closely

related language spoken in Cowichan and northward) . The W̱SÁNEĆ people were still knowledgeable in our traditional W̱SÁNEĆ philosophies, beliefs, and practices. It was during this time that the little school, which were known as “Indian Day Schools” didn’t go all the way to grade 12, so many of the students who attended this school were transferred to residential schools. In this education system the students were taught European ways. At these schools the young W̱SÁNEĆ people were told, actually forced not to speak our ancestral language. Many times they were beaten if caught speaking our ancestral language. Many of our elders do not have fond memories of the residential schooling experience. As a result of going through this horrible and traumatic experience, our elders who were survivors of the residential school system had a vision that our W̱SÁNEĆ children and future children would be proud to be W̱SÁNEĆ. It was their hope that they would carry on the knowledge, beliefs, language, and practices of the W̱SÁNEĆ people. It was also their vision that the education system will no longer destroy the W̱SÁNEĆ people, but rather embrace and enhance them. This is the vision that eventually led to the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board.

The envisioning of a W̱SÁNEĆ school system included the construction of a new school building, which was first opened in 1989 and named the ŁÁU, WEL, ṈEW Tribal School. While a new building was an important part of the overall vision for the evolution of education and schooling in the W̱SÁNEĆ community, the elders understood that it is not just the building, but the learning environment that was most important factor. The educational environment was considered most important. The environment must be situated within our community, and in W̱SÁNEĆ language, philosophies and beliefs.

One of the influential ancestors of the W̱SÁNEĆ people, the late Tommy Paul once said in reference to the founding of the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board and the envisioning of a new school building, “One day you are going to have to understand that it is going to be what is offered to you, school and schooling. It is not easy now that you have to have a piece of paper to go and get a fish for example! Education is now a must” (Personal Communication, 2014). Leading up to the opening of the ŁÁU, WEL, ṈEW Tribal School in 1989, the W̱SÁNEĆ people continued to reflect on these words of Paul. Paul's vision fuelled the drive towards

the formation of the school board and the building of our own community school. It is also important to consider that the time period leading up to the building of the ŁÁU,WEL,NEW Tribal school was during a time when many of the WŚÁNEĆ people who were also residential school survivors were beginning to have children of their own. Not only was the desire to have our own school, but also our own school board. This was really a community vision, where the power, control and focus of this community education system would be once again focused on and in the community. Prior to the building of the new WŚÁNEĆ community school, there was a one-room school built (date unknown) in the community for WŚÁNEĆ children to attend but at that time the teachers were Nuns. A number of years later (date unknown), there was a five-room school built, but it also was operated and taught by Nuns. The teachers were Nuns and the administration of the school rested with the Department of Indian Affairs. This was not the vision of our Elders or community leaders for the our community's education system.

Eventually and understandably, the WŚÁNEĆ people grew dissatisfied with that neo-colonial education system, and with the lack of

involvement of W̱SÁNEĆ people in the education of W̱SÁNEĆ children at that time (prior to 1976). It was this sense of dissatisfaction that led to the formation of the Saanich Indian School Board. The elected councils of the four W̱SÁNEĆ bands formed the original Saanich Indian School Board. In 1976, a school was built, because there was a fire and the original school burned down. The Federal Government had refused to, and ultimately had no intention to build a new school at this time. The Government's intention was for W̱SÁNEĆ students to attend mainstream public schools in the local district. The new Saanich Indian School Board (SISB) resisted this and alternatively temporarily offered portable units. W̱SÁNEĆ children went to school from 1976 through to 1989 in these portables.

The SISB lobbied the government for the construction of a new Tribal school building. The SISB argued that our students could have a better chance at success in the education system if they had a better, more suitable learning environment. The SISB could see at that time that our Saanich students were not succeeding in mainstream provincial schools. This is the effort that led to the building of the ŁÁU, WEL, NEW tribal

school. This new school was one step towards retaking control of our own education.

According to our oral history, the W̱SÁNEĆ people acknowledge and thank the sacred mountain we call ŁÁU, WEL, NĒW for saving us from the great flood. It is our hope that through development of our own school system that we can reunite and become a strong W̱SÁNEĆ Nation again. In a metaphorical sense, it was also like the 'Mainstream Education System' was like another 'great flood'. It came to drown us in the white man's ways, but we have survived it, and now is the time we can truly make education our own, authentic W̱SÁNEĆ educational way. This project is in a way, like the Raven seeking to rediscover our former place before the great flood, when we fished as formerly.

Chapter 2 KENOLES

Literature Review of Indigenous Education

We have been here a long time. During that time we lived with the sea songs, the elements, the lands. Our ancestors continue to teach us through our ancient language through our presence here.

STOLOEEL (Dr. John Elliot Sr.)

Learning and Teaching, Schooling and Knowledge: A

Reflection

For quite some time now, I have been contemplating the importance and meaning of education. I have been reflecting on my own educational journey, watching my own children navigate their own educational journeys. All of my professional and academic roles have been situated in the education field. Obviously I place high value in education. I believe that it is important, I really do. What I have been contemplating with this project is not how to improve the Public education system for Indigenous people (or all people for that matter); rather, what I have been contemplating is, struggling with, and exploring is to uncover the

essence of, the philosophies and the fundamental guiding principles of Education for WSÁNEĆ people.

It was quite clear in the early colonial policies in Canada, which led to the implementation of the residential school system and Indian day school system, that it had an aim of assimilation, to educate the ‘Indian out of the child’. Knowing this, and knowing the current state of despair that our communities live in, I am even led to question the purpose and the intent of the current modern public school system and Band school system that is currently in place. It seems the purpose and intent of modern mainstream education and schooling are to support individuals to live as a part of this contemporary society. I believe that they are important; I believe that they are far better and more appropriate than some of the early colonial education systems that were implemented. I believe that the current models of Western public education are important. I send my children to school on a daily basis. I was filled with pride and joy when our oldest son graduated from the system, despite not fully engaging with that system. I feel compulsory public schools can teach many important things to all children, such as work ethic, self-

discipline, independence and teamwork skills, and it can provide a safe place where students can gain important social, intellectual and literacy skills. It also is a mechanism to provide students with a knowledge base for functioning in the dominant society. The k-12 public system also provides some of the opportunity for students to pursue higher education if they desire. This is good. Two of my nieces are undertaking post-secondary education, and needless to say I am proud of them. Still I wonder, I question, and I challenge the compulsory education system we live with.

David Orr (2004), in his book *Earth in Mind* articulates that the problems we should be contemplating are not within education, but rather it is perhaps the education system that is the problem. He feels that the education system is designed to create a workforce of its learners that will compete in the global economy. I wonder if all the talk about pipelines from the oil sands, the construction of shopping centers (thus habitat destruction), among other things, are supported by the worldview that is fostered in current education systems. I acknowledge that there is ongoing transformation and reformation in the education

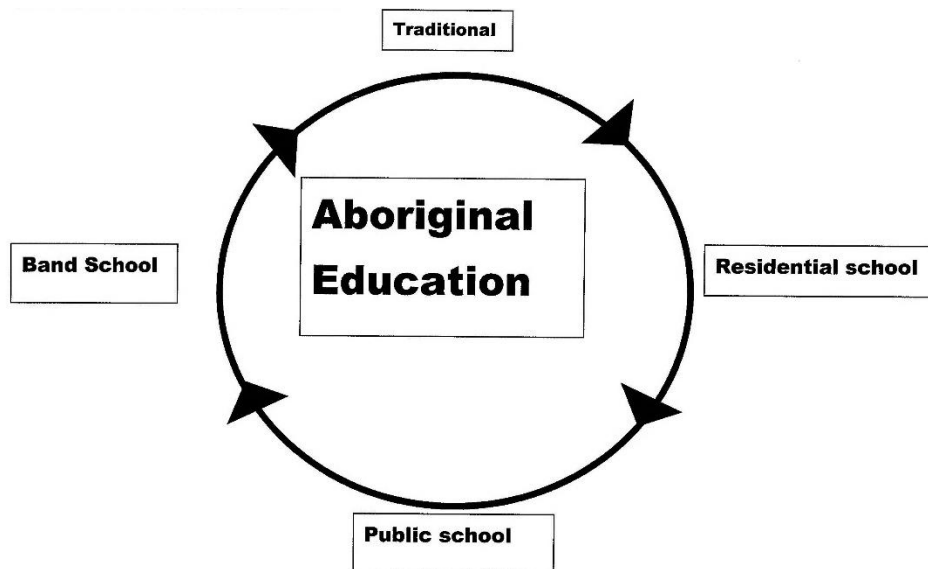
system (as it is currently in BC), but I believe what is really needed is a “re-education of humankind” (Kennedy, 1993 pp. 331), that is, all of our modern societies, towards a more sustainable future.

The Oxford dictionary defines *education* as “ The process of bringing up a child, with reference to forming character, shaping manners and behaviour, etc.; the manner in which a person has been brought up; an instance of this.” (“Education, n.”, 2015). The W̱SÁNEĆ peoples of this land now known as Southern Vancouver Island/Southern Gulf Islands/San Juan Islands had an education way that was an integral part of life on this land, for millennia. Education and schooling, during the recent history of British Columbia and Canada has become an instrument of colonization and assimilation of the W̱SÁNEĆ people. In this dissertation, I am going to explore education from the local W̱SÁNEĆ perspective, to explore how (a traditional) education, which ensured for generations a way to live on this land sustainably and harmoniously, has become a tool for the colonizer to continue to disconnect us from our lands and maintain the colonial project of absorbing us into the

mainstream society. Through the discussion of Aboriginal/Indigenous Education in the W̱SÁNEĆ context, and leading to an exploration of and my learning in the knowledge and education of the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery, this dissertation will inform us of the future possibilities for W̱SÁNEĆ education specifically, and Indigenous Education in general.

As a framework to guide this exploration of Indigenous Education from the local Indigenous perspective, I am going to use the Aboriginal Education Model that was developed by Haig–Brown, Hodgeson–Smith, Regnier and Archibald (1997) in their book *Making the Spirit Dance Within: Joe Duquette High School and an Aboriginal Community*. The model describes the concept of aboriginal education in a circular model where education moves from ‘traditional’ to residential school, then to public school, and finally to the band school system. In this model, the circle continues back and connects to the ‘traditional’ education. I am using this model, to illustrate the trajectory of education and schooling in my review of the literature. This trajectory is consistent with the trajectory of education and schooling in W̱SÁNEĆ. This current work and

dissertation represents the reconnection backwards and forwards to a traditional W̱SÁNEĆ education.



Tr Figure 1 Trajectory of Aboriginal Education

Additional Education

Indigenous peoples in Canada, and around the world had societies that developed, evolved, thrived and lived according to their teachings over thousands upon thousands of years. In Indigenous oral histories, this is the way it has always been, and goes back to the time of creation. Each Indigenous nation had intricate societies that were founded upon their own Indigenous knowledge, contained in their language, infused with their worldview and rooted in their lands. There was and still are

traditional knowledge systems, and education systems to pass on those knowledge's to future generations. This dissertation is my exploration of both the past and the future of W̱SÁNEĆ education. It will be both an academic exercise, but also as a narrative reflection on my experience in the mainstream education system, my thoughts and vision for the future of education, Indigenous and mainstream, and mainly about what I understand is most important for my W̱SÁNEĆ people.

Residential School

The treatment of children in indian (sic) residential schools is a sad chapter in our history. Two primary objectives of the residential school system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said 'to kill the Indian in the child'. Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

Stephen Harper, June 11, 2008

The residential school system has been recognized as a blatant, violent and sinister attempt to assimilate the Indigenous people of Canada, through 'education'. This education system was intent on removing or repressing ancestral language, culture and beliefs and replacing it with the language, culture and beliefs of the mainstream culture. There is a great deal of literature available on the residential school system (Haig-Brown, 1988; Milloy, 1999; Fontaine 2010; Chrisjohn 2006; Regan 2010), so in this chapter, I want to highlight the intent and purpose of this system, which was to move W̱SÁNEĆ communities away from a traditional territorial based education system. For nearly a century, the Canadian Government created and controlled this education system. Churches and missionaries ran residential schools, which were funded by the state. There was a total of about 130 schools in operation across the country, and the last one closed in 1996. The residential school system was designed to assimilate Indigenous children, by separating them physically from their families and

communities, and “prepare Aboriginal people to live a civilized life” (Miller, 1996). This was all done under the guise of “education”.

I often think about my mother, father and grandparents, who all endured this residential school system. Then I think about myself. All of them encouraged me to further my education, yet I cannot speak my own ancestral language, except for some words and phrases. I am now thinking and writing in English. I am now thinking of the potential for WŚÁNEĆ ‘education’ for the future of WŚÁNEĆ children.

Public School

It is implied that, based on the Prime Minister apology of 2008, that the policy of assimilation of aboriginal peoples is no longer happening. However my observation is that the mainstream education system seems to be perpetuating the assimilation process today, albeit in a much kinder, gentler way. There is a growing body of knowledge and research in academia around Aboriginal or Indigenous Education in Canada. The current and dominant discourse is around Indigenizing education (eg. BC’s recent announcement for new curriculum on Aboriginal history and culture). These processes are about tweaking or improving the education

system, so that it better serves Indigenous peoples (McLaughlin & Whatman, 2008; Friesen & Friesen 2002). In general, study after study shows that the 'education system' is not serving Indigenous peoples adequately. Researchers, policy makers and administrators continue to point out that graduation rates and performance and achievement levels are all consistently and disproportionately lower for Aboriginal peoples than that of their non-Aboriginal counterparts (RCAP, 1996: Cappon 2008). I question and challenge the idea that Indigenizing education results in an Indigenous education. In the words of one local educational leader and elder, "the problem is not in the educational system, rather that this is not our educational system" (personal communication, 2014).

Band Schools

The W̱SÁNEĆ communities have been a part of the Band School movement. Improving the lives of Indigenous peoples in BC and Canada is the primary concern for Indigenous peoples, leaders and communities. Education (in its contemporary western form) is often seen as one of the important venues for this. Across BC, there are now more than 100 schools run by First Nations. The aim is to provide quality instruction

and nurturing learning environments for the children in communities. In addition, these schools also aim to retain and revitalize First Nations cultures and languages. Education has come a long way, and this is far, far better than that of the residential school system.

This movement stemmed largely from a policy paper put forward by the National Indian Brotherhood in 1972, called “Indian Control of Indian Education”. This paper stated that responsibility and control for education should be brought back to the communities and to the parents. In 2010, the Assembly of First Nations brought forward this same vision for education in their “First Nations Control of First Nations Education” policy paper. It seems the vision is the same, albeit with updated terminology. It would seem that the problems persist (inadequate funding, low graduation rates).

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), along with many First Nations in BC are working towards and striving for First Nations jurisdiction over education. The areas being negotiated are: Credentialing, Teacher Certification, The role and structure of Community Education Authorities and of FNESC. I see great potential in

this movement, but again, I return to the fundamental question, whose education system is it? What is the purpose and intent? Moving forward, we must pay attention to the answers to these questions, as we envision the future for Indigenous education.

Indigenous Education

The exercise of this section of the dissertation is to explore what an 'Indigenous' education is, or more specifically, what a W̱SÁNEĆ education is. I think that it should revisit the terminology used regarding Indigenous peoples. I use the terms "Aboriginal", "First Nations" and "Indigenous" interchangeably. All of these terms have been used in education as well (Aboriginal Education, Indigenous Education), but they do have subtle yet important implications, especially in the context of education.

As I have had the opportunity to spend more time learning the W̱SÁNEĆ language, culture and beliefs, I have realized that I have had to unlearn, or rethink almost everything that the mainstream education system has taught me. To reiterate what David Orr (2004) has said, the problem might be the education system itself. The mainstream education and

schooling system is not the same as the W̱SÁNEĆ educational way. I started to understand the importance of a W̱SÁNEĆ education system that is rooted in W̱SÁNEĆ philosophy, beliefs and territory. This has crystallized for me in that it was not until I began to learn even a little bit about the W̱SÁNEĆ language, and culture, and particularly about W̱SÁNEĆ place names and the W̱SÁNEĆ reef net fishery, that there is a W̱SÁNEĆ identity and worldview that was not formed in me through my mainstream education and schooling experience. Deloria (2009) writes, “Unlike Western thinkers, for example, the Sioux did not separate their thoughts into categories or disciplines. Everything was practical, economic, political and religious all at once. Indeed, they had a word to describe this totality, ‘wounicage’, which simply meant our way of doing things”. To help illustrate what I am trying to say, the following has been adapted from Learning/Teaching Across Cultures: Strategies for Success by Ray Barnhardt (2000). I am most concerned with teaching within our culture, not across culture, the following table is helpful in illustrating the differences in the between Indigenous and western worldviews. The

contrast in worldviews shows how the mainstream education may not appropriate.

Indigenous Worldview	Western Worldview
Spirituality is embedded in all elements of the cosmos	Spirituality is embedded in a single Supreme Being
Humans have responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationships with the natural world	Humans exercise dominion over nature to use it for personal and economic gain
Need for reciprocity between human and natural worlds–resources are viewed as gifts	Natural resources are available for unilateral human exploitation
Nature is honoured routinely through daily spiritual practice	Spiritual practices are intermittent and set apart from daily life
Wisdom and ethics are derived from direct experience with the natural world	Human reason transcends the natural world and can produce insights independently
Universe is made up of dynamic ever-changing natural forces	Universe is made up of an array of static physical objects
Universe is viewed as a holistic, integrative system with a unifying life force	Universe is compartmentalized in dualistic forms and reduced to progressively smaller conceptual parts
Time is circular with natural cycles that sustain all life	Time is a linear chronology of “human progress”
Nature will always possess unfathomable mysteries	Nature is completely decipherable to the rational human mind
Human thought, feelings and words are inextricably bound to all other aspects of the universe	Human thought, feelings and words are formed apart from the surrounding world

Human role is to participate in the orderly designs of nature	Human role is to dissect, analyze and manipulate nature for own ends
Respect for elders is based on their compassion and reconciliation of outer and inner-directed knowledge	Respect for others is based on material achievement and chronological old age
Sense of empathy and kinship with other forms of life	Sense of separateness from and superiority over other forms of life
View proper human relationship with nature as a continuous two-way transactional dialogue	View relationship of humans to nature as a one-way, hierarchical imperative

Table 1

Barnhardt's comparison of Indigenous and Western worldviews

In Barnhardt's chart above, you can think about each of his points in relation to education, and it becomes clear which paradigm a mainstream education is situated in, and which paradigm a W̱SÁNEĆ education should be situated in. It becomes clear that worldview and paradigm are fundamental considerations for education.

W̱SÁNEĆ Education

During this research project to learn about and revitalize the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net Fishery as a knowledge and educational way, I have had the tremendous opportunity to spend valuable time learning from my uncles Earl Claxton Sr., John Elliott Sr, from my father Louis Claxton, along with

other elders. I have also had many wonderful opportunities to learn on the land with many knowledge keepers from W̱SÁNEĆ, and that has helped me to form what I see as a W̱SÁNEĆ education. This education can be found in the knowledge of the W̱SÁNEĆ reef net fishery of place names in our territory, our seasonal round.

W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net Fishery

At this point in this dissertation I want to transition my focus to how the W̱SÁNEĆ people, my Indigenous nation practiced a traditional fishery that was founded on spiritual philosophies and principles, and it formed that core of the respectful relationship with our environment. The Saanich reef net fishery, which was the most important means of subsistence for the Saanich, was more than just a fishing method. The reef net fishery was not only founded on a deep and spiritual respect for the salmon, it also created, fostered, and maintained this relationship with the salmon, and the environment. In addition, it formed the core of Saanich traditional society and was an integral component of Saanich governance. Even more than this, the reef net fishery is representative of

the Saanich worldview. Dr. Nancy Turner describes this worldview as kincentric, regarding all earth's beings as relatives (Turner, 2005). I believe that it is this worldview, this fundamental respect and way of relating to our environment that is vital to our decolonization and more importantly, to our survival and growth as a Saanich community. Our traditional ancestral education system embraced this knowledge and worldview.

The knowledge encompassed in the Saanich reef net fishery is vast. It includes spiritual knowledge, knowledge of the SENĆOŦEN language, as an intricate knowledge of the environment. This knowledge has been threatened by contact and colonization. More recently however, in the face of resource depletion, there has been a growing interest in this traditional knowledge. Academics and the western scientific knowledge often refer to Indigenous knowledge as Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Often considered only supplementary, TEK is widely understood by resource managers and scientists as a kind of local Indigenous knowledge, outside the realm of western science, that can enhance existing resource management practices and be a way of establishing

better relations with local First Nations in the pursuit of existing resource management goals (Schreiber and Newell, 2006, p. 79).

I believe that WSANEC knowledge is vital to our decolonization, and arguably the modern TEK that First Nations have developed over generations of interactions with industrial developments in their ancestral territories is both traditional (in that it is based on a unique, long standing and ongoing relationship with the land and sea) and ecological (in that it is directly relevant to present day concerns over environmental degradation and the future of the resources)” (Schreiber and Newell, 2006).

Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or more specifically W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge (the focus of my dissertation), which includes the knowledge of the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net technology is more valuable than ever. The revitalization and resurgence of W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge systems are necessary for the re-establishment of traditional W̱SÁNEĆ governance, resource management, reconnection and re-establishment of W̱SÁNEĆ relationships to the territory, and for restructuring the relationships between the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation and Canada. Innovation and transformation

in the current Education system in W̱SÁNEĆ must be rooted in and focused on W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge, such as the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net knowledge system. This will contribute greatly towards the decolonization, revitalization and resurgence of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation.

Dr. Nancy Turner (2005, p. 17) states that TEK is evidence that Aboriginal peoples were the original ecologists, aboriginal peoples need to use their environment, and the other living things in their ecosystems, for survival, just as all of us do. However, the attitude of respect, gratitude, and honour, and the spiritual relationship humans had with nature in traditional cultures is important in determining how they used their environment. Religious attitudes in traditional society may be metaphorical guidelines for sustainable living.

My Uncle Earl once said, “The W̱SÁNEĆ are environmentalist, because it goes along with our beliefs” (Personal Communication, 2006). Our W̱SÁNEĆ ways is what deeply connects us as a people to this place, the

land and sea around us. It is this deep spiritual and physical connection to the territory that must be revitalized and renewed, which is foundational to the W̱SÁNEĆ educational way. This will form the foundation for decolonizing the relationship between the W̱SÁNEĆ people and the environment, and with the Settler State. This must form the foundation for the W̱SÁNEĆ education system. In the words of Orr (2004), perhaps, “all education is environmental education”. A W̱SÁNEĆ education is also deeply concerned with respecting the environment.

An environmental education is rooted in the environment. The W̱SÁNEĆ People of south-eastern Vancouver Island have a traditional territory that includes the Southern Gulf Islands, San Juan Islands, Haro and Rosario and southern Georgia Straits. The majority of the W̱SÁNEĆ traditional territory is the marine environment. The W̱SÁNEĆ traditional lifestyle was accordingly centered on the marine ecosystem. The W̱SÁNEĆ people’s relationship to the environment was traditionally very spiritual in nature. The W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net Fishery, a gift from the Salmon People in the W̱SÁNEĆ worldview, was a technology that allowed the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples to live harmoniously with the environment. The

W̱SÁNEĆ did not prosper simply because there was an abundance of salmon; rather the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples had a highly developed management system which was based on spiritual beliefs and principles. The W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery was more than just an effective technique to catch salmon; inherent in the technology was a system of governance over the salmon fishery and salmon resources. Because of the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery, the W̱SÁNEĆ had the ability to live according to the teachings of our creator, XÁLS. The Reef Net fishery was a way of life, providing the Saanich the ability to live in such a way to be strongly connected in a healthy manner to the local marine and terrestrial environments. This was the way we lived for thousands of years, if not more. Today, the W̱SÁNEĆ people are living not as the creator wants us to live, the W̱SÁNEĆ live almost entirely under the control of the Government of Canada (under the Indian Act). Similarly, the colonial governments now govern the salmon resources and its fisheries. The salmon stocks, like the W̱SÁNEĆ way of life are threatened with extinction. This dissertation is focused on the effort to recall, relearn and revitalize the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net, which will benefit both the Salmon and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples.

The Saanich Reef net fishery is a highly sophisticated fishery that was directly suited to the Saanich People. It allowed the Saanich to live in their lands in prosperity for thousands of years. It is more than just a fishing technique, it is a model of governance over an integral part of what it means to be a Saanich person, fish and fishing is the Saanich Identity. To govern ourselves as Saanich would mean to also to govern our fisheries and live and fish as we always did, with the Reef net. This is what is promised in the Douglas Treaty. The Saanich are an example of a traditional Indigenous society that had an extensive system of governance in place that allowed this society to flourish, this situation however could represent any traditional Indigenous society on Canada's Pacific Coast. The Saanich maintained this connection to the territory and maintained our identity and worldview through education. Education is the key. In the words of STOLØEŁ (Dr. John Elliott), "the WŚÁNEĆ reef net fishery was our education system" (Personal Communication, 2014).

Any discussion on the Saanich Reef net fishery must first include a discussion about the WŚÁNEĆ ÁLENEEØ, or the traditional territory and homelands of the Saanich people. Any true Indigenous education in

Saanich must be rooted in the land. The lands and waters of the Saanich territory, the living environment, the reef net fishery, and the Saanich people are all inextricably linked.

Place names represent vital knowledge. Basso (1996, p. 30), in his research with the Apache writes, “If place-names appear frequently in ordinary forms of Western Apache discourse, their use is equally conspicuous in oral narratives. It is there, in conjunction with stories Apaches tell, that we can move closer to an interpretation of native claims about the symbolic importance of geographical features and the personalized relationships that individuals may have with them”, and further, “Most American Indian tribes embrace ‘spatial conceptions of history’ in which places and their names –and all that these may symbolize– are accorded central importance”. Place names are a central component of the land, language and cultural relationship.

Saanich place names are more than just given names. The meanings and translations of those names exemplify the spiritual and cultural connectedness of the land and the Saanich. For example, the word “Saanich” is the phonetic word in English that comes from the SENĆOŦEN

word “W̱SÁNEĆ” (WH SAY NUCH). W̱SÁNEĆ when translated into English means roughly “raised up” or “emerging”. This name pertains to the Saanich creation story, which incorporates a flood. The story states that the creator XÁLS warned of a great flood. When the floodwaters receded, it appeared to the Saanich people like the land was emerging. The peoples then proclaimed the name of the land to describe the emergence. The name for the Saanich people shows a highly spiritual connection to the land.

Many other names in the Saanich territory refer to land as if they were parts of a body. For example, the easily distinguishable long and narrow East Point on Saturna Island is called “TEḴTEḴSEN”, which means long nose. The name for Mount Douglas is “PKOLS”, which translates into “white head”. There are countless names like this. The names and their meanings go deeper than just given names, in many cases there are also stories that are attached to those places. In addition, it is a Saanich belief that all of those physical landmarks and locations were once people, they were once relatives that have been transformed by the creator into the physical features of the Saanich territory.

There are many, many names and stories connected to the W̱SÁNEĆ territory in the SENĆOŦEN language. My uncle would tell me that our place names defined our territory. The extent of our place names was the extent of our territory. I think that you could also say that this was the extent of our relationship to the territory. There is a vast knowledge contained and encoded in the SENĆOŦEN language and in our place names.



Figure 2 Saanich Territorial Map

The Saanich place names serve as a constant reminder of the cultural, spiritual, and social connection between the land and the people. Place names illustrate and express the deep connection to all living things in

the environment. The reef net fishery also exemplifies the Saanich people's spiritual relationship to the salmon, and to the marine environment.

I end this section of this dissertation, with a story. It is a story from the oral history of my people, the W̱SÁNEĆ/Saanich people. It is a story that my Uncle shared with me. It was a story, which he received from his Uncle. This story is ancient, and in the W̱SÁNEĆ worldview, it goes back to the time of creation. It is more than just a story, it is our history and it is our reality. This story, is much more than a story in the usual sense of the word, rather it is a story that serves to connect the W̱SÁNEĆ people and history to our lands, it reminds us of our teachings, beliefs, and spiritual connection to the land. It is with this story that I am challenging us to expand our notion of literacy, towards an authentic Indigenous literacy, a literacy that is rooted in the land.

The SENĆOŦEN name for the area that is now known as Gordon Head (where the University of Victoria is located) is SI,ĆENEN. This name roughly translates into "becoming Saanich" or "stepping into Saanich" which really expresses that this area was a part of the core of the Saanich

Homeland. There is a story in the Saanich oral history that is connected to this area. This story is a family story that has been passed on through the generations, and it represents an ancient connection to this land, a connection that continues to this day, and this must not be forgotten.

The name for Cadboro Bay/Mt. Tolmie area in SENĆOŦEN is SNAKE, which approximately translates into “of snow”, and this refers to this story...

SNAKE (of Snow)

The Saanich story that is connected with Cadboro Bay and the Mt. Tolmie area is a story about a Saanich Couple who were running away from XÁLS (the Creator). They were running away because the man didn't keep his word.

The man received his power, while he was a part of the sacred winter dance society. The man received the power to heal, however it is a teaching, a law, to never speak about your special power. The man broke this law and he spoke about his power to others. He broke a sacred law.

The man did not want to suffer the consequences for breaking this sacred law. He wanted to avoid answering to XÁLS about what he had done, since it was XÁLS who gave him this power, and it was with XÁLS that he gave his word to never speak about his power. The man came up with a plan; he whispered to his wife, "Let's escape". They got into their canoe and paddled away.

When they reached Cadboro Bay, they pulled their canoe up onto the beach, and the couple started climbing up the shoreline. XÁLS spoke to the couple from SMOKEĆ (Pt. Roberts), he said, "You cannot run away from me." It was then that XÁLS transformed the couple into stone right there on the shoreline.

To this day you can still see the boulders that are the transformed bodies of that couple down at Cadboro Bay. They serve as a reminder to all peoples of the Saanich Peoples beliefs and teachings from XÁLS.

A special acknowledgement and thanks goes to my elders who have kept this memory alive by sharing it with me, STOLC̱EEL (John Elliott), and YELḴÁTFE (Earl Claxton Sr.).

There are countless stories that intertwine with the place names of our traditional territory. These stories convey our traditional identity and worldview. This knowledge is the traditional education of the WSÁNEĆ.

WSÁNEĆ Seasonal Round

The WSÁNEĆ seasonal round also contains a vast knowledge system. The year is circular, seasonal, and related to the moons. Each has a name, significance, and tells of WSÁNEĆ life and connection to the territory. This knowledge could, and did form the basis of a WSÁNEĆ education system.

SḶÁU LFE – The Natural Laws of the W̱SÁNEĆ People



Figure 3 SḶÁU LFE - The Natural Laws of the W̱SÁNEĆ People

The image is a poster created by a local W̱SÁNEĆ person MENEFIYE in partnership with Parks Canada. It represents the natural laws of the W̱SÁNEĆ people, the rings represent the seasons, moons, and culturally important activities of the W̱SÁNEĆ people in our homelands. When I look at this graphic, I see our curriculum, one that is rooted in the W̱SÁNEĆ worldview, language, culture, beliefs and homelands of the W̱SÁNEĆ. This curriculum is much more appropriate for the W̱SÁNEĆ than the mainstream Ministry of Education curriculum.

When I reflect on my education, and reflect back on my experience, I realize that it was my parents and my grandparents who had the greatest

impact on my educational path. Each of them, in their own way, instilled a deep value for education. They encouraged me to “get my education” and “make something of myself”. I fared well in grade school. I am now still striving to “get educated”, evidenced by the paper that you are reading. I think that it was their experiences in education (residential school/day school) that in turn influenced them to feel that it was in my best interest to join the ‘mainstream’. I am sure they felt that pressure. Penny (1993) says it well, “Only the students who adjust to the dominant culture will be successful”. Consider that my first language is English and my parent’s first language is SENĆOŦEN. I now think about my own children’s experience in school. They struggle, just like the statistics suggest they might. I see that ‘aboriginalism’ is celebrated in schools. It is ‘aboriginal’ in that the land and the local peoples aren’t necessarily respected, but rather celebrating ‘aboriginal’ culture, no matter where from, seems adequate. Again, Alfred and Corntassel (2005, p. 598) articulate it well, “in Canada today, many Indigenous people have embraced the Canadian government’s label of ‘aboriginal’, along with the concomitant and limited notion of postcolonial justice framed within the

institutional construct of the state”. The problem is deeper. The education system is not our system.

Education today is wholly oriented toward science and secularism. At the core of every curriculum is the belief that we can look at phenomena with a completely rational and objective eye and find abstract principles underlying all behaviour, from atoms to masses of people. (Deloria et al, 1999, p. 129).

I was speaking with a teacher from the Bella Bella Community School. This teacher informs me that the “BBCS is an accredited independent school (and has been for at least the 6 years I've been here). In order for us to maintain that accreditation (we get evaluated every 3 years) we must (and do!) teach the exact same curriculum that any big city, public school teaches” (Personal Communication 2012). The problem continues.

In my reflection, the solution seems clear. A strong connection to the land is the central theme. To stave off the continued onslaught of assimilation, nationhood “requires a nation to be confidently rooted in

their culture, and be bodily and spiritually strong to be able to survive on their lands independently, in order to support our traditional models of government” (Alfred, 2005, p. 31), including education.

If by definition, ‘Indigenous’ means coming from the land, then an Indigenous Education must be rooted in the land. If the intent of education is to pass on knowledge, such as WSÁNEĆ knowledge, which is inseparable from the land, language, culture and beliefs, then this education must similarly be rooted in the land, language, culture and beliefs.

I would like to conclude in the words of Elizabeth Minnich where she says, “education can either maintain domination or it can liberate. It can sustain colonization or neo-colonial ways, or it can decolonize (1990, p. 161)”. I envision an education that liberates and decolonizes our Indigenous communities. There is a great opportunity for further ‘research’ in this area, and there is great potential for the healing of our people, learning from the Land. One such ‘school’ is doing just this. The Chief Zzeh Gittlit School is the furthest north of Yukon schools. It is located in Old Crow, north of the Arctic Circle. Old Crow is the home of

the Vuntut Gwich'in. The community is rich in culture and traditional ways. All students study Gwich'in, and take part in cultural activities. Traditional cooking, sewing, beading, working with furs, and making traditional tools and items are part of the cultural activities that are on going. Elders visit the school to tell stories, cook with the children and assist with other activities. All students will have time on the land. This is the model of traditional education that I am recommending.

Aboriginalism (which is identifying and celebrating this state constructed identity) is ultimately just another reflection and manifestation of assimilation; it replaces authentic Indigenous identities with identities that best serve the Canadian State's wants and needs. This is what mainstream schooling supports. Schooling isn't benign, rather it must be recognized that it is imperial, and changes/challenges Indigenous worldviews. What is needed is a truly 'Indigenous' education based on the land.

Literature Review of the Reef net

In this dissertation, I am contemplating the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef net technology as an education system. One of my research questions and focus of this project is to understand the current state of knowledge of the Reef Net, and how it can be perpetuated in the W̱SÁNEĆ community. I am positing that the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery was a central part of the W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge and education system. Here I want to articulate and understand the Reef Net as a “system”. Therefore, I will review the literature of the Reef net Fishery from an ecological/environmental perspective, using Systems Theory as a theoretical framework.

Human relationships with the environment are dynamic and complex. There are several important components to this relationship, including economic, social, spiritual, physical, and educational spheres. All together, you might think of it as a system. This section of the dissertation will consider the W̱SÁNEĆ traditional way of life as an ideal system, one that has stood the test of time. The Reef net Technology can be understood using this system theory approach. The Reef net System was a healthy sustainable system. In healthy ecological/environmental

systems, that is the human relationship to their environment, where systems are sustainable, there is a feedback loop, which forms a self-regulatory system. In First Nations fisheries systems for example, there were spiritual, cultural and legal instruments in place to regulate First Nations fishing, which contributed to the overall health of fishing systems. In contrast, it is arguable that the modern industrial pacific salmon fisheries in British Columbia, where fishermen are striving to catch all of the fish, the system is broken. My focus on fisheries is simply because fisheries were central to the existence of First Nations in BC. In the W̱SÁNEĆ context, Reef Netting and salmon were integral to the W̱SÁNEĆ identity and way of life.

I will begin this section with a story that my late uncle Earl Claxton shared with me. My uncle Earl was a respected elder, historian, and linguist in my family, and in our community. He was raised as a fisherman, in a fishing family, in a fishing community. When he was a young boy of probably four or five years old, he recalled his parents and extended family packing up their canoes with their belongings necessary for the summer season. Once everything was packed he remembered

paddling with his parents (my grandparents) all the way to the Mitchell Bay on the San Juan Islands to participate in the Reef net fishery there. The trip occurred on a seasonal basis, however one trip stuck out in particular in my Uncle Earl's mind. That was the day when Grandpa Johnny Claxton brought home a three-horse Johnson gas powered outboard and bolted that onto the stern of the family dugout canoe. At that time, my Uncle thought that was the best thing that could have ever happened! However, in retrospect, my Uncle now sees that day as the “beginning of the end”, essentially one of the first indications of the mechanization and industrialization of the pacific salmon fisheries, change that would ultimately push First Nations fisheries, like the Saanich Reef net fishery, aside. In the past few decades there has been a decline in some of the world's most important fisheries. In Canada on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, there has been great stock depletion and reduced catches. The simple fact that these stocks have been under management for decades reveals that not only are the stocks failing, but more importantly that there is a flawed management regime. Over the last number of years, there has been a marked decline in the sockeye

salmon runs to the Fraser River. One newspaper headline read “Sockeye Collapse Could Have Grave Implications”(Sim, 2007). Dave Barrett of the Commercial Salmon Advisory Board was quoted saying “the industry is on its knees. And if we can’t count on Fraser Sockeye as we have in the past, we are going to have to formulate new ways to make money”. This statement clearly illustrates some of the problems of the system that involves salmon, the fishing industry, and people (the fishermen, and the governing bodies who manage the salmon industry). The newspaper article also referred to the fact that First Nations were also unable to catch enough sockeye salmon for food and ceremonial purposes.

Clearly, there is a problem, or flaw in the fishery ‘system’, there has been a disconnection in this system, and the feedback loop has been detached. If a truly sustainable fishery is to be established, then it is the fishery system that needs to be restructured. Perhaps some clues that could lead toward the establishment or re-establishment of a healthy system could come from an investigation into traditional First Nation’s fishery systems. By looking at traditional First Nation’s fishery systems,

it may be possible to discover the fundamental relationships that are important for and may lead to resilient and sustainable fisheries systems.

To begin, I would like to explore the idea of what a healthy, sustainable fishery would entail from a systems theory point of view. C.S. Holling is frequently cited in the fields of environmental management and ecological economics, and is known for blending systems theory and ecology. I am going to utilize what C.S. Holling asserts about systems and apply it to his theories for pacific fishery systems, past and present. Holling states that ecosystems and socio-ecological systems are comprised of hierarchies and adaptive cycles, and that together this forms a panarchy. Holling defines panarchy as the description of a healthy system, where the system can invent, experiment, benefit from the inventions that create opportunity while being kept safe from those that destabilize because of their nature or excessive exuberance, the system as described by Holling is both creative and conserving (Holling, 2001). A healthy fisheries system then, one that includes the salmon, the ecosystem, the environment, humans and human activities would strike a balance between conservation and

creativity. One could say that traditional First Nation's fishery systems epitomized this relationship, where the First Nation's community and the salmon could thrive together. For example, the Straits Salish Reef net Fishery was a system that was creative, in that this fishing method allowed the Salish to fish in the tidal marine environment, enabling the Salish societies to thrive by catching the salmon as they migrated towards their home rivers. The Reef net fishing technology was also conserving, in that this fishery would allow the Salish peoples to target a specific species of salmon, as well as providing a means for some of those salmon species to escape. Another example of a fishery system that was both creative and conserving was the halibut fishery, which was used by many First Nations on the coast of British Columbia. This fishing technology's important feature was the halibut hook. It is the design of these halibut hooks that is the creative but conserving feature of this fishery. The hooks, by design, were capable of only hooking a halibut of a certain size or larger, a halibut which was smaller than this certain size, which was dictated by the size of the hook, would not get hooked and

caught. These two examples of how First Nation fishery systems were both creative and conserving.

Another aspect of Holling's systems theory that helps to further analyze the Pacific salmon fishery is his adaptive cycle. The adaptive cycle is a representation of four ecosystem functions, and the flow of events between them. The flow of events varies in speed ranging from rapidly changing situations to slow progressions; however the cycles are cyclical and connected. The functions and flow of events alternate between slow and long periods of resource transformation (from exploitation and conservation) and shorter and faster periods of opportunities of innovation (from release and reorganization). In terms of fisheries systems, the exploitation and conservation, as well as the opportunities of innovation could come from the skills, knowledge, and relationships between the humans and the environment. In First Nations fisheries systems like the Straits Salish reef net fishery, the complexity and effectiveness of the fishing technology was so innovative, that there was the capability to catch tremendous quantities of salmon, while there was both design features and social structures that ensured conservation

practices. According to data from the late 1800's the Straits Salish reef nets were capable of taking well over 1000 salmon per day (Rathbun, 1890). To provide a better idea of the fishing power of the Straits Salish reef net fisheries, there are for example 25 known Saanich reef net sites throughout the Saanich traditional territory (which includes the southern gulf Islands, San Juan Islands and across the strait of Georgia to Boundary Bay). There are several other Straits Salish First Nations that also fished with reef net technology, such as the Lummi in Washington and the SCIANEW in Beecher Bay near Sooke. In *Lummi Indians and the Canadian/American Pacific Salmon Treaty* (Boxberger 1988), it describes how the Pacific Salmon Treaty was negotiated in 1985 between Canada and the U.S., without the input of the Lummi Nation. This is despite the Boldt Decision in which it was ruled that the Indian Tribes, specifically the Lummi were allocated 50% of harvestable fish in Washington waters. The Lummi were capable of taking at least that much fish. With all of this tremendous fishing power, it was the spiritual beliefs and practices that had conserving effects in this fishery system. For example, in the bunt of the reef net there was a small ring made from a willow branch, which was

woven there to allow some of the salmon to escape. It was a spiritual belief that the schools of salmon were families and that if some of the salmon could escape then those particular lineages would perpetuate themselves (Claxton and Elliott, 1994). As well, it was customary that when the first largest sockeye was caught, that all fishing would cease and the community would hold a spiritual celebration and a feast that would last for four days. It was a strict practice that all fishing would stop, to the point that it was considered taboo to continue to fish. You could imagine that at this time of the fishing season, this would be during the peak of the salmon run, so to stop fishing altogether is a conservatory practice in itself. First Nation's fishery systems, which are exemplified by the Straits Salish reef net fishery, seemed to strike and maintain a balance between conservation and exploitation. This balance is attributed to an *ecological understanding* which is described by Nancy Turner and Fikret Berkes (2006) as including the development of belief systems that avert resource depletion activities. Many other First Nation fishery systems exemplify the balance between exploitation and conservation, allowing the First Nations to catch as many fish as

necessary, without overfishing. One of the other most productive fishing methods was with traps and weirs. These technologies, not unlike the reef net fishery, allowed for copious amounts of salmon to be harvested when the runs were at their peak. More specifically, these technologies included stone wall fish traps, fence weirs, and basket traps which were used right within salmon spawning river systems and estuaries. I would like to emphasize that in conjunction with the utilization of these fishing technologies were highly developed spiritual and societal beliefs, laws, and organization, and without these, the systems would not be effective.

Holling goes on to describe the nature of systems where “the systems connectedness increases, eventually becoming over connected and increasingly rigid in its control to the point when it becomes an accident waiting to happen”(Holling, 2001). This element of Hollings theory characterizes the modern salmon fishery on the west coast of British Columbia controlled by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The Depart of Fisheries

Daniel Boxberger (1988, p. 300) articulates one of the possible sources of this broken backloop in the pacific salmon fishery:

“Pacific Salmon are anadromous, that is they hatch in freshwater then migrate to sea where they may range several hundred miles from their stream of origin. Upon reaching maturation the salmon return to their natal streams to spawn and complete their lifecycle. Because of this migratory pattern, and the vast distances covered by some species, the fishing practices of Canada and the United States can influence salmon stocks originating within a state or a province where a fishery takes place. High seas mid-water trawling and ocean troll fisheries are especially problematical because of the management difficulties involved when the stocks are mixed. This has led to both intranational and international conflicts between user groups in the United States and Canada. The Pacific Salmon Treaty is designed to resolve some of those conflicts.”

The broken backloop in the context of pacific salmon is that Canadian fisherman can catch salmon that come from US waters and also visa versa. Also, there is no consequence for Canadian fishermen who catch those salmon that originate from American waters. In fact, the fishermen are even rewarded for catching those salmon; they are caught and sold for money just the same as any salmon are. Even within British Columbia, you can see this problem. There are many salmon producing river systems within the province of British Columbia, some are smaller than others. It is only the larger salmon producing river systems, like the

Fraser River, that are managed closely, and the smaller systems that suffer from overfishing. Even within the Fraser River system, some of the runs are facing serious risk. A report prepared for the Sierra Club of Canada's B.C. Chapter shows that at least 38 sockeye runs, coast wide, qualify for "endangered" status by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. The report, "B.C. Sockeye Salmon Population Declines: Probable Causes and Recommended Response Strategies," was prepared by the well-known salmon biologist Dr. David Levy (2006). Dr. Levy's report shows that the probable causes of the sockeye runs' declines are mixed-stock fisheries, poor management, as well as low levels of marine survival, likely related to climate change. Because the fisheries are mixed stock, the management is considered 'poor' because the backloop is disconnected.

So if the major problem is the disconnection of the backloop in the pacific salmon fisheries system, how did this problem evolve? Leslie King speaks to this in her paper *Competing Knowledge Systems in the Management of Fish and Forests in the Pacific Northwest*. King's paper raises questions about institutional *interplay*, and the impact of

international and national institutions as they come into contact and conflict, and asks what other consequences such interplay may have. In other words, the 'interplay' that King is referring to is essentially the breakage of the backloop. King begins her paper by discussing First Nation's fishery systems in terms of governance. King states that "socially held beliefs are crucial determinants of patterns of governance"(King, 2004). The social beliefs could include the feedback that is given about 'resource' use in the backloop system. Quite often First Nation's beliefs foster respectful use of resources. For instance, the Saanich people believe that the salmon are their relatives and are to be treated like they are family. This was a socially held belief that formed one of the central principles of governance in Saanich fisheries. Conversely, in colonial fisheries, the commonly held social belief is that the salmon are common property until they are caught. King (2004) further describes the beginnings of the backloop disconnection:

In BC Fisheries the Dominion Government of Canada began managing fisheries in the newly minted province from the late 19th century. In creating a fisheries management regime where, they thought, none had

previously existed, they created new rules of the game to govern fisheries access, harvesting and technology. These new rules of the game were designed to maximize profit, at the cost of depletion of the resource.

In the years to come, the colonial government would take overwhelming control over First Nations lands and resources. With respect to fisheries, Canada's pacific coast fisheries would become one of the most regulated fisheries in the world.

For thousands of years before Europeans arrived, First Nation's economies on the Pacific slope centred on the marine resources. For the Colonial society to expand, it sought to build its economy on those same marine resources. With the emergence of a state managed fishery and salmon-canning industry in the 1870's and 1880's, First Nations peoples gradually incorporated fishing and cannery work into their seasonal lifestyle. Dianne Newell (1993) points out that First Nation's peoples "participated in the industry on a grand scale, despite growing competition from European and Asian immigrants". As colonial control was gradually introduced, First Nations peoples also gradually came to

depend on the state governed industry. And eventually, First Nations peoples would eventually become marginalized in one sector of the fishery after another, in effect their autonomy and their fisheries was systematically dismantled.

In other historic treaties that were signed by First Nations peoples, domestication of First Nations rights with respect to fisheries is the Colonial agenda. On southern Vancouver Island Governor James Douglas negotiated 14 land purchase agreements with the First Nations of the area. These agreements are often referred to as “The Fort Victoria Treaties” or the “Douglas Treaties”. With respect to First Nation’s fisheries, The Douglas treaties explicitly state that those First Nations groups have the “liberty to carry on their fisheries as formerly”. If taken literally, those First Nations’ peoples had a system in place, a system of governance over their fisheries, which indeed formed the core of their traditional societies. With the promise that their fisheries systems were to be protected, First Nation’s leaders likely saw no reason not to enter such agreements.

To the contrary, First Nation's fisheries were not protected as promised. They were merely overtaken by the growth of the modern industry. This process did not involve misinterpreting the First Nation's right in the courts, but by merely encroaching and imposing colonial rule over the resource. Initially, traditional forms of fishing, such as the Saanich Reef net were outlawed, and gradually federal regulation took its place. Now, First Nation's fisherman can fish, but only under approval of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as long as it is within their overall management scheme. Again the management scheme is founded on a disconnection in the feedback loop. In the end, the Crown assumes governance over this industry and First Nation's peoples become just another user group. This kind of relationship does little for the empowerment of First Nations societies toward a self-sufficient, self-governing future.

Ironically, as Canada's capitalist society continues to build itself, it too find itself struggling to maintain the society that it creates. In the end, it is the earth that suffers the most. In terms of the fisheries resources, salmon stocks are declining and many wild stocks teetering on

extinction. Salmon bearing streams are being destroyed by urbanization. Shellfish such as crabs and clams not only face over fishing, but also are subject to endless pollution. Technology has become increasingly sophisticated to the point where less people can exert an unprecedented amount of fishing pressure. To paint a grim picture, the situation is bad and getting worse. This modern and contemporary society is in self-destruct mode and philosophies and principles regarding the environment need to be examined. This has generated a new interest in traditional First Nation's knowledge.

Western science is turning to First Nations peoples for solutions. Tim Johnson explains this situation in the context of the study of the Arctic environment. He explains, "Native peoples have often found themselves shunned and hushed when advocating environmental ethics to the larger global community. But this time it is different. Now scientists are conducting an extensive array of studies in the north that support Native observations" (Johnson 1999). In this situation, western science is turning to first nations peoples for validation not an answer.

On the other hand, First Nation's peoples and their philosophies existed for millennia before the advent of colonization. Following contact, in a comparatively short time western society has decimated the environment, the same environment in which First Nation peoples prospered. Winona LaDuke (1994) makes a good case for First Nation people's knowledge and the environment. She states,

Traditional ecological knowledge is the culturally and spiritually based way in which first nations peoples relate to their ecosystems. This knowledge is founded on spiritual-cultural instructions from "time immemorial" and on generations of careful observation within that ecosystem of continuous residence. I believe that this knowledge represents the clearest empirically based system for resource management and ecosystem protection in North America, and I would argue that Native societies' knowledge surpasses the scientific and social knowledge of the dominant society in its ability to provide information and a management style for environmental planning.

First Nations systems of knowledge may be superior to colonial knowledge in some contexts. In terms of management of fisheries, it is the focus of this paper. The problem exists because of the colonization of lands and resources that are entirely driven by accumulation of wealth within the global economy. Again, it is the broken backloop where contemporary systems concerning natural resources continue to fail.

Looking to the future, for First Nations and non-First Nation peoples to prosper in the lands that we now share, a new relationship needs to be forged between First Nation peoples and the state. Historic treaties such as the Douglas Treaties should be recognized as such, then a new nation-to-nation could emerge where both nations have something valuable to offer, and both could prosper not at the expense of each other, or at the expense of the environment. Modern agreements should encompass a similar kind of relationship, one between nations. Efforts to merely domesticate First Nation peoples should cease, namely the British Columbia Treaty Commission process. Finally, the public should be made aware of the validity of First Nation people's perspectives and

history, and then all peoples could move toward a mutually beneficial future. Right now I am speaking to every facet of first nations–state relations. In terms of fisheries and fishing industry, new agreements should be forged between first nations and the State. First Nation peoples need to exercise autonomy over their fisheries, and ultimately their lives and societies. I would argue that this will ultimately lead to the rebuilding of healthy, and sustainable First Nations fishery systems, and hopefully healthier First Nation peoples.

All of the past and present policies, Supreme Court decisions, western science, scholarly works, have not made any clear answers, only muddying the waters, in more ways than one. One thing I can say is abundantly clear. Prosperous First Nations existed for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. These nations lived on these same lands and resources. Here on the Pacific coast, these people could not survive as distinct nations without healthy fisheries systems and relationships to the lands and waters. I would argue that fisheries were and still are central to those destinies, and aboriginal identities. In the end, it is not ‘Indians versus conservation’ as the bureaucrats that derive

wealth from industry would have us all believe. Instead, First Nation philosophies and principle exceeds just conservation and moves to kinship and respect with the environment, which allowed First Nations peoples to flourish.

McGoodwin (1990) states that:

Ultimately fisheries are human phenomena, and that strictly speaking there cannot be a fishery without a human effort.

Therefore, they stressed, to predicate the management of a fishery mainly on the basis of biological, ecological, and state level concerns economic concerns while essentially ignoring or discounting fisher's knowledge one risked instituting a management policy that might be doomed to fail.

McGoodwin is correct in stating that the fisher's knowledge is important. In the case of the Pacific Salmon Fishery in British Columbia, I would argue that it is the knowledge and practices of the First Nation's fishermen are the most important. However, McGoodwin fails to correctly characterize the problem that the management decisions and policy governing pacific fisheries are

mainly driven by economic concerns. This is why the pacific salmon fishery is doomed to fail in its present form. I would say that to incorporate the fisher's knowledge, more specifically the First Nation peoples and nations knowledge, then this would lead to more effective fisheries management regimes in the future.

So how can we begin to take some of these theoretical concepts and turn them into some practical solutions? According to C.S. Holling's systems theory, to connect the backloop in the continuum of events in the adaptive cycle characteristic to healthy systems, then there would need to be some tremendous adaptive changes that would lead towards conservation. Some of these changes would have to be the subject and directive of further research, but undoubtedly it will involve some comprehensive changes to the way we all live and do business. For example, some of these changes will go beyond just where and how we catch salmon, but how we cut trees, or develop lands. For the purposes of this paper, some of the changes that come clear as a result of reconnection of the backloop, and modeling the fishery systems of the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia are; that mixed stock fisheries

would need to stop, and fishing methods would need to change towards being more selective, and finally the politics of resource regulation needs to be refined.

The concept of this dissertation has centered on the concept of conservation and the introduction of change as a necessity to follow the trajectory away from exploitation, essentially connecting the backloop. *Conservation* however means different things to different groups. For instance, fisherman may feel that they are conservationists in that they want to sustain their income and their livelihoods (while maximizing profits). The governing bodies like DFO may characterize themselves as conservationists because they strive to leave just enough fish to ensure the maximum possible yield in subsequent years. Academics may see conservation as encompassing entire ecosystems. Finally to First Nation people's conservation is more implicit in a worldview. However based on an understanding of backloops in first nation's fishery systems, one of the common and most important features was species specific fisheries. In the case of the Straits Salish Reef net fishery, non-targeted fish that were caught could be released unharmed. Similarly, in riverine-based

fisheries such as the use of traps and weirs, fish could always be released and allowed to pass unharmed. In contemporary fisheries, the requirement to release non-target species is not practical. Modern fisheries such as purse seining and gillnetting despite the best efforts of fishermen, have high rates of mortality of discarded fish. One of the options is to move fishing activity closer to the rivers. This is often referred to as terminal fisheries. This is a good option, however it is often stated that the fish caught in these kinds of fisheries are of lesser quality than those caught in ocean based fisheries. Finally, some more creative techniques could be employed, such as Reef net fishing. This kind of technology provides the ability to catch ocean quality fish while allowing unwanted bycatch to be released unharmed, with minimal handling. Also, there must be some reformation of fisheries management strategies, towards the management of whole ecosystems rather than just the management of stock numbers. On an even broader scale, there needs to be institutional reform at top levels, particularly where the management of salmon involves salmon that migrate beyond, and across international boundaries. The spirit of the Pacific Salmon

Treaty needs to be enacted with a spirit that goes beyond just numbers and economics, and in a way that acknowledges Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems. In the spirit of those First Nations fisheries systems that have been replaced by the modern industrial fisheries, I would hope that the reconnection of the feedback loop that leads towards innovation and change, would allow the opportunity for Indigenous peoples the opportunity to revitalize the oral histories, traditions, practices, principles, and beliefs that formed the core of their fishery systems all up and down the coast of British Columbia to be reestablished. Instead of an industrial revolution, there needs to be an ecological revolution. This includes an educational revolution in W̱SÁNEĆ, and education at is once again centered on the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef net technology.

Chapter 3 SWÁLET

“Western Science, following Roger Bacon, believed man could force nature to reveal its secrets; the Sioux simply petitioned nature for friendship”

Vine Deloria, Jr.

Introduction

Research in Indigenous communities is often looked upon as something as negative, destructive, disrespectful and colonial. As more and more Indigenous peoples attend universities, and move on to higher and higher education, the notion and concept of “research” continues to be interrogated/interrupted and transformed from Indigenous perspectives.

This work builds on the current discourse of decolonising Indigenous research and Indigenous methodologies. The current discourse centers on decolonizing research methodologies to support Indigenous scholarship. My work builds on this, however, my catalytic work mainly focuses on the demonstrable resurgence of W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge.

Locate myself as a “researcher”

I think it both useful and necessary to locate myself as a researcher, to illustrate and develop my argument. Absolon and Willett (2005, pp.) state that it has become fundamental in Indigenous research for the researcher to locate themselves. These authors are of the opinion that “neutrality and objectivity do not exist in research, since all research is conducted and observed through human epistemological lenses ”. Therefore, it is imperative that I locate myself. I was born and raised in my home community of Tsawout, by my parents, who are both W̱SÁNEĆ peoples. Both my parents were raised in community and spoke their Indigenous languages as their first language, but in turn, raised me and my sister with English as our first language. Education was encouraged, and I heard many, many times while growing up, that I should pursue higher and higher education. School was a priority. I was enrolled right from elementary school through to high school, in the local public school system. I was not alone, many children from my communities attended these schools. It was perceived that the quality of education was better in the mainstream public school versus that of the local band school. It

has been my parent's vision that I achieve the highest education possible, and well, I am still trying to realize their vision.

I have attended the University of Victoria for my Undergraduate degree in Psychology, and my Master of Arts Degree in Indigenous Governance. All the while through school, I always felt I was missing out on something important. Though I was raised to be in touch with my cultural practices and beliefs, I always felt that there was more. I had often wished that I could spend time with my Grandparents, learning from them. Instead, I always felt that school took priority, and was 'distracting' me. It was not until during my Masters Degree, after the completion of my coursework that I realized and discovered what was missing. It was during my "research" for my community governance project learning about the W̱SÁNEĆ reef net fishing technology that I felt my learning and research resonated with my identity and being. This is why I use quotations around the word "research", because "research" took on a new meaning and relevance in my world. It was during this time that I got to spend one-on-one time with my uncles YELKÁTFE (Dr. Earl Claxton Sr.), STOLØEL (Dr. John Elliott Sr.) and my father SELEMTEN (Louis

Claxton). I learned about a way of life that they grew up in, a way of life that was not valued by mainstream society. What I learned moved me. I learned more about what it means to be WSÁNEĆ, our beliefs, connection to our lands, and our beliefs and our philosophies. I had to rethink much of what I learned in the mainstream education system.

This is how I have come to locate myself as a researcher. I have always made it a priority that my research is a benefit to my community.

Cora Weber–Pillwax (2004) outlines two key principles of Indigenous research:

1. The researcher is accountable for the effects of the research project on the lives of the participants, and
2. The purpose of the research is to benefit the community.

Without studying Weber–Pillwax’s work, I have always adhered to these principles. However, this in part leads me to my location of myself. As an emerging scholar, I am accountable between two very different worlds, essentially. Here is a visual representation to illustrate what I am trying to express:



Figure 4 Locating Myself as a Researcher

As you can see, I locate myself between two worlds. I feel accountable to both, yet not very capable in either. The discourse in education, and in Indigenous education is that the direction, momentum or the pull is predominantly towards, and into the mainstream world (arguably assimilationist). While I do feel that it is important to bridge these two worlds, it is equally important to work towards revitalization and maintenance of our world through Indigenous research and Indigenous education.

Mainstream research

In my academic learning, I have come to understand that there is a connection between research, science, Eurocentric thought and colonization. Thankfully there is a growing body of Indigenous scholarship that is changing this situation (Smith, 1999; Kovach 2009;

Wilson, 2008; Brown & Strega 2005). As an undergraduate student in Psychology, I was taught that research consisted of using the 'scientific method'. This method was used by science to understand cause and effect relationship of phenomena in nature. In this way, it was possible to understand the world around us, and why things are the way they are, and that in effect, we could control the world. I could not subscribe wholeheartedly to this worldview, but could not articulate why. Deloria writes about this:

With some modifications, and with a considerable reduction in the intensity of educational discipline, the education that Indians receive today is the highly distilled product of Christian/European scientific and political encounters with the world and is undergirded by specific but generally unarticulated principles of interpretation. Because the product is so refined and concise, education has become something different and apart from the lives of people and is seen as a set of technical beliefs, which, upon mastering, admit the pupil to the social and economic structures of the larger society. (Deloria , 2001, pg 42)

While Deloria is referring to education, I believe that the same principles can be said of research and research methodologies, and more specifically, it is the paradigm in which education and research is situated within. Thomas Kuhn (1970), in his work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, discussed how sciences would go through transformations from one paradigm to another via revolutions, and how that was the usual developmental pattern of sciences. What may be happening in Social Sciences and Education is a paradigm shift, but further to this, I am concerned with the revitalization and maintenance of our Indigenous paradigm, and more specifically a W̱SÁNEĆ paradigm.

My discussion on mainstream research methodologies, for the purpose of this dissertation is going to be limited. I acknowledge that there are many qualitative and quantitative research methodologies that have evolved from the early forms of research that have originated in the natural sciences. I also acknowledge that there are many great researchers doing great work in the social sciences and in the larger academic world. At the same time, I acknowledge that Tuhiwai-Smith's

text (1999) highlighted the troubles of academic research in Indigenous communities and for Indigenous peoples.

While it may seem irrelevant or off on a tangent to discuss western research methodologies in this way, it is considered important, or vital to consider how you arrive at knowledge acquisition, and how you arrive there is just as important as the knowledge acquired. This discussion is of utmost importance for a project on Indigenous knowledge and learning to be validated and understood by the mainstream academic world. I will turn now and look at work of Indigenous scholars and into Indigenous methodologies.

Indigenous Research

The pressure on Indigenous scholar to conform to the mainstream academic approaches and methodologies is immense and unrelenting, as is the ongoing assimilation of Indigenous peoples. At this point I am going to turn to the work of the emerging and leading Indigenous scholars. While it is important to point out that Indigenous peoples in BC, Canada and around the world are incredibly diverse, while at the same time, it is useful to survey the landscape of Indigenous scholarship,

and its rich diversity, which has informed and guided my work in exploring local W̱SÁNEĆ ways of knowing. As Manulani Aluli Meyer (2008) states, specificity leads to universality. Though the universality is important, it is the specificity that is my concern. In this sense then, for me, I am turning it around, that is to say, universality will lead to specificity for me, and more specifically, the regeneration and revitalization of this specificity.

Decolonization Movement

As any Indigenous researcher would claim, our communities and nations are the primary reason and driving force behind our work (Weber–Pillwax, 2004). My intention and motivation is the same. This, “catalytic validity” test for research which stresses the purpose and effects, I believe goes hand in hand with the decolonization movement. One of the most influential of Indigenous scholars, and personal mentor Taiaiake Alfred (2005) writes, “we will begin to make meaningful change in the lives of our communities when we start to focus on making real change in the lives of our people as individuals.” Further he states that “it is still true that the first part of self–determination is the *self*”. Sandy

Grande (2004) contends that we should come to know ourselves as “revolutionary agents”. I believe that as Indigenous scholars who are firmly rooted in their Indigenous knowledges and communities through their research, will undoubtedly contribute meaningfully to the decolonization of our peoples, and that this research will contribute to the development of meaningful locally informed and grounded approaches to Indigenous education that will also decolonize our communities. This dissertation is directed towards decolonizing through the restoration of our traditional fishery, revitalisation of WSANEC education, while also contributing to pan- Indigenous scholarship and academia.

Indigenous Research Paradigm

Shawn Wilson (2008) states that the basis of an Indigenous research paradigm, which is the focus of his book *Research is Ceremony* “rests with the positive effects of maintaining, transmitting and clarifying an Indigenous way of doing and being in the research process”. It is that Indigenous way of doing, and Indigenous way of being that is the central

focus of this work. It is the teaching and learning about our way of doing and being, where our educational system should be centred.

The main premise of Wilson's work (2008) is the notion that relationships are fundamental to Indigenous research, much the same as the centrality of relationships in ceremony and in community. This brings me back to the fundamental principle that Weber-Pillwax (2004) points out, that is that accountability to the people and the community. Wilson also starts out his book in a unique way. He begins by writing to his children, using his children as his intended audience. I believe that is useful. It is important to identify your audience, and tailor the work/research for that audience. I would take that one step further by making the audience, my community, and the current generations, and the generations to come.

Wilson (2001) challenges Indigenous researchers by stating, "we need to move beyond these, beyond merely assuming an Indigenous perspective on these non-Indigenous paradigms". Kovach (2009), in her work centers her research around the conceptual framework of her Plains Cree knowledge and epistemology. Kovach (2009) writes, "Plains Cree

knowledge offered guidance in research choices that reflected values, standards, ethics, and ways of Indigenous peoples and Cree specifically, and it demanded that I write knowledge differently than I had been instructed to do within Western research training”, and she further states that her methodological world, while not less complicated, became clearer by building it around her Plains Cree framework. I believe that it is fundamental to any research to both consider the community audience, and to use the community’s cultural framework to guide the research. This is then, Indigenous research and scholarship.

Umek (2004) in his book *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*, develops an Indigenous theory around the principles and teachings of his people. He utilizes stories and Nuu-chah-nulth language as a cornerstone to his writing. It was in this book, where the differences in between the mainstream worldview and Indigenous worldviews, together with the W̱SÁNEĆ teachings I have received thus far, became readily apparent. The title, the word Tsawalk, is translated as meaning “everything is one” (2004). What he means is that the spiritual world and the physical world is one. There is no division between those worlds, as

there is in the mainstream society. Atleo (2004) discusses the concept of *oosumich*, which is the spiritual methodology of knowledge acquisition. This concept is structured such that success, knowledge acquisition, or the answer to the problem in the physical realm is sought and found in the spiritual realm. I think that this is a key concept. In the W̱SÁNEĆ worldview, it is much the same, in that the spiritual realm and the physical realm are interwoven together, they are inseparable and that was the traditional worldview. Mainstream research has only served to sever and put a rift between these two worlds. Any Indigenous research methodology, and more specifically a W̱SÁNEĆ research methodology must honour and acknowledge the traditional worldview where there is no arbitrary division between physical and spiritual worlds.

Storytelling

Due to the oral nature of Indigenous knowledge, storytelling is an important research methodology. There is power, teachings and beliefs all conveyed through Indigenous stories. I often think that it is inappropriate to call it 'storytelling', as stories are often thought of as make believe, made up and fictional. Indigenous storytelling has been

used as a methodology for a number of Indigenous scholars (Thomas, 2005; Archibald, 2008; Atleo, 2004). Thomas (2005) writes, “traditionally, storytelling played an essential role in nurturing and educating First Nations children”. She furthers, “I now realize the wisdom that made up those stories. Now as a parent and educator, I am always sharing these important stories that I once thought insignificant”. In the Indigenous world, stories are fundamental in Indigenous knowledge. It was how this knowledge was conveyed through the generations, and it must be a part of any Indigenous scholarly work.

Autoethnography

While not an Indigenous methodology, another methodology that I feel resonates with my proposed work is autoethnography.

Autoethnography is a natural fit as a methodology for this work. This approach starts with the self, and also uses one’s own story or learning journey as the focus. This methodology resonates with the aims of my proposed study, and of my understanding of Indigenous research and scholarship. Whether it is through socialization or academic learning, the researcher is often separated from the research or the learning. Sparkes

(2000) states that “personalized accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purpose of extending sociological understanding” is what is referred to as autoethnography. Ellis writes, as an autoethnographer, I am both the author and the focus of the story, the one who tells and the one who experiences, the observer and the observed, the creator and the created. I am the person at the intersection of the personal and the cultural, thinking and observing as an ethnographer and writing and describing as a storyteller (2009).

This methodology resonates with Indigenous methodologies, because it has been written by Indigenous scholars the only thing that we can write about with any authority, is ourselves (Allen, 1998; Monture–Angus, 1995). While autoethnography may be questioned or dismissed academically, and its validity not readily accepted (Chang, 2008), I feel that due to the spiritual, experiential nature of Indigenous research, I believe? that it could be used appropriately and effectively as a methodology.

Master/Apprentice

In my home community of W̱SÁNEĆ, SENĆOŦEN language revitalization is a very high priority concern. One of the ways that this is carried out by my home community is using the master/apprentice approach that was developed and documented by Leanne Hinton (2008). The Master–Apprentice approach is designed to create a one–on–one relationship between a “master” (speaker) and “apprentice” (language learner), who together constitutes a learning and teaching team. This approach has had great success in our community, and several apprentices are gaining fluency in our ancestral language. Our ancestral languages and our ancestral knowledges, and the land are all inextricably linked. I see great potential in adapting this master—apprentice method to the researching of ancestral Indigenous knowledge. This method honours both the learner and the teacher, and I can imagine that this was much the way knowledge was transferred traditionally by our ancestors.

Land and language

As I have stated, Indigenous knowledge, language and land are all inextricably linked, that is they cannot be separated, dissected and taken separately. When they are all experienced together, there is a power and

a meaning that cannot be expressed in this text. As a research methodology, I propose that the research must be land-based. I was unable to find any supporting literature on this concept, and this is where I feel I could contribute to Indigenous scholarship. Guilar and Swallow (2008) write about promise and potential of learning from place, spirit and traditional language as the foundation for the Indigenization of education. I suspect that it can also be of value as an Indigenous research methodology. It is vital to take learning and research out on the land, which is the way it should be.

W̱SÁNEĆ Research

For my intended research, I would hope to blend all of the methodologies that I have just written about and explored, in such a way that this research can be valuable for the academic world, myself, my community and to regain and revitalize a W̱SÁNEĆ way of life on this land, and one that revitalizes our W̱SÁNEĆ education system.

In the mainstream world, learners are awarded credentials (Grade 12 certificate, Bachelor's degree etc). In an Indigenous world it is different. I have looked to the writings of other Indigenous scholars, and many

write about conducting and situating 'research' in an Indigenous worldview (Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2010; Atleo 2004), defining and conducting 'Indigenous' scholarship. I again, look to the SENĆOFEN language. I asked my elder advisor about this question. He said to me, 'TOLNEW' means 'to know/know' and 'I,TOTELNEW' means 'learning/still learning'. I probed a little further, and asked "well how do you know when you know?" His response was, when you become a SIÁM, that is a respected person. In my experience, there comes a time when you become the advisor, the teacher. The community will draw upon the SIÁM for advice, knowledge. You will be referred to and called a SIÁM. I was told that long ago, this term was not used lightly. I am also told that this is a lifelong process.

I have thought more about this, and about my learning. I think that you also know when you know, when you begin to form a relationship to the lands, animals, resources, fishes, mountains, rocks, beaches of your homelands. You begin to see all of these differently; they are not simply physical objects, but relatives. It goes back to a different worldview, one that aligns with the teachings. This is what education should be. This

work, has helped me to reflect on my learning, and I realize that I am still learning (I, TOTE_WNE_W).

My work is inspired by the work of my late uncle Earl Claxton Sr. where his life's work was to create a teachable curriculum for our children.

He has always emphasized that our place names in our language are intimately tied in to our beliefs as W_SÁNEĆ people. This essentially is the aim of my work, study, or "research", that is to ensure that this vital knowledge is passed on. Here is but one example of a place name in our language that expresses a teaching or belief. There is a point in our W_SÁNEĆ homeland known as YEUWE. This point in English is known as Tilly Point on Pender Island. YEUWE has been translated as "the fortune teller point". More accurately however, through the work of my late Uncle Earl, he noted that when you take a verb and put an S in front, it becomes a noun. So this means YEUWE is not a noun. Rather it is a transitive verb. The transitive verb is YUEWET, or to examine something with the vision of said fortune teller. Therefore, YUEWE is actually the vision of this fortune teller. Right next to Tilly Point is QENENI_W, which

means “something that is stopped”. There is a huge boulder there. The vision of that fortune teller, was taken away and stopped by XÁLs. Now when the WŚÁNEĆ people are out there, fishing, and we see that boulder, we are reminded of this event, which is really a sacred teaching. That was our belief and it is our reality. Currently, our ‘education’ does not validate or support this reality in the lives of our younger generations. My work proposes to change this. There are many, many stories, place names, teachings and beliefs that are intricately woven with our territory. That is what the WŚÁNEĆ territory is for us.

My late Uncle reminded me many times that this knowledge and our teachings were our hereditary right as WŚÁNEĆ people. Similarly, WŚÁNEĆ also had a hereditary right to a name, to our ĆELÁNEN (our nation’s laws/teachings/beliefs), and to our NEHIMET (family rights/teachings/history that was passed on), and this of course included the land.

As my late Uncle taught me, our language, beliefs and the land are all intertwined, and learning was a lifelong process. Place names and activities throughout our territory is key.

Looking to the future, as a human race living on this earth, and as academics who theorize and inform, we have a great deal to learn from each other. This is what my research fits in, for the W̱SÁNEĆ way of life, where our young can live, and make something of themselves as W̱SÁNEĆ.

In my learning thus far with my uncle STOLØEŁ on the land, visiting sacred places around the W̱SÁNEĆ homeland, he shared a couple of ways young warriors would prepare themselves for war, and for life. I think that some of these can be employed by me as I conduct my 'research'. It will be important to honour those traditional ways in my search (or research), so that I can become situated and rooted in a W̱SÁNEĆ worldview.

I was told that a young warrior would run up to the top of ŁÁU,WELNEW, a very sacred mountain in the W̱SÁNEĆ homeland. At the top, the young warrior would gather some vines of the trailing blackberry, and would then sit with those vines tied across his bare chest. While sitting, the young warrior would be forced to sit very, very still, because of the sharp thorns against the skin, which would allow the

warrior to contemplate, and to get in touch with the spiritual realm. This would also teach patience and discipline. This kind of exercise would be valuable for me, as I contemplate how to move forward with my education and my work, and it will help me to remain grounded and situated in the teachings and beliefs of the W̱SÁNEĆ people.

Similarly, I was taught that spiritual bathing in local cold waters in our territory is a way for young warriors to prepare and strengthen themselves. Warriors would go at daybreak to nearby streams or in secluded ocean beaches to bath in the water. Water in the W̱SÁNEĆ worldview has its own living spirit, and it cleanses and strengthens a warrior's spirit and allows that warrior to again, connect with that spirit world. My work and research must be in touch with the W̱SÁNEĆ world and teachings, therefore, this teaching should be a part of my research practice.

As a methodology, I feel that the autoethnographical approach is an approach that honours and respects Indigenous approaches. This approach would allow me, as a 'researcher' to be wholeheartedly concerned with only myself and my learning, and allows me to be

involved in a participatory approach in this learning with my respected knowledge keepers and teachers. This is very close, in my opinion, to how learning and teaching would have happened in the traditional W̱SÁNEĆ world. When the time is right, further into the future, I as a learner would in turn become the teacher. This is the long-term goal for my 'research', to revitalize and retain the ways of our W̱SÁNEĆ people, and to find ways to do this, through education.

The autoethnographical approach is applied in concert with the master/apprentice approach. The master/apprentice approach has been utilized with success in Indigenous language acquisition, and is essentially the approach I utilized in my Masters "research", in Indigenous knowledge acquisition. In this way, the learner is paired with the knowledge keeper, and knowledge is passed on this way.

In spending time with elders and knowledge keepers, I have noticed that Indigenous knowledge is inexplicably linked to the land. I have noticed that visiting places, where that knowledge is situated, enhances the learning that takes place in intangible ways. I foresee that any of my "research" must be situated on the land, rather than being displaced, as it

would be if I were interviewing an elder in an office or in a home setting for example.

Finally, as with any study in any discipline, the study and the work must be done using the terminology of that discipline. In the case of my learning and study, I must become more adept in my ancestral language of SENĆOŦEN. It would be meaningless, if not impossible without doing so. My late Uncle YELKÁTŦE said it perfectly, when he said “We must realize that our children’s first language is English, where our elders first language is SENĆOŦEN. SENĆOŦEN defines our nation, or homeland, and who we are”. Another important teacher, STOLŦEEL also once said “our language is the voice of the land”. Together learning the language, and learning the teachings and beliefs embedded in the language and inextricably tied to the land in our place names, is the key to our identity and existence on this land. It would go a long ways toward our decolonization, and I believe that education, a W̱SÁNEĆ education has everything to do with that.

Chapter 4 S_XOLE: My own learning, or more appropriately unlearning.

Story of the origin of the Salmon

This story comes from the time when there were only people on earth, and there were no salmon. The salmon people were in their own land, far away. The W_SÁNEĆ people were facing starvation because everything else they relied upon for food were disappearing and becoming scarce.

At this time, there were two young W_SÁNEĆ men who ventured off to find the salmon. They set off in their canoe, headed out to sea, in no particular direction. They journeyed for three and a half months. Finally, the two young men arrived in a strange country. When they landed their canoe, a man came forward and spoke to them as if he had been expecting them, “you have finally arrived”. The two W_SÁNEĆ youth, not knowing where they were

simply responded, “yes we have arrived”. Here they stayed for a time with their new host. They were fed and looked after. They looked around, and noticed that everywhere they looked, smoke was rising. The Salmon People were burning QEXMIN (Indian Celery), and the smoke was rising from each of their homes. QEXMIN was the food for the Salmon People.

After about month passed, the Salmon instructed the W̱SÁNEĆ youth that it was time to journey home. They were instructed that the Salmon they were looking for would also start off on their journey, and the youth must follow them. The next day, the W̱SÁNEĆ youth left, following the salmon. They travelled day and night, for three and a half months. Every night, they burned QEXMIN seeds, an instruction from the Salmon People. The smoke of the QEXMIN was to feed and sustain the Salmon on their journey. When they finally reached ᐢCÁS (Discovery

Island), they burned QEXMIN along the beach, all the way home.

Today, the W̱SÁNEĆ People burn QEXMIN whenever they cook the salmon. Also, when cutting the salmon, the W̱SÁNEĆ people pray to the salmon that they may always be plentiful.

To Fish as Formerly

The W̱SÁNEĆ people were also known as the Saltwater People (Poth, 1990). Our lives were connected to the water, the islands, our canoes, the tides and all sea life. Our territory included the tidal waters of the southern Gulf Islands and San Juan Islands, and all of the lands in between. You can see by looking at our territorial map (see page #) what kind of people we had to be. Our territory is as much land as it is water. We had to be sea-going people: fishermen, sailors, navigators and canoe builders. Central to this way of life was the S̱XOLE, or Reef net Fishery. The Reef net Fishery was a technology that was unique to the Straits

Salish People. The Reef net Fishery did two things, it set us apart from other First Nations Peoples, and it brought us together as a nation.

This project is about bringing the reef net fishery back to life in the WSÁNEĆ community and homelands. It is about revitalizing the practices, philosophies, knowledge and belief systems, and spirituality associated with the reef net. It is about making it living again. The project to revitalize the reef net fishing practice was the result of three related initiatives, the construction of a ceremonial reef net, the construction and fishing of a full size modern reef net, and my learning throughout the whole process (and also the learning of all who was involved), which all together comprised the reef net revitalization project. This is our journey back to the reef net.

Our relatives to the south, the Lummi Nation have also begun to bring back the reef net. A few of their key reef netters invited me to visit them and witness their work, and they have visited us, to help us with our work. The Lummi reef netters, on their journey back to the reef net, have shared what they have learned and helped us greatly by helping the WSÁNEĆ construct a full size reef net, using modern materials.

Last school year, under the guidance and direction of STOLØEEL (John Elliott Sr.), the students at the ŁÁU,WELNEW tribal school participated in a project to construct a ceremonial reef net. While the students learned about the Reef net Fishery in school, together they built this ceremonial model, which our community brought out in a sacred ceremony on August 6 2014, a ceremony to acknowledge and bring back the spiritual practice of Reef net Fishing.

During the summer of 2014, a group of community members interested in bringing back the reef net, met weekly. We met with the Lummi, and together, we built the full size reef net. The project culminated with a one day reef net fishery on August 9 2014 at Pender Island, at one of our WŚÁNEĆ hereditary fishing locations. This project is just the beginning. It has started the process of bringing back the reef net to the WŚÁNEĆ people, and to make it a living practice once again.

I recently had a great conversation with Songhees Elder Skip Dick, while eating together at the Office of Indigenous Affairs Elder's Breakfast, at the University of Victoria. He spoke about a time when he went up north to Terrace BC to a First Nation's community celebration. He met

some people from there who were wearing some 'very beautiful' vests with First Nations designs on them. Skip commented to the people how much he liked them, and he asked them how much they were to buy one of them. He explained, as soon as he asked the question to this person, their face dropped, and Skip knew that he had said something offensive. He said he wished he could take back his words. Through this, he realized that mainstream culture and the assimilation process has brainwashed us to be in a very commercialized mentality, where everything has a dollar value. The person explained to Skip that the vest was a family vest, and this was something that was passed on, and therefore did not have a dollar value attached to it, it was invaluable. After telling me this story, he reflected on how traditionally, our identity, culture, land, beliefs and practices were all things that were passed down and taught to the young people. In this way, it had immense value. It was inherently valuable and it was a part of who we were. He feels that we lost some of who we were through colonization and assimilation, and that capitalism has changed us, to where we value dollars more than those things that made us who we were/are. He also shared another

example from his community. He noticed that the community lands was in need of a clean up. When he brought this idea forward to his community, and to his family, they responded, "That is a great Idea Uncle Skip, how much will you pay us to do it?" This was when he realized that our people, and particularly the younger people had lost many of the values that our people held traditionally, such as pride and initiative. These values have been replaced by the value for money, and for the things that can help to acquire it. He said that he thought that one of his wishes for our people is to restore some of our traditional values and principles to reflect our traditional ways. This is in part, my intention for restoring the Reef net Fishing practice. There are many values, principles and philosophies that are inherent in the Reef net Fishery that lend value to revitalizing this practice, it is not just about catching fish or making a living at it. It is an educational endeavour, more than that, it is life.

My prayer for our people

This is my prayer for my people. I pray that we could once again be in touch with our homelands, in tune with the seasons and the

seasonal round. I pray that the reef net fishery can once again be the backbone of our people. I hope that our people can once again be in tune with the return of our relatives the salmon people. I pray that our people can be strong, healthy, and once again live according to the teachings of the creator. I pray that we can be knowledgeable in the tides and currents, and in the habits of the salmon. I hope that our people can remember the true history of the salmon people, and once again respect them as our relatives. I pray that we as a people can learn how to reef net fish again, and that we can reestablish reef net fisheries throughout our territory, and that all of the people of W̱SÁNEĆ can be a part of this beautiful practice. I pray that through these, we can feed our people, as well as play our part in restoring strong and healthy runs of salmon. I pray that we can teach the greater society about us, show them how strong and resilient our people were, are and can be. I pray that we can teach others and ourselves how to live a more sustainable lifestyle. This is our right and it is our responsibility. This is my prayer for our people.

How it all started

The W̱SÁNEĆ reef net fishing practice is an ancient, sophisticated, ecologically friendly, sustainable, spiritual, respectful practice (Claxton & Elliott, 1994; Poth, 1990; Van Eijck & Claxton, 2008; Jenness, N.D.; Boxberger, 2000; Easton, 1985; Suttles, 1974). It was a practice that was unique to the Straits Salish People (Claxton & Elliott, 1994; Poth 1990). It represented a unique connection between the lands and waters of territory and the people. It was a practice that defined the W̱SÁNEĆ people as a nation. It was fundamentally a part of life, just as breathing is. To be W̱SÁNEĆ was to be a Reef net fishing people. This is a way of life that has not been practiced for a generation, and for our nation to survive, this way of life must be revitalized.

My work began in during my research for my Community Governance Project for a Master's Degree in Indigenous Governance in 2002/2003.

My research then was focused on articulating from our W̱SÁNEĆ perspective, what is meant by a sentence in the Douglas Treaty that states entitled to "carry on our fisheries as formerly" (Claxton, 2003).

The Supreme Court of Canada has held up the Douglas Treaty as a valid

treaty agreement between the Saanich People and Canada (Knighton, 2004). This then raises the question, why aren't we still Reef net fishing?

This work continued as I embarked on the journey of doctoral studies. I began, in 2003 in a doctoral program by special arrangement through the Indigenous Governance Program. My learning there with Dr. Taiaiake Alfred and Dr. Jeff Corntassel has been foundational, and their teachings still guide and direct me. My doctoral work has always focused on building upon my Master's work. After further coursework in the Indigenous Governance programs, I transferred into the School of Environmental Studies, studying under Dr. Nancy Turner. There I learned a great deal about ethnoecology and ecological restoration and how it relates to the Reef net fishery. Following that, I withdrew from the program for personal reasons. After a couple of years, I resumed my studies in the Faculty of Education. There I was able to focus on the Reef net fishery as a knowledge system and education system. My focus was on understanding it this way, and on how to ensure this knowledge system is perpetuated and revitalized

As I reflect on my educational journey, and I have always believed it to be a journey rather than a destination, it has been the time learning during my graduate studies that have been particularly meaningful. It has been spent learning about who I am as a W̱SÁNEĆ person from some very key knowledgeable W̱SÁNEĆ people, and putting that learning together with my academic learning. This situation has been one that has me uniquely situated in my community. The knowledge and practice of the W̱SÁNEĆ reef net system was not being passed on. It was not until I reached graduate level study before I learned anything about reef net fishing. How can something so central to the W̱SÁNEĆ identity, not be widely known about? Over all of my years, I always felt that there was so much I could learn from my Elders, but I was always 'too busy' going to school, or working. My educational journey has not just been about learning, but it also has been about unlearning in many ways. My most influential instructor along the journey has been my Uncle YELKÁŦE (Earl Claxton Sr.).

Uncle's Teachings and Instruction

The following is a story that was told by YELKÁFTĚ (Dr. Earl Claxton Sr.)

It is a belief of the WŚÁNEĆ people that the SĀOLE, the reef net, originated the following way:

A WŚÁNEĆ couple had a beautiful and eligible young daughter. The family travelled together to ĀĒTENEM (Pt. Roberts) to visit their relatives who lived there. While they were there, the young lady would often go sit alone on the shore and look out over the ocean. One evening, a handsome young man came walking along the beach, and he spoke to the beautiful young WŚÁNEĆ lady. After that first meeting, they met one another down at the shore many times and they became fond of each other.

The handsome young man wanted the young WŚÁNEĆ princess to run away with him, so they could be together forever. Though the young WŚÁNEĆ princess also wanted to be with the handsome young man, she was a strong believer in WŚÁNEĆ traditions, and she told the young man

that he must speak to her parents first and get their approval. The young man respected her wish and he spoke to her parents. The parents accepted the young man, but only if he stayed with the W̱SÁNEĆ people for a time. It was during this time, that the salmon became very scarce, and hard to catch. The W̱SÁNEĆ people began to suffer.

The young man offered his help to the W̱SÁNEĆ people. He asked them to bring him some SXOLE. This was a word that the W̱SÁNEĆ people had never heard before. They noticed that this young man spoke differently, and had many different names for the things he spoke of. No one knew that he was really speaking in spiritual terms, using sacred prayer words. They only knew that they had never heard those words before.

The young man requested many items with which he promised would help provide for W̱SÁNEĆ people. He requested a certain plant, and again the W̱SÁNEĆ people

did not know what he was asking for. The W̱SÁNEĆ people brought the young man boughs, branches, roots, he rejected them all one by one, until one of them brought the pacific willow bush. The young man took the willow bush, and he stripped it of its inner bark. From this fibrous inner bark, he made cordage and began to construct a net.

The young man completed constructing the reef net gear with all of the other natural materials brought to him previously. He taught the W̱SÁNEĆ people the names of all of the different parts of the net and all of the terms used while fishing with the net. He taught the W̱SÁNEĆ people how to be reef net fishermen. The W̱SÁNEĆ people became successful in catching salmon, and became a prosperous people once again. The W̱SÁNEĆ people used the reef net, which was the gift of that young man, to catch salmon ever since then.

A short time later, the young man told the W̱SÁNEĆ people that it was time for him to take his new bride home with him. With all of their possessions loaded into their canoe, they departed, with the young princess's family watching from the shore. The young man and the young woman, headed out to the deep water, and when they reached a distance away, they simply vanished into the water. It is now believed that the young man who came to W̱SÁNEĆ and married this young W̱SÁNEĆ princess was the spirit of the salmon in human form. He gave the W̱SÁNEĆ people the gift of their own way of fishing, and the W̱SÁNEĆ people gave him the gift of a beautiful wife.

It is a belief of the W̱SÁNEĆ people that the salmon are our relatives, and they were people just like us, and they must be respected as such. The W̱SÁNEĆ people have fished this way for a very long time, and this is what connects us to the Salmon people. This is the way it has been taught.

This story of the Reef Net encompasses the significance and importance of the Reef net Fishery of the W̱SÁNEĆ People. It reflects the beliefs of the W̱SÁNEĆ people and how we relate to the land and to the salmon.

The Reef net Fishery was our way of life, or connection to our territory; it formed the spiritual, social, physical and philosophical core and backbone of W̱SÁNEĆ traditional society.

While this is oral history, and told as a story, it is also a belief. It is believed to have actually happened. It did actually happen. It is a record of an actual historical occurrence. It also reflects an important philosophy, that we are directly related to the salmon. This is an important idea for W̱SÁNEĆ ethnoecology, that we are related to our natural world. This denotes a particular relationship and responsibility to the natural world. This kind of worldview, which aligns with a concept known as a kincentric worldview (Salmon, 2000) is a worldview that needs to be brought forward, taught, fostered in our children, and lived.

Colonial Correspondence as a History

As the W̱SÁNEĆ oral history of the reef net teaches us, this was a fishery that is very ancient. It was widely practiced in the Straits Salish waters, and it was an effective fishery. There is a great deal of colonial correspondence that indicates the prevalence of the reef net fishery at the time of contact. There is correspondence from the late 1800's showing the use, and the desire to continue to use Reef net technology by the Straits Salish people, despite the emerging industrial commercial fishery.

Additionally, the Douglas Treaty states that the W̱SÁNEĆ People were entitled to "carry on their fisheries as formerly". Reef net fishing was outlawed by the Canadian government in the early 1900's effectively putting an end to a way of life that we had known and developed for countless generations. In 1852, the W̱SÁNEĆ signed a treaty with then Governor of Vancouver Island Sir James Douglas. This treaty guarantees the broadest fishing rights of any treaty agreed to in North America. The treaty allowed the W̱SÁNEĆ to "fish as formerly". This includes the right to benefit commercially from our catch as we did annually. The question

remains, if the reef net was so prevalent, and a historic treaty that was signed protected it, why aren't we still fishing this way today? This is why this dissertation is about the resurgence of the Reef Net fishery.

This is the Story of the Revitalization of the Reef net System

Spiritual nature of the SXOLE

I have come to understand that the Reef net knowledge system as a very spiritual practice. This understanding has come from first hand experience, and together with the oral history that has been passed on (such as the story of the origin of the reef net), it is evident that spirituality is inherent to the practice.

As I previously explained, much of my learning on the Reef net has come from my Uncle Earl. His was very knowledgeable in WŚÁNEĆ history and culture. His first language was SENĆOŦEN, and he only first learned to speak English in his youth. Uncle shared with me that he was raised in a traditional WŚÁNEĆ way, learning by listening, observing, practicing, and doing. He shared stories about travelling by dugout canoe with my grandparents and my father, aunts and uncles out to the

islands, where they would live during the summer months. He shared many stories about hunting deer and grouse, fishing for halibut and salmon, harvesting clams, sea urchins and other seafood, and picking berries. Uncle explained to me that he learned from Grandpa and his Uncles many skills that all W̱SÁNEĆ people should know. Uncle could to forecast the weather, read the tides and currents, knew where to find fresh water. Uncle could make a fire in all weather conditions, using pitch wood as a fire starter. Uncle carried many, many stories from our W̱SÁNEĆ oral history; his was a historian by all means. He has seen many changes over his lifetime, but the values and traditions instilled in him through those early experiences shaped his life, and his teachings continue to shape mine. One of those important teachings is the spiritual nature of W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge.

Even at the end of his life, he was still teaching me. With great sadness, my Uncle passed away from multiple myeloma in June of 2011. My father and I would often go and visit him in his home. Towards the end, my Uncle was quite medicated, because of the pain. One of the last times my father and I visited, my Uncle called out to me to come and see

him (I was sitting in the next room, chatting with my Aunt, as my Uncle was asleep I had thought). We began to talk about canoes, and reef net fishing. He knew how much I was interested in the topic. He seemed to be quite clear and coherent, and with a big happy smile he said to me, “It is going to take you three years”. I did not know what he meant, about “three years”. As it turns out, he was referring to how long it would take for me to prepare to go reef net fishing once again. At the time, I had anticipated that I would be out Reef netting much sooner. I was in the middle of my doctoral studies, which is in itself a long journey. Since that time, I have completed my comprehensive exams, wrote a research proposal and presented it to my committee for approval, and got ethics approval from the University of Victoria. All of this took me to the summer of 2014, when I was finally prepared to bring this Reef net Revitalization project to fruition. This idea of three years always sat in the back of my mind. One afternoon in the summer of 2014, I came across my Uncles obituary in my files on my computer, and I noted the date of his passing, it was three years later and the W̱SÁNEĆ people were to go reef net fishing again. How did my Uncle know this? Why did he

call me specifically at that time, and tell me that it would take three years? For me, this cannot be easily explained, and such is the case spiritual knowledge. This was his teaching.

Another important teaching I received from Uncle Earl was about a ceremonial reef net model. When I first started going to him to learn about the Reef net fishery, he had a picture from the early 1900's that showed a model reef net.



Figure 5 Lummi Nation Ceremonial Reef Net

He said that this model must be constructed first, before the W̱SÁNEĆ people could go fishing again. The creation of a ceremonial model and

bringing it forward to the community was a very important and integral part of this Reef net revitalization project. The model and the associated ceremony reflected the spiritual nature of the Reef net technology.

The Reef net

The Saanich Peoples main fishing technology was the Reef net. In the Saanich language it was called the S_XOLE. This word refers to the material that the net was constructed of, the inner bark of the Pacific Willow Tree. The Reef net technique was perfectly suited for the Saanich People since fishing for salmon (particularly Sockeye and Pink) was conducted in tidal waters rather than in rivers and streams. The S_XOLE was an incredibly sophisticated technique, which required in-depth knowledge of the salmon, their habits and travel routes, the tides and currents, and of plants among other things. This fishing technique could not be successful without the Saanich people's deep respect for the salmon, the earth, and each other. The principle of respect was an integral part of the Saanich people's worldview.

The S \dot{X} OLE was hand constructed from hand picked materials of Cedar and Willow. The Reef net fishing apparatus consisted of a lead and a net. The lead served to funnel salmon into a net that was suspended between two canoes. The net was secured in an ideal location, such as at the mouth of a bay, for entire fishing seasons by the use of giant rock anchors. To use the reef net required intimate knowledge of the salmon and the environment.

The lead of the reef net consisted of cedar log buoys, cedar ropes to form the sides and the floor of the lead, and specially made rock weights. Dune grass would be threaded through the twinning of the ropes that formed the floor and the sides, which would fool the salmon that they were actually safely swimming near the bottom. Ropes to permanent anchors secured the front of the lead, and the rear of the lead was connected to the fishermen's canoes and to the net itself. The net itself would be suspended between two canoes, and it would bag out with the flow of the tide. The sterns of the canoes were also secured to the bottom with ropes and anchors. When the net was hauled and fishing was stopped, the rear of the lead was tied to those rear anchors and the

lead of the reef net remained in the water, usually for the duration of a season, unless repairs had to be made. This is a simple description of a complex fishing technique.

The Saanich people successfully governed their traditional fisheries for thousands of years, prior to contact. This was not just because there were laws and rules in place, and that everybody followed them, but there was also a completely different way of thinking about fish and fishing, which included a profound respect. At the end of the net, a ring of willow was woven into the net, which allowed some salmon to escape. This is more than just a simple act of *conservation* (the main priority and narrow vision of DFO), but it represents a profound respect for salmon. It was believed that the runs of salmon were lineages, and if some were allowed to return to their home rivers, then those lineages would always continue. The Saanich peoples believed that all living things were once people, and they were respected as such. The salmon were their relatives. All things on earth were to be respected since it is the earth that we all share. This was a teaching of the Saanich.

After a school of salmon entered the net, the captain would give the order to release the rear anchor lines and the tide would bring the canoes together. At this point the salmon could be rolled into the canoes and brought ashore. The rear anchor lines would be attached to the rear of the lead, and the fishing location would be maintained. At the shore, the women and children would receive the salmon, again with great respect. The catch was divided among the crew and the family, and was divided in two's ("twos" was a sacred number). Respect for the salmon was integral to the Saanich worldview, and it ensured that the salmon return to the rivers into perpetuity.

Out of respect, when the First large sockeye was caught a first salmon ceremony was conducted. This was the Saanich way to greet and welcome the king of all salmon. At this time, all fishing would cease, and the celebration would likely last up to 10 days. All fishing stopped, not just the fishermen who caught the fish, but the whole nation of fishermen joined in on the celebration. The act of celebrating the return of the special salmon exemplifies the respect held for the salmon. I would argue that this deeply rooted respect was integral to the Saanich

people's governance of their fisheries, or to employ a Eurocentric concept, their overall management scheme. I say this because; at this time of the celebration it was likely that the peak of the salmon run was traveling through the Saanich Territory. Taking time to celebrate allowed for much of the salmon stocks to return to their rivers to spawn, and to sustain those lineages or stocks. This kind of fishing behaviour directly contrasts the approach of DFO, where it is their mandate to catch as much fish as possible while allowing a minimal amount of fish as escapement, based on "scientific formulas".

The Saanich reef net Fishery is a highly sophisticated fishery that was directly suited to the Saanich People. It allowed the Saanich to live in their lands in prosperity for thousands of years. It is more than just a fishing technique, it is a model of governance of over an integral part of what it means to be a Saanich person, fish and fishing is the Saanich Identity. To govern ourselves as Saanich would mean to also to govern our fisheries and live and fish as we always did, with the reef net. This is what is promised in the Douglas Treaty.

The Reef net Fishery: Explained

Our ancestors, the Straits Salish people, fished for sockeye in the Salish Sea using reef nets. Reef nets are an ingenious fishing technology that enabled us to become a wealthy and powerful people.

Our family is W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich). Our winter village sites are located on the Saanich Peninsula and our fishing sites are located throughout the Southern Gulf Islands and east to Point Roberts.

Our fishing techniques and our society were highly advanced. Our fishing locations were a birthright handed from generation to the next. We believe that all living things were once human, and that the sockeye that filled our nets were sacred lineages that must be honoured and protected. Through this relationship evolved a sophisticated cultural practices and rituals that elevated the salmon. They are our equals, to be valued just we as we value each other. Rather than having dominion over the annual cycles of life the Straits Salish people were part of them. Our nets were designed with a large hole to allow sockeye to escape, and we celebrated the first salmon ceremony after catching the first sockeye of the season, a ceremony that could last for over a week. These intentional

design elements recognized the importance of conservation. By protecting the long-term viability of the families fishing location, our ancestors protected the value of the inheritance of future generations. Our family's wealth was not counted by the number of fish that could be slaughtered in one season, rather its worth was in the resilience that was established by allowing the strongest part of the sockeye return to the spawning grounds to reproduce.

SWÁLET: Reef net Fishing Locations

To successfully catch salmon using the reef net, the Saanich fishermen had to be keenly aware of tidal flow and the location and habits of the salmon. The direction of tidal flow is usually the direction that the salmon travel; it would push the salmon directly into the net. An ideal location for setting the reef net was at the mouth of a bay, with tidal flow coming out of the bay and directly into the net. Reef net fishing locations, called SWÁLET in the Saanich language, were the birthright of the Saanich People and fishermen. They were passed down just as family names and history were passed down. Fishing locations were not owned;

rather the families belonged to it. In traditional Saanich society, the extended family formed the unit, and this was how everything was passed on. The elder of the family was usually the captain of the fishing crew, and held the knowledge and history that connected the family to that fishing location, and it was their responsibility to transfer that knowledge on. This is in part, how the Saanich governed their fishery.

There are many Reef net locations in the territorial waters of the Saanich people. The locations identified may have more than one Reef net gear associated with it, which was, as already stated, owned, and passed down through hereditary lines. For my project, which was the start of the revitalization of the Reef net technology, I chose one specific location as the location to fish. This specific location was ideal because it is a location that I belong to, through my lineage. Here is a list of 29 locations that have been identified in my research, however more research is required to identify the hereditary owners and how many gears were at each site. The list of locations are listed approximately from south to north:

- Smythe Head, Vancouver Island

- Large Bedford Island
- Christopher Point, Vancouver Island
- Iceberg, Point Lopez Island
- Watmough Head, Lopez Island
- Southeast Point of Charles Island
- TIQENIN/Cattle Point, San Juan Island
- KEXNINEN/Eagle Point, San Juan Island
- SKO,ANEX/False Bay, San Juan Island
- SKE,ANEW/Kanaka Bay, San Juan Island
- I,OLENEW/Pile Point, San Juan Island
- SWELEC/Fishermen Bay, Lopez Island
- WICOSEN/Flat Point, Lopez Island
- WTEC/Dead Man Bay, San Juan Island
- SCEHENE/Andrews Bay, San Juan Island
- TITEK/Bay between Deadmans Bay and Smugglers Cove, San Juan Island
- EEINCEEL / Open Bay–Mosquito Pass
- NENANET/Open Bay Kellet Bluff on Henry Island
- WCIEMEN/Johns Island
- KENNES/"Happy Island", Gossip Island, near Stuart Island
- CXENA/Fishery Point on Waldron Island
- WLEKOI/West Beach, Orcas Island
- QENENIW/ Tilly Point on South Pender Island
- SXIXFE/Point across Bedwell Harbour
- CAK,SEN/Point on North Pender Island
- SKELAMEKS/Helen Point on Mayne Island
- WCIWEM/Cherry Point, Bellingham Washington
- Birch Point at Point Roberts
- Cannery Point at Point Roberts

The following is a nautical chart, which shows all of the Reef net fishing locations as a fish icon:

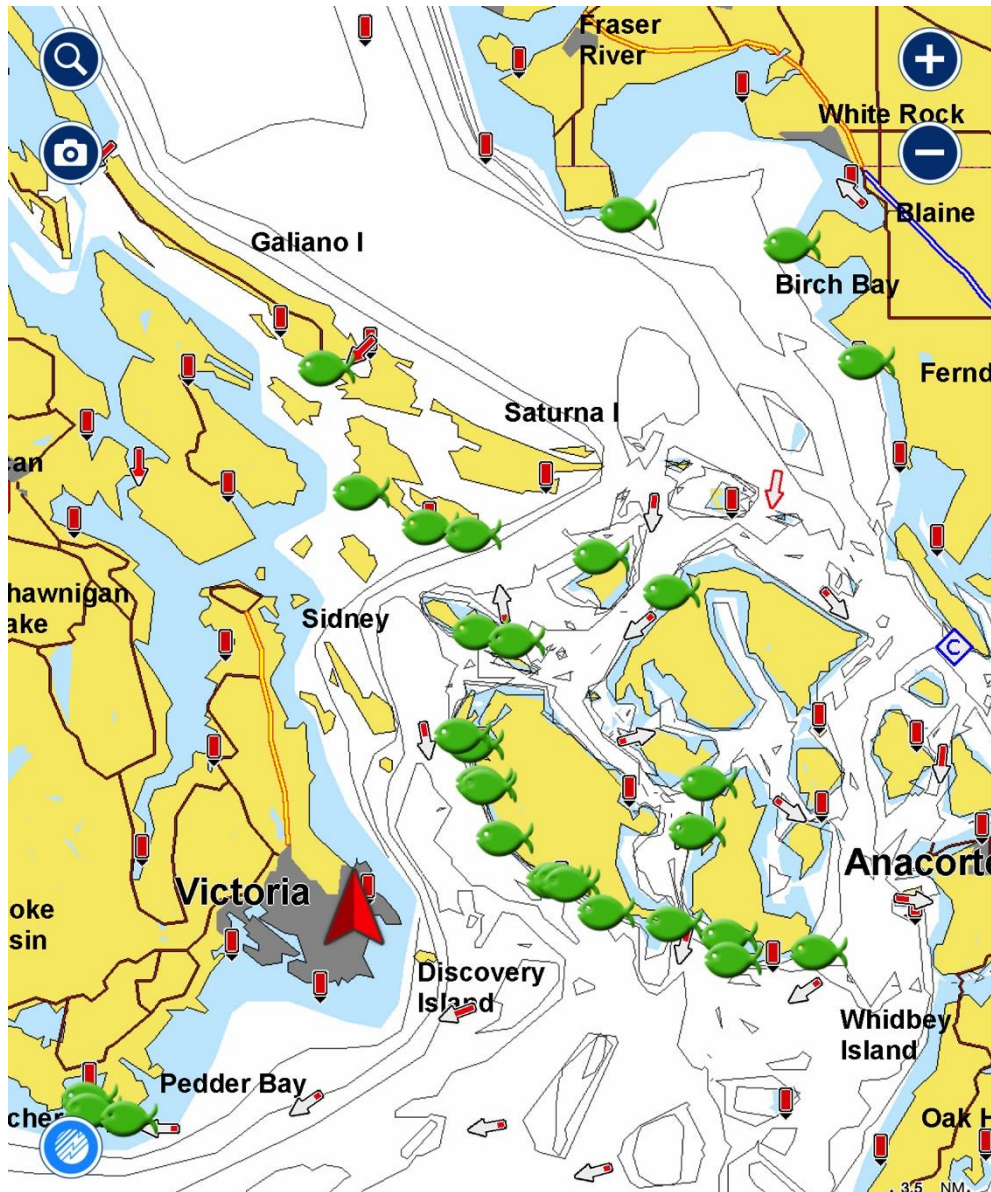


Figure 6 - 29 Reef Net Locations in WSÁNEĆ Territory

The site I chose for my Reef net revitalization project was SXIXTE, which is the point directly across from Hay Point at the mouth of Bedwell Harbour. This site in our oral history belonged to SXEDQELÁNEW. SXEDQELÁNEW was a highly respected WSÁNEĆ person, and was held in

great esteem by the W̱SÁNEĆ people for his excellent skills as a hunter and a fisherman. He lived in a longhouse on SDÁ,YES, now known as Pender Island. The longhouse was built on land next to a freshwater creek that empties into Bedwell Harbor. This was an ideal location for SXEDQELÁNEW, and for all W̱SÁNEĆ people. It had an abundant supply of fresh water, and from this location there as access to the abundant land and sea resources. SXEDQELÁNEW owned the reef net site at SXIXTE. One of his direct descendants was Louie Pelkey, who was my paternal Grandmother's father. My first cousin Allan Claxton now carries the name SXEDQELÁNEW. Traditionally speaking, Allan Claxton would carry the rights and responsibilities associated with Reef netting at that site. This site was a very important site in my family history.

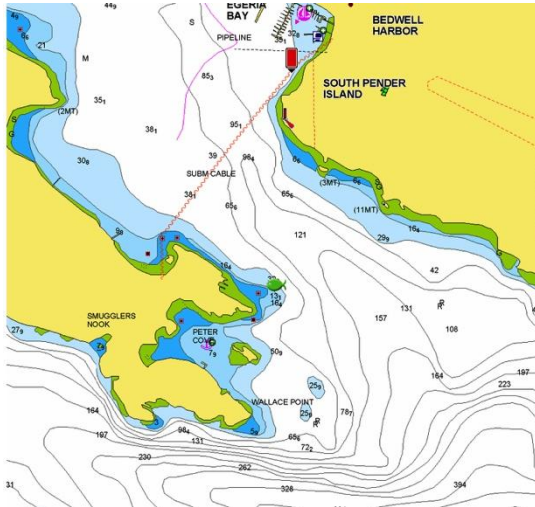


Figure 7 - SXIXTE Reef Net Location at Pender Island BC

The reason why this site was chosen for my Reef net revitalization project was two-fold. Firstly, the site was an important part of my family history and lineage. It was important for me to honour and uphold this history. As I can draw a direct connection to this site, though my family lineage, was important, as this connection could not be contested or disputed. Traditionally, this was how our fisheries were governed, and it was a law. Secondly, the name SXIXTE in our language reflects the sacred connection to the Reef net of the W̱SÁNEĆ people. My Uncle STOLØEL (John Elliott Sr.) explained that the name was a female name, and it was a sacred name. He felt that this site might have been the one of the original, if not the original Reef net fishing site of the W̱SÁNEĆ people. To me, this

site was the most appropriate site with which to re-establish the Reef net fishing practice again.

Revitalization of the SXOLE

It was the wish of our ancestors, elders, leaders and people to re-establish our ancient practice of reef net fishing. We are seeking rebuild our nation and our relationship to our territory and to once again fish the Fraser River sockeye as we have done for thousands of years. Bringing back the Reef net fishing practices is one step towards the rebuilding of our nation and the resurgence of our people and our life ways.

The purpose of this project is two-fold. Firstly, we wish to re-connect with our traditional fishing methods and secondly, we wish this project to develop into an annual commercial venture with crews operating reef net gear in numerous locations throughout the Salish Sea.

Our family wishes to realize our treaty rights with our traditional techniques, as we believe the reef net is still the most efficient and effective way to fish in a respectful and honourable way. Currently there is a non-First Nations commercial reef net operating in Washington State

that boasts the highest quality and most humanely caught product on the market.

The reef net was more than just an implement to catch fish it formed the entire worldview of the Straits Salish. When the W̱SÁNEĆ negotiated their treaty with Douglas they specifically demanded that their right to fish be protected. This was more important to the W̱SÁNEĆ than anything else and when we lost our connection to the fish, our connection to the reef net, we were stripped of our identity, stripped of our meaning, lost and without cause. By returning to our ancient reef net locations and put our gear back in the water we will be reconnecting to the essence of what it means to be Straits Salish. This project you will contribute to the rebirth of our culture, the reawakening of our spirit.

Construction of the Ceremonial Reef net

The W̱SÁNEĆ School Board's statement of Philosophy of Education reads:

- 1. That our SENĆOFEN culture must be maintained, perpetuated and protected*

2. *That along with the school: The SENĆOFEN people must be involved in the education of our youth.*
3. *That our children must attain the academic skills and spiritual and cultural values which allow them to live successfully in a multi-cultural society: Also that the Non-Indian society must be educated about the SENĆOFEN culture.*
4. *That the SENĆOFEN tribes control will enhance the education of our students.*
5. *That along with academic skills we must instill SENĆOFEN values (Family, Self-respect, Initiative, Confidence, Responsibility, Respect for others, work ethic, pride, honesty).*
6. *That students have rights and responsibilities with the education program.*
7. *That a safe and suitable learning environment be provided.*

The construction of the ceremonial Reef net within the school as a part of the Reef net revitalization project is consistent with and falls within the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board's philosophical statement. The project was meant to realize those philosophical statements, by bring the Reef net technology back to the center of the W̱SÁNEĆ society, starting with the education of our children. This was the premise of this project.

Starting in the spring of 2014, I started to spend time with STOLØEL in his SENĆOFEN Language and Culture class at the ŁÁU,WEL,NEW Tribal School. His class was held over three hours on Fridays. I attended most Fridays for during the Spring of 2014, though STOLCEL continued to

work with his students on the project

during the times that I could not attend.

Together with the students, we harvested



Figure 8 - Willow Stand

some SXOLE, or willow. We brought it back to the classroom, where we taught the children the technique and process of harvesting the fibrous inner bark used for twine construction.

Firstly, we went out to a local wetland to gather some willow. This was a way for us

and for the students to reconnect with the local territory. STOLCEL reinforced that the willow tree was a living entity, and taught some sacred prayer words speak to the tree before harvesting its branches.

Through harvesting the willow, we learned that the best willow to harvest was the long and straight branches of the new

growth in the spring time. The bark came off easily and the rough outer bark could

be scraped off quite effortlessly. Through working with their hands, the students ended up with a nice supply of long strands of the inner bark of the willow tree. With this the students could begin to make cordage,

using a twisting technique, which creates a strong, yet, fine two-ply cord.

We spent a few classes harvesting willow branches and stripping the outer bark off, until we had an adequate supply for the length of cordage we required to begin making the net.



Figure 9 - In the Classroom



**Figure 10 - Inner bark
of Willow**

The students worked with their hands, and while that was going on there was the chance for some informal teaching of stories, history, and also just a chance to visit. A comfortable learning environment was organically created.

Perhaps opening each class with a prayer, which was a spiritual grounding, created this environment. Opening in this way also acknowledged the spiritual nature of the Reef net and the Reef net model. STOLCEL noted that many of the students that were normally disruptive in his classroom on many of the other days would settle down and work on the net. I believe that the students felt the meaning and the significance of the work, and it was something that they could connect to through their ancestral connections.

For much of the classes, the students worked with their hands, and even worked together twisting the bark to make twine. The students expressed a sense of pride and accomplishment in their twine

production. While making twine was the focus of the initial stages of the project, there was ample opportunity for language and culture learning in the classroom.



Figure 11 - Twine Construction

During the project, which ran from January 2014 through to the end of the year, it became a focal point for the school. Some of the students who showed interest in carving, and in other aspects of this project took on other aspects of the creation of this model. Under the guidance of STOLCEL, some of the students began to carve the canoes that would be a part of this model. Others created model halibut hooks and other fishing tools, and even carved miniature salmon. The learning and teaching was fueled by creativity, and by cultural connection and relevance.

Momentum within the school continued around the project. During this Spring of 2014, one of the other teachers in the school (there are three) began to shift the teaching of their subject around the project. Berkeley Lott, the Science/Social Studies teacher in the school taught his

social studies unit based on the Saltwater People text, and paid particular attention to the Reef net chapter in that text. This learning and teaching allowed the students to engage with the Reef net technology in a deeper and more meaningful way. Students weren't just learning about it in one subject area, but across the subject areas. This project was not as much about creating a curriculum of the Reef net, but enacting it in hands on ways, making it a living curriculum versus one that is in print.

The result of this part of the project within the school was the creation of an adequate amount of twine for the ceremonial Reef net model. During this time, I had time to establish a connection with the students, and the time and space to interview them. The interview was to establish a baseline of the knowledge of the Reef net technology in the community, as well as to assess their engagement with the project.

STOLCEL talks about his students hands on efforts and participation in making the twine as their 'prayers' for Reef net revitalization. In this sense, their contributions and their learning (and teaching) were their prayers. Without this, the revitalization of the Reef net could not have happened.

Visiting Lummi for reef net Ceremony and to view net

During my Reef net learning journey, I was contacted by a member of the Lummi Nation, who was also interested in revitalizing the Reef net fishing practice in Lummi. We talked on the phone, and exchanged information via email several times. I had shared what I learned and what I had previously written and published. I shared that it was also the wishes of the W̱SÁNEĆ people to return to the Reef net. In the summer of 2013, I along with STOLCEL received an invitation to Lummi Reef net Gathering and Salmon Barbeque on August 28, 2013 at Xwe'Chi'eXen (Cherry Point). We were invited to be witnesses (in the traditional ceremonial sense) to a celebration of the Lummi Nation fishing with a reef net at Cherry Point. STOLCEL and I travelled together to Lummi. When we arrived in Lummi, we were welcomed and treated with a great deal of respect and hospitality. While we were there, we spoke informally with the various peoples who were involved in the project in various ways. We learned that it took approximately 2/3 weeks and many people to construct their full size net. I also was able to get a sense of the magnitude of their project, and the amount of community engagement

and involvement required. It really was their whole community behind this effort and it was also the whole community celebrating the return of the Reef net to their community.

While there, with the Reef net fishermen fishing off in the distance, the ceremony, the calling of witnesses and the sharing of prayers, songs and words happened back on the beach. The beach where it all happened was one of the original village sites of the Lummi People. It



Figure 12 - Lummi Reef Net at Cherry Point

was a significant location and it was one of the original reef net fishing locations. This was a traditional gathering place for the Lummi, and once again, the Lummi were gathering there, in

celebration of the Reef net and the return of the Salmon people. At this gathering, a meal was shared, and there were displays. One of the displays was a model reef net. This was the kind of model, which we were endeavoring to create, so it was really powerful to see one first hand. This model was not created by using traditional natural materials

like we used for ours, but instead they used raffia.

As I understand it, this model was not brought

forward in ceremony as we did in WSÁNEĆ.

During this visit, the Reef netting occurred off the

shore, and it was not readily accessible for me to

view it. I was excited to see reef net fishing first

hand, but disappointed that I could only see it from a distance.

Then in the spring of 2014, in April, we were invited once again to Lummi to view the reef net gear up close. While there the Lummi fishermen shared with us the dimensions of the net, the materials used, and the techniques for construction. It was really moving for me to see a reef net first hand. Before this it was always something from the distant past, and unknown (except in pictures). The Lummi fishermen were very giving with their knowledge and experience, both in building the net, and fishing it. It was impressive to be able to see the net first hand, and to see how they constructed it, honouring the traditional technology, but



Figure 13 - Lummi Reef Net Model

using modern materials. While there, we were provided with a list of materials needed to construct our own net.



Figure 15 - Lummi Reef Net

Construction of the full size reef net

Following our visit to Lummi, our working group met several times leading up to the summer fishing season, to strategize and plan our Reef net revitalization effort. We met in community, and more and more

people became interested in supporting the effort. A key turning point was gaining the support of the Gulf Islands Chapter of the



Figure 14 - Lummi Reef Netters

Capital Regional District Board. We received a small grant to support the effort, and with that

support we were able to purchase the necessary materials to begin construction. While we were able to purchase the net, twine, net needles, ropes and lines, anchors and buoys, there was still the question of the canoes. During one of the working group meetings, the Chief of the

Tseycum First Nation offered to lend their nation's fiberglass travelling canoe. We were able to pair that with our own Tsawout First Nation's travelling dugout canoe. Now everything was in place, and we were ready to begin construction.

It was July, and I was concerned that we may not be able to construct our net in time for the fishing season. According to our W̱SÁNEĆ oral tradition, our nets would have been constructed well in advance of the fishing season. It was already half way through July when finally we were in a position to begin construction. Once again our Lummi relatives came to assist. They arrived, on their own expense when they heard that we had all of the materials and were prepared to begin building the first Reef net in W̱SÁNEĆ in a generation. On the tailgate of my pickup truck, with all of the materials loaded in back, the experience of the Lummi fishermen shone through. They immediately drew a blue print for our W̱SÁNEĆ Reef net gear. With our blue print in hand, we were able to go to the soccer field at our Tribal School to begin construction.

In the morning, using the blueprint, a surveyor's measuring tape, and some pegs, we measured out the dimensions of our net based on the

specifications in the blue print. The dimensions of the net were based on several factors: mainly the length of the canoes and the depth of the water (at half tide) at our identified fishing location. The length of the canoes determined roughly the dimensions of the net itself, and the depth of the water determined the depth of the main anchor lines as well as the depth of the lead. Pegs were placed in the field at the corners of the net and the lead.

The gear, while constructed from common materials used in commercial fishing gear is constructed in a unique way to build a gear that was unique to the Straits Salish People. Several community members, thirteen in total arrived in



Figure 16 - Reef Net Hanging

the morning, and along with the four Lummi Reef netters, we had mustered a large crew to take on the task of constructing this net.

The Reef net Construction began with the construction of the bunt end of the net first. The bent end is a rectangular net that is hung onto a lead line that borders the perimeter of the net. The net is hung in using

standard net hanging techniques, using net hanging twine and needles.

The rectangular piece of web was measured out, and attached to the lead line in certain places, to ensure that a greater portion of the web was hung towards the latter end of the lead line, so that when the net is in the water, it bags out forming a bunt end rather than just being flat in the water.

After the net was attached according to Lummi's fishermen's specifications, then we all took turns proceeding to hang the net. There were so many of us working together that we could all take turns hanging and tying, and also each side of the net could be hung simultaneously. This meant that the whole process could be completed fairly quickly and efficiently. This was only one part of the reef net gear. The other part that needed to be constructed was the lead of the reef net. This part of the gear is quite unique and a little more complex to construct.

The lead consists of two cork lines, two lead lines, and floor lines that are connected to the lines in a perpendicular orientation every three feet.

The overall shape of the lead is a trapezoid, with the longer side being

the front or lead end, and the shorter side is the net end (see diagram #). When it is in the water, it essentially forms a funnel channeling the fish into the net. All of the lines were laid out, and then secured together with the same net hanging twine. Once all of the intersections of the lines were secured with twine, then strips of blue ribbon were attached to the floor and wall lines. All together this lead together with the tide helped push the salmon into the net.

Traditionally, the lead had dune grass in the twinnings of the floor lines. The dune grass is called SLEQAI. This translates I am told, into “calming”. The dune grass was chosen specifically for its colour, quality and length. It is blue green in colour and it reflected the sunlight in a special way. It is believed that the salmon felt safety being surrounded by the dune grass flowing in the tide, and it was also believed that the salmon were fooled into thinking that the lead was actually the bottom of ocean. This was an important and unique component of the net, and the one that was most complex to construct.

While all of this was being built, the last component to be made was the main anchor lines and the adjustable rear anchor lines. These were

just as they sound, standard anchor lines, using 60lbs steel anchors and mooring buoys. They were measured out according to the depth of the ocean at our fishing location. The standard length of the anchor line is roughly five times the water depth at the location.

The original materials used in making the first fishing gear were cedar rope and willow bark. The anchors and net weights were made of stone and the buoys were cedar logs. The original Reef nets were made from only the finest materials, materials found in nature. This was a part of our connection to nature, to the land and to the water. It was our connection to all life, and to it also showed our respect for life. The W̱SÁNEĆ had such a profound respect for life, that the Reef net had an escapement hole which would provide for some of the salmon to escape. The hole had a ring of willow around it. This hole was called SHELIS, which translates into “life”. Our modern net used the typical nylon seine web, lead lines, poly ropes and twine, but it was built using the same ancient knowledge and beliefs. Under the guidance of the Lummi Fishermen, we were able to build the whole gear in one day. This was amazing since when the Lummi first built theirs it took several weeks.

This goes to show the value of practice and experience, and the importance of perpetuating this (practical) knowledge. While our new net was constructed with modern materials, we honoured our ancient W̱SÁNEĆ beliefs by also tying in a ring of willow, to create a SHELIS in the Reef net.

The Reef net Ceremony

The W̱SÁNEĆ people have lived on our homelands for thousands of years, according to our oral history, since the beginning. The W̱SÁNEĆ have lived according to our beliefs and ancient teachings that have been passed from one generation to the next. Ceremonies and rituals are taught to the young to ensure the perpetuation of a way of life. This way of life has continued from the beginning, when XÁLS (our creator) put the W̱SÁNEĆ people on this land and taught them how to live on this land according to his teachings. There are many ceremonies, rituals and teachings that are associated the Reef net fishery. It was, rather it is a very spiritual practice. One of the important ceremonies



**Figure 17 - SHELIS
- Ring of Life**

that were nearly lost, one which my late Uncle Earl urged me to bring back was using the ceremonial Reef net, the net created at the Tribal School.

This ceremony, as I was told, was where the ceremonial net was brought forward, using your TEX,TAN, which is your ceremonial birthright. I was told that this was not done every year, but only brought forward when the responsibility for the knowledge and the practice of the net was being passed on. In traditional times, it was the CWENALYEN who held the responsibility and the ownership of the Reef net (gear and the site). This is why we also brought forward this ceremony. This ceremony tied to the location that we chose to fish as well. It is all woven together, the fishing location, the knowledge, ownership and responsibility of the fishery and our ancestral beliefs. Our ceremony was used to acknowledge all of this. We acknowledged the hereditary ties and ownership to the Reef net location, through our lineage and our names, we acknowledged the family heads and the CWENALYEN. This was the purpose of the ceremony, to honour our connection to the land and to all creation. It was also a celebration. It was very powerful to be a

part of an ancient ceremony that has not been brought forward in my lifetime, and perhaps not for a generation or more.

Reef net fishing

On August 9th, 2014 the W̱SÁNEĆ people went Reef net fishing again, for the first time in approximately 100 years in Canadian waters. This day will be historic day where the W̱SÁNEĆ people were able to revitalize a core part of W̱SÁNEĆ traditional society. It was an eventful day, which began at the break of dawn with the launching of the canoes at the Tulista Park Boat Ramp. Two crews then paddled the two canoes, against the tide, to Sidney Spit. Thankfully, a Parks Canada boat offered to tow the two canoes to Pender Island.

Once at Pender, the canoes gathered at the Reef net site, which was across the mouth of Bedwell Harbour from Hay Point. An exciting and interesting event happened when we arrived at Bedwell Harbour, a pod of Orcas swam ahead of us into Bedwell Harbour along eastern shoreline then around the harbour and back out along the west shore of the harbour. Many of the local residents explained how extremely rare it was

for Orcas to travel right into the harbour. It was a very special occurrence.

Using my own 16" fiberglass boat, I set the two main anchors, using my GPS chart plotter to situate the anchors on the reef at the fishing location. We then used the Parks Canada landing craft to set the lead of the net. We actually made a mistake in setting the lead; there was a twist in the lines of the lead. It was impossible to untwist the lead on the water, so we pulled it all in and went back to the shore where we stretched the lead out and sorted out the twists. After the lead was untwisted, we then pulled the lead back on to the deck of the landing craft, careful not to twist it again. The Parks Canada landing craft then cruised back to the main anchor buoys at the Reef net site. We then were able to successfully set the lead of the net, and set and attach the Reef net and the canoes. It was really amazing to set the net and have all of the gear in the water, working properly in the flow of the tide. At this point we let the gear work and fish in the tide. There was no salmon, we didn't see any fish jumping or finning.

While we did not catch any salmon, I would consider this day a success. I would also say that we had a 'proof of concept', that the technology worked as it should. While we were fishing, we observed both a flounder and a rockfish follow the lead and swim right over the net (on two separate incidents). If those fish were salmon, we would have simply pulled in the net and caught the fish. Those two fish that swam through the gear were bottom fish, so for them to swim into the gear, near the surface, shows that the gear was working as it should. This fishing technology is nothing short of ingenious. We only let the gear work for a couple of hours, then we decided to pull it all in, which in itself is a great deal of hard work. The reason for deciding to pull it in was that we needed to factor in travel time back to Tulista, and the fact that the crew was tired, hungry and thirsty by this time in the day.

By the time we loaded the canoes back on to the trailers, along with all of the gear, loaded back on to my truck, it was already dark. It was a very long day, from daybreak to well past dark, and since this was August, it amounted to about 18–19 hours in total. It was a very long, hard day. It

was also a historic, and successful day. Maybe we did not catch any salmon, but we did successfully set the Reef net.

What I learned about Reef netting

There are many things that I have learned along this journey. There are things that I learned that could have only been learned by experiencing it, by doing it, by living it. That is what this process has been about. Fishing with the Reef net was not practiced in decades, and the knowledge of it nearly lost. This project was about learning to become a Reef netter again, through gathering as much information about it. The project then became about honouring the Reef NET through the appropriate traditional and spiritual protocols, then most importantly, by going out and fishing it again.

One of the most important lessons of this Reef net project has been that it is a very communal and collaborative activity. One person cannot be a reef netter alone. It takes a large group, and community to make it happen. It is such an immense project, that everyone needs to work together, and also commit a great deal of time towards the project. The

Reef net has the power to bring together children, adults, elders, families, communities and nations. When everyone is working together with a like mind and heart, it creates a strong sense of identity and connection to the common history and future. This process that brought everyone together is really a nation (re)building process.

Understanding, experiencing and feeling the connection to the spiritual realm, and the spiritual nature of Indigenous knowledge was also a key learning. Building the ceremonial net, and bringing the Reef net back to the community through ceremony was really what made it possible, and made it living. At the Reef net honouring ceremony, one of the elder witnesses spoke about the importance of ceremonies like this. It was said that ceremony is the connection to the spiritual realm and to the ancestors, and it brings them in. It was this connection that provided the guidance and momentum to make the Reef net live again.

The visit from the pod of orcas, while it could be dismissed as merely coincidence, was characterised by an elder advisor as a spiritual occurrence. The elder explained that killer whales are our relatives in our worldview, and they were there to help us. The pod of orcas travelled

along the shore of Pender Island, through Bedwell Harbour, and directly over our Reef net site at SXIXTE. In retrospect, the travel path of those orcas is the path of the salmon. I feel that this is what they were trying to show us, and show me, as the CWENALYEN, or captain. I should have paid attention to their message. If I was receptive to them and their help, I would have set the main anchors on the north side of the reef as opposed to the south side of the reef. Setting the main anchors on the wrong side of the reef was a central mistake of the day, and it really is one of the most important steps, as the rest of the gear is situated in the flow of the tide, based on the position of those anchors.

One of the most important lessons that the Reef net experience has given to me is about the nature of Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is a spiritual knowledge. It connects the spiritual and physical realms of knowledge and existence. It has to be; otherwise it is incomplete without it. Our connection to place, to the land and the waters is also spiritual and metaphorical. It is much more than just being out on the land/water, but also connected to it in that deep spiritual/metaphysical/metaphorical way. That is the most important.

This is what we believed the treaty acknowledged and protected. I have also come to understand that the mainstream education and schooling system also separates and leaves out the spiritual element of the knowledge it concerns itself with. This project has helped me understand? this, and then ensure that this is a part of the vision in the future.

W̱SÁNEĆ Philosophy, worldview and connection to land as education

As W̱SÁNEĆ people, we have been living on/with/in/a part of our homelands for a very, very long time. Western science has tried to put a date on how long we have been here. While Western science has its methods and intentions, it misses something, it misses the point. It ignores the way, the reality of the W̱SÁNEĆ people. It dismisses and misunderstands it. From the perspective of the W̱SÁNEĆ people, we have been here since the beginning, and it is the creator, XÁLS, who put us here. It is only with our presence here that a very deep and connected worldview and philosophy has developed, and it is this that Western

science cannot detect, study, understand and respect. It is also largely misunderstood and disrespected by Western education systems.

It goes without saying, but it is often not recognized that 'education' is an enterprise that is inherently philosophical at its core, and that philosophical problems and thought are an inescapable fact of all education systems and learning and teaching situations and relationships. All life, actions, perspectives and worldviews have philosophical underpinnings. Education systems are founded on these as well. Recent history has shown that settler colonial education systems in BC at first attempted to forcefully assimilate Indigenous peoples into the settler society, through removing children from their homelands and teaching them settler ways, which included Western philosophical principles and beliefs. Now more recently, through provincial curricula, standardized testing, and B.C. Teacher certification processes and teacher education programming, the process of assimilating Indigenous children is still alive and well, albeit more subtly and sensitively. It is less pronounced but the process of teaching Indigenous peoples in

mainstream settler colonial philosophies and principles is still present as it was in the days of first contact and colonization 150 years ago.

Pre-contact Indigenous nations in what we now call British Columbia were very diverse. One way to begin to understand and illustrate this diversity is to look at Indigenous languages. Linguistically speaking, about 60% of all First Nations language in Canada are found in British Columbia (FPHLCC 2010). It has also been determined that there are about 30 different language families and many more dialects within those language families, which means that there are upwards of about 50 different and distinct languages found within BC (FPHLCC, 2010). Many, if not all of those languages are endangered or critically endangered to being lost, because of contact and colonization. Our elder John Elliott says, "Language is the voice of the land". I have come to understand that in the case of the SENĆOŦEN language (which is threatened), is inseparable from the land, from W̱SÁNEĆ beliefs, philosophy, teachings and worldview. Now considering the diversity of Indigenous languages in B.C., this points to the diversity of Indigenous philosophies and beliefs that were/are in B.C. How can there be a one size fits all education

system today, when in pre-contact Indigenous societies there was this vast diversity? Consider for a moment the incredible diversity and beauty in the landscape of British Columbia. Now, consider that it is the same diversity and beauty that is found in the worldviews of the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia. Settler colonial, mainstream, white education has done great damage to Indigenous philosophies. It has dismantled and disconnected it from the people and the land. I believe now and moving forward education can be a part in reconnecting and revitalizing Indigenous peoples, philosophies and the land. It will be helpful now to begin to envision what a W̱SÁNEĆ philosophy and connection to land is, by looking generally to Indigenous worldviews, and moving to a W̱SÁNEĆ philosophy and worldview.

Despite all of their diversities, Indigenous philosophies have one thing in common; a deep seeded connection to the land. The environment, and all living things were important to and inseparable from Indigenous worldviews. Indigenous peoples related to the land and were a part of a dynamic living system. It was not something to be controlled, and transformed (destroyed) for monetary capital gain, it was something to

be respected, as all living beings are. The connection to the environment was deep and meaningful. Our elder and advisor John Elliott Sr. states, “We have been here for a long time. During that time, we lived with the sea songs, the elements, and the lands. Our ancestors continue to teach us through our ancient language through our presence here” (Personal Communication 2013). It is clear that language, songs, ceremony and the land are intertwined and inseparable. These languages, songs, ceremonies, ecosystems and the land are ancient and have been in place for millennia. It is important that they be revitalized, and be carried on into the future generations. We as a people with this history have a responsibility to it, to each other and to the environment.

The environment, the land and all living things are important, more than that, integral to an Indigenous worldview, but evident in the language, songs, ceremonies and practices is the importance of both the physical and spiritual realms, and how they were interconnected rather than separated. Umek, also known as Dr. Richard Atleo (2004), in his book *Tsawalk: A Nuuchahnulth Worldview* develops what he calls an Indigenous theory on the Nuuchahnulth concept of ‘heshook-ish

tsawalk', which he translates to mean 'everything is one'. This is the Nuu-chah-nulth perspective that reality is inclusive of both the physical and the metaphysical. The spiritual world and physical world are not separate to the Nuu-chah-nulth. Similarly our elder John Elliott Sr. says "a whole new reality is created when you connect to the spiritual world" (Personal Communication 2013). This is important to consider when we think about the education system.

Chapter 5 SHELI – Visioning: towards an authentic W̱SÁNEĆ education system for W̱SÁNEĆ Resurgence

The Beliefs of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples

It is the belief of the Saanich people that XÁLS put us here on this world and gave us a language of our own called SENCOTEN.

That the Lands around us came from XÁLS and the islands, points land and huge boulders were once people and are still referred to in their old names.

That the four winds, the trees, the birds, the animals, and the fishes too were people at one time long ago.

That the living things can understand us if we speak to them using special words.

That among us are special people who have special rights in regard to spiritual communication.

That the islands, the salmon and the living things can be called upon for help to survive in this life.

That the fire and the water have a life and spirit too, and that they can assist in the communication beyond this life.

That beyond this life, life continues and that, at times, communication can take place with relatives who have left this world.

That the origin of the living things of this world are our ancient relatives, and that they must be treated with respect.

That there must be honour given to life around us, that ceremonies and rituals taught to the young will perpetuate these as time passes from one generation to the next.

That when our relatives leave this world they enter the sky world. The stars represent the twinkling of their eyes as they look down upon us a night.

That the Thunder Being lives in a cave in LAUWELNEW, our Sacred mountain and that he is the communicator between this world and the sky world.

That the KEXMIN, Indian consumption plant, is a good medicine used to clean and open the way for the pure spirits to come near.

That in Saanich there is EN SKAU, a destiny based on what a person does. If one does good or one does something not good to one another or to the living things around us, it will return to that person in this life.

It is the belief of the Saanich people that the SXOLE (reef net) is a gift of the salmon spirit who came to our land and took a beautiful lady from Saanich for his wife.

The Saanich have lived to these and many other beliefs for thousands of years.

When the Saanich people lived on this land ÁLENENEĆ, our homeland according to the teachings and beliefs given to us by XÁLS, Our Creator, life was good and plentiful. When the Saanich people forgot the teachings and did not honour life, XÁLS, Our Creator, punished the Saanich people with a flood. Only the ones who lived by his beliefs and teachings survived the great flood.

These are our beliefs. This is our History. This is our Culture

(Earl Claxton Sr. and John Elliott Sr.)

Bringing Back the Reef Net: Evidence of Resurgence

The revitalization and resurgence of the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery as a practice, belief system, and knowledge system was the most salient purpose, and of the essence of the catalytic validity of this dissertation. Restoring the W̱SÁNEĆ practice of fishing as formerly is essential to the resurgence of W̱SÁNEĆ education, as it is essential to W̱SÁNEĆ identity and way of life. The often violent legacy of schooling and western education played a central role in demeaning, disrupting and dismantling the W̱SÁNEĆ identity and way of life. This project is important and timely, coming at a time when the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada have publically called the Residential School system in Canada and ‘act of cultural genocide’. In some senses, and with respect to the significance of these historically remarkable statements, to call it ‘cultural genocide’ misrepresents the full extent of the intent of the Settler Governments and their religious partners. The intentions were not simply restricted to “cultural genocide” but were a complex of actions and inactions directed towards a final terminal solution to the ‘Indian Problem’ (along with

treaty rights and obligations). The Settler Governments attempted to eliminate Indigenous peoples all together using many horrific strategies (forced sterilization, starvation, medical experimentation, forced removal from community). The underlying objective was ultimately eliminating Indigenous peoples, clearing the way for unfettered access to, and literally the theft of the lands, waters and resources for settlement and economic exploitation. Indigenous peoples essentially stood in the way.

The project of the resurgence of the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net is a way for the W̱SÁNEĆ people to strengthen and renew our identity and nationhood, which was nearly destroyed, sadly neglected and almost forgotten as a result of the success of the colonizer's strategies. It is my hope that this dissertation can inform and inspire other First Nations in British Columbia and Canada to initiate Indigenous Resurgence practices in their communities and on their lands. Using Taiaiake Alfred's (2009) and Leanne Simpson's (2009) frameworks for Indigenous Resurgence, this dissertation has illustrated how the Reef Net revitalization project embodies W̱SÁNEĆ resurgence on the water. The following sections will

explore and explain for the reader how this journey we have walked is a resurgent one.

The W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net practice to restore The W̱SÁNEĆ people's presence on the land and the revitalization of land and water based practices

The W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net is a manifestation of an intimate knowledge of and a connection to the lands and waters throughout the W̱SÁNEĆ traditional territory. Traditionally speaking, the W̱SÁNEĆ people travelled throughout the territory, and carried out activities on the lands and waters that corresponded to the 13 moons of the W̱SÁNEĆ calendar year. As reviewed earlier for the reader the W̱SÁNEĆ people, traditionally a people of movement, have been forced into becoming a more stationary land based people, living on small "Indian Reserves" that were sliced away from their traditional territory established through the Indian Act. This resurgent project dedicated to restoring the way we fished formerly reveals the potential for reconnecting to the W̱SÁNEĆ territorial lands and waters in a way that is uniquely W̱SÁNEĆ. In the past, everything we needed was provided by the land and waters. They provided nourishment

for our bodies, gave us the words to speak, answers to our greatest challenges, and comfort to our spirits. Through this project the hope and possibility represented by restoration of the WSANEC way has been achieved for the many participants in the ceremonial net creation, community based ceremony, reconnection/cooperation with our relatives the Lummi, and the fishing of our community created and fished Reef Net. Even our relatives the Orca were present in our resurgence, greeting our canoes as we entered our traditional fishing grounds of Pender Island.

Through my “research” journey I have learned that I take my own WSÁNEĆ knowledge and deep connection/relationships to our territory, and all of its life forms and beings for granted. I regularly fish and hunt throughout my territory, and I have an in-depth knowledge of it. My identity, my way of living, and my territory are inextricable. My territory is who I am, and my territory is me identity. When I am out on the waters my eyes and ears see and hear the history of my people, and the names of all places in SENĆOŦEN. When I am out on the waters, I can feel my territory, my land rise up through my body, and I feel as if I am being

filled up and healed by my territory/identity. With every breath and every action I feel connected to all of my ancestors and all relations of the W̱SÁNEĆ people going back before the concept of time. In every rock and current, in every landform, with every plant and animal I encounter I feel what it means to be a W̱SÁNEĆ person in my W̱SÁNEĆ homelands.

Unfortunately In my community, there aren't as many people who have had the opportunity, or privilege to attain the knowledge and access to the territorial waters as I have been blessed with. The resurgent journey described in the preceding pages is essentially to provide an opportunity for all of my relatives in the W̱SÁNEĆ community to have these same opportunities and privileges, by providing for them the opportunity to fish as formerly.

Last year, during our resurgent community Reef Net fishing day, as I was the ØENÁLYEN, the coordinator of the effort, I appointed a person from my community as a skipper of one of the canoes. I appointed this good man, because I knew he has a love of his culture and experience paddling our community canoes in War Canoe races. I was comfortable knowing that he was more than capable to skipper one of our Reef Net

canoes. When the time came to embark on the paddle to SXIXTE, the Reef Net site at Pender Island from the boat launch, I was surprised when he said, “does anyone know where Pender Island is?” It was then that I was struck once again with both sadness at the depth of the loss we have suffered, and a sense of hope with the power of resurgent approaches to restoring our ways, and in so doing, ourselves as WSÁNEĆ. This teaching will stay with me as I continue this resurgent journey, an open ended journey that does not end with a university degree, rather it only is complete when everyone in our community gets the opportunity to walk the lands and waters, fish and hunt throughout the WSÁNEĆ territorial homelands as I have. Most importantly, this Reef Net resurgence project by bring the WSÁNEĆ back on the land and waters of our territory will restore the connection and presence of the WSÁNEĆ peoples of my community to our homelands, something I can sometimes feel that the territory aches for. The relationship is spiritually and physically reciprocal, we need the territory and the territory needs us. In the times before contact and colonization the land provided everything we needed

to survive and thrive as a people and as a culture. It even provided answers to questions we did not even know we had.

An increased reliance on traditional diet(s) among Indigenous people

In pre-contact times, the W̱SÁNEĆ people sustained themselves physically with everything that could be gathered, harvested, cultivated, caught, hunted, fished from throughout the W̱SÁNEĆ territorial homelands. By far, the salmon was the most important source of food and was deeply embedded into our ceremonial and spiritual lives. The salmon is considered an honoured relative of the W̱SÁNEĆ. Thousands of salmon would be caught in the spring and summer, and then they were smoked and preserved, and were eaten and celebrated all year round.

In current times, it is a fair statement that the salmon are far less abundant, and physically less important to W̱SÁNEĆ survival. Each year fewer and fewer W̱SÁNEĆ people eat less local traditional foods, including salmon. Our people, like mainstream Canadian society find it much more convenient and economical to shop at a local grocery store, eat at restaurants or eat fast foods. This change in diet is a reflection of our

colonization, and depletes our connection to our territory, culture and relatives.

Revitalizing the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery, provides an opportunity for the community to restore our relationship to, and have greater access to salmon, and with that the opportunity to incorporate more salmon into their diet. Salmon can be smoked (hot and cold smoked), canned, frozen and eaten fresh. All five species of salmon would be made more readily available in a sustainable and culturally appropriate way by the restoration of the Reef Net fishery. Eating more salmon would have its health benefits physically and spiritually. Eating more salmon, especially Reef Net caught salmon has deep potential cultural benefits. Family and community gatherings can be centered on the sharing of a meal of Reef Net caught salmon. Sharing a meal of Reef Net salmon reconnects us with our ancestors and relatives.

The transmission of indigenous culture, spiritual teachings and knowledge of the land between Elders and youth

This project of the resurgence of the Reef Net has been centered on the spiritual knowledge, beliefs and ceremonies of the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net

practice. It was a practice that was nearly lost forever, despite being acknowledged and protected by the Douglas Treaty of 1852. Since the Reef Net has not been in use in W̱SÁNEĆ for a generation, the cultural and ceremonial knowledge, spiritual beliefs and teachings, and the practical knowledge also have not been transmitted to generations of W̱SÁNEĆ people.

During my research, and my learning process of the Reef Net, many elders have said that the Reef Net used to form the core, or the backbone of the W̱SÁNEĆ traditional society. As a knowledge system, the Reef Net fishery involved many spiritual, cultural, and practical teachings, beliefs and practices. It formed the core of the W̱SÁNEĆ society; with spiritual, educational, social and governance structures. The fishery was also a unique sustainable fishing technology, only practiced by the Straits Salish people. The Reef Net distinguished the Straits Salish, as a nation. It created the W̱SÁNEĆ identity.

This project brought together members of the community, of all ages, with the knowledge from a few W̱SÁNEĆ elders, and centered on ceremonial and hands on practical creation and operation of the fishery.

Most importantly, it brought the Reef Net fishery back from the past and into the present, with a vision to continue it on for many future generations. To be complete, the Reef Net fishery requires cultural, spiritual, and technical knowledge of both the net, and the water. It requires the participation of all the generations in the community. This is in part what in the past made the W̱SÁNEĆ people a strong nation, and it is what this resurgent project with the active participation of many community members has restored

The Reef Net strengthens familial activities and re-emergence of W̱SÁNEĆ cultural and social institutions as governing authorities within W̱SÁNEĆ

The Reef Net is inherently family centric. I do not mean that it was only focused on the nuclear family, but on the extended family as a family unit. There was the Family Head, and in the case of the Reef Net, the ØWENÁLYEN, or the Reef Net Captain. This person was responsible for overseeing the operation of the Reef Net fishery for his family, and was responsible for the practical and ceremonial knowledge transmission. Reef Net fishing locations were also hereditary, and

ownership followed family lines. This also involved ownership of family fishing village sites throughout the territory. Along with fishing locations and associated family village sites, was the ownership and stewardship of associated lands for hunting, harvesting of all types, and fresh water supplies. All of this knowledge and practices was centered on the extended family unit.

This was how the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net formed the system of governance for the nation. It was upheld through the extended family unit system. The heads of families, with the elder advisors, and family spokespeople, all formed the governance system of the community. It was all centered on the Reef Net. Laws (societal, land, spiritual etc), land ownership, wealth, and the management of all of the 'resources' within the territory were all upheld within each extended family unit, and all families within the W̱SÁNEĆ nation were acknowledged and respected regardless of the overall size of the family.

It was within this family unit that the children and youth were educated, to ensure that the knowledge system and practices would be maintained and passed on, this was the strength of the nation. A strong

sense of identity, and relationship to the territory through practices like the Reef Net fishery, were what our young W̱SÁNEĆ people were educated in. All of the W̱SÁNEĆ philosophies, beliefs, laws, spirituality and connections to territory were all intertwined and interwoven with the W̱SÁNEĆ language (which emerged from the land and waters); it all together formed the Nation. The restoration of the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery has the potential to bring the W̱SÁNEĆ people back together as a nation.

Short-term and long-term initiatives and improvements in sustainable land-based economies of the Reef Net fishery as the primary economies of W̱SÁNEĆ

As previously discussed, the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery formed the core of W̱SÁNEĆ traditional society, which included the W̱SÁNEĆ traditional economy and system of education. Reef Net and Reef Net site ownership meant wealth. To be a capable, competent, and successful Reef Net owner, meant economic success. As a community, the W̱SÁNEĆ people had access to the sockeye salmon up to a month before other nations had access to that salmon run. Further, the salmon were ocean

caught rather than river caught, which meant the salmon were in prime condition. Reef Net fishing is a sustainable practice. Reef Nets are capable of catching large amounts of salmon, while providing the opportunity to release unwanted by-catch unharmed. Also, Reef Net fishing requires no fossil fuels. The catch, is a quality of salmon that is unmatched by any other fishery. The flesh of the salmon is not damaged or bruised, as compared to other modern industrial commercial fishing activities.

Revitalizing and re-establishing the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery can be both a short term and a long-term initiative. Actually the W̱SÁNEĆ paradigm that is foundational to the Reef Net fishery should be the long-term sustainability of the W̱SÁNEĆ people's activities. The paradigm of a foundational respect for the environment, as if everything has a human spirit and is related to us, will be the driving force for a long-term sustainable W̱SÁNEĆ economy. There is a real opportunity for the W̱SÁNEĆ people to look backward while moving forward to a much better future as a W̱SÁNEĆ people and nation.

This project also demonstrates Indigenous resurgence through Leanne Simpson's (2009) framework for Indigenous Resurgence. This W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net project did not rely on Government or corporate funding. While we did gratefully receive some support from a local non-governmental-organization that supports a wide variety of local community projects, the entire project was essentially a collaborative community effort. It took many community members and allies to make it come together to be a success. This is what the Reef Net fishery represents; it is in essence a representation/reflection of the W̱SÁNEĆ way, as it takes whole families and whole communities working together, as they have in a resurgent way. It is through collaborative efforts like this that everyone involved and those in the community watching can begin to envision a better future for the community as a whole, a W̱SÁNEĆ future. The Reef Net fishery will continue. The knowledge and capacity building, the reestablishments of cooperative working relations with

This Reef Net project, a collaborative community effort, was/is deeply rooted in the W̱SÁNEĆ language and culture. It was initiated and

nourished throughout by community ceremony. It is inseparable from the W̱SÁNEĆ language, culture, philosophies, beliefs and land (water). It is also central to W̱SÁNEĆ nationhood. The Douglas Treaty of 1852 explicitly protects the W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery, and as we understand and believe, it was central to our existence as a nation (with inherent laws, a governance model and implicit ownership of lands and waters, and jurisdiction over it). This also implies that we had a unique W̱SÁNEĆ way of education, one that transmitted this complex and detailed knowledge and practice for countless generations. In a relatively short time, this was violently dismantled, but not lost; this project of resurgence is the beginning of an open ended mission to make it once again the backbone of the W̱SÁNEĆ culture and community.

Drawing in the Net

This project is merely the beginning of a long and endless journey. This journey will take many years, maybe even generations to where the W̱SÁNEĆ people can be a Reef Net people, a salt water people again. The most important indicator of the success of the resurgent path that I have

walked with my community and record in these writings will be seeing the W̱SÁNEĆ Fish as Formerly forever.

The most challenging part of this journey, has been my own decolonization. I have found walking in the worlds of the W̱SÁNEĆ and the university very rocky and full of obstacles. The competing demands on me as I have walked the path of this dissertation have been at times painful, and revelatory. As a proud W̱SÁNEĆ community member my first and foremost goal in all my educational efforts has been directed towards achieving a catalytic outcome for my community, or in other words to play a role in resurgence. Without belabouring the point, and for fear of belittling the opportunities and support I have received as a university based “researcher,” I have found it very difficult to balance the demands of traditional academe and the W̱SÁNEĆ way. The path forward for me and my W̱SÁNEĆ relatives will require further decolonization of our hearts, minds, bodies and spirits, particularly in the younger and coming generations in our community. To ensure this work continues, I recommend:

- That we continue our efforts to WŚÁNEĆize our own approach to education in our tribal school system and in the local school board which educates so many of our children
- We continue community efforts to relearn and revitalize the Reef Net practice – Keep fishing
- We continue to build Inter community ties with other Straits Salish Nations who are also looking to revitalize the Reef Net, even internationally across the Salish Sea (Marker, 2015).
- We strive to concurrently rebuild our national collective identity by revitalizing other WŚÁNEĆ knowledges and practices , and then concentrate on rebuilding our relationships as equals to settler states as a nation.

It is time to draw in our net together, and be nourished with the catch. It will strengthen our communities, to once again be with the salmon on the water as the salt water people. It is time to reacquaint ourselves with the Salmon people. We need to remember that a WŚÁNEĆ princess bestowed upon us the gift of the WŚÁNEĆ Reef Net fishery, and we must

honour this gift every day, and allow it to draw out of our people, the
W̱SÁNEĆ way. The Reef Net is a blessing, a beautiful W̱SÁNEĆ practice.

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Appendix

SENĆOṚEN Alphabet

With written explanation of sounds, all letters are in uppercase.

A – short “A” sound

Á – an “AE” sound with an abrupt stop

Ā – long “A” sound

B – sharp “B” sound–popping sound

C – hard “C” sound

Ć – a “CH” sound

Č – a hard “CW” sound

D – a sharp “D” sound, between “D” and “T”

E – a short “U” sound

H – a normal “H” sound

I – a long “E” sound

Î – a long “I” sound

J – a sharp “J” sound

K – a sharp “K” sound

Ɔ – a sharp “KW” sound

Ɔ̣ – a soft “K” sound, said in back of mouth

Ɔ̣̣ – a soft “KW” sound done by rounding the mouth

L – ordinary “L” sound

ɬ – a sound made by blowing slightly under the tongue

M – normal “M” sound

N – normal “N” sound

ŋ – an “NG” sound

O – a short “O” sound

P – normal “P” sound

Q – a hollow “QW” sound

S – normal “S” sound

ʃ – an “SH” sound

T – a normal “T” sound

ʈ – a “TS” sound

ʈ̣ – a “TH” sound

ɽ – a “TL” sound

U – a double “U” sound

W – a normal “W” sound

W – a windsound or sharp “WH”

X – a short sound made by placing tongue close to roof of mouth and
exhaling

X – a “XW” sound

Y – a normal “Y” sound

Z – a normal “Z” sound