

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Continuously at the Beginning and the End:

Puget Sound Salish Weaving Traditions for Continued Twulshootseed Language Reclamation

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts  
in American Indian Studies

by

Leeann Reed

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## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Continuously at the Beginning and the End:

Puget Sound Salish Weaving Traditions for Continued Twulshootseed Language Reclamation

by

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Master of Arts in American Indian Studies

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This research explores traditional weaving knowledge and values as a context for language learning. I focus on Twulshootseed, also known as Southern Lushootseed or Puget Sound Salish, and Puget Sound weaving traditions to better understand the role of community in language revitalization. Where programs may often compartmentalize language learning, this project frames weaving as an expression of language, situates community spaces as a site to bring together fragments of revitalization, and engages specific traditions around weaving to build a model for language learning that is holistic and individual. To do so, I draw on research pertaining to language learning, history around the documentation and revitalization of Lushootseed, traditional and modern applications of Puget Sound weaving, as well as my own family's knowledge.

The thesis of Leeann Reed is approved.

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2023

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Figure 1. Map of Lushootseed Speaking Tribes in Washington state from the Lushootseed Dictionary by Vi Hilbert, Dawn Bates, and Thom Hess (Bates et. al, 1994, p. iii).

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To break from the work and give the reader a sense of peace, this will be broken up into sections and in-between each section, there will be an excerpt of a poem that was written alongside the research. This fictional poem is separate but in complement with the fundamental pieces of this thesis and the field work. I wish for the reader to use these poems as a moment to pause, drink some water.

### Interlude I

*Once when they were in and out of landscapes, the sky opened in colors. Above the closely nestled canopies capturing the scents of smoke and wet, the sky threw colors at the world below them.*

*Once when they were young, they thought very deeply about how to paint those colors on to themselves. The colors just thoughts though, the colors indescribable. The colors just a notion, an idea, and wonder because in the sky only the spectacular is real.*

*Once when they were like spiders, the strands around them lay in confused tangles. Was it like their hair or was it like webs caught in evergreens? They lay in confused bliss deeply in thought about how the spider untangles the web and when the spiders knows simply when to give up.*

## Prologue

My name is Leeann Reed. I am a member of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, whose current lands are in Puyallup, Fife, and Tacoma, Washington. When I was little, I was often told stories to keep me out of places. I grew up with a very healthy fear of ghouls, ghosts, and spooks. While I identify as a scaredy cat, I was first and foremost, a Scooby Doo kid. And like the famed dynamic duo, I am sometimes curious to a fault, and I use that curiosity to motivate me even if the tasks seem difficult. This work started out as a dedication and love letter to myself. I used this work to build a foundation in language learning. As I continue on a language journey and accept the losses in my community and tribal community, it is turning into something for my teachers, in the past and present.

I am saying all this because no one told me how hard family and community research is. I believe a lot of American Indian Studies research ideologies maintain a rose-colored outlook in their work, especially in the reflective stages. How many times are we going to read, 'It's hard but it's rewarding.' When do we feel those rewards? Are there rewards? Doing research called 'Indigenous' or 'land based' or 'inter-generational' also means confronting reality. Ancestors used to feel like a long distance but in doing this work, and often coming home sad, angry, heartbroken, and frustrated, they have felt closer because I see and learn about the outcome of their lived experiences. Some days it feels like they should be proud of my achievements and other days I feel like I do not do enough.

If you agonized over hundreds of online searches, read countless books and articles, made panicked calls to your family to see if they remember a random story they told you as a kid, and considered throwing a book out of a window, me too. It is not always fun, and the rewards do not initially feel rewarding. My personal rewards out of all this are finally

understanding language materials I could not figure out and feeling inspired to work in my community regardless of its faults. This begins my storytelling to invite myself and maybe others in places, rather than out. But we must stay vigilant, mind the trap doors, and bring a flashlight into dark rooms.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET = Mountain  
INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET = Kiya  
INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET = Dad  
INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET = Mom  
INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET = Aunty  
INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET = Grandpa  
INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET = Horse  
INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET = Dog  
INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET = Hello

(Excerpt from *And Long Shall We Sit Amongst the Hungry* 2015)

Lushootseed is a language spoken by many Native American tribes in the Puget Sound region of Washington State. Lushootseed is a member of the Salishan language family. It is also known as “Salish” or “Puget Sound Salish.” The name “Lushootseed” is an anglicized version of the name coined by linguist Thom Hess. It comes from the word dx<sup>w</sup>lešcid, which is made up of the morphemes “dx<sup>w</sup>” and “-ucid” means language and “leš” indicates the Puget Sound region (Hilbert & Hess, 1976). As of 2008, it was estimated that there are 18,000 people from Lushootseed-speaking tribes (Endangered Languages Project, 2022). The language has two dialects, Northern and Southern Lushootseed. This thesis will focus on the southern dialect, also called Twulshootseed or Whulshootseed.

The purpose of this work is to understand the Twulshootseed language and explore how traditional weaving knowledge can be a context for language learning, can reengage intergenerational transmission of knowledge, and can facilitate community-based interactions. I came to this topic while I was writing my undergraduate thesis project entitled *And Long Shall We Sit Amongst the Hungry*, which is a long form poetry collection examining different life experiences of Indigenous people, myself as a multi racial Native person, and mental illness in families and across generations. The excerpt of the poem above played with the idea of

translation by engaging in translation without doing any translation. Key to the cultural aspect of that work was examining not just my tribe's language but my relationship with it.

When I first began writing this body of work, I was only told that the alphabet was called the international alphabet. Earlier in the poem, I attempted to write these words out using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). My relationship to this poem is complex. For one, the content does not represent just a collection of simple words in Twulshootseed, but at the time, it encompassed almost my entire knowledge of Twulshootseed, except for a few other words. This project was concerned with building a relationship to my language based on those few words and to understand what it meant to have a strong connection to something I knew so little about. The research I did on Lushootseed altered the course of my poetry project when I became more familiar with the IPA. At the time, I viewed it as a barrier between myself and my tribe's language. Without any experience in linguistics or any understanding of it as a colonial tool, it presented itself in my work often as just an antagonist because I could not understand it. When engaging in language research now and having a stronger understanding of the alphabet and my feelings about Twulshootseed, how I wanted to express language changed slightly. Having grown up in my tribe's weaving community and been taught, guided, and raised by some of the best artists in my community, I grew to understand and love the intergenerational teaching environments and what they offered to the community.

While at art school, I made the choice not to pursue textile and weaving arts because of the fear that the competitive nature of the east coast art programs would make me hate the art I love doing. Instead I chose to include weaving alongside some of the work I was doing in poetry, in my essays, and sometimes in paintings. Such as an interdisciplinary poetry collection about love and self-love where I held weaving, beading, and word collages alongside my poems. Art

was a space of relief and reflection that became an educational context to research my tribe's traditional designs and their usage. As a result, I became very drawn to Salish basket designs and the use of symbolism. With the stories my Kiya told me about weaving, my tribe's history, and the power weaving had in ceremony and negotiations, I recontextualized my understanding of weaving and the symbols to better understand them in my art. Research into language done simultaneously with visual art led to my discovery of ideologies that discussed languages as endangered or dead languages and ideas of authenticity. I developed a bitter outlook on language work and this idea that a language could cease to exist. However, as I refamiliarized myself with Twulshootseed, I began to see the language not as endangered but in a "deep coma" and somewhere inside of me.

### **Research Imperative and Purpose**

My research is focused on using traditional art and art learning environments to complement or add to language learning. Having grown up in a family that practices basketry and textile weaving, I am inspired by the Puget Sound traditional weaving community's use of traditional knowledge and community involvement. In those classes, the artists and community organizers promote accessibility, reciprocity, foreground culturally specific Indigenous knowledge, and promote intergenerational, lateral, and cross-cultural learning. Lushootseed is a well-documented language; many coast Salish tribes have community language programs. In my tribe for instance, the framework for language learning focuses on language in the home, creating speakers, and language learning within families. I am interested in engaging community as another generative source of language learning, wherein communities can speak to each other, address biases and dialectal differences in critical but productive ways and expand on questions

around why language is important and how to better serve communities. With this, two questions guide my research:

1. What is the value of the Puget Sound basketry and textile weaving as a context for language revitalization and recovery?
2. What value does this have for other revitalization efforts?

Engaging in language research now with the guidance and new knowledge attained from being in a Master's program in American Indian Studies, I am finding that through the weaving community's values and teaching methods, language work in that context has the potential to re-engage with community and make space for people to share knowledge in a new way. I Engaged in Lushootseed language research from an academic style of research and more community and culturally driven ways of doing research. That led me to understand how cultural language revitalization done during the 1960s and the 1970s was done alongside the work of traditional art revitalization. With this in mind, I noticed the ways of teaching and learning present in art communities that I do not necessarily see in language work in the Southern language dialect.



## Background Context

Southern Lushootseed, also known as Twulshootseed or Whulshootseed is considered to be a moribund language; there are no more first language speakers (Miller, 2019). Though that is the case, they are active community level and college level classes that focus on language learning and language use. Documentation and study of this language done in the twentieth century was motivated by political and professional goals for basic preservation and academic study.

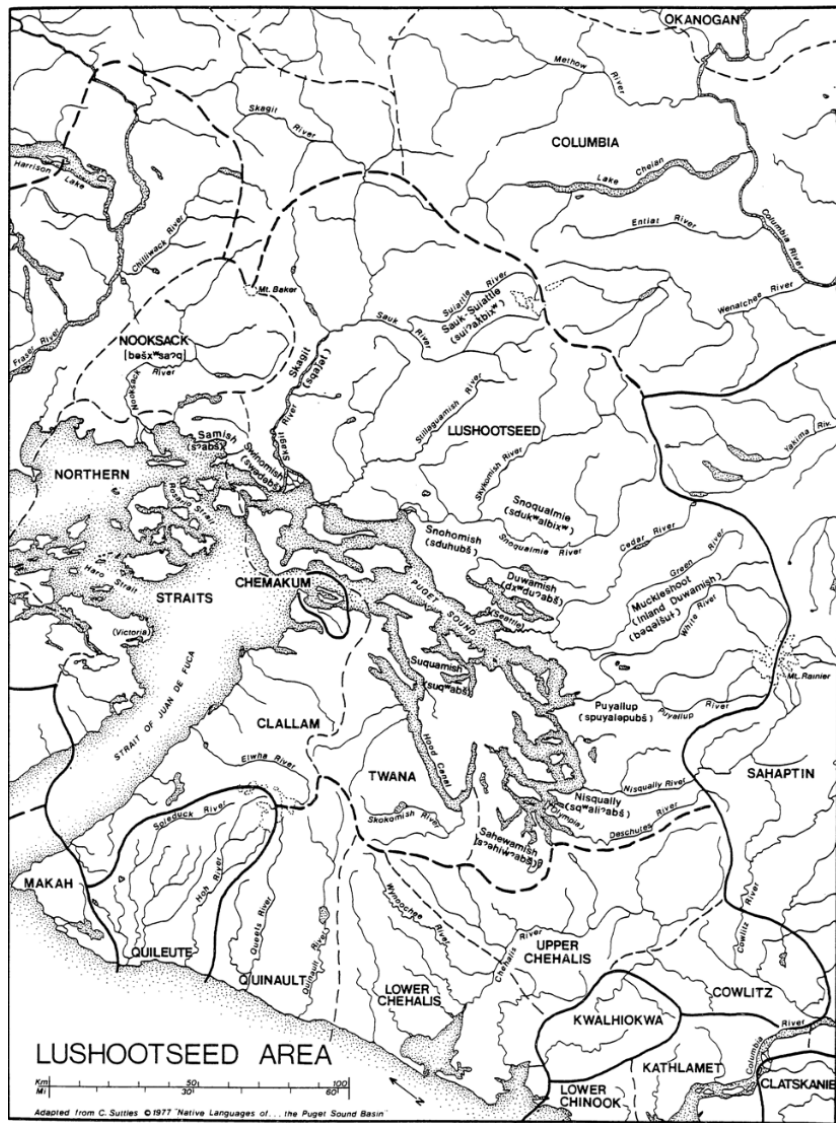


Figure 1. Map of Lushootseed Speaking Tribes in Washington state from the Lushootseed Dictionary by Vi Hilbert, Dawn Bates, and Thom Hess (Bates et. al, 1994, p. iii).

Southern Lushootseed is spoken by many tribes including the Nisqually, Puyallup, Muckleshoot, Suquamish, Duwamish, Squaxin, and Snoqualmie. The Northern dialect is spoken by the Swinomish, Skagit, Upper Skagit, Tulalip, Stillaguamish, Snohomish, and others. The alphabet has 43<sup>1</sup> characters since the 1970s and was derived from the IPA. While the language includes sounds found in English, it also contains sounds that are not found in English, including glottal stops, clicks, raspy sounds, and voiceless sounds. Both Northern and Southern Lushootseed are considered endangered languages.

Many of the available Lushootseed language materials include information obtained or created by Northern language learners and teachers. Although the Northern and Southern Lushootseed dialects are similar, researchers have found there are subtle differences between the two. The differences can take the form of stress placement in words. For instance, Northern Lushootseed stresses the first syllable while Southern stresses the second syllable. Linguist Thom Hess noted another difference between the dialects, dissimilation, which he describes as sound change or sound loss. For example, some words ending in -s in Northern may be said with a -sh sound in Southern. Other dialectical differences include different words entirely depending on the tribe and region (Hess, 1977). The two dialects overlap in terms of linguistic similarities as well as in language documentation and activism. While there are distinct differences that make the dialects unique, the similarities allowed for intersection in language work and shared stories. Puget Sound Salish tribes are similar culturally and linguistically as well as in the traumas that led to the steady decline of language users and speakers.

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<sup>1</sup> **Twulshootseed Alphabet:**

a b c ç ċ d dz ə g g<sup>w</sup> h I j k ḳ k<sup>w</sup> ḳ<sup>w</sup> l ḷ ḷ<sup>w</sup> m n p p̣ q q̣ q<sup>w</sup> q̣<sup>w</sup> s š t ṭ u w ẉ x<sup>w</sup> ǰ ǰ<sup>w</sup> y ý ?

### *Language Loss:*

The decline of heritage language use in the Lushootseed speaking communities is often attributed to the Federal Indian boarding school and day school system. This destructive educational system was created by the U.S. government and various religious organizations with the explicit goal to assimilate Native people into Euro-American ways of living and destroy any connection to Indigenous cultures and world views. These schools were known for their brutality, and with regard to tribal language, used violent punishments on students when they used their Native languages (Iverson and Davies, 2015). As a result, many Native people stopped using or learning their tribal languages and/or chose not to teach it to their children for their protection.

The Native American Rights Fund's 2019 report reviewed existing research on the long-term effects of the boarding school system on native families, one of which being the impacts the schools had on language use. Some of the findings explain that the violent trauma that would be associated with language and the imposed idea by the institutions that English is more valuable than tribal languages were some of the factors that contributed to language usage declining (Shelton et al., 2019).

Elders in my community pass down stories about the effects of these schools in their own experience and through the experiences of their relatives. In my family, I always found it troubling that only one generation separated fluent and non-fluent speakers. This reflects the sustained and violent nature of those kinds of schools. In a conversation between my Kiya<sup>2</sup> and I, we discussed in some detail family stories about boarding schools and the treatment students faced. She told me a story relayed to her by her Kiya, Hattie Allen Cross, saying:

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<sup>2</sup> Kiya means grandma in Twulshootseed. The spelling of it using IPA is kayəʔ. I did not know how to spell kayəʔ using the IPA until the research, so I am more comfortable using the phonetic spelling, Kiya.

“Grandma always told this story about her cousin coming to Chemawa<sup>3</sup>, and it might have been Cascadia<sup>4</sup>, and when he showed up, he didn't speak English at all. And he started saying hello to his cousins and stuff and they started beating him and they could not tell him not to speak Indian because if they would have, they would have gotten beat. So they just keep beating the hell out of that kid. I think that's the saddest story. So that's the kind of stuff they had put in their brains. ‘It was shameful to be Indian. You were stupid if you believed “that crap” and you needed to Americanize yourself in order to survive.’ It was a really bad time for Indian culture,” (Field Notes, 2/5/23).

The impacts of the schools created and sustained the downward fall of many cultural practices, especially any outward expression of indigeneity. The loss of language came from the violent suppression of language boarding schools, contributing to feelings of shame and trauma associated with language. As young people grew out of the boarding school system and started their own families, they often avoided teaching Native languages and cultural practices.

I realized from being in conversation with my elders that often it was the women in my family who were sent away for school. With regard to traditional knowledge systems and the already imposed Western gendering of women's roles and men's roles, women who were sent away for school lost access to cultural teachings in their homes and communities. As a result, knowledge that family members would normally pass along to their children would not be transmitted, and the home structure became more representative of Euro-Western domestic structures.

### **Concluding Thoughts:**

Rather than understanding the use of the IPA as only a colonial tool, it became clear through research that it can be used as a decolonizing resource for myself in my own language work and throughout the process of this research. The Lushootseed speaking tribes of Washington State face several challenges: the lack of speakers and accurate number of speakers,

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<sup>3</sup> Chemawa Indian School is a Native American boarding school in Portland, Oregon.

<sup>4</sup> The Puyallup Indian Boarding school is sometimes referred to as Cascadia, the hospital it later became on the Puyallup reservation.

the trauma associated with language loss in the community, and the growing collection of language teaching materials that often assign notions of speakerhood and language biases. This section posed the question: “What is the value of the Puget Sound basketry and textile weaving as a framework for language revitalization and recovery?” The following Chapter will explain the research plan and design that went into answering this question and provide more context about the scope of the study and the language.

### **Thesis Overview**

Chapter One of this work explained my interest in the Lushootseed language and the conflicting feelings about the barrier that the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) posed for a language learner and my own personal goals for language learning. This section introduced the verbal morphology of the Lushootseed language and my perceived areas of improvements that can be made to community revitalization efforts.

Chapter Two is concerned with my positionality as a researcher. Having been a part of my tribe’s weaving community for some time, my foundational cultural knowledge is highly influenced by the transmission of expertise in those spaces. From there, I explain my methods for this inquiry, which are based on Indigenous research methods.

Chapter three is a literature review that explores the documentation of the Lushootseed language from early anthropological projects to community revitalization efforts in conjunction with University of Washington researcher Thom Hess and first language speakers, most prominently, Vi Hilbert. The University-based programs shaped the community work that would later be done, especially in the Twulshootseed communities. While the University of Washington work was done with Northern Lushootseed in mind, their work included and informed the

southern dialect and the southern language speakers who would go on to establish programs in their communities. This section highlights the work done with the Puyallup Tribes, language nesting programs, and language immersion courses made for the Twulshootseed language.

Chapter four is a basketry section that explores the creation of the weaving conference space through analyzing prominent weavers in the Puget Sound Salish weaving communities. This analyzes the work of master weavers, interviews, and personal experiences of myself and my Master Weaver Kiya Karen Reed. Weavers Hazel Pete, Fran and Bill James, Beatrice Black, and Bruce Miller's teaching philosophies were based on traditional ways of teaching and learning that maintained respect, reciprocity, relationality, holism, and dedication.

Chapter Five examines the in-person research done with my Kiya. Alongside research done to build the literature review and basketry information, this research engaged in intergenerational learning methods that worked to fuse basketry practice and language learning in order to understand what weaving and language can offer each other.

Chapter Six goes over the larger implications of my work. This centers on reconnecting with traditional ways of learning to re-establish relationships with elders, create language community, and define personal connections to heritage language.

## Interlude II

*Once when they were cold, they wrapped themselves in the colors from the sky and the colors from the trees, and in there they created a warm home to stay in. The itchiness didn't bother them until they learned how to make their home soft.*

*Once when they were young and stretched out on the warm sand, they wondered why the sand was the way it was, where it came to be, and they told each other scary stories of the pokings in the sand. They lay blissfully aware of the real threat of pokings and stickings walking on them or tickling their ears.*

*Once when they were a story, they walked tireless up a mountain, armed only with the knowledge of warmth and spiders. They walked in search of the mystery behind colors. At the top the mountain shown a layer of mist obscuring the view of their home, shining in the spectacular they didn't know was always around them.*

## **CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMING AND METHODOLOGY**

This research into Lushootseed and Salish art is important in terms of culture and cultural expression. Understanding one's own connections to their heritage language is a complex process as it is determined by many cultural connections. The following Chapter will explain my positionality as a researcher and my background as a traditional artist in my community. It will then go onto explain the key methods used to do this research. The methods explored in this study are based on Indigenous research methods and Indigenous research to ensure I maintain the best care in doing language work. Indigenous autoethnography, based on Paul Whittinui's work on the subject, was used as a reflective space in this paper to protect information, explore the researcher as an insider or experiencer, and help define my research as indigenous research. This work also pulls on Indigenous methods of other scholars, such as Jo-Ann Archibald's storywork, Stephanie Waterman's homegoing, and weaving methods based on my community's and family's weaving pedagogy.

### **Positionality**

My relationship with this project is twofold: grounding myself in language and art and understanding what that might offer for people who may want to learn language in the same way. Going into this, I was not entirely sure how basketry fit into the equation. I think what was significant when it came to weaving and Twulshootseed is that the IPA is very confusing for first time learners and that there needs to be something in addition to that to represent the language. There is cultural significance when it comes to weaving and symbolism. Lushootseed does not have a traditional writing system, instead I understand the uses of symbols present in art, especially in ceremony as a reflection of language. Originally, I wanted to construct a narrative



about using symbolism to represent language, but it became more important to discuss how the weaving revitalization movement created and sustained a sense of community. Weaving revitalization began around the same time as Lushootseed language revitalization. That era was significant for community interest bringing back art practices. Weaving has always presented itself to me as an outlet, a representation of the intangible. In a frustrating process like language learning, it is a reflective space.

With weaving and my own building of language knowledge, I am learning a lot about patience, dedication, and time. Being able to learn a language is a privilege because it necessitates time and energy that not everyone has. I think that was one of the reasons why I wanted to push back against language ideologies in my community that put language learners down and view their progress as wrong. When I think about my introduction to language as a kid, it always came in the form of saying “bye,” acknowledging my Kiya, acknowledging the mountain and river. Looking back on this, I am aware of how often this happened in cars.

In reflecting on making space and making time, the most important liminal space in my life was car rides. Liminal in this case refers to the time between going from one place to another. That is where my family talked to me and my siblings, got to know us, spent time with us outside of activities, and taught us random words in Puyallup. When we saw the mountain, we always said *ʔəs ʃuʔil te spadite al tuuti*<sup>5</sup> every time when we were in the car. Car rides and language necessitated a grounding in our natural environment and a coveting of a mountain. *ʔəs ʃuʔil te spadite al tuuti*, ‘Is that our mountain all the way over there; that’s our mountain over there, very beautiful.’ Later when asking my Kiya for a more accurate translation, she said that *ʃuʔil* can mean happiness or contentment, but it also refers to a spiritual contentment or

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<sup>5</sup> This means ‘The mountain is happy over there’

enjoyment. In car rides, she always described the lands from where I was to the mountain as my traditional homelands. The phrase centered me in my home as it indicated for me where my family had been for generations and that the mountain was content with that. In my practice of making space, I am moving past using liminal space and moving into creative space.

My weaving communities demonstrate that weaving is never a lonely process. My weaving process then is twofold: space creating and relational. I want to fill some of the empty space with language. When appropriate, I want to allow language learning to exist side by side my weaving practice. The practice of weaving is reminiscent of the liminality of childhood car rides. By taking advantage of that time, I can ground myself in language, expressing how I feel about it, and that creates another way of documenting the work. My weaving will then be transformed from a representation of my intangible feeling to also include my seemingly intangible language. When I am ready to share with people or ask for help, language can be a part of the process that is shared.

### **Methodologies**

During this research, I was influenced by my own guiding morals about entering spaces, maintaining, and creating boundaries so my work is not all consuming. I drew inspiration from research methods present in American Indian Studies, particularly Indigenous-based research methods that discuss respect, reciprocity, relationality, and responsibility. The primary methods employed in this research were autoethnography, storywork, and homegoing which are framed or inspired by Indigenous research methods. Scholars within this area came about to address the issue of non-Indigenous researchers making Native communities feel like they were being researched on and not with. Linda Tuhiwai Smith is a scholar who has written extensively on this

topic, discussing the dismantling of western research as decolonizing methods. In the introduction of her book *Decolonizing Colonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People* (2021), she discusses the relationship the term “research” has with imperialism and colonialism. She, and other indigenous researchers, have pointed out the extractive nature of western academic research has led to distrust in Native communities.

Indigenous research methods address this by using community values to engage in research such as rejecting western notions of value and speakerhood counting in favor of indigenous values for language (Hill, 2002). Some Indigenous research re-imagining notions of research methods around Indigenous values of respect, reciprocity, relationality, and responsibility (Kovach, 2021; Littletree et al, 2020). Some scholars use this type of research to reimagine the role of the researcher as an active participant in the research (Leonard, 2010; Whitiui, 2014).

Shawn Wilson’s 2008 book, *Research is Ceremony*, highlights some of the issues with doing research in Indigenous communities, namely that because past research done in Native communities was not relevant to them. He notes that even scientifically-based research is not without bias because Western notions of research often employ outside solutions. Many Indigenous scholars have noted the same thing, which sustains community distrust towards research (Wilson, 2008). With this in mind, my research focuses on what Lushootseed languages communities can do with the tools and structures already present in their tribes.

To fill in additional context in this work, I did research with my Kiya, Karen Reed, a master weaver and language activist, whose career in teaching tribal knowledge and traditions spans over 50 years. With the help of her expertise and guidance for research materials, we did one-on-one conversations and language sessions where we discussed Southern Lushootseed,

language structure and vocabulary, and art within our tribal community. The methods employed in these meetings, interviews, and conversations were largely inspired by Indigenous research methods of respect, responsibility, relationality, and reciprocity. Along with these, I combined other methods of research defined largely by the weaving community of which we participate in, which includes those four values as well as cleverness. The following sections will explain the research and data analysis methods in more detail.

*Auto-ethnography:*

Since becoming familiar with the disciplines of linguistic anthropology and linguistics, linguistic “fieldwork” has been described as extractive and not collaborative with Native communities. My research emphasizes Indigenous based research methods and autoethnography. Community largely inspires my reason for engaging this topic. But my scope of in-person research is highly focused. To address that in my work, I explored my personal history with weaving communities and aimed to relate some of my Kiya’s stories to the research, so it contextualizes information. Indigenous Autoethnography as described by Paul Whitinui, is not only as exploration of the self but one’s own identity as a researcher and an Indigenous person (Whitinui, 2014). It can help Indigenous people understand where they are “within the research agenda,” (Whitinui, 2014, p.461). Through Whitinui’s understanding of autoethnography, this research refers to how I, as a researcher, understand myself as an active participant in the language community and how my beliefs and lived experiences influence the findings. It is a reflective lens which filters my findings and helps me practice accountability by discussing all changes and steps in the research plan with my Kiya.

Understanding the need for additional care made clear the concern about making public family information and the University owning information obtained through research with my

family. With regard to care, I wanted to make sure I was keeping some information private, so it remains special to my family. Auto-ethnography informed how I maintained this. For one, when I interviewed my Kiyā, I included questions about her thoughts on language ideologies within the community and asked for permission to use certain information. In sections of this work, I included her own mentors' teachings who she worked with in the creation of weaving gatherings and conferences. The access to this knowledge and weaving relationships highlighted in this work are because of my Kiyā. It is a priority to respect and acknowledge that because I want to make it clear that some of this is based on personal experience.

Auto-ethnography became important in another way by allowing me the space to be reflective about my experiences throughout this work. There are some details or information I feel are better understood by the inclusion of additional context. Finally, I used this method as a way to engage in work without being disrespectful or making large statements that frame some of these experiences as a monolith. Experiences I had in weaving and community spaces may not be widely felt. By reporting on my experience, I want to highlight how I have felt community and watch the ways it continues to grow.

### *Storywork*

One researcher's method that helped shape my research process as Indigenous research was Jo-ann Archibald's "storywork" method. To explain this approach, Archibald outlines seven principles, respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy, as a way to engage in research with elders to understand storytelling, the process of it, and meaning making (Archibald, 2008). I was drawn to Jo-ann Archibald's story work because it described this idea of learning through story or personal story. My work uses scholarly language archives as well as family language archives. Engaging in family language work necessitated a

different type of care, which was styled after storywork. In tandem with my thesis work, my independent language work has involved the listening and transcribing of family language recordings that my Kiya and her family did from 1974 to 1975 with her Kiya, Hattie Allen Cross. Understand the role of story and being in conversation as key to maintaining a reflective process in this work.

### *Homegoing*

Stephanie Waterman's 2012 study uses the term "homegoing" to describe the experience Native students have in higher education contexts, and how taking the time to go home impacts their academic success and well-being. In one part of the study, Waterman found that some students felt a responsibility to return home because they have a responsibility to their communities. This is related to this research in that I use this concept as a method. Homegoing in this research relates to the choice to travel back and forth between Washington State and California. It helped to re-establish myself in my community after being away, it demonstrated that my sense of responsibility guides my research practice, and it helped shape how I wanted to discuss language materials with community in mind.

Making the effort to be there in person was important to research because it demonstrated to my Kiya that I was serious about doing work in language and weaving. It also gave my Kiya the incentive to make time and to share her expertise and knowledge. While there were moments where we did talk over zoom, over the phone, and over text, it was important to me to maintain my physical presence. Due to the nature of my work and interests, it was important to be respectful, clear, honest, and responsible with my Kiya's time. Being aware of how she is feeling, what she needs, and only pushing her to a respectful amount were necessary in her being comfortable and establishing the pace of our working relationship.

### *Art Practice and Cleverness*

Creating art during this research was an active practice I maintained throughout this work. Alongside my research into the intersection between weaving and language learning, art was used as a processing space, or a silent task done in tandem with listening to language materials or practicing. I chose to do this for several reasons, for one I wanted to break the research roles and keep conversations less stringent. I did this with weaving practices in mind and how the practice of weaving is sometimes trial and error. It requires the important skill of being clever. My Kiya has always called a new technique, idea, and way of doing something as “being clever,” oftentimes in the context of weaving or baking. I am using her notion of cleverness to describe the work I did during her rest periods or our non-recording days to go through research materials.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Language research in Native communities is closely tied to the well-being of the community. Doing language within families complicates that further by introducing deeply personal and important family stories that frame why an individual wants to embark on the process of learning a language. This Chapter introduced my goals as an artist and a language learner and outlined the research design. The focus on Indigenous research established a sense of care with all the language materials I came across, regardless of if they are family-oriented or academically-oriented. The next Chapter will explain in more detail why it became a priority to rethink the use and study of language materials through documentation done by non-Native researchers, non-Native people who lived around Indigenous communities, and Native scholars

who wanted to change the narrative around their tribes' languages and to focus on their future endeavors.



### Interlude III

*Once when they were sound, they sat tiredly and watched the trees blurry on either side of their vision. They floated aimlessly without the thought of being and didn't achieve for nothing except for still existence. Here they felt their truest selves and here, they will return often.*

*Once when they were bored, they started a fire and threw pinecones into it, stepping back every few throws to complicate the game. With every one they yelled and turned, noise and laughter filling the expanse. In the distance they saw another fire go up and laughter and echo drifted to them. While playing, they occasionally wondered if the sounds were from another dimension, like their faces on the surface of water. And other times, silently they individually wondered if they in fact were not alone after all.*

*Once when they couldn't see, they brushed their hands slowly across the terrain in search for a shelter. Hands on the ground in a crouch, they became intimately aware of the sensation of the ground as though it was beneath their feet. They understood with their entire bodies what it felt like to hear and feel the constant movement of the ground.*

### CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Twulshootseed language reclamation was subject to many different eras of study, from largely academic study to community focused study. Linguistic Anthropology and Ethnology were the main academic frameworks that guided early research. That would later change with community-oriented work that focused on the community's needs as it relates to their languages. This section will analyze Twulshootseed community language ideologies more deeply with a focus on the work being done on and with the Puyallup Tribe, affiliated programs from the era of earlier documentation, and to present day language work. This section will highlight community ideologies around linguistic purism, culturally centered learning and teaching, language revitalization literature, and potential drawbacks from arising language ideologies.

Linguistic Anthropologist Paul Kroskrity (2015) explains the differing beliefs about languages in indigenous language communities, specifically in his work with the Tewa community, and the researchers who study them. These language ideologies refer to shared beliefs about a language. This can reflect an academic standpoint when researchers share beliefs based on observations about the language. As well as the community, whose observations are based on their uses and beliefs about language. Differing language ideologies can cause contention in the community.

I examined relevant revitalization literature that discuss common issues across revitalization and reclamation contexts and the work published about and on Twulshootseed revitalization. "Revitalization," as defined by Myaamia Linguist Wesley Leonard (2017), directs languages toward creating new speakers and is a methodology that focuses on the language itself. Language revitalization is a common term used to redefine notions of language and endangerment, it shifts the focus from preservation to the focus on speakerhood. In the creation

of speakerhood, Leonard argues there is a focus on the language itself and the number of speakers. In the Twulshootseed and Lushootseed language communities, classes are still often focused on this aspect of language revitalization, especially since there are no new speakers of the language (as far as I know). “Reclamation,” according to Leonard, is the creation of community epistemologies and allows communities to create their own goals, address needs, and perspectives around language (Leonard, 2021). In the language reclamation model, Leonard explains that this will allow for the creation of community epistemologies. This means that communities can create their own goals, address needs, and perspectives around language.

Scholarship around language revitalization emphasizes the creation of new speakers, but that does engage the community as much. To reach membership that lives farther from the reservation, Puyallup Tribe culture and language classes make extra efforts to digitize and make available long-distance learning options for tribal members. In thinking about the “language community” in this case, it refers not only to participants in the tribal government funded language operations, but also the people who have a historical or familial relationship with the language. Most of the research in this section deals with ideologies being used and described in these language programs. In my own interactions in community spaces, there are different beliefs around what language means to the people and why one should learn it. While revitalization programs can create lessons and distribute materials, without including conversations around reclamation, it misses opportunities for community conversation and participation in the language creation materials.

## **Lushootseed Language Documentation**

Documentation of the Lushootseed language began in the 1700s and 1800s, as scholars traveling within and around settlements in the area took interest in the area's tribal communities. For Lushootseed and other language groups around them, documentation of the languages, which manifested in the creation of dictionaries and other descriptive materials, began to increase in the treaty era. Notable people who worked in Coast Salish communities included Franz Boas, a Columbia University anthropologist who was strongly affiliated with "salvage anthropology," the idea that Native languages should be documented before they died out. A review essay written by Wendy Wickwire discusses Boas' complicated legacy. She explored varying perspectives of his former students who agreed or disagreed with his work. Some believed that he stripped traditional stories of their tellers and community origins for scientific analysis or that he altered linguistic data to represent "pre-contact purity," (Wickwire, 2016, p. 179 ). Ethnologist George Gibbs translated treaty materials and made various dictionaries during the mid-nineteenth century (Wright, 2017).

Preservation of the culture began to change slightly in the twentieth century, when Coast Salish art began to get some outside recognition and researchers began working in the communities to document the cultures, traditions, and some language information. Regarding Southern Lushootseed, especially for the Nisqually and Puyallup peoples, Marian Smith was prominently known for making records of the culture and doing language documentation (Laguna, 1962). During the 1950s and 1960s, cultural preservation and "dying culture" rhetoric began to change with tribal people becoming more involved in the production of mainstream cultural materials and in doing so, became concerned with the future of their cultures, and not necessarily preserving them for only archival reasons. This section will discuss the work done by

professionals in these communities and the impacts that had on the language and how it was viewed.

### *Documentation*

Early Lushootseed language documentation efforts were influenced by the political and professional scholarly goals of anthropologists and ethnologists. Work achieved later would go on to decolonize these texts and center the Native experience, but the legacy left behind these is still deeply felt by community members. Linguistic Anthropologist Paul Kroskrity has written about how the legacy of these anthropological styles of twentieth century non-Native linguistics affected Indigenous groups and what that means now in the field of linguistic anthropology. He critiques salvage anthropology not just for being extractive but also for imposing hegemonic structures of Western patriarchal way of knowing on linguistic and oral customs of Native groups (Kroskrity, 2013). He describes salvage anthropologist style as “extractive” rather than “mediative.” “Their goal was to make a purely academic contribution, to archive representations of languages that were rapidly vanishing,” (Kroskrity 2013 p. 148). The early language work done by Boas, Gibbs, and Smith reflect this type of work in that their work focused on the documentation of language but not necessarily for the benefit of the people. Kroskrity goes on to say that salvage era works were made with academic an audience in mind and did not believe Indigenous people would have a need for their publication.

George Gibbs was an ethnologist and medical doctor who participated in treaty negotiations in the Isaac Steven treaty party, whose main concern was making treaties with Native tribes to cede their lands (Sturtevant, W. C., & Sturtevant, W. C., 1996). That involvement intersected with some of his notable language work as he worked as an interpreter during treaty negotiations using Chinook Wawa, a well-known indigenous trade language in the

Pacific Northwest. He studied Salish languages in the Pacific Northwest from 1849 to the 1860s (Sturtevant, W. C., & Sturtevant, W. C., 1996). Gibbs's 1877 Nisqually dictionary was the first published study of the Southern Lushootseed dialect (Bierwert, 1996). This work is found in *The Contributions to North American Ethnology. Volume I*, a series of books by the American Ethnological Society that compiled ethnographic and linguistic information about many tribes in the American West, among other locations. The volume features comparative vocabularies of several Salish languages and a dictionary of the Nisqually language, including a pronunciation guide using an official alphabet based on the method laid out by Gibbs in his "Instructions for Research Relative to the Ethnology and Philology of America," (Gibbs, 1877, p.249). The translations themselves are bare in comparison to contemporary dictionaries, with minimal information about usage and functions of words. This was the only publication focused on the Southern Lushootseed language, until the 1920s when Arthur C. Ballard wrote about the Muckleshoot and Nisqually language (Bierwert, 1996).

From the 1920s onward, there were a few anthropologists who began writing seriously in the Southern Lushootseed speaking tribes. One of which was Marian Smith, a student of Franz Boas. She was interested in the cultural lives of Indigenous people in the Pacific Northwest and engaged in fieldwork in the region from 1935 to 1936, 1945, and in 1948 (Laguna, 1962). Her research is described as a "natural history" approach. One critic of her work defined this approach as, "essentially collecting and classifying data," (Herskovits 1960, p.1062). In terms of Lushootseed speaking tribes, she is known for writing the book *The Puyallup-Nisqually* (1940) and the essay "The Puyallup of Washington" (1940). Her contributions to the documentation of Native culture and society were largely observational and comparative.

In the preface of her work the *Puyallup-Nisqually* (1940), Smith writes, “Puyallup-Nisqually culture is gone,” (xi). She describes her book as, “a monument to the culture into which they [her informants] were born and which they saw vanish before their eyes,” (xi). While she does mention briefly that there is possibility for cultural revival, she portrays her informants as the only keepers of knowledge from which the people can learn from. Her work offered insight into the social, economic, and spiritual practices of Native people that were becoming less used. She did so through the lens of a “vanished people” narrative and imposed hierarchy about the relative value of knowledge systems and who should pass them on. While these salvage-oriented reasons for doing these anthropological works are troubling, the created documents themselves continue to be invaluable to the community study of languages and why people chose to study them.

This era of scholarship towards the study of Native people had problematic aspects to it, even if during that time non-Native scholars were seen as more progressive in their beliefs on culture and peoplehood. In Robert E. Moore’s essay “Disappearing Inc” he discusses the implications of documenting “vanishing” native languages and using writing as a permanent record. He explains the concept of memorialization, which, “is based on an ability to imagine language as ‘frozen’ in time and separable from its speakers,” (Moore, 2006 p.298). In the memorialization of a language, it is documented for its linguistic value but in a static unmoving way. The materials created with this in mind are then not meant for the continued use of a language but a grave marker. The documents made using salvage era techniques and in the context of vanishing people narrative employ memorialization by limiting the access to these documents to the academic audience and doing research on communities rather than with them.

These historical texts often read more like tourist guidebooks that give the outside audiences a glimpse inside the communities without engaging with the people themselves. The downside to these documentations, especially the dictionaries and ethnographic observations, is how they describe the language (or lack thereof). This is exemplified by the ways these documents present themselves as being “outside” of the culture and how inaccessible the material is for people for which the material was written about. The Salish languages did not have a traditional alphabet or writing system. The written documentation done by scholars is a reflection of how they heard and understood the language rather than how the people might describe and write out their languages. Kroskrity explains the concept of “covert linguistic racism” as an implicit bias where language ideologies are connected to political economic structures, creating a “hegemonic positioning of white culture,” (Kroskrity, 2021, 181). When documentation is done without the communities in mind, the collected materials reflect the researcher more than the people.

The expression and representation of the traditional languages are filtered through a similar worldview and consciousness, one modeled by a Western academically trained individual and their understanding of any language. This position of power shows the imbalance in past linguistic documentation of Salish languages. Language expression was not determined by the people or their imaginations. The time between when George Gibbs and Marian Smith saw change with respect to many western notions of language that were imposed on endangered languages, such as language being portrayed as “underdeveloped” or that Native cultures are simply “gone.” When those affiliated with institutions of higher education attempt to engage in language work, they can reproduce certain linguistic binaries of good versus bad or present a single vision for how languages should be taught.



### *Revitalization*

In the world of academia, these imbalanced structures seem to persist. Whereas Kroskrity concludes his paper on the possibilities for dismantling hegemonic structures existing in linguistics today, Myaamia language scholar and Linguist Wesley Leonard continues the conversation, and explaining how linguistic anthropologists institutionalizes and reproduces white supremacy (Leonard, 2021, 218). He argues that these structures are designed for the needs of white subjects rather than making efforts to serve the communities they study. (Leonard, 2021). Even though it may have been done so unconsciously, Smith and Gibbs imposed their world views and academic sensibilities onto their subjects. Even though that was the case, Native people themselves were turning the tides and beginning to see the need to preserve their languages. Cultural preservation and Native pride were some characteristics that came out of the 1960s era of Native American activism, sometimes called The Red Power Movement. During this time, Native people were concerned with the United States honoring treaties and treating tribes as sovereign nations. This activism also encouraged Native people to have pride in their cultures and beliefs (Iverson and Davies, 2015).

People in their own Native communities were beginning to engage in cultural and language preservation efforts, which was not going unnoticed by community members and others. For instance, Leon Metcalf was a musician and professor who grew up around the neighboring Native communities. During the 1950s, Metcalf noticed an increase in preservation efforts within tribal communities. He grew up on the Tulalip tribal lands and later lived around tribes in Auburn, Washington. He recorded 61 hours of conversations and narratives by first language Lushootseed speakers, materials that would later be donated to the Burke Museum at

the University of Washington (Hilbert & Hess , 1982). His work was a response to community work he was seeing in the tribal communities he lived near, even though he himself was not Native.

A decade later, scholars Vi Hilbert and Thom Hess began working on documentation and revitalization projects, specifically, creating materials for the Northern Lushootseed Dialect because, at the time, there were very few resources for this dialect. Vi Hilbert was an Upper Skagit tribal elder, language activist, first language speaker, and teacher. She met Thom Hess in 1967 and they began working together to record other first language speakers and would later go on to teach language classes at the University of Washington (Lushootseed Research, 2023). She was a well-respected elder not just in her own community but across many language communities in Washington State for the contributions she made to the revitalization of Lushootseed dialects. Thom Hess was a Linguist and professor who is known for the work he did with the Lushootseed language. Starting in 1961, Hess's research initially consisted of recording first language speakers with the intent to study the grammar of the languages and to document vocabulary. Through working in the communities and with first language speakers, his views on his work changed and he came to realize the cultural value of his work for the communities he was working in. It was through this work with elders that his professional relationship with Hilbert began (Bierwert, 1996).

Hess's contributions to the study and revitalization of Lushootseed includes the co-creation of Lushootseed readers, dictionaries, and other educational materials. His work in the language helped to amplify tribal community efforts in language revitalization. He met with speakers and language activists who would go on to become important role models in their communities. In addition to his collaboration with Vi Hilbert, Hess worked with other first

language speakers including: Louise ‘cisx<sup>w</sup>isał’ George, Dewey Mitchell, Helen ‘switatk<sup>w</sup>’ Ross, Al ‘sǰəlpqídəb’ Sampson, Martin ‘ʔalatał’ Sampson, Ernie ‘šidut’ Barr and Joyce ‘sdzəwíl’ Cheeka, , and others (Bates et al. 1994). At the University of Washington, he and Hilbert worked together not only to preserve first language speakers’ knowledge but also to develop a curriculum to teach the language to young people who were interested in learning. For these classes, they created language readers, dictionaries, and other materials.

The two dictionaries Hess co-created were the *Lushootseed Dictionary* (1994) and *Dictionary of Puget Salish* (1976). *Lushootseed Dictionary* was created in collaboration with Dawn Bates and Vi Hilbert. This not only features information from previously published sources but also worked in collaboration with other first language speakers of both dialects, although it favors the Northern more heavily (Bates et. al., 2003). Its introductory pages include the alphabet, pronunciation, typographical information, and an abbreviation key. This is a bilingual dictionary including English-Lushootseed and Lushootseed-English translations. The entries include dialectal information, distinctions between root words and additional suffix/prefix information. It also includes sample sentences and variations of words. *Dictionary of Puget Salish* by Thom Hess was created with the help of first language speakers and was published in 1976. It features a collection of Puget Salish vocabulary that Thom Hess gathered between 1962 and the time of its publication. Hess makes the point of indicating that this is a small portion of vocabulary and there was more to do for vocabulary documentation (Hess, 1976). The word entries include information about the use of suffixes, prefixes, words in sentences, and definitions.

Education of the language at the University level became concerned with teaching people and encouraging new speakers. VI Hilbert taught classes at the University of Washington from

1971 to 1987. In her role as a language instructor she had four major goals: encourage students to have pride in their ancestral language, master words for gatherings and ceremonies, encourage students to do at-home language research, and to increase language fluency (Hilbert & Hess, 1982). The goals of current language programs have not strayed too far from these goals outlined by Hilbert and Hess. They have built upon them, focusing on how people are using the language and the challenges they face. Interestingly, Hilbert's language classes included supplemental readings that were traditional stories to go along with the lessons of the week. Traditional stories are the teaching tools that taught values and built a tribal world view. Language learning in this era was inextricably tied to traditional learning and rebuilding cultural worldview (Hilbert & Hess, 1982).

The language work leading up to Hilbert and Hess's contributions was mostly documentational and emphasized archiving or preserving information. Hilbert and Hess's work marked the revitalization era of Lushootseed dialects. While language instruction emphasized cultural grounding, it was work done in an education institution. Thinking back to Leonard's critique language work in linguistic anthropology and by extension educational institutions, I would not call the work done by Thom Hess and Vi Hilbert a reproduction of white supremacy. They taught through grammars and storytelling, but they also reproduced academic linguistic standards of dictionaries and grammars as the seemingly best way to learn language.

*Lushootseed Reader with Introductory Grammar* (1998) breaks down Lushootseed syntax through examples and expects critical thinking to understand what is happening in the sentence. Having gone through a few lessons myself, I found myself talking aloud a lot to work through the sentences. And with the focus on grammar, it does not include options for the user to create

their own thoughts as part of the learning exercise. However there was a strong effort to culturally ground the language learning in terms of content, storytelling, and pride.

### *Twulshootseed*

The infrastructure, language materials, and teaching pedagogy created by Hilbert remained an important source of inspiration for language scholars who would come later. By offering this history of Lushootseed language documentation, I am contextualizing my choice to focus on the work primarily done in my tribe, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, for the majority of this thesis. The current Southern Lushootseed instructor at the University of Washington Seattle is Tami Hohn (Wise, 2021). Hohn is a lecturer at the University of Washington and a member of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. She teaches the classes created by Vi Hilbert but with an emphasis on Southern Lushootseed as well as other Salish languages. Her teaching has reestablished Southern Lushootseed at the University of Washington and sustains the language's presence there (Wise, 2021).

Danica Miller is an Associate Professor at the University of Washington and a member of the Puyallup Tribe. She co-created the Lushootseed Language Institute, which was a two-week immersion course designed to teach the language, encourage speakers, and make space for culturally-specific learning methodologies in the language realm (Miller, 2023). Her classes use, as she describes it, something called an “auntie education” model and centers community protocols for a classroom framework (Miller, 2019). The University of Washington, Tacoma class is taught in support of the Puyallup tribe.

The Puyallup Tribe established its language committee during the 1990s. It was originally comprised of members Karen Reed, Carol Ann Hawks, Barb Richards, Peggy McCloud, Teresa Harvey, and Kathy Lopez, some which did language work in family and one,

Karen Reed, was a student of Vi Hilbert at the University of Washington. While at the time it was heavily underfunded, they began making language readers and tapes, with a focus on the Southern Dialect, especially varieties spoken in the Puget Sound Region. These materials consisted of language work done within their families and with first language speakers. My Kiya, Karen Reed, for example, was mentored by first language speaker Ernie Barr of the Snoqualmie Tribe. Since then, language at the Puyallup tribe has grown into a tribal department. The Puyallup Tribe Language Program is currently taught by Irene McCloud, Chris Briden, David Turnipseed, and Heather Williams (Puyallup Tribe Language, 2023). Presently, Linguist Zalmai Zahir is an active participant in the Puyallup Tribe language community and former student of Vi Hilbert. Zahir is a linguist known for his work on Lushootseed, particularly on grammar and language nesting. He is the primary language consultant for the Puyallup Tribe. In addition to some published articles about language revitalization and language domains, he is known for language documentation work and language curriculum (Puyallup Tribe Language, 2023). His language philosophy focuses on language in the home and creating in-home language nests as a method to create more language users.

Other Southern Lushootseed speaking tribes have established programs. The Nisqually, Suquamish, Duwamish, Snoqualmie, Squaxin, and Muckleshoot tribes all have active language programs. Based on those tribes' language and government websites, there is a dedication to the history of the language, the differences between dialects, and creating new speakers. For so many tribes with active language programs, it is comical that the non-governmental organization, *The Endangered Language Project* says both dialects are spoken by less than five people (Endangered Languages Project, 2008).

## Community Language Ideologies

Based on the information gathered from various programs and family stories, I can deduce that revitalization in the Pacific Northwest Coast began in the 1950s and flourished from then on. The large efforts made by Vi Hilbert and Thom Hess alongside community and family efforts has allowed the language to stay in the public consciousness of Northern and Southern Lushootseed speaking tribes. Before, there was little to no visual representation, but now it is represented in community events as titles, names, speaking, and artistic expressions. With this effort though, community beliefs and values around the language and what it should be are both helpful and a hindrance to linguistic progress towards speakerhood.

With regard to speakerhood in the Southern Lushootseed language communities, in an official capacity, the number of speakers and learners is not clear. When looking at literature about other language groups, there are new conversations about what constitutes a speaker and what it means to count speakers. Linguistic Anthropologist Jenny L Davis' observations about the ongoing legacy of the Chickasaw language revitalization were helpful in understanding this (Davis, 2016). Some observations in her book that related to aspects of Twulshootseed revitalization are the relationships Chickasaw language learners have with their language, language as it related to social status, and ideologies discussing speakerhood and "enumeration" or, the practice of counting speakers and languages (Davis, 2016; Hill, 2002). The Lushootseed language revitalization efforts were always centered on rebuilding relationships between speakers and their language, having a sense of pride around heritage language, and the use of culture to inform one's language journey (Hilbert & Hess , 1982).

In my own language work in my family, it is troubling to think about how there is only one generation between first language speakers and second language speakers in adulthood.

Rebuilding the relationship one has with language, as explained by Davis, can turn the language itself into a cultural artifact. Davis calls this identity based on the proximity to language an ethnolinguistic identity. In this way, language is not used as a living form of communication, it is symbolic of the people (Davis, 2016). The usability of a language changes as people impose new values and ideas that determine their own relationship with language. Language revitalization comes from deeply felt beliefs not just about community uses of language but also individual communicative strategies.

In an interview with the *Seattle Times*, Lummi Elder Fran James discussed the effects of boarding schools in her own life. Her son, the late Chief Bill James, said, “My mother lost the spirit of her people. Even though today she’s very strong in her culture, she lost her language,” (King, 2008). In some ways, language reclamation deals very strongly with the rebuilding of ties to people. In the example of the Chickasaw revitalization, Davis highlights three connections Chickasaw speakers have to language: familial relationship to speakers, some level of Chickasaw language learning or activism, and familial relationship to language learners and activists (Davis, 2016). Even when someone is not a speaker of their heritage language, belonging to the community and being around language speakers still informs one’s identity with language.

In communities such as mine where we do not have any more ‘first’ language speakers, it becomes clearer how these types of relationships form. Davis’s discussion about the hierarchies that are created as people rebuild language identities is present across many endangered languages. In communities that lack first language speakers, this presents itself as an opportunity for people to get closer to language and hopefully revitalization. It’s important to address the hierarchical imposed narratives by scholars about speakers and learners that focus on the supposed deficits of first language speakers. Many people in my tribe can do self-



introductions, know some words, and because the language is so well documented, there are many language materials. I do think what is missing is a clear understanding of what constitutes a language speaker. Davis mentions this as well, calling for a count up for speakers, rather than a countdown that is often attributed to the decline of first language speakers. This questions the colonial notion of what constitutes a speaker. In more community spaces where critical language discourse can occur, this number or body of people would become clearer.

The University of Washington classes created by Vi Hilbert and Thom Hess in the 1960s and 1970s were focused on cultural grounding for language and to get people interested in learning it. This was apparent in their teaching method, which they list in their curriculum: Lushootseed (cultural) values, breaking the artificial nature of language learning in the class with activities such as bone games, and field trips to tribal gatherers, such as the long house (Hilbert & Hess, 1982). The instruction to the curriculum itself mirrored much of this. Students were expected to introduce themselves with their names, tribal affiliations, and some information about their genealogy if it was necessary. The topics of the week were accompanied by traditional stories. The books were created especially for the course, showing that teachers had in mind how students would learn. Three textbooks were made for the course: *Lushootseed 1* (1976), *Lushootseed 2* (1976) ; and *A Reader Study of Northern Lushootseed Language and Culture*. Vocabulary and accompanying tapes were in Northern Lushootseed. The lessons in each of the books have seven sections: choral repetition, sound and symbol, grammar notes, sounds drills, vocabulary comments, new vocabulary, and language exercises (Hilbert & Hess , 1982).

Revitalization efforts such as this one were made with the vision of not just preserving language but also focusing on how people would continue to use it and teach it. This effort is important to my study of the language because it was from here that all other language programs

would eventually follow. I am not sure if the materials that were made by these early educators are in use now and to what extent language departments now find them useful, but it was one of the most successful efforts of its time. It shows that people interested in preserving Lushootseed were not just concerned about language, but how language informs culture and identity. It is very interesting to consider how the lectures correspond with traditional stories. Since it did happen at an institution of higher education, the question is raised about how authentic tribal instructors were able to be when teaching and interacting with students.

When speaking to my elders, they offer conflicting opinions about the language classes offered for Southern Lushootseed. Some feel that the tribal programs do not call on enough elders in the community, others believe that the programs invent words that are not real, and some believe they teach incorrect pronunciation. To confirm or deny these ideas would require a large community study of the community language ideologies about ideas of standardization and language purism. This comes up as a problem in other language communities. For example, Linguistic Anthropologist Eleanor Nevins, when discussing the White Mountain Apache Tribe, explains that community members feel an ambivalence to language programs created outside of the community. She states, “Language education programs are perceived by some as threatening to replace Apache pedagogical practices and to undermine relations of authority between younger and older Apache generations,” (Nevins, 2006, p.269). This highlights growing concerns about revitalization learning environments that do not use tribal pedagogy, especially in school environments.

Endangered language communities struggle with notions of linguistic purism and apprehension about how language work is being done. In Native language communities, language ideologies privileging linguistic purism are sometimes seen when communities want to

promote the language and minimize outside influence (Kroskrity, 1998, 2015). This is often a result of perceived distances between language work being done by outsiders and community members who believe their linguistic knowledge is being overlooked. The elders in my life who express those views seem to focus on two key issues within my tribe's language program: pronunciation and word creation. When it comes to pronunciation, they believe that the language instructors are teaching incorrect pronunciations of specific sounds. The ones I have been able to identify as being spoken incorrectly are the voiceless L and the variations of the X's. I have not been in the language learner/user space for very long, so I am not sure to what extent that is accurate. Some elders also believe that the language programs "invent" words that are not "traditional" or the "real" language. These two opinions seem to be the most damning in Southern Lushootseed, often leading elders to have little or no relationship with the community language classes.

Nevins' (2004) paper discussing language loss in White Mountain Apache highlights the relationship between the younger and the older generation language learners in the White Mountain Apache tribe. She points out that the older generation is becoming more distant from younger learners. This has manifested in subsequent generations not being able to communicate in their heritage language or understand stories told in their oral tradition due to generational language differences. This article highlights the effects of what happens when the different generations are not practicing mutual relationality. Not calling on one another and being in conversation results in distance between the generations and fosters more distrust surrounding what is happening in the language reclamation space and who has access to changes of adjustments on language discourse. Elders' perceptions about language have shown that within these language communities, there are critics that advocate for linguistic purism. With that

though, there are new ideologies coming in that attempt to address notions of speakerhood and culturally-centered language ideologies.

Some of the ways this is being addressed involve rethinking what language research is called and who does it. Leonard and Haynes (2010) co-authored a paper that develops a model to decolonize the relationship between the researcher and the community by making “collaboration” collaborative. In this model, the authors outline that true collaboration cannot privilege the needs and expertise of one over the other but instead, the researcher’s need, and expertise and the community’s needs and expertise have equal access to the project they are working on (Leonard and Haynes, 2010). Doing so helps to repair historical tension set forth by extractive entities as well as understanding notions of speakerhood are different for all communities. An integral part of this model working relies on trust between the community and the researcher (Leonard and Haynes, 2010).

At a university level, Vi Hilbert included traditional stories and games in the classroom to maintain cultural context (Hilbert & Hess , 1982). Culturally-centered learning is still an important aspect of Lushootseed revitalization programs, but now there is a lot of focus on language in the home. Whereas past language classes in the early revitalization efforts of the language were structured and focused on syntax and listen/repeat exercises, there is now more emphasis on community protocols in the classroom. Danica Sterud Miller, in the context of the two-week immersion course called The Lushootseed Language Institute, defines Indigenous instructors as an informal carrier and teacher of tradition, what she calls “auntie education” (Miller, 2019). “Auntie education” refers to the traditional roles of aunties in the Puyallup community and used that to inform the teaching style in the classroom. The class itself mirrors community protocols of gatherings which include song, prayer, gift giving, and they bring in

community members to speak. While the curriculum is community focused, it also highlights the high expectations that teachers have for the students. By the end of the courses, they are expected to know the cultural and geographical context of the language, learn four songs, understand Lushootseed phonetics and morphology, understand domains, use Lushootseed in their daily activities, and create a Lushootseed video to post online (Lushootseed Language Institute, 2017). This kind of work addresses the issues of language at home versus language at school by including teaching roles that are present in families.

Tribally funded programs are similar, though because they do not carry the same academic responsibilities found in a classroom, they use culture and the current lives of tribal people in their learning structure. Linguist and consultant Zalmai Zahir defines a language user as someone who uses Lushootseed for an hour or more per day (Zahir, 2018). Much of his work is focused on creating language users. Language instructor Danica Sterud Miller also emphasizes this distinction saying, “To create Lushootseed speakers, we need to create language users, not just language learners,” (Miller, 2019, p.82). The instructions for the nesting method included keeping a language journal. The actual practice of language includes self-narration of self-care tasks. The goals of language nests and language nesting are concerned with bringing language into the home, creating language users, and reclaiming the home as a language domain. In this curriculum, students are given sentences that are action statements such as “I am washing my hair” or “I brush my teeth” that also contain relevant vocabulary. The domains available include the bathroom kitchen, bedroom, living room, and laundry room (Puyallup Tribal Language, 2023).

While the goals of these curricula are to encourage language use, they all strive to define speakerhood in a neat, quantifiable way. That poses more potential issues in how people identify

with culture. To someone who does not spend time agonizing over linguistic theory, it implies, ‘If someone speaks the language for a certain amount of time per day, they are a speaker.’ This view greatly limits how people identify and engage in language learning. It creates divisions between people who focus efforts on different parts of language learning, and it orders different skills to be learned. This idea also does not take into account what people are saying in the practice space.

The past and ongoing Twulshootseed revitalization efforts are focused on framing the language around the culture. Through this type of learning, it reaches students on a tribal level and builds a multi-dimensional relationship wherein their expression of themselves as an Indigenous people are supported and encouraged. While this is certainly the case, ideologies of what constitutes a speaker, ideas about linguistic purism, and community ambivalence towards the teaching of the language impacts community involvement and further divides the people for which the language is being cultivated. This highlights several concerns: how do you re-engage community in decision-making processes? How should programs demystify language programs and language teaching for elders? And how does one build those relationships of trust and responsibility for people resistant to a change they perceive as wrong? The following section will explore these questions by analyzing the existing art community amongst Puget Sound Salish tribes and how it is built and sustained.

### **Weaving and Collaboration**

The Puget Sound Salish weaving community uses traditional knowledge that emphasizes the growth of community, requires community responsibility, and codes how Native people should relate to each other and the environment. This knowledge building teaches skills,

gathering, and learning or research methods that rely on being in positive relationships with the land, elders, family, and community. These have been carried over into the weaving and basketry revitalization and reclamation of weaving practices, so much so that weaving groups depend on these values as frameworks to maintain the community spaces.

In this project, I wanted to begin a practice of weaving and language learning to better understand the role of language and weaving as well as how weaving can be an expression of language and language learning. This stems from a couple of cultural practices. Lushootseed, prior to contact, did not have a written language system. Lushootseed-speaking tribes and other neighboring tribes made extensive use of storytelling and ceremony as a way to maintain history and instill community obligation to learn certain histories. Lushootseed-speaking tribes had complex class systems and different ways of assigning wealth which played a large role in the importance of community artisans, especially in basketry, carving, weaving, and other arts (Tepper, et. al, 2017).

In these communities, physical objects are often grounded in context by storytelling or recalling the specific details behind the work. That is not to say one can necessarily read baskets like a book or hieroglyphs but rather that you can read the context of a piece, such as who made it, who it is made for, why it was made, and certain symbolic references added to the history of an event or a moment. Scholars interested in basketry who previously thought basket designs and patterns were readable like hieroglyphs have reflected on this stance and understood that some of those ideas come from a romantic understanding of Native culture. In changing this viewpoint, they shifted gears and refocused their understandings of weaving and culture in the context in which they belong (Jonaitis, 2020). Art and language as dual means for transmitting knowledge in Puget Sound Indigenous cultures share interrelated values and often complement each other.

The historical role of art and creation is ingrained in community structures and ways of relating. In the context of community (especially in ceremony and gathering), the giving and receiving of such a gift sustained oral traditions, personal histories, familial legacies, and storytelling.

With regard to language learning, this project arose out of the interest in understanding the historical overlaps of language and weaving and how those occur now. In addition to research into the literature about Lushootseed, language reclamation and revitalization, and linguistic anthropology, additional knowledge came from fieldwork done with my Kiya Karen Reed. My field work consisted of interviews, reflective conversations, and comparing prior research. Karen is the daughter of Benjamin Reed and Lucille Cross. She is a Master Weaver, teacher, and respected elder in the Puyallup Tribe. She was mentored by many well-respected artists such as her Kiya, Hattie Cross (Puyallup/Skokomish), Hazel Pete (Chehalis), Beatrice Black (Quileute), Anna Jefferson (Lummi), Fran James and Bill James (Lummi), Bruce Miller (Skokomish), and many others. Her relationship with these artists spanned years of close friendship, professional work, and dedication to community gatherings where she was often teaching alongside them. Her work as an artist, mentor, and teacher revived community interest in weaving traditions, ceremony, language, and Salish culture. While now she is a retired artist, she still makes her home and knowledge available to family, relatives, and her community. The reason I chose my Kiya to work with for this project is because she was my first teacher in the traditional arts, and through her work I was able to work with amazing artists and weavers.

My Kiya's own work in language revitalization began when she was a college student at the University of Washington. In a recorded conversation we had in January 2022, she discussed the curriculum, other teachers she went on to learn from, and what made her want to go into language research. She said, "I was always very interested in our culture and wanted to learn



about our Native ways and Native living and language.” I found it very interesting that in this conversation, the drive to engage in language was not just focused on having the language itself but the relationship the language has to culture and ways of being. We both share the belief that language revitalization and cultural revitalization are related to an Indigenous world view. Efforts to revitalize language and culture adds to conversation about what it means to have Native “ways”, to engage in Native living, and what having language does culturally. It brings into the conversation ideas of holism and the interconnectedness of knowledge.

The language classes she took at the University of Washington were with Skagit elder Vi Hilbert. Her experience with the lessons involved classroom teaching as well as listen-and-repeat practice in the University language lab. While taking classes with Vi Hilbert, she was also taking classes with her Kiya, Hattie Cross. Later she worked with Snohomish elder Ernie Barr. Their working relationship was not only focused on language but also cultural knowledge and stories. Later she would go on to work for the Puyallup Tribe where she developed language readers that introduced the sounds of the alphabet and introductory vocabulary and phrases.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This literature review discussed the documentation of the Lushootseed language beginning in the nineteenth century into present times. From this, it became important to highlight not just the different eras of language work being done but how they informed and worked with (or against ) each other. The early work done by non-Native academics did work on the community and not with the community. What that means is the materials made from studying the language were not for the people but for an outside audience interested in viewing

what was perceived to be “dying” cultures or simply seeing it as a general contribution to the field of linguistics.

During the rise of revitalization efforts, scholars such as Thom Hess realized that doing language work in the community had a larger importance for the community itself. By training and working with first language speakers such as Vi Hilbert, language materials reflected the interests of native people and what they wanted for their communities in the future as it pertains to language and cultural expression. Those people they worked with went on to work in their communities developing community language projects with native language ideologies in mind. With the creation of new materials and how those languages can and should be learned has created new developments and challenges to language learning, such as community language ideologies.

I would like to take a moment to note that sometimes the academic framing of community language ideologies makes them out to be roadblocks in teaching language and creating language materials. True, it often does introduce a barrier, but language ideologues demonstrate that the community cares about how the language is being articulated and who should be in charge of teaching it. Ideologies of purism about the language, pronunciation issues, and the construction of language projects for the community without the entire community in mind are some of the issues Southern Lushootseed faces.

Traditional art revitalization was done alongside the work of Lushootseed revitalization. The traditional values found in arts reflect historical tribal values of symbolism, giving, and reflection. The following Chapter will introduce traditional art research to better understand the role teaching plays in addressing these issues, and what can be gained by imbuing language in other community spaces.

#### Interlude IV

*Once when they made a home, they thought about it might be like to drift into the horizon. They were fond, very much, of hot fires on the cool sand of the beach. In the distance they watched the ever expansive and never-ending line before them, occasionally allowing passing thoughts about circles and things that never end.*

*Once they pretended to be like the fuzzy things, all of them at once and sometimes just a bear. What it had meant to them, to stretch their shadows in the campfire and shout at the top of their lungs, deep growls, and playful yells. They allowed their shadows to consume one another, and they grew to such a mysterious height that even they became afraid and wonderful, the things they could make.*

*Once they were worried about the lingering of eyes, dark, only visible from the flashes of fire light and lightning strikes. Wrapped around themselves or each other they still, not a breath visible in the coldest of winter moments, they waited patiently for the acknowledgement to pass, to know only they were seen, understood, and not a great mountain the eyes wish to cross. When the danger passed and they became safer in the morning light, they climbed atop the largest rock and howled or growled, only willing to pretend to be the known.*

## CHAPTER FOUR: PUGET SOUND SALISH BASKETRY AND WEAVING

Pacific Northwest and coastal Salish Native communities are well known for their artistry in traditional art forms such as carving, textile weaving, basketry, and others. When cultural and political revitalization was occurring during the 1960s and 70s, art and language revitalization were often occurring alongside one another, especially within families. Concurrent with research with my Kiya, I was doing independent language research about morphology of the language, how language is being used by people in my community which helped inform the literature review section, and the origins of language materials and signage.

In this section, I will be examining current Puget Sound weaving methodologies and how they changed from what they might have been in the past. Precontact, weaving largely took place in the home but there was community value in the creation of baskets and woven goods, especially for wealth and ceremonial purposes. With US assimilation projects and the outlawing of many religious and cultural practices, many weaving traditions declined or became dormant. There was a growing interest among tribal members in Washington State to preserve weaving styles and teach them to new generations. To explain how that happened, I will look at the contributions of well-known master weavers; Chehalis Master Weaver Hazel Pete, Lummi Master Weavers Fran and Bill James, Beatrice “Grandma” Black, and Skokomish Master Weaver Bruce Miller.

The Puget Sound weaving community is built around Indigenous values of respect, relationality, compensation, family, and many others. Often it uses a ground up teaching approach where when someone is ready for a mentor, they begin with the natural world and lay down the foundation of weaving relevant to their own lives. Being in conversation and being in space with weavers is being in their lives, which is personal and for some spiritual. The

relationship depends on all parties taking care of each other, respect where they gather, and keep in mind the future generation of weavers.

Master weavers and teachers bring their life lessons from weaving and being in conversation with their elders to people who did not have access to tribal teachings or wanted to further their knowledge. Their values as Native artists and community members helped create the foundation of weaving gatherings, both large scale and small scale. Understanding their contributions as a whole, they sought to rebuild the community through cultural teaching. The reason I chose these artists is because their lives and artistic lifestyles explain how people sought out teachers and how they defined and influenced the community weaving spaces. I will explain the methods and teaching frameworks in these Indigenous spaces and explore the role of the artists as not just a teacher but family.

Art inspired my interest in language because my tribe did not have a writing system pre-European contact. From my understanding of arts, from being an artist, and from my own cultural understandings, I was largely interested in the role design played in the preservation of knowledge. In the Puget Sound Salish weaving traditions, baskets and woven blankets were utilitarian, ceremonial, and aesthetic. Traditionally these tribal groups have cultural practices around the establishment of wealth and status. Along with material goods, skills were highly regarded. Some weavings were used in place of shell currency during trades. During a conversation between my Kiya and I, she explained the value of certain weavings, such as certain baskets:

“ I remember one of my teachers saying that you could trade a big cedar root basket for a canoe. So, it always had a high value, the good stuff was higher price, just like the carving and you could trade your baskets for anything,” (Field Notes, 8/3/22).

Weavings in the realm of ceremony were rich with color, symbolism, and storytelling. There were items that were given away by the potlatch host and given to the witnesses of the ceremony to honor them and their duty to recall and transmit knowledge. Blankets were also important in spirituality as there were often used forms of spiritual protection. The value of weaving is still relevant.

Weaving as a craft has values present then that exist still now. No wasting materials, gathering respectfully, and being respectful of your teacher continue to be important values. My Kiya's weaving teachers taught that when you are gathering materials, it is traditional to look for three: Take one for you and leave two behind – one for someone else and the other to continue growing. The materials for basket weaving are not just for one person, but for a community of people and animals in the environment who depend on its survival. Waste and excess are frowned upon. I was taught to take only what you need and to be careful when preparing materials, so it was not taken for no reason. The artist, even before the project is started, is in relation to the environment and moves with reciprocity, keeping others in mind as they work. Revitalizing weaving traditions also meant learning and teaching these values.

Weaving conferences and gatherings arose out of community and individual goals to revitalize Native culture, particularly weaving practices, and traditions, that were on the verge of dormancy. The organization of the conferences one may experience now include a variety of weaving teachers, singing and prayers, honoring of elders, and displays of master weavers' work. When revitalization of culture began to take off in the 1960s and onward, there were many artists dedicated to the revitalization of cultural art styles. In the Puget Sound weaving communities, there were a handful of highly active encouraging artists interested in learning to weave and finding elders willing to teach. Hazel Pete was a Chehalis master weaver who was one of the key

figures in weaving revitalization. When I asked my Kiya about Hazel Pete's teaching ethics, she said this:

“Hazel Pete knew everybody. She would get in her car and go to a reservation, fill the trunk up with basketry materials, pull up to the community center and go inside and tell them we're making baskets today. And they all dropped what they were doing and weave with her,” (Field Notes, 2/10/23)

Her teaching method took a ground up approach: she began with teaching gathering and processing of materials, which was always a family activity. She would later go on to host and be a part of weaving gatherings all over Washington. Her methods and attitudes toward teaching align with the more traditional protocols. She was open to whoever wanted to learn, openly sought out students, and curated a sense of community around weaving that persists today (Meachman, 2003). Hazel Pete founded the “Weavers Teaching Weavers” conference, a style of learning she called ‘sit beside learning’ which involves sitting beside and working with your teacher for one or more days.

Similarly, Lummi elder and master weaver Fran ‘*che top ie*’ James was a respected teacher and artist in the community. “Love, love,” were the words she used to greet people and the last words she spoke. Her and her son the late Chief ‘*si'li'xw*’ Bill James are largely credited to the revitalization of Lummi weaving, especially textile weaving (Mapes, 2013). When I asked my Kiya how I should talk about Fran James, she corrected my work and told me to make sure that I discuss them as Fran and Bill James. At community events and weaving conferences, I cannot think of one where they were not their teaching together. They often offered prayers, stories, advice, and comfort in those spaces. There is a tradition, where the first thing you ever make, you're supposed to give away. It was at a Bruce Miller Textile weaving conference where I made my first scarf. I gifted it to Fran James. Though the passing of these two elders left an intense emptiness in these weaving spaces, because of their work as teachers and people who were

always looked for in these spaces, their legacy lives on. Even now, when I am weaving on my loom, I have a vivid memory of the scarf I made thrown over Fran's shoulder. The weaving and teaching styles were similar to Hazel Pete but with them they brought compassion and the importance of being in conversation with elders in order to learn about culture.

Beatrice Black was a Quileute master weaver and respected elder to people within her tribe and neighboring tribes. Like Fran James and Hazel Pete, she was open to teaching those who were interested and was generous with her time ("Entwined with Life: Southern Northwest Coast Weavers," 2001). Black, known to her loved ones as Grandma Black or Gram, was a mentor to my Kiya. She once told me a story about Beatrice Black being interviewed by someone from the University of Washington about basketry. The interviewer was talking fast, and Grandma Black was working on one of her beautiful baskets, not really listening to the interviewer. The interviewer took a pause and said to Grandma Black, "You're sure good at that." Grandma Black said, "Yeah I get better as I grow up." My Kiya always ends the story with, "And she was 86 years old!" In addition to her kindness, generosity, and skill that guided her practice, she was ever growing and open to learning. As an accomplished artist who taught many who work in community weaving spaces, they brought with them her teaching of always learning. In a way, being a master weaver is not a finality but a state of ongoing growth, always being clever.

Before the conference space was established, the artists' willingness to show up, open their homes, and share their lives were crucial to the revitalization of Salish Basketry now. The students they took on used these teachings to shape not only the spaces they made but their teaching styles as well. Another artist who came to exemplify this was Subiyay Bruce Miller, Master Skokomish weaver. He dedicated most of his life to teaching, weaving, and reviving ceremonial spaces. Island Wood, an environmental education nonprofit, created a cultural history



film series and featured Miller, his life, and his work. In this film, he describes his experience of being a weaver and a teacher, how that brings him a sense of contentment, and how it creates what he calls his best chance at immortality. This notion of immortality can refer to the many ways in which people engage in this art. When I was learning to weave, I was taught to mind the tension in my projects. A piece being made reflects the journey, the knowledge, and the artist's sensibilities at that moment in time. A collection of works tells the life story of the artist and in that way, preserves them (Island Wood, 2006).

Miller's philosophy on teaching presented in this film emphasizes the importance of the artist community and creating a body of growing knowledge. He states, "Do not teach them all the same thing. If you teach them everything all the same, they will not need one another, and the world will split apart," (Islandwood, 2006, 00.09-00.40). He sees passing down knowledge as passing down pieces of himself. In this way, no one is truly gone forever, and the knowledge outlives the artist. Not teaching everyone the same thing speaks to the importance of collaboration in Salish weaving; without that collaboration, the space and the community cease to be. This film is framed around the narrative "teachings of the tree people." The trees symbolize teachers in a forest. As we get older, we see our trees become frail and fall. When a tree decomposes in the forest, it becomes a necessary piece of the ecosystem and from it, new life begins. I think in this, Miller sees his work as having the ability to inspire people so new iterations of weaving continue to be made. These spaces offer a style of learning that removes hierarchy and focuses on how individuals can contribute to a knowledge base belonging to everyone. Miller learned to weave and build relationships from the elders in his family, especially his aunts, grandmothers, and other matriarchs. The teachings he carried with him he carried into the weaving spaces he helped to curate.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

The work of these artists informed several important teaching methods in the weaving communities. Part of teaching is seeking and being open to teaching, which involves students being within a close proximity to one's work and life. Connections made in these communities are maintained through compassion and respect as well as creating community environments that require weavers to rely on and help each other. Both master and student weavers are expected to pass down knowledge, share in their spaces, and understand that mastery is a muscle that has to be maintained. Weaving and weaving art communities, especially how they function now, cater to the needs of students while also challenging them. They are based on traditional structures of knowledge sharing that have occurred for generations, these are just one of the iterations. The sharing of knowledge, as seen in this conversation, helped me understand that art and art making is not just a procedure that focuses on a decorative end product but is based on respect between people, how relating to each other grows community knowledge, and that knowledge is a living, breathing entity that informs a Native world view.

The impacts of artists like these are immeasurable. During a time where many weaving styles were dormant, they and their students would go on to learn new styles, innovate weaving designs and patterns, and make replicas of weavings in museums and archives to revive styles. The weaving values that they all learned from their grandmothers and family members moved into these weaving conferences and gatherings organizations, which are based on traditional gathering protocol, and rebuilt an aspect of family life that seemed to be missing between some generations. Weaving conferences as they are known now are not necessarily traditional in the sense of what that means. Rather they take from traditional weaving practices which occurred in

the home and in a formal gathering setting allows people to re-engage with cultural practice they did not have access to.

This reconstruction is similar to linguistic methods of language teaching. Such as the Master Apprentice language learning program for California tribes. Hinton states, “the Master-Apprentice Program is a training program designed to teach a common- sense, culturally appropriate, oral approach to language teaching and language learning to teams consisting of a Native Speaker and an apprentice,” (Hinton, 1996, p. 180). Master weavers have a similar teaching method known well in the communities. With language learning and the idea of building language spaces, the arts community presents an opportunity to explore building art and language relationships in language through the established teachings of those spaces and encourage community conversation.

Art is one piece of a heart in tribal communities. The ability for people to come together and share in a set of skills because of a communal desire for the continuation of traditional skills is a space of strength. Already these spaces are generative as a means of repairing generations and show proof that they work. The study “Tanning, Spinning, and Gathering Together: Intergenerational Indigenous Learning in Textile Arts” by Cindy Hanson and Heather Fox Griffith looks at the relationships Indigenous artists have with art and arts to create a space for intergenerational learning. The research emphasis in this paper is the value of intergenerational learning in Indigenous art practices. The art space is a domain of shared interest wherein community members explore how art is part of one's identity (Hanson & Griffith, 2017). This art research focuses on the researcher gathering information from observing a shared experience in relation to the people. It also highlights the value of traditional art learning in intergenerational spaces. Many of the observations made in this study were like experiences I have had in weaving

spaces. Using the term narrative memory to explain how art pieces have a way of transcending time; while they are a nod to the past, they look forward into the future, using a foundation of respect, relationality, and reciprocity.

The dedication master artists and teachers have to the ongoing practice of weaving has a strong mission for the continuation of traditional arts. That level of dedication and willingness to take on students as part of their artistic practice requires engaging in relational learning. Engaging in traditional based learning environments grounds people in their culture and their community. Rebuilding these relationships between the generations is not only beneficial in the art world, but positively impacts the community because it creates spaces where people can critique and challenge issues or problems in the community. It does so by instilling accountability back into the people.

This accountability refers to showing up and being open to guidance and being a guide for tribal members. Being ready to learn and ready to teach helps lay the foundation for respect, wherein these relationships, the needs and concerns of one's student, apprentice, family member, or relative is being met. Engaging in respectful relationships leads to productive interactions based on relationality, these learning environments practicing intergenerational transmission of knowledge rebuilds responsibility communities' members have to take care of, guide, and understand each other. Even in the era of cultural shame and activism, art seemed to pick up faster than language. Art allowed individuals to express themselves outwardly in ways that words could not do or perhaps lacked ability to articulate. And the traditional art movement was built on reconstruction: the reconstruction of identity, weaving, and family. Growing up in weaving spaces creates bonds and friendships close if not closer than family. Learning to weave from an elder is not something you can show up, do, and leave. It is a process wherein the master

and the student share their lives and knowledge. I believe this bond can be seen as a reconstruction of traditional family values where traditional (pre-contact) weaving took place.

Refrain

*Once when they were in and out of landscapes, the sky opened in colors. Above the closely nestled canopies capturing the scents of smoke and wet, the sky threw colors at the world below them.*

## CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

I planned a 10-week research timeline to focus on building knowledge about weaving, community protocol, and the Puyallup language. With this, I aimed to write about the existing relationship between weaving, art expression, and language revitalization. In addition to my Kiya's knowledge from her own work and lived experiences, I used articles and written records about Lushootseed and weaving to bring in existing opinions on language and different ways to incorporate language learning into what may seem like nontraditional spaces (according to western education standards). The end goal of this project was to create language readers where one can read basket making instructions in Lushootseed and have a language-specific weaving program. As the fieldwork progressed, it became an exploration into the process of language work where I realized my goals were more long term than short term.

The methods I used to inform this research were Storywork (Archibald, 2008), which aided in understanding the value in personal story and storytelling as a site for research. Auto-ethnography (Whitinui, 2014), which was a reflective space which helped orient me in the research. Homegoing (Waterman, 2012), which established my going back and forth to do in person research as a way to maintain presence and space. And art practice and cleverness to draw on the relationship between language and arts.

### **Elder Led Research**

*LR: "I should have practiced."*

*KR: "We are practicing."*

(Field Notes 1/22/23)

The first part of our session was focused more on introductions, such as 'my-names-is' statements. We also spent some time practicing the phrases from her readers. We did not get to the fiber work that I wanted to do. Her readers were a very helpful resource during our sessions

as it introduced some of the language structure and pronunciation. One thing we talked about was other perspectives on Twulshootseed. Some elders feel that since there are no more first language speakers that any teaching of the language is not teaching the correct or real Puyallup. That measures up strangely with other revitalization efforts done in the community, especially in the arts space. In addition, many weavers in their discussions of their artwork, defend their works as traditional. This stance aligns strongly with an anthropological linguistic understanding of linguistic purism. The revitalization of traditional weaving arts was done so through working with elders as well as artists using their skills to copy artifacts in tribal and museum archives. In 2000, the Burke Museum asked my Kiya to replicate a cedar hat from the remains of a cedar bark hat, roughly 400-1000 years old, that was excavated from Wapato Creek in 1976 (Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, 2001).

The next step we took was practicing the statements we went over and while working on a basket, sometimes referring to her notes or to mine. In terms of a project, I wanted to do a cedar basket with an X design, as a call back to the very first basket I ever made. Because of my limited materials at home, I only had enough to make a small basket. Interestingly, she was critical of the use of IPA in her work. When talking about her language research, she explained that her use of IPA was out of respect for her teachers and for her, it was more useful to write it phonetically. The early language projects, especially ones that were funded by universities and tribal governments, made the conscious decision to use the IPA. It has been argued by both non-Native and Native people that the IPA may be too difficult to use. And yet some elders, especially during the early years of revitalization, wanted their language to look distinct from English because it was a different language. Native scholars in favor of the IPA also noted that training in the IPA used by linguists allowed them access to papers and documents written for an



academic audience (Hilbert & Hess , 1982). The use of IPA was a reclamation of language materials because it allows Native people to be able to read and analyze complicated linguistic texts written about the language and it helps with some level of standardization across tribal programs. The counter point that the IPA is difficult to read is one that is still relevant today. Even having grown up around the symbol and signage, it took me nearly two years of language learning and familiarizing myself with the symbols to really understand it.

By the end of this meeting, I came to realize the necessity to review the goals I set out with. In the past, my Kiya always said that if I moved home, we could do language classes. When I did finally make time to come home more often and really seek that guidance, I think we were both unprepared in terms of understanding **our** expectations. While in the moment, this felt off course, it shed light on just how hard it is to establish language learning relationships with a mentor and what it means to be prepared. My Kiya mentioned many times that she has not been in an environment where she was learning or teaching language for over thirty years. But in that period, she was never without it. She had moments where she saw her being older as somehow a deficiency. The knowledge she has is there, it was just a matter of practice and tailoring the language work to her. At this point, I found that family involved language work necessitated an elder led approach. In the moment, I changed from basketry materials to something I knew she was already comfortable sharing. I altered the plans to focus on what she was comfortable to share.

Following an elder-led approach, our next research session we spent more time talking about baskets because she was also not feeling well. During her rest periods, I continued my own research into basketry materials and weaving. By going through dictionaries, I was able to compile a long list of baskets based on the desire to make them. Later, I recorded a conversation

where she talked in detail about her teachers and her experiences weaving and asked questions about baskets and words I found in the dictionaries. Prior to starting this research, she asked me to find her copy of the George Gibbs Niskwalli dictionary. While searching for this, I sorted through her books and records. Before finding the dictionary, I found her language notes from college, family language notes, a small dictionary of Puyallup words created by her uncle and family language class. Many of her language notes were geared towards language learning for school age children.

To support her, while she was showing up and supporting me, I realized that I needed to be flexible and clever about the time spent. When we were able to talk, I geared the conversation towards her weaving teachers, who I know she loves talking about. The ways I was able to support her was continuing to show up, finding alternative ways to engage in language when she was not comfortable or ready to do so, and finding ways to make things easier for her. I often thought about Jo-Ann Archibald's story work when I was engaging in my language work. Specifically in her understanding that life stories are learnable and teachable tools, and in the contact of an elder led research method, helps build additional context to goals and topics of interest. When I engaged with my Great-great Kiya's language materials and discussed the stories surrounding the recordings with my Kiya, I was culturally grounded in my family's relationship with language. The words they spoke, how they said things, and what they wanted out of the language classes became helpful in understanding language in a genealogical sense.

Elder led research marks a methodological finding in my work that set the pace of the learning environment by taking a conversation approach and elder led sessions, the value of being in conversation while working on language became clearer. This became helpful when distraction or misdirection occurred. These in the moment changes initially felt tangential. But

upon further reflection, they represented different feelings and thoughts about the work that was being done. Familial distractions often included questions about what I was doing, leading them to share stories about the people I am researching, and how they felt about them. Personally, those moments gave me a sense of direction because it reminded me that this work is grounded in family, and family is an inner community. Every chance a misdirection or side quest arose led to more information. I made use of the time regardless of changes and tailored conversations and experiences towards what my Kiyā was interested in talking about and thought about how it related to the original topic of the week. With this week in particular, the focus on discussing basketry rather than basketry vocabulary was still related to the original plan.

### **Weaving Relationships**

*KR: Basketry if you look at it, even today is kind of a family thing. Mothers teaching their kids and their kids teaching their kids and down the line. It's still like that a lot. But a lot of people who are just interested also are learning how to make baskets. So I think it's a good thing. But in the old days, it was more of a family thing.*

(Fieldnotes, 2.10.23, 10:04)

For Week 3, I found that my Kiyā and I had different expectations for recording. Her expectations for recordings are influenced by clarity of audio and being well practiced before recording. Whereas I am more interested in a conversational approach. Regardless, I decided to make the most of my visits anyway and began analyzing her language materials. I was drawn to the language work she did while she was a student at the University of Washington, work she did while she took language lessons from her Kiyā. I also looked at her uncle's language materials, and the work she created and made as an employee at the Puyallup tribe. This was a fruitful series of visits because in going through her language materials, I found pictures of the people whose family language work I am using. Originally, I hoped to make a wool weaving project,

but we started a purple twined basket instead. During this visit, a family member asked if I was fluent while I was visiting. In that moment I replied with a laugh. Later when I was thinking about it, I realized that my community's expectations for language learners is centered on fluency. In my community, language loss is discussed as a loss of connection. In order to reconnect with language, knowing language completely is a value in the community.

The language work we focused on was self-guided work, grammar, and understanding my family's experience with language work. We talked as we worked on our baskets. My Kiya's research was concerned with tribal culture but also the legitimizing of tribal cultures as one would any major culture in the world. That is apparent in her work as an artist, her interest in passing down culture to her family, and how it heals aspects of her life. At this point in the research, I began reflecting on the conversations we had about her teachers and the values apparent in the weaving community. Weaving pedagogy and the role of teachers led to my understanding that weaving teachers are reflective of a teaching relationship found in homes. When discussing Beatrice Black, she spoke about her fondly and how welcoming Black was of her. With the close relationships that form the weaving community, master weavers build connections with their mentors or apprentices that can be as close as familial ones. This is not always the case, but when it is, it is interesting to see how that bond changed how people relate to the work being done with their teacher.

### **Familiarization**

*LR Reflection Excerpt: We didn't record again. I used to see that as failure on my part. I don't know anymore. I think everything we do informs our language journey.*

*(Field notes, 3/5/23)*

At this point, I wanted to jump into grammar and sentence structure and do another wool weaving project. I changed that to introductions, to back track our work again and do a reset. My Kiya and I returned to her readers again, and as a surprise to me, I was getting much better. There were two sounds at the beginning I could not do, and I was able to almost do them properly during this visit. We discussed sentence structure and grammar a bit, using her weaving notes.

Something that I realized by this visit, was the necessity for a familiarization period: between the language expert and the language learner. While my Kiya did language work for nearly three decades, she put that work to the side in the late 1990s to focus on basketry and weaving. For language work now, she needed to refamiliarize herself with it as well. My research plan, while flexible, was so focused on moving from step A to step B. During this visit, I was again reminded that elders need time to re-enter language spaces and take on a teaching mindset, especially if they had not been using language regularly for a long time. There are days where it is hard on an elder to penetrate their own mental fog because of exhaustion, pain, and other health related things. When I worked with my Kiya and followed an elder led approach, I did not mind taking it at her pace. If I had not, I would not have found the things I did or asked the questions that arose because of that.

What I am calling a familiarization period is a foundation setting period between the student and the teacher. For us this period was sporadic over the course of a year and a half and became more concrete in the Winter. I think this period is necessary for language learning because it helps to determine how the teacher is feeling, how they are perceiving their knowledge, and how they want to present it. For the student, this period is important for how they become receptive to knowledge and where to glean information. Jo-Ann Archibald's

storywork method worked well in this period of language learning because through storytelling, family, and reciprocity, I was able to construct a narrative about language learning that is a reflection of where my family's knowledge came from and how that informs my language foundation.

In this Familiarization Period, there was a two-part process: the language work and the basketry work that helps the weaver reflect and practice. In terms of basketry, the familiarization period was helpful for determining skill and goals. When we were not doing language and focusing on baskets, there was still a passive focus on language internally, in the form of thoughts, and externally, when random questions came out of nowhere. I think this period of language learning helped me understand my Kiya's language knowledge, what work we needed to do together and reanalyze the plan. This helped shape what to do during the next half of the visits.

*Midpoint Reflection:*

Halfway through my field work, I took a short break to reflect on the themes that were coming out of this work. During the first few weeks, I spent time talking with my mentor about the IPA. As mentioned before, as a language beginner, learning the alphabet was a difficult barrier to overcome. In thinking about this, a question arose. How does one express themselves in a language they can't write? The obvious answer is audio recording. But from a creative perspective, active processes of creating and symbolism came to mind. Due to that along with some of the morphological aspects of the language, expressing oneself in writing takes more time to get to. The basketry community's ability to imbue their work with memory, symbolism, and expressions of culture adds to written accounts and verbal stories in another way. In the

Puget sound Salish art community, art and language intersect through its expression of time, relationships, memory, and symbolism. I believe art works as an additional form of linguistic representation in these communities and can be merged into Lushootseed language studies. I do not think my model is geared towards tribal or federally funded programs, per se, but community-based work that can bring in many programs from tribes that are linguistically the same or similar.

My family learned to weave, tell stories, and learn language from elders in my family, especially my great-great Kiya Hattie Cross. When I began working with my Kiya on language learning, I encountered many family language materials. This evoked several questions about my inquiry into language representation and this idea of language reclamation in families. When a family makes this information, who owns it? Should it be donated to the tribe? How do you pass on this type of information? What additional context does one need to understand why these were taking place?

In audio recordings and physical items, we found there were stories, word lists, random art, and all this was mixed in with arts materials. When I think about communication and what it means to document something, there is an incompleteness of written words. For example, I came across my Great-great Uncle Silas' language word list he made from working with his mother. His materials use phonetic spellings. As I read them, I felt like his phonetic spellings were wrong (based on the corresponding language tapes). Then when asking my Kiya about it, she told me he had a hearing impairment. That and other peculiar moments came to make sense about the audio recordings. Uncle Silas talked the loudest, when Kiya Hattie repeated herself to him, she always spoke a lot louder, and he often said, "Can you say that again?"

As a researcher, the experience of working in family knowledge and family archives is very different from information I come across in linguistic and anthropological papers. In the family context, it is a living archive that invites feelings of familiarity. Having grown up on the stories about some of these people, it feels like meeting them for the first time without ever really being able to meet them. Encountering their language work makes it feel more valuable. The level of care in the family research realm transferred into research done in the community and academic realms. Within the Puyallup language community, the nesting program is focused on creating language users. Zahir's (2018) defines language users by the amount of time per day they are using their traditional language. This makes distinctions between learners and users which is troubling. Where some of these ideologies and notions about learning attempt to raise awareness about the shortcomings of revitalization movements, it creates more divisions in the community. How do notions of learner and user play into people's learning who prefer reading or writing as their form of engagement with language learning? Does that count as a language learner or user? Where some tribal language ideologies favor the use of stories as teaching tools, where does the listener sit in the user/learner binary?

Before doing language with my family, it felt academic and scholarly. For Native people during the era of Vi Hilbert, it makes one wonder if these similar feelings were the motivating factors for her language work. Many language learning methods focus on family and the home. Language domain nesting, while having a confusing notion of user vs speaker vs learner, is interested in language learning at home and daily use. In the auntie education model, it mimics the role of aunties in Native communities as educators and relatives. Where Hilbert's class did include some familiarity, it was in a classroom. But there was a focus on creating a worldview around culture and pride. It seems like the state of Lushootseed (especially based on online



language materials) is focused on encouraging intimate family guided language learning and departs slightly from the more academic environments. A question comes to mind, how might that function in community and found-family learning spaces?

In terms of this idea of mixing language and weaving, I think language would come first before weaving. Above, I called this the Familiarization Period. Cultural, familial, and personal context in language learning is necessary to set up so language learners have a foundation to begin on. Starting from zero is hard, especially in a language with a history of using the IPA for writing, but also producing language materials using different spellings. The complicated language politics makes it hard for people to find where they fit in learning environments. Once that can be established, then weaving acts as a form of maintenance, taking up space, and being in practice. Like journaling, practicing, and drawing, these are records of where one can be at any given time. Weaving in this case exists not only as an expression of language but necessitates a duration of language in any way the weaver chooses. The dominant language ideology (Zahir, 2018) in my community that says one must speak the language for a certain amount of time per day is limiting and not always possible. With weaving relationships, language and weaving are closely related. The care, love, and time that goes into a project is intertwined with practicing words, asking questions, and maintaining relationships. And when one is not working one on one with their teacher, when they weave alone, the weaving offers the weaver time to practice and recall those words and assign certain uses of language or stories with that weaving.

Whenever my Kiya tells me to grab a basket or weave, she always has a story attached to it. Weaving, in its symbolic and relational nature, is deeply personal and allows people to share time, space, and knowledge. The point of language is to use it, and weaving creates not just a

space in time and a safe place to use language but a culturally relevant setting. Grammars, readers, and other language materials sometimes run away from where a culture's language is from. Re-establishing the culturally important spaces to use language encourages people to use language and talk about it. In talking about it, it can lead to larger community conversations about how language is taught.

### **Listening back: Language Materials and Time Travel**

*It's 1974 in Hattie Allen Cross's kitchen, where her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren which circle her, awaiting translations for words and sentences. One child hovers around the table closest to Hattie, repeating perfectly after her as the adults stumble on the words. Uncle asks the child, "Can you count to ten on the tape?" The adults enter the encouragement 'Count for Uncle.' The child, possibly a baby, suddenly counts, "dǎ́cǒ?, salí?, lìx", buus, cǎlǎc," making it all the way to five. Uncle asks them to count again. "No," the child says. Amused by the children making their way to the table, Hattie relays a sentence in Puyallup. It means, "I have no shoes on." Probably directed at the children. Oh to wander around at grandma's house with no shoes on.*

(Narrative reworked from Family Archive)

We had to realign our goals and get a more realistic sense of how we wanted to do this work together. While doing this, I began having family language tapes digitized for the use of language learning and refamiliarizing my Kiya with material she has not heard in a while. At the midpoint of this research, it became clear how much the goals shifted and changed. In acknowledging where the research moved, the latter emphasized listening to language tapes, weaving, and re-entering weaving spaces.

In our next two sessions together, we listened to language tapes. It was helpful not just to hear pronunciation and language structure but how my Kiya was taught. It was a family endeavor where the adults and their children were present. The questions posed by them to their Kiya, Hattie Allen-Cross, were influenced by their day-to-day activities and how they wanted to use

language during these activities. For example, there is a lot of vocabulary and sentences about fishing. Being a fishing family, it seemed very appropriate.

Something that came up in conversation was that my Kiya had not started her weaving practice by the time of the recordings. Hearing that and listening to family inquire about fishing statements showed the ways my family was making space for language in their lives and practices. Communicating fishing terms, which is important to my family, is a clear example of people establishing their linguistic cultural grounding. It became clear that this is what I was doing in our language-weaving practice.

During our time listening, it became clear that remembering information is as valuable as gathering new information. While talking and listening back to our family's tapes, we worked on a basket. A purple and cream-colored raffia basket designed by my Kiya that we started in week four. In reflecting back on our time, working on the basket and listening helped to keep us in focus with the time. I found that while dedicating the time used for the basket weaving and language practice, it helped focus on the task and not the time. Being in conversation or even listening while working helped it feel more natural rather than a stress or a performance.

### **Side by Side Weaving**

For our last sessions, my Kiya and I went to the Hazel Pete: Weaver's Teaching Weavers conference hosted by the Chehalis tribe. This felt like a natural pause to the academic research. Though, we are both dedicated to language work and transcribing family language materials. Being in a large weaving space was emotional for both of us. While we were there, she talked about what we were doing and reflected on her experience being in that weaving space. While she was not weaving, she was touched to see the people she taught to weave teaching in this

setting. In conversation with people about my research, she told many people that when she was in college, she received credits for doing language with her Kiya. And now I am doing the same. She is seeing the cycle of her teachings and goals being reproduced and built upon.

Weaving pedagogy has a strong foundation for maintaining intergenerational learning. Using those teachings with my own weaving practice ensures space and breath for language learning. Part of my language journey where I fused basketry and language learning involved recording myself. In this audio diary or practice, there was no real goal except to recall what language came to mind and use it as an accountability tool. Having not created a vocabulary yet where I can have a dictation of my actions, I just talked about how I was feeling, the work I was doing, and made names for my pieces as I was working. My thoughts and basket are now inseparable to me. It represents my state of being and desires at that point in time and helped me sustain my space for language learning. My struggle with language learning from digital and print materials was first, “who do I talk to?” and then it became, “How do I do this without giving up?” The good thing about baskets is how long it takes to make them. In the duration of time that I am weaving and speaking, it is a dedication of my focus, time, and physical energy. I am aware of myself, how I am feeling, and working through complicated feelings. My first goal in language learning was to be able to have a complete thought in Puyallup. It was an odd victory celebrating *x<sup>w</sup>ak<sup>w</sup>il čəd* (I’m tired).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This section is a love letter to my community, the way I define community, and the values those hold in the spaces I inhabit. Making community in weaving meant making family, as demonstrated by the values of master weavers who have come and gone. Their teachings and philosophies as Native people were imbued with traditional knowledge which like wet cedar was

woven to build new spaces in a reality where community, knowledge, and indigenous ways of being were fragmented and nearly on their way out. The combined knowledge of all master weavers, not just the few mentioned in Chapter Five, shape their traditions around community knowledge and maintain a presence in the world by being open to change, open to students, and open to teaching. This chapter was a journey by which I used weaving pedagogy and space making to contextualize my language learning process. In the ten sessions of work done with my Kiya, we found out together the difficulty of language learning after long absences and the need to become familiar with it. Our sessions deviated from the original plan to accommodate an elder led research approach wherein my Kiya shared the knowledge she wanted to at the right times for her which motivated me to keep working on my own goals. As a near perfect end to the work together, we re-entered a weaving space where I got to watch her feel the contentment, pride, and importance of the work she did as a teacher, mentor, and relative. It is one thing to write metaphorically about intergenerational knowledge, and it is something more to see it and be a witness to an elder's achievements. The following section will conclude on the key findings of this work and step back to think about the larger implications.

*Interlude V*

*“As opposed to what?”*

*Probably the unknown.*

## CHAPTER SIX: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This work sets up several contexts in the Puget Sound Salish native communities that employ traditional knowledge systems. In the 1970s revitalization era, Native scholars, non-Native scholars, and community language activists changed how language materials about Lushootseed were being made. In Robert E. Moore's "Disappearing Inc," he discussed memorialization as a method employed in language work in order to archive a language and keep it situated in the past. I mentioned this earlier in the paper with respect to early documentation work done in ethnology and the early linguistic anthropology. Moore also introduces another term in this work, regenerativity, where tribal language activists and scholars reframe language materials, so they help native people in the present and the future for the sustained use of the language. Notions of regenerativity is seen in works done by Lushootseed language communities by the ways they include cultural teachings methods, such as storytelling, re-imagine the role of the teacher to reflect traditional learning bonds, and makes active efforts to push language into domains it is not inhabiting.

Chapter Five introduced the teaching methods of artists in the Puget Sound Salish Weaving Communities. Their teaching method embodies traditional methods that inform the role of the master weavers and the students. Master weavers have been known to seek out and be open to teaching weaving, such as with Hazel Pete. Sustaining relationships with these students necessitate reciprocity by both parties where they share in equal care of each other and the knowledge. Such as the gathering tenants that maintains the care of oneself, the community, and the environment. Mastery of weaving is viewed often as a process and not an end goal. And in these teachings, artists ensure their students maintain community by instilling the importance of relying on each other. These are just some of the teachings present in the weaving community

that center on intergenerational learning and creating and relying on community. Because these spaces exist, it allows the sharing of weaving knowledge, ideas, and innovations.

In the fieldwork portion of this study, it fused these ideas of language grounded in culture and the strength in the weaving community. In this work, I found the pace of learning necessitated an elder led approach to learning. I found through the research the deepness of weaving relationships and how they inform not just the connection itself but how it came from familial teaching structures. I found in this work the importance of refamiliarizing oneself with language and weaving is important because it sets the expectations for the relationship and where it needs to go. With Refamiliarization came listening back and relearning. This all led to the understanding of this in the context of side-by-side learning, where one can see from their students and mentors the impact of life's work. With this, two questions guided my research:

1. What is the value of the Puget Sound basketry and textile weaving as a context for language revitalization and recovery?
2. What value does this have for other revitalization efforts?

Four themes arose from this research begin to answer those questions. The first theme looks at the weaving community's role in building language community. The second explores the ways weaving gatherings facilitate community conversation. The third theme looks at the role of community in rebuilding community responsibility. And the last explores individual experience idea that when you are weaving, you are the beginning, and you are the end.

### **Creating Language Communities in Weaving Communities**

Puget Sound Salish weaving can be a context for reimagining engagement with the Lushootseed language community. Over the course of this research, the areas of improvement



that I see in the revitalization of Southern Lushootseed is in rethinking community engagement and the ways people can be reached. Already, tribes and university level classes are bringing cultural and cultural ways of learning into the language. Such as the use of the “auntie education model” in the Lushootseed Language Institute or the use of domains to address language not being active in the home.

The revitalization and reclamation of language can be understood as a reconstructing identity. While it does decolonize, which is largely thought of as a dismantling tool, the other side of language work is the reconstruction system and ways of being that are not completely present in the larger community. With the examples found in Salish basketry weaving and weaving gatherings, it was an inter-tribal effort that brought people together from neighboring tribes to share knowledge they have in common as well as differences. But what is the value in that?

For this study, ‘traditional’ refers to how Native people-built connections and relationships which informed kinship making and a unique world view. The revitalization of basketry was a result of many communities’ desire to reconstruct and share worldview, lost cultural knowledge, and expressions that were largely fragmented across reservations. Artist Bruce Miller’s philosophy, “Do not teach them all the same thing. If you teach them everything all the same, they will not need one another, and the world will split apart,” emphasizes this. This aligns with the Leonard and Haynes (2010) understanding of collaboration. In a community context, mutual collaboration strengthens and maintains community.

The building of these communities and gatherings rebuilt missing parts of Native community through small actions of teaching people where to get weaving materials, showing them how to use them, contextualizing knowledge with storytelling, and making family in a way

that is more reflective of the people as whole. Rhetoric's of lost knowledge and lost language falter in the view of these interactions because in this community building, Native people are in a reconstruction process that proves it wrong. In the weaving community intergenerational learning relies on reciprocity between generations and respect. Similarly when it comes to the gathering of materials, gathering with three in mind: yourself, the future generation, and future growth, aligns the weaver with the land where they are gathering from and a larger sense of awareness. The actual physical weavings and mutual projects made are often described with story, filled with memory, and can symbolically and metaphorically represent the weaver at any given time.

These values can be transferred easily into the Lushootseed language reclamation because they reflect reconstructions of world views that were likely present in the past. Using this context imbues the expectation of the transmission of knowledge and reflects already the community values around remembering knowledge, especially symbolically and in art. The art made with this study largely reflects that. The baskets are a part of my language notes as are my written ones. The use of basketry is a reflection of the work I put in and the people I worked with. The gathering aspect of basketry, as in weaving with people and being in relation to people while you work, is a space where language can be talked about, and questions asked. People can share who they are learning language from, the ancestral history that brought them to use certain words or phrases, and what they can think about Lushootseed. Engaging in community engages community conversation, which helps create a clear understanding of community expectations and values assigned to the language.

## **Weaving Gatherings Facilitate Community Conversation**

Becoming a person who is concerned with language and concerned with language community, means examining language biases in the community. With those, I have a strong concern about access to culture, why we should learn language, and the value it has for tribal groups. I am hesitant to include school into my research into language because the culture of schools for people is a troubled one. School and academic institutions have been very helpful for revitalization of Lushootseed in giving Vi Hilbert a platform to teach the language with an indigenous classroom in mind. That itself advocates not just for the language but native students in academia. But the lack of access after education is troubling. It was not until this year that Hilbert language recordings were accessible online, done so through the language non-profit Lushootseed Language.

Institutionalizing learning can have positive attributes, but I believe it must also be paired with community events funded by tribes for its members and potentially community members. By thinking about language community engagement in the context of space, having language space can facilitate conversations about academic and community language ideologies. In Paul Kroskrity's 2015 essay "Designing a Dictionary for an Endangered Language Community: Lexicographical Deliberations, Language Ideological Clarifications," language ideological clarification, "is the process of identifying issues of language ideological contestation, including both beliefs and feelings that are Indigenous to that community and those introduced by outsiders," (143). Language Ideological Clarifications addressed tensions in endangered language communities where ideologies are contradicting each other.

Weaving gatherings facilitate community conversation, applying this to language brings in the process of ideological clarification where ideologies of speakerhood, language user vs

learner, and how current study of the language is being done. The inter-tribal aspect of weaving gatherings brings dimension to the kinds of conversations that can be held by inviting other Twulshootseed speaking tribes. Addressing access issues and increasing conversations about language in the community requires community involvement in the making and breaking of language. When developing these programs, I wonder about the access to knowledge, who has the right to interpret materials, and what level of control that will give people in positions of power. Within my community, there are critiques of language programs for that reason.

These conversations with my Kiya are important to me first because I now have a record of some of her life stories and I can continue to share that. But with regard to language work, I have a piece of the history of language working within my community and over time, with more information, I will be able to track the progress of this history and its relevance. It enlightened specific cultural values such as respect, making and maintaining relationships, and reciprocity. When thinking about language and why people want it, I see themes of interconnectedness and relationships to the larger picture of culture, being, and identity. Foundational to those is in the relationships communities have with each other, how community members create access to ancestral knowledge, and how Indigenous ways of knowing are changing to fit the times. How can a community contribute to community knowledge and where does that happen? Drawing on the already present creative community spaces that encourage sharing and being in community begins to answer that.

## **Rebuilding Community to Rebuild Responsibility**

### *Re-Establishing Intergenerational Relationships*

When weaving pedagogy is grounded in relationships with elders and traditional ways of learning, knowledge is shared between generations which rebuilds community. As illustrated above through the discussion of important elders in my own weaving community, this space expects close and respectful bonds made between teacher and student, as well as their families. In these close bonds, knowledge is a shared experience where the teachers have expectations for students and the students have those for their teachers. In weaving, openness, understanding, and getting to know one another helps establish the nature of their work together. As is seen through Hazel Pete's generosity and in my own weaving/language practice with my Kiya, knowing how to talk to and work with each sustains the bond. In the fieldwork, that became clear when realizing it was important to use an elder led approach and to be clever about the best ways for one another to work together.

Reconnecting with traditional methods of transmission of knowledge facilitates reconnection with older generations and understanding their lived experience as it informs our own. In my fieldwork, this realization changed the course of the research to be more realistic because it took into account when and how much my Kiya wanted to share. In this though, it inspired self-motivation into research and arts practice which later supplemented work being done by my Kiya that felt tangential. In reality, it is all connected. Being grounded in this knowledge establishes our relationship and the course it will follow or change.

This holds value in language learning because it sets the pace for the learning process and sets up the structures that the language work is done on. This structure is expectations, understanding language biases, and sharing linguistic knowledge from a community and

academic standpoint. Doing so helps address some of the linguistic hurdles in the language community, namely demystifying language work being done now for elders and creating a traditional frame for students to base their work on. Building these relationships re-establishes the space where intergenerational transmission of knowledge is lacking in Lushootseed language reclamation.

### *Rebuilding Community Responsibility*

The dedication master artists and teachers have to the ongoing practice of weaving has a strong mission for the continuation of traditional arts. That level of dedication and willingness to take on students as part of their artistic practice requires engaging in relational learning. Engaging in traditional based learning environments grounds people in their culture and their community. These learning environments match up with current language learning techniques. One of which is the master-apprentice method that matches language learners with a fluent speaker. Rebuilding these relationships between the generations is not only beneficial in the art world, but positively impacts the community as a whole because it creates spaces where people can critique and challenge issues or problems in the community. It does so by instilling accountability back into the people. This accountability refers to showing up and being open to guidance and being a guide for tribal members. Being ready to learn and ready to teach helps lay the foundation for respect, wherein these relationships, the needs and concerns of one's student, apprentice, family member, or relative is being met. Engaging in respectful relationships leads to productive interactions based on relationality, these learning environments practicing intergenerational transmission of knowledge rebuilds responsibility community members have to take care of, guide, and understand each other.

Art has a healing quality to it. Engaging in art spaces allows creative outlets and lets one engage in the intangible and tangible aspects of being in relation to art and fellow artists. In tribal communities, art has a value more than the decorative or skill aspect of it. Art in the Puget Sound weaving community is a teaching tool that preserves the artist and their sensibilities and sets the foundation for new students to take up the practice and make it their own. Bridging the space between generations in cultural revitalization environments supports the recreation and transformation of culture so it may exist in the present and the future.

In the field of linguistic anthropology, Linguistic Anthropologists Jane Hill and Leanne Hinton explore the value of studying Native cultures in terms of what it does for the community. Hill draws attention to the fact that in this field, the language used by outsiders who have studied Native communities assign meaning as a means to extract value for outsiders rather than focusing on what it means to the community (Hill, 2002). Hinton explains that for tribal members, language revitalization has many values, she states language is healing, language is key to identity, language is key to spirituality, and language is carrier of culture and world view (Hinton, 2002). I believe that art and art expression relates to language because it is a reconciliation of the tangible and intangible. In art, conversations occur between forms of expression that cannot be put into words. In this way, I believe art, like language, is healing, key to identity, key to spirituality, and a carrier of culture and worldview.

The established spaces created where teaching, learning, and understanding in art transmission spaces rebuild ways of relating that were key components in more traditional ways of knowing. The example of artist Bruce Miller sheds light on some of the protocols in art communities. These protocols depend on the student and the teacher being in a reciprocal

relationship. While the teacher must make themselves available, so too does the student need to be open and available to learn. This dynamic creates mutual learning and understanding between the generation rather than the hereto-patriarchal dynamic where the teacher talks down to the student. In other areas of culture that are subject to western notions of hierarchical learning, this learning can decolonize those institutions in culturally relevant ways and help bridge the growing distance between the generations so the whole community's language needs can be addressed.

Rebuilding relationships and reevaluating the use and strengths of culturally grounded spaces builds community responsibility by repairing the relationship between generations in settings of shared skills. The survival of cultural and Indigenous world views depends on the younger generation learning from the past and engaging with Indigenous ways of knowing so it fits their own needs. Community protocol creates a structure where individuals are expected to reflect on how their work and actions impact the community. This establishes a system of checks and balances where the younger and older generations are always in conversation, being critical, and being held accountable. That critical space is where culture grows, and tensions are resolved so generations no longer feel a separation from each other. Weaving conferences open a space for people to come back to their community and learn the protocols and social structures that shape an Indigenous world view. If communities cannot learn to come together, then is there one in the future?

### **You Are the Beginning, and You Are the End**

In my tribe's culture, the role of weaving has a utilitarian and a symbolic gestural role. Some baskets and blankets were marks of status and had some level of currency. One thing that struck me as I listened back to field work conversations was how textile and basket weaving



relates to notions of subjectivity and personhood. The practice of weaving and language is a reflection not just of the community but the self. Having a language practice like one does an art practice reconnects learning with language as a personal experience. I asked my Kiya broad questions about weaving, narrowing that down further by asking questions about the value of weaving and symbolism. At one point I asked her, do you think that art and basketry and weaving is healing? Her answer was this:

“Oh yes, and nothing better than the feeling of starting a basket, finishing it, and holding it in your hands and telling yourself I did this. It's real— gives you a really good feeling like instead of going to work every day and sitting at a typewriter being a cog in the big machine and you absolutely do not see the beginning or the end. When you make a basket, you are the beginning, and you are the end and it's really a good feeling, ” **(Field notes, 8/3/22)**.

My Kiya contrasted weaving with working. In a work environment, she compares that work with working towards a goal that is not necessarily your own and the final product is not one you can necessarily feel or be a part of. In the case of basketry, in creating, “You are the beginning, and you are the end.” I am drawn to this idea of being the beginning and the end. In the case of the art space, it situates a temporal aspect of it that may be uncomfortable. Notions of beginning and end connote finality and mortality. In this case, I do not think it functions to do this. The beginning and end are the duration of time and part of one's life that is embodied in a basket. And in this model, being the beginning and the end illicit good feeling, it is healing. The role of basketry on a theoretical level is a creation of space that depends on the creator to maintain its duration.

Aside from the temporal notions, I am drawn to understanding subjectivity and personhood. Being in the context of art space means that the creation is a reflection of your life at the time, a slice of who the creator is at that moment. In the weaving community I grew up in, teachers and elders taught me that to some extent you can see how someone was feeling based on

how their weaving looks. When I reflect on my own art pieces that I made especially for myself, those pieces represent specific times in my life and because of that, they are very close to me. They present pieces of my personhood. I believe this is true for all art. But in the case of Indigenous weaving, it is even more powerful, especially given histories of the use of blankets and weaving as protection, commemoration, and remembrance.

Fusing language learning and art can be effective for language reclamation and speakerhood. It helps rebuild communities where people can use the language, it can create space for community members to address language biases, and it can create language spaces motivated by people and not just tribal government or otherwise funded environments that are subject to influence.

Creation in that space would embody the language learning and the art at that time. When learning, it does have this sense of endlessness because it feels like a task. The rewards to learning are not as visible or as apparent as creating something. Combining the two would give learning that good feeling, that sense of healing, and give a sense grounding. The basket in this case would be an expression of language much like alphabet functions. Unless done so in a direct way, it would not be a direct correlation but a situational correlation where the learning process is expressed in weaving. The weaving is a record, but one that feels like a finished one.

But finishing does not mean ending. The good feeling my Kiya talked about is not one that has a definite end but an end for now, where you can go on to return back to a project and begin a new one. In my experience as a weaver, when you are dedicated and love it, you want to keep doing it in some way. Some of that is because of personal aspirations, but also community support and the sharing of knowledge. In my home state, tribes come together and hold weaving conferences. In these conferences artists teach, share their artwork, and engage with the

community. Being in a community, at least to me, has an uplifting aspect to it that inspires you and makes you want to create more, to show off, and build on skills. My weaving community is invaluable to me. The support, love, kindness, and help they have given to me over the years inspires me to want to give back, to continue teaching, and to be an artist. In combination with community, one-on-one art teaching, and a desire to engage in one's tribe, the grounds for learning are fertile. In the case of language, structures exist already that can support an artistic and linguistic sharing of knowledge that can be immortalized in weaving.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this research and in my language journey, I've stopped understanding myself as a researcher. In language, art, and representation, I have come to see these topics as filters by which I put myself through to understanding the personal side of research and learning.

Twulshootseed has seen loss, documentation, revival, and re-animation. Indigenous communities often see a value in language for what it represents because it was lost. Languages' additional value is seen in its ability to give purpose to a body of people who want to use it, create with it, and demonstrate a specific world view.

In the arts, Indigenous people project and define their unique perspectives, explore values as people of a land, and the community that shapes that. The sites of creative outlets represent a space of indigenous creativity and voice. In the early stages of language learning it is hard to achieve that same type of expression. In bringing the two together, art and language support language learners by dedicating space to be in language and allow art to be a representation of their language work, regardless of fluency and speakerhood. This engagement motivates the learner to create community because weaving values and tradition naturally invites people. In

that space, language learners share art and linguistic knowledge, reshaping the information to become community motivated and sustained knowledge.

Often language work requires the learner or researcher to obtain a source for which knowledge comes, like a tap. But by looking inward and understanding one's own subjectivity while doing community language work requires a participation of being in the language community and not a researcher looking in. In that dynamic, the responsibility one has as a community member is measured alongside personal goals as a language learner or researcher. Like in basketry, it is a high value and requirement to pass down teachings, as it should be in language.

## CACOPHONY: LANGUAGE IN FIVE MOVEMENTS

i

Once when they were in and out of landscapes, the sky opened in colors. Above the closely nestled canopies capturing the scents of smoke and wet, the sky threw colors at the world below them.

Once when they were young, they thought very deeply about how to paint those colors onto themselves. The colors just thoughts though, the colors indescribable. The colors just a notion, an idea, and wonder because in the sky only the spectacular is real.

Once when they were like spiders, the strands around them lay in confused tangles. Was it like their hair or was it like webs caught in evergreens? They lay in confused bliss deeply in thought about how the spider untangles the web and when the spiders knows simply when to give up.

ii

Once when they were cold, they wrapped themselves in the colors from the sky and the colors from the trees, and in there they created a warm home to stay in. The itchiness didn't bother them until they learned how to make their home soft.

Once when they were young and stretched out on the warm sand, they wondered why the sand was the way it was, where it came to be, and they told each other scary stories of the pokings in the sand. They lay blissfully aware of the real threat of pokings and stickings walking on them or tickling their ears.

Once when they were a story, they walked tireless up a mountain, armed only with the knowledge of warmth and spiders. They walked in search of the mystery behind colors. A top the mountain shown a layer of mist obscuring the view of their home, shining in the spectacular they didn't know was always around them.

iii

Once when they were sound, they sat tiredly and watched the trees blurry on either side of their vision. They floated aimlessly without the thought of being and didn't achieve for nothing except for still existence. Here they felt their truest selves and here, they will return often.

Once when they were bored, they started a fire and threw pinecones into it, stepping back every few throws to complicate the game. With every one they yelled and turned, noise and laughter filling the expanse. In the distance they saw another fire go up and laughter and echo drifted to them. While playing, they occasionally wondered if the sounds were from another dimension, like their faces on the surface of water. And other times, silently they individually wondered if they in fact were not alone after all.

Once when they couldn't see, they brushed their hands slowly across the terrain in search for a shelter. Hands on the ground in a crouch, they became intimately aware of the sensation of the

ground as though it was beneath their feet. They understood with their entire bodies what it felt like to hear and feel the constant movement of the ground.

iv

Once when they made a home, they thought about it might be like to drift into the horizon. They were fond, very much, of hot fires on the cool sand of the beach. In the distance they watched the ever expansive and never-ending line before them, occasionally allowing passing thoughts about circles and things that never end.

Once they pretended to be like the fuzzy things, all of them at once and sometimes just a bear. What it had meant to them, to stretch their shadows in the campfire and shout at the top of their lungs, deep growls, and playful yells. They allowed their shadows to consume one another, and they grew to such a mysterious height that even they became afraid and wonderful, the things they could make.

Once they were worried about the lingering of eyes, dark, only visible from the flashes of fire light and lightning strikes. Wrapped around themselves or each other they still, not a breath visible in the coldest of winter moments, they waited patiently for the acknowledgement to pass, to know only they were seen, understood, and not a great mountain the eyes wish to cross. When the danger passed and they became safer in the morning light, they climbed atop the largest rock and howled or growled, only willing to pretend to be the known.

v

*As opposed to what?*

Probably the unknown.

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