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Running Head: PORTRAITS OF THREE SUCCESSFUL ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATORS

Full Circle: A Portraiture Study of Three Successful Indigenous
Educators and Community Leaders Who Experience Personal Renewal
In their Practice of Cultural Restoration

By

Kathrin W. McCarthy

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Educational Studies

Lesley University

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Abstract

This qualitative inquiry uses the narrative methodology of portraiture to explore how the experiences of three successful Native educators and community leaders can contribute to the adult learning and development literature. In portraiture study the researcher uses diverse methods of gathering data, including interviews, observations of participants, and participant artifacts to co-construct a story of each participant's life. Participants' portraits were analyzed using well-established adult learning theories including Erickson's developmental lifespan concept of generativity, Lave and Wenger's concept of situated learning and communities of practice; Wlodkowski's concepts of motivation and culture; Belenky and her colleagues' conceptions of voice as development; and various concepts related to leadership. Newer, less well-established adult learning theories were also used in the analysis: those of indigenous meaning making, spirituality, and narrative learning or "storying." Cultural sustainability, done in ways particular to each participant, is the overarching theme common to their portraits. The participants, two Tlingits from Southeast Alaska, and one originally from Taos, New Mexico but married to a Tlingit man and adapted into the tribe, work to sustain Tlingit culture through practices of Chilkat weaving, Tlingit language teaching, and performing Tlingit ceremony with younger generations. Their practices as educators and leaders are anchored in a value system that is grounded in relationships, and in an indigenous cosmology that understands interconnectedness of all life. This study may benefit others by making the connection between personal renewal and cultural restoration explicit, by showing how a grounding in culture can foster not only belonging and connectedness, but also personal identity; by showing how adversity and intergenerational grief can be overcome with social support and opportunities to

cultivate social-emotional assets; and by providing a genuine encounter with authentic voices of the three participants.

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My three participants were also my teachers. They gave much of themselves by participating in this process with me. They provided important feedback in their work with me as co-creators of this research; their collaboration was invaluable to the co-construction of this study. I am grateful for their patient sharing, and accommodating caring.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Vivian and Jay Woodard, who taught me to love the natural world as a beautiful place filled with opportunities to experience wonder and awe.

To my friend and participant Clarissa Rizal, who died suddenly of cancer on December 7, 2016. *“All of creation is co-created. We never create alone”* encapsulates Clarissa’s understanding of making art and of making it in the art of living. That statement, superimposed on a background of her art and given out as an adhesive sticker at Clarissa’s memorial service, also perfectly captures the essence of doing portraiture.

And to my husband Paul, who made it possible for me to do doctoral studies. I owe my completion of this dissertation to him.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

There is no lack of literature on Alaska Natives and Native American peoples, but it tends to be done on, rather than with them. It also has an overwhelming focus on deficits, social ills, and what could be generally regarded as negative life outcomes (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Barnhardt & Kawagely, 2010; Brayboy, 2005; Greenwood, 2010; Jaimes, 1992; Lomawaima & McCarthy, 2006). This study features experiences of three adult Native persons who are each successful educators and leaders in Alaska and elsewhere.

The purpose of this study is to explore participants' personal and professional triumphs and so to contribute a positive focus to a literature that is largely fixated on problems (Deloria, 1995; Grande, 2004; Woodard, 1989). The research methodology used for this study is portraiture, because it features what is good about participants, and co-constructs with them a narrative that allows readers to learn from their experiences (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Participants were determined to be exemplars worthy of study by virtue of being successful Native educators and leaders, and were therefore purposefully selected for this study.

This chapter gives background information to establish a context for this study. After that it provides a problem statement; research problem and dissertation question; methods of data collection and analysis; interpretation and discussion of results; researcher information, the social significance of the study; and study limitations. Chapter one concludes with a definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Most research on indigenous peoples focuses on problems and deficits. These issues are not to be denied. Native Americans have the highest adult suicide rates in the United States; Alaska Native women are at four times higher risk than other groups for committing suicide; the

incidence of sexual assault and domestic violence are highest in the nation for Alaska Native women (United States Commission on Indian Law and Order Report, 2012). Native Americans and Alaska Native Peoples have health issues documented to be of extreme concern, including diabetes, heart disease, and substance abuse.

These various social woes are usually attributed to tremendous cultural upheaval and the breakdown of traditional societal forms of regulation and stability after white contact (Barnhardt, & Kawalegy, 2010; Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994; Jaimes, 1992; Miheusah, 2003; Napoleon, 1996; Oleksa, 2005). Severe losses of lives, plus rapid social and cultural changes resulted from European colonization of the United States and Alaska. European contact was accompanied by devastating disease epidemics that decimated Native American and Alaska Native populations. These epidemics produced intergenerational trauma akin to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder syndrome in its affects for multiple generations and entire communities of indigenous peoples (Braveheart, 1998, 1999).

Other causes of social problems are attributed to policies and practices of forced assimilation through Christianization, children removed from their homes and sent away to boarding schools, and public schools and institutions first administered by the U.S. Military and then by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Language loss, loss of control of indigenous lands, and loss of traditional ways of life were also outcomes of forced assimilation (Hirshberg, 2008; Hirshberg & Sharp, 2003; Lomawaima, 2000a, 2000b; Lowmawaima & McCarthy, 2006). These are some of the major causes of cultural disintegration identified by anthropologists, sociologists, and others who research social ills among indigenous peoples, but indigenous peoples have nevertheless prevailed (Dombrowski, 2014; King, 2012). The complexity of

indigenous lives and the fact that indigenous peoples have survived and are even thriving in some ways are witnessed in the stories of this study's participants.

The ontology of Native Americans and Alaska Native peoples is intertwined with indigenous epistemology, which is less about what they know than relationships they have with the things they know (Battiste, 2008a, 2008b; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Greenwood, 2010; Kassam, 2001, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Indigenous peoples traditionally have over-arching cosmologies that all things, both animate and inanimate, are interconnected and alive. Research on indigenous ways of knowing supports claims that all life is interconnected and that relationships are key to understanding indigenous worldviews, however varied they may be (Kassam, 2001, 2009; Thornton, 2008, 2004).

Connection is the root of the values-based approaches that seek the overall good in processes of decision-making in the context of relationships that indigenous people have with things, each other, and all of life. Relationship with community, the past, and place are embedded in values that drive the work of these three participants (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994, 1990, 1987). Portraiture too is based in relationship; this makes it an ideal methodology for research with indigenous participants.

1.2 Problem Statement

Marginalization is a reality for Native American and Alaska Native persons; it manifests in the literature in at least two ways. First, authentic indigenous voices are dampened or silenced (DeLoria, 1969; Grande, 2004; Smith, G. H. 1997; Smith, L. T, 1999; Trask, 1999). This means that despite the fact that there is a great deal of inquiry about Alaska Natives and American Indians, their feelings, opinions, ideas, and desires are rarely represented; as a result, indigenous perspectives are paradoxically lacking in the qualitative research literature (Barnhardt &

Kawagley, 2012; Battiste, 2000; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Greenwood, 2010; Kawagley, 1995, 2001; Kenny, Fairies, Fiske, & Voyageur, 2004; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Second, most of the dominant research focus on indigenous persons and communities is on deficits and dysfunctions. This deficit lens highlights problems within indigenous communities, but not what is healthy, functional, or successful (Battiste, 2008; Benham-Ah Nee, 2000; Grande, 2004). These dual sins of omission and commission both point to a need for this research.

1.3 Research Problem and Dissertation Question

Not much is known about what Alaska Native adult educators have to say regarding their experiences as learners and teachers, because few studies have provided them with opportunities to speak. The absence of Alaska Native voices in educational research is a gap in the adult learning literature (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2010). By conducting portraiture study of three Native professionals who teach and lead in various roles, my goal for this inquiry is to contribute knowledge to help fill this gap.

My dissertation seeks to answer the question: “What can be learned from the experience of three indigenous teachers about successfully becoming educators and community leaders?” Multiple rationales underlie this research question. Portraiture study with Alaska Native adult educators could enrich the adult learning and development literature by adding previously unconsidered indigenous perspectives on education; inspire reflection on teacher preparation with culturally diverse students; and inform conversations between adult educators about external conditions and personal characteristics that could enhance potentials for success with indigenous learners despite histories of adversity.

1.4 Procedures for Data Collection

Procedures for data collection in portraiture research include recorded informal conversations with and formal interviews of participants, naturalistic field notes of participants at work, member checking by participants of transcribed data, and considering relevant participant artifacts and documents. Additionally, I maintained a journal of reflections and observations on all processes related to portraiture research.

Data collected for a portrait begins with in-depth descriptions of the physical environment and arrangements of furniture, art, and general ambience of sites where participants work or live. Participants' appearance, their attire, mannerisms and gestures, facial expressions, body language, and behaviors are all included. Because context is paramount in portraiture, these descriptions help to provide rich layers of information about participants and what matters to them. My thoughts and feelings as researcher about observed details, recorded in a journal, are also a part of the collected data.

1.5 Data Analysis

Transcribed data from interviews were analyzed using the voice-centered method developed for analyzing interview data (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003). Voice-centered analysis involved reading and re-reading transcribed data for plot/story, tone, and overall sense of each participant. While performing this close reading, I paid attention to my feelings, reactions, and responses to what was said as recorded and then transcribed, but did not let it overshadow the participants' voices. This is congruent with the cautionary note of Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis (1997) concerning scaling back the researcher's voice. Gilligan, et al., recommended re-listening to recorded interviews at least four times in the first step of voice-centered analysis. As researcher I listened to recordings and read transcripts for "ranges in the

harmonies, dissonances, distinctive tonality, key signatures, pitches and rhythms always embodied, in culture, and in relationship with oneself and others” (Gilligan, et al., 2003, p.157).

Another important aspect of voice-centered analysis was listening for contrapuntal voices. This suggests approaching data as if listening to a piece of classical music with counterpoint or opposing elements, hearing one instrument, then another, and another, until one hears the cohesive whole. This was similar to listening for the deviant voice suggested by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), in that discrepancies were revealed by noticing and attending to contrapuntal among other elements as part of the more complete voice of a whole person.

1.6 Interpreting and Discussing Results

Erik Erikson’s (1952, 1963) life-span development model offered a framework for exploring with my participants who they are, how they think, and what the sources of their views about their identities are from a psychosocial perspective. In interviews, field observations, and artifacts, participants present multiple manifestations of who they are to the portraitist, and various interpretations are possible. Erikson’s theory seems useful for interpreting my participants’ views of their identities because his is a positive developmental framework that is inclusive of cultural viewpoints.

Another reason I used Erikson’s life-span developmental theory as part of my theoretical framework is because I asked participants to tell their stories from early childhood through adulthood. It is critical for indigenous persons to have experiences that strengthen and support positive self-concept in the context of connection to and identification with other members of their tribe(s). Traditionally, an indigenous person’s sense of self is grounded in a view of reality based on relationships, and the worldview that fosters relationship-based experience still obtains,

at least residually, for many Native persons. There is a system of collective *we* values rather than individualistic *I* values (Jones, 1993; Kassam, 2001, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

Children and adults who grow up with a collective value system have cultural wealth to flourish as adults (Greenwood, 2010). Yet despite these positive assets, rapid social change and residual colonization create serious conflicts for indigenous children and adults. Discovering how my participants have finessed those challenges to become successful community leaders and teachers could add value to the literature on adult development and learning.

1.7 Who I Am As A Researcher

I am a participatory action researcher with a strong constructivist background. Participatory action research recognizes the power of participants to find solutions to problems their communities are facing. It is a way to undermine the hegemony of the expert (Kassam, 2009). Constructivism conceptualizes learning as knowledge built upon past understandings, but in new, more adequate forms. Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, both constructivists concerned with intellectual development, have respectively influenced my thinking with their emphasis on how learners become increasingly able to take more complex perspectives; and on learning as mediated through social interaction.

The writing of my former mentor Elizabeth Jones has been important to my interest in social justice, especially regarding emancipatory pedagogy to facilitate others in finding their voices, developing self-awareness, and moving toward critical consciousness (Freire, 2004). In addition, Jones' work on the telling of stories as forms of play and learning has influenced my research on story telling as a way for adults to learn. This fits with my interest in how Alaska Native peoples have for hundreds of years taught their cultural values and what they know about the natural world through stories.

Other theorists and researchers important for me are Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Carol Gilligan, and Mary Field Belenky and the Women's Ways of Knowing (WWK) collective. These authors significantly influenced my thinking and action as a teacher and a researcher because of their strong focus on social justice. They are constructivists, critical theorists, and feminists. They advocate liberation, critical pedagogy, and participatory action research, and seek social justice, equality, and re-dress of inequality in their practice. I admire their work because it resonates with my own work and values.

I was also powerfully influenced by Sylvia Ashton-Warner, who wrote a book about the indigenous Māori people of New Zealand entitled *Teacher* (1963). Ashton-Warner was a controversial figure in the history of New Zealand education because her approach to teaching reading was centered on the lives of the Māori children she taught. What she said about Māori culture resonated for me, especially the need for a white teacher to try to learn as much as possible from and about the culture in which she works. Ashton-Warner's work also supported my bias that mainstream conventional schooling is destructive to indigenous peoples' cultures and ways of knowing and learning.

Most white researchers primarily seek to learn about other cultures rather than learn with and from members of a given culture (Jones & Jenkins, 2010). This had already proved to be problematic for me because many things I initially learned about Alaska Native peoples by reading anthropologists were obsolete, incomplete, incorrect, or based on a position of superiority. Co-construction of knowledge involves real collaboration and learning with participants (Tuck, 2009). My orientation to research is guided and informed by participants, and learning with and from persons of other cultures, as opposed to learning about them.

I share a sense of the sacredness of place important to Tlingit people. I am deeply influenced by where we live. An important part of my adult life has been actively involved in conservation efforts with Tlingit people to protect places important for subsistence activities and to foster institutional protection in perpetuity of the fish and wildlife resources in our homeland.

1.8 Social Significance of the Study

The study may provide valuable insights from participants' cultures, their ontological and epistemological perspectives, and their sense of who they are. The findings may be compared and contrasted with Eurocentric views of human development such as Erikson's lifespan conflicts. I believe some findings will be supported by Western developmental research, in particular, studies on relationships and the ethics of care, where indigenous ways of knowing are congruent with current research on relationships and caring (Collins, 2008; Gillian, et al., 2003; 2011; Greenwood, 2011; Noddings, 2003; Wilson, 2008).

I expect that data analysis, interpretation, and discussion will contribute to the literature on the history of indigenous peoples in Alaska and the Taos Pueblo as well as research on indigenous rights and social justice, and, of course, on adult learning and development. The participants' experiences of continuing colonization practices, some of which are part of well-meaning, but misguided social policy and education efforts, will offer readers enhanced understanding of the development of resistance, critical consciousness, and social justice in our contemporary, fast paced, rapidly changing society (Barnhardt, & Kawagely, 2012).

1.9 Definitions

Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA): Alaska Natives had legal claims to their lands and land use rights since 1912, but as a result of the discovery of oil on Alaska's North Slope, the United States Congress passed ANCSA in 1971 to enable the building of

Alaska's crude oil pipeline. The Alaska Native peoples received land and money in compensation for giving up their land claims; they also gave up rights to the subsistence harvesting of fish and wildlife.

Alaska Native: People of indigenous ancestry in Alaska. Alaska Native as a category includes many diverse groups of people (see figure 1: Native Languages Map)

At.o'ow: This Tlingit word means owned objects or things that have been purchased through trade, money, peacemaking, collateral for an unpaid debt, or through a personal action, usually involving loss of life. *At.o'ow* include many different things including land, names, and symbolic property claimed by the matrilineal clan or house group (a sub-lineage of the clan).

Chilkat Weaving: A style of weaving characteristic of the Chilkat Tlingit people. Chilkat weavings are ceremonial robes worn by high-ranking persons at *Koo:eeex* and other ceremonial events. They are traditionally woven from mountain goat wool spun with fine strips of cedar bark. Mountain goat is naturally off-white; other colors in blankets are black, blue-green, and yellow. Dyes for these colors were traditionally made from lichen, soot, and oxidized copper. Blanket designs are dramatic, using Northwest coast form-line design to tell a story or document an important event.

Chilkat: Chilkat is the name of an important northern Southeast Alaska river, trade route, and the Tlingit people who live near the river. The Native village of Klukwan is on the Chilkat River.

Coho: Silver Salmon, one of the five species of Pacific Salmon. The origin of the word Coho is unknown. It is thought to be from Northwest coast indigenous language or Northwest pidgin trading language, e.g. Chinook. It is understood by all northwest indigenous cultures as referring to the silver salmon. Coho is a clan within the Raven moiety.

Clan: Northwest Coast Native groups were composed of hierarchical matrilineal clans in their organizational structure. The clans took their names from the matrilineal holders of those names. Tlingit, Haida, and Tshimsian tribes were composed of numerous clans.

Conservative: Conservative Tlingits are individuals who have maintained traditional kinship ties and exogamous marriage practices. Until the end of the 20th and into the 21st century, conservative Tlingits continued to speak Tlingit and practice subsistence hunting and gathering activities with their children and grandchildren. Many conservative Tlingits became members of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) rather than Protestant churches, due to the fact that ROC policy was to translate their liturgy and songs into Native languages.

Innovative/Progressive Alaska Natives: This terminology appears in the literature in reference to individuals who, during a time of intense cultural change, embraced many of those changes. Many became Christians, moved away from their matrilineal clan houses, and created small nuclear families. They did not continue to observe the taboos or requirements of their moiety and clans of their parents. Innovators were also people who decided that a better future was possible by leaving the villages of their birth. Thus, they moved to places where opportunities other than a subsistence economy were available.

Jilkat: The Tlingit language term referring to people from the Native village of Klukwan located on the Chilkat River. Chilkat is an anglicized version of Jilkat.

Kiva: A circular structure built in central locations in a pueblo. The Kiva is a symbolic representation of the subterranean birthplace of the people from the pueblo. Its purpose is to serve as the place where important ceremonial, spiritual, and cultural activities occur.

Koo:ex: A party usually given to honor a clan elder who has died, also called a Potlatch. Before Christianization, *Koo:ex* were given for many reasons: marriage, the naming of children,

giving permission to individuals for conducting dances, and other ceremonial events. Both Raven and Eagle moieties must participate in the *Koo:eeex*, insuring reciprocity and balance between the moieties.

Matrilineal: Societies where lines of descent are from the mother.

Matrikin: An anthropological term referring to interrelated members of matrilineal clan organizations, who take their membership and lineage from their mothers.

Moiety: Societal kinship division into two halves (composed of clans), in which marriage between persons of the same moiety is taboo. Thus, marriages occurring between, but not within, clans, are the traditionally preferred exogamous pattern. Moieties function as vehicles for balance, reciprocity, and sharing between opposite clans. Moieties in Southeast Alaska are Eagle/Wolf and Raven.

Native Alaskan: A person of non-indigenous ancestry born in Alaska.

Ravenstail Weaving: Ravenstail weaving is an earlier form of twined weaving, used to produce beautiful black and white, sometimes red and white, geometrically patterned ceremonial robes. The ancient form of Ravenstail weaving is experiencing a resurgence.

Shagoon: A Tlingit word meaning either ancestors or those yet to be born.

Shuka': A Tlingit word for ancestors in general, but its meaning is ambiguous because it faces in two directions; it means ahead, or having come before: what waits in the future and what is past. In time, it includes those born before, who are now behind, and the not yet born who wait ahead. Thus, it refers simultaneously to the past and the future.

Subsistence: The word subsistence is given to life sustaining hunting, fishing, and gathering activities traditionally done by indigenous people. In particular, subsistence is a multitude of activities outside a cash economy with cultural and social importance to places,

names, and property among Tlingit peoples. Participating in subsistence activities has sacred aspects for teaching traditional ecological knowledge to younger generations, ensuring that the animal and plant resources of Tlingit homeland are sustainable.

Traditional: Traditional refers to an indigenous person who knows her or his clan's oral history and practices traditionally acceptable behaviors for a man or woman of a particular caste. Traditional is often used interchangeably with the term conservative to identify men and women who speak Tiwa (in Taos Pueblo) or Tlingit, and who know the history of their clan and its activities in the region people are located.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

I began my review with literature on the historical marginalization of Alaska Natives and Native Americans, including boarding school experiences, which is important to understanding the historical, social, and political contexts affecting participants. I reviewed selected literature on relevant indigenous and non-Native ways of knowing and learning. I reviewed literature on aspects of voice as it relates to learning and ways of knowing, which included controversies regarding voice, especially as it relates to the potential for collaborative co-constructions of knowledge. I then reviewed selected literature on lifespan development, particularly that of Erik Erikson (1952,1963). Finally, I reviewed literature on portraiture itself, my preferred means of ushering participants onto a narrative stage for the purpose of facilitating an encounter with my participants for readers of this research study.

2.2 Historical Marginalization and Colonialism

Historical context provides a framework for understanding effects of white European contact and colonization on the ancestors of study participants and on the participants themselves. To Europeans, the new lands they arrived at were considered previously undiscovered or *Terres Nullis* (that is, empty or blank terrain). Indigenous inhabitants were viewed as not fully human and definitely uncivilized; consequently, their humanity, rights, languages, and cultures were disregarded (Bodine, 1973). As non-Christians, indigenous people were considered savage and expendable (King, 2013). Most conveniently for European colonizers, Native peoples lacked advanced weapon technologies, and domesticated animals such as horses, to resist European encroachments on their territories and degradations of their cultures (Diamond, 1997). The historical context of colonization in this literature review is

delineated in terms of the ravages of disease epidemics, religious oppression, and boarding school brutalities imposed on indigenous Americans.

2.3 Contagious Disease Epidemics: Southeast Alaska

Indigenous peoples' exposure along the Pacific Northwest coast to smallpox, venereal disease and other pathogens causing epidemics was probably initially contracted from sailors with the Spanish explorers Bruno Hecate and Juan de la Bodega Quadra, who sailed up the Pacific coast from Mexico in 1775. These voyages contacted Natives along the Pacific coast from Mexico to the Northwest Coast, respectively encountering Tshimshian, Haida, and Tlingit tribal peoples from British Columbia to Sitka, Alaska.

Contagious diseases reduced the populations of northwest coast tribes significantly. For one example, in the mid-nineteenth century several smallpox epidemics killed up to 80 percent of Bella Bella Natives, southern neighbors of the Tshimshian, Haida, and Tlingit peoples in present day Washington State (Boyd, 1975, 1999; Bringham, 1999). Death and suffering on this scale were apocalyptic. Indigenous peoples who had never encountered such large-scale devastation were seriously challenged to make sense of what happened to them. Along the northwest coast, which includes southeast Alaska, the virulence of the epidemics turned lives and worldviews of survivors upside down. Shamans, who were healers and protectors against forces of malevolence believed to exist in the spirit-world, were completely powerless to prevent deaths from introduced pathogens. Lack of protection from Shamans increased further cultural disintegration (DeLaguna, 1987; Guilmet, Boyd, & Whited, 1991).

Alaska Natives' experience of the epidemics was based on their views of who would, as opposed to what could, cause such suffering and extreme disruption of life. Events such as the virulent smallpox epidemic were attributed to supernatural malevolence by colonizers (Harkin,

1997, 2007). Another impact of introduced disease epidemics was felt later within Alaska's Native cultures as internalized self-blame and self-denigration. The devastating epidemics suffered by indigenous peoples in Alaska were then interpreted as caused by Natives themselves (Napoleon, 1996).

By 1796, vaccination had been discovered; it was well developed by the early 19th century. The Russian America Company (RAC) had located its company headquarters in Southeast Alaska at the settlement called New Archangel, known now as Sitka. RAC vaccinated the Alaska Natives they had contact with. Tlingits who had submitted to vaccination by the Russians were spared to a great extent from subsequent smallpox epidemics (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1990). But contagious diseases continued to weaken Tlingit society. Tuberculosis was particularly virulent. Tuberculosis infected and killed large numbers of persons in Tlingit communities into the mid-twentieth century (Brown, 2012; Fortuine, 2005).

2.4 Contagious Disease Epidemics: New Mexico Pueblos

Whether by malicious intent or ignorance, diseases introduced by Europeans were significant in subduing indigenous peoples throughout the Americas. The region now known as New Mexico fared somewhat better than other areas of the American southwest (Roosevelt, 1995). European contact did not occur there until the second half of the sixteenth century. In 1560, there were more than 100 agriculturally centered groups stretching over 200 miles along the Rio Grande, Pecos, Gila, and San Juan Rivers (Gutierrez, 1991). Spanish explorers called all these communities, *pueblos*, meaning villages or towns.

Raids by Apache and Navajo tribes resulted in consolidation of pueblos into larger settlements for defensive purposes (Ramenofsky, 1996). Consolidation of pueblo groups increased vulnerability to disease contagion compared to when pueblo peoples lived in smaller

and more scattered groups. By 1640, the number of pueblos was reduced by over eighty percent to nineteen; various reasons are given for this decline in the number of villages. For example, it is believed a prolonged 12-year drought forced abandonment of some sites (Dozier, 1970).

Disease epidemics may not be the only or even the main reason for pueblo population decline; nevertheless, it is acknowledged that contagious pathogens from colonialists and their domesticated animals were a major cause of deaths (Albers, 1987; Barrett, 2002; Kessell, 2002). Smallpox, influenza, and measles were the most virulent killers of pueblo peoples. These contagious diseases, along with whooping cough and scarlet fever, were significant causes of the disintegration of pueblo communities (Brown, 2013).

2.5 Religious Oppression: Southeast Alaska

Religious oppression occurred throughout lands colonized by Europeans in the Americas. In Southeast Alaska the first non-indigenous religious contact was with the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). The ROC did not impose restrictions or limitations on Alaska Native peoples' ceremonial practices and did not impose changes on spiritual or ceremonial practices, as long as Tlingits did not threaten ROC efforts to enroll Tlingits in the church. The ROC encouraged Tlingits to marry in the church but did not interfere with the clans' control of who got married (Dauenhauer, 1996; Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994; Kan, 1998).

American military control, continued exposure to infectious diseases, and the arrival of Protestant and Catholic missionaries into Southeast Alaska obliterated the last vestiges of autonomous indigenous spiritual and ceremonial practice. "The disease epidemics were a prelude to new forms of power relationships based on systematic principles of discipline and control" by missionaries (Harkin, 1997, p. 78). This discipline and control was most egregious after the American period began, when both American missionaries and the American military

took it upon themselves to force Tlingits to move from small villages to larger living groups justified by a demand that they attend school. The forms punishment took were whippings, imprisonment, and fines. Tlingits who attended potlatch ceremonies, high-ranking clan holders who practiced polygamous marriage, and those who married or cohabited outside Christian churches were the main targets of punishments (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1987, 1990; Kan, 2015).

2.6 Religious Oppression: American Southwest

While not alike in all details with that in Southeast Alaska, religious oppression was also a reality during colonization in the American Southwest. Conquistadors and the clergy who accompanied them into the Southwest viewed indigenous persons as inferior because they were not Christians. Ethnocentric Spanish were unaware of pueblo peoples' spiritual culture. In particular, they were ignorant of the complex spiritual systems functioning within the pueblo cultures.

The inhabitants of many pueblos superficially complied with forced Christianization. They managed Spanish occupation by feigning conversion; others adopted Catholic beliefs and rituals while continuing their indigenous religious practices in secret (Brown, 2013; Eggan, 1950; Ortiz, 1972). Despite Pueblo dwellers becoming Christian, attitudes of the Spanish clergy and governors toward them remained ethnocentric and racist. The Europeans enslaved pueblo people, treated them as sub-human, and forced them to do hard labor in the missions. The exploitation of Pueblo people's knowledge and labor made the building of missions and the colonialists' settlements possible (Barrett, 2002; Kessell, 2013).

Pueblo peoples were also under a constant state of surveillance by Catholic priests and pueblo Christian converts, who zealously attempted to stamp-out or at least curtail many of the

same activities as were punished in Tlingit society, including polygamous marriage among high ranking persons and participation in non-Christian ceremonies. The Kiva, centrally located structures built to replicate a womb-like shape to symbolize the physical, cultural, and spiritual birthplace of the Pueblo people, were burned. Kiva leaders were brutally punished (Gutierrez, 1991).

2.7 Boarding Schools in Alaska

Russia's sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867 began an era of radical changes. These were characterized by efforts to Christianize and assimilate Alaska Native peoples by Christian missionaries, and the United States Navy, which forced Natives to move into communities where missionaries had easy access to them (Dauenhauer, 1982). Racist attitudes that excluded Natives from becoming citizens until 1924 were combined with policies and practices designed to eliminate Native languages. The latter effort was effectively located in boarding schools run by Christian missions, then later by the United States federal Department of the Interior, and finally the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2010; Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994). While boarding schools in the United States and Canada were not uniformly damaging, as will be explained later, they were nevertheless severely disruptive and did a great deal to deny the natural continuity of indigenous cultures, largely by punishing the speaking of Native languages (Adams, 1995; Battiste, 2000; Haig-Brown, 1988; Oleksa, 1992b).

After a century of decimation by disease, in the early 20th century Alaska Natives suffered the removal of their children from their homes and villages to boarding schools. Native children from all over Alaska were sent to boarding schools, some of which were located in Southeast Alaska. Among the primary goals of Alaska boarding schools were to Christianize Native children, to teach them that the indigenous beliefs and ways of knowing practiced by their

families and cultures were inferior, and to inculcate Native students with the curricula of the dominant non-Native society (Dauenhauer, & Dauenhauer, 1994).

The main purpose of boarding schools was to assimilate Native children into the dominant white culture and to eradicate Native culture (Adams, 1995; Berger, 1991; Churchill, 2004). It is well documented that Native languages were banned in Alaska's boarding schools (Oleksa, 2008, 2011). Speaking one's Native language was regarded as an offense for which a child was often punished severely, which is thought to be a major reason for the significant decrease and even elimination of Native language speakers in such a geographically and culturally diverse place as Alaska, with its many indigenous languages (DeLaguna, 1974, 1988, 1990; Krause, 1992). The diminishment or demise of Alaskan Native languages is a needless chapter in the continuing conflict in America's history of diversity versus monoculturalism, replacing massacres of the nineteenth century with obliteration of Alaska Native cultures in the classroom through acculturation and assimilation (Barnhardt & Kwagaley, 2010; Krause, 1980; Napoleon, 1996).

2.8 Boarding Schools in New Mexico's Pueblos

Pueblo dwellers experienced similar attempts to assimilate their tribes. A variety of tactics were used, from threats of imprisonment to removing children to boarding schools. Members of the Hopi tribe, and pueblo peoples from Oraibi, Bacavi, and Zia, all located in New Mexico, were engaged for several years in strongly resisting the United States government over where and how their children were educated (Lomawaima, 2000). Hopi opposition to boarding schools included over-all resistance to the government's attempts to pacify and assimilate Hopi culture (Gutierrez, 1991).

Hopi persons expressed their preferences for their way of living, dressing, eating, and overall desire to be left alone. Hopi loss of control over their children's education was a serious blow to retaining their culture and way of life. Pueblo children were sent to boarding school based on a variety of reasons, including: colonial, ethnocentric, humanitarian, or practical; for example, children from the Zia Pueblo were sent to boarding school because there was no other school for them to go to. Boarding school, in the view of Pueblo parents, was not a positive solution, but a loss.

In September 1895, nineteen Hopi men were imprisoned on Alcatraz Island for refusing to send their children to boarding school. The 19 Hopi men from Orayvi (Oraibi) were the largest number of individuals from a single group jailed at Alcatraz at that time. One hundred years after these men were jailed, Alcatraz is now a National Park. The United States Park Service has commemorated the centenary anniversary of the Hopi men's return home after spending nearly a year imprisoned on Alcatraz Island (Eagle & Findley, 2014). The imprisonment of Hopi parents was a shocking example that occurred in the late nineteenth century of increased attacks on Hopi sovereignty and culture, as the United States government acted to Americanize the Hopi people. Imprisonment became the government's principal means of intimidation and punishment.

Capricious uses of power concerning schooling of pueblo children were often motivated by non-Natives' desires for natural resources located on Native lands. Control of these resources and ability to exploit them was the basis for a decision in 1906 to send the U.S. cavalry to coerce Hopi parents with the threat of removing their children from their communities and sending them to boarding schools. This show of force was intended to intimidate the Hopi into accepting government requests to sign lease agreements allowing access to very valuable deposits of oil,

coal, and a huge aquifer (Ali, 2009). This was met with strong resistance but in some cases pueblo children were sent to boarding schools.

2.9 The Complexity of Boarding School Experience

Taking children away to be raised in boarding schools was often justified to Native parents as a way for their children to obtain schooling; this could be regarded as a transparently self-serving rationale by non-Natives to give themselves cover for a multitude of sins (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2010). Boarding schools in Alaska also had a stated humanitarian rationale of caring for orphaned children. Stated humanitarian motives are examples of rationalizations for insidious asymmetrical power relationships disguising efforts at assimilation (Harkin, 1997).

However, as reprehensible as many aspects were in the history of boarding schools in the United States and Canada, there were also good outcomes: for example, some lives were saved due to basic resources having been made available to students. Nor were all personal accounts by Alaska Natives or American Indians regarding boarding school experience negative (Parker, 1992). Effects of boarding school experience for many Alaska Native persons were not uniformly horrible (Hirshberg, 2008; Hirshberg & Sharp, 2005).

Consensus is a value in all Alaska Native cultures (Oleksa, 2005). This could be a reason for the silence by many Natives on matters of social and political controversy. Alaska Natives as a whole have not demanded reparation, redress of harms and damages, or legal claims regarding the unconstitutionality of taking children from their parents (Hirshberg 2008; Kan, 2015).

However, Alaska Native parents filed a lawsuit in the late 1970s against the State of Alaska for failure to educate their teenage children locally rather than in remotely located high schools. The Native plaintiffs to the Molly Hootch case won the right to have their children educated in their own villages. Those adults who were sent to boarding schools may have felt the Molly Hootch

decision helped to redress the harms done to them when they were taken from their homes as children (Cotton, 1984).

Interpretations of the past are continuously being reshaped as Native people respond to changes in the present (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994). The fact that Alaska Native peoples have not formulated a united statement on their experiences in boarding school leaves comments on the topic to those who are willing to speak about their personal experiences (Hirshberg, 2008). Disparate experiences were had and divergent views continue to exist among Alaska Natives who were sent to boarding schools. As Nora Dauenhauer wrote in *Our Culture*, telling the story of her father's experience with boarding school, "Some children ran away from school, and some ran to school" (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994, p. 71).

2.10 Ways of Knowing and Learning

Views on the nature of reality are varied, and there are multiple ways adults learn from their experiences and construct meaning in their lives (Boud & Walker, 1991; Daloz, 2005; Dewey, 1938; Jones, 1993, 2007; Fenwick, 2003; Greenough, 1993; Heifetz, 1994; Knowles, 2011; Kolb, 2001; Merriam, Cafferella & Baumgartner, 2007). Human beings have a vast potential for different kinds of experiences that can be used for learning. Indigenous ways of knowing are primarily experiential, and so are connected conceptually to mainstream Western research on experiential learning. In this section of the literature review, research by Tara Fenwick (2003) on five forms of experiential learning are reviewed due to their particular relevance to the study's indigenous participants.

Experiential learning is the primary conceptual framework that informs this research with indigenous participants; this orientation is summed up in the statement that, "Indigenous knowledge is unique to given cultures, localities, and societies, and is acquired by local peoples

through daily experience” (Dei, Hall, and Rosenberg, 2000, p. 19). Paralleling an understanding of the primacy of experience to knowledge, participants’ experiences are the primary source of data for this and any portraiture study (Lave & Chaiklin, 1993; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Relevant to any discussion of experiential learning with indigenous learners is the role of relationships and relational ways of knowing in a transformative learning process (Carter, 2003; Greenwood, 2010; Kassam, 2009; Taylor 2000; Wilson, 2008). A relational basis for learning and knowing is directly connected to indigenous worldviews, which include conceptions of reality, values, and ways of knowing.

2.11 Experiential Learning

Fenwick’s first experiential learning focus area is reflection on concrete experience. The concept of *phronesis*, otherwise known as practical, how-to knowledge, is important to understanding indigenous ways of knowing. Phronesis is relevant to people whose lives require them to develop expertise at sustainable activities where actions do not have predetermined or technical solutions, which also includes leadership (Bartlett & Collins, 2012; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Heifetz, 1991, Kassam, 2009).

The conceptual underpinning for the theorizing processes of learning from reflecting on experience is called constructivism (Forman, 2011; Piaget, 1966; Vygotsky, 1978).

Constructivism is usually described as sense making (or meaning-making) and problem-solving through reflection on concrete experiences. Constructivist theory posits that experiential learning is the basis for how persons construct knowledge through processes of reflection on experience. As a mode of knowing, it is individual, internal, cognitive, and personal.

Constructivism encompasses a number of related perspectives, which vary depending on the orientation of the researcher; thus, there are different areas of emphasis in learning (Merriam, Cafferella & Baumgartner, 2007). For instance, there is an emphasis on individual cognitive development in Piagetian constructivism (Piaget, 1966). Around the same time that cognitive constructivism was being formulated as theory and practice, important social, emotional, and relational dimensions of social constructivist learning were developed independently by Vygotsky (1980).

Vygotskyian constructivism acknowledges the importance of language in making meaning, which includes internal self-talk as well as communication and social interaction with others. In Vygotskyian theory, learning is a socially mediated activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky; 1978; Wagner, 2000). In contemporary understanding, both Vygotsky's and Piaget's theoretical constructivist positions appreciate the "...outcome of learning as the development of individual consciousness and self-mastery through a process of reflection" (Fenwick, 2003, p. 24).

Indigenous peoples worldwide face many similar problems in common. Indigenous peoples in regions around the world, especially in the circumpolar arctic and sub-arctic, face environmental extremes that affect their lands (Kassam, 2001, 2009). Native peoples collaboratively build social capital through practices that hold indigenous circumpolar communities together despite their experiencing myriad rapid and devastating social and political changes.

2.12 Situated Learning

Situated learning is Fenwick's second form of experiential learning. Knowledge is not theorized here as something that inhabits or is located in an individual person; instead knowledge

derives from within a nexus of relationships, and is often pointed out by experts or elders. Native ways of knowing emphasize collective knowing and do not privilege individualistic or individual knowing. Learning in Native societies frequently occurs in situated activities where people are learning together within a conceptual sphere of indigenous values, beliefs, and reasons (Kassam, 2001, 2009).

Communities of practice (CoPs) are defined as intentional groups of people who are engaged in the same work; they often form due to the presence of particular problems the group wishes to resolve. Another hallmark of CoPs is that they seek to improve their problem solving abilities, increase their skills over time, and improve at what they do. This is described in terms of situated experiential learning. Communities of practice, with their situated learning experiences, have similarities to ways Native adults typically learn, often by watching and listening in small groups (Lave, 1993; Wilson, 2008).

In Native communities, social interactions among people doing the same work provide important ways groups of people make meaning and come to collective understanding of what they are doing (Graveline, 1998; McIssac, 2000). Indigenous collective learning communities can be very similar in the sense that people are working together to solve problems important to their communities. How indigenous people gather together for a common purpose fits well within the conceptual understanding of situated experiential learning.

Communities of practice are relevant to this study because participants' histories and the contexts of their work as teachers and community leaders are experience-based and practice-oriented. Traditional activities done in CoPs in Southeast Alaska are subsistence hunting and fishing; gathering, preparing, and storing subsistence foods; collecting spruce roots, mountain goat wool and cedar bark for weaving; singing and dancing at Tlingit ceremonial events; or

speaking Tlingit at language camp (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 2004, 1994; Fenwick, 2003; Lave & Wegner, 1991, Kawagley, 2005; McIssac, 2000; Rizal, 2005; Wegner, 1998).

2.13 Reliving Past Experience

Fenwick's third form of experiential learning entails tuning in to unconscious desires and fears. The theoretical underpinning for this form of experiential learning is psychological. What is more, psychoanalytic concepts for framing and making sense of experience are used to inform Fenwick's theorizing. In experiential learning, both conscious and unconscious feelings are recognized as important (Todd, 2003).

An important aspect of this dimension of psychologically grounded experiential learning theory is intersubjectivity, which is defined as interpersonal dynamics related to not only co-constructing knowledge, but also co-creating shared reality constructs. In other words, multiple persons can share an experience that has the same meaning for all of them. In indigenous societies, intersubjectivity is not labeled or necessarily identified as such, but is recognized as an everyday resource for meaning-making in social and cultural life (Tolman & Brydon-Miller, 2000; Cajate, 1994, 1999).

Researchers working with indigenous populations cannot skirt issues related to participants' experientially reliving the past. This is exemplified most poignantly by the experiences of intergenerational grief and trauma. Alaska Native and Native American lives are historically and contemporaneously affected by the long shadow of trauma (Napoleon, 1996). Clinicians working within indigenous communities have observed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms even in children who had not directly experienced any cataclysmic societal changes or traumatic losses of their elders (Braveheart, 1998,1999; Doucet & Rovers,

2010; Duran, 2006). Nevertheless, health workers enumerated many PTSD indicators among younger Alaska Natives and Native Americans.

Puzzled by the intense feelings of guilt, shame, withdrawal, hopelessness, confusion, grief, irritability, and anger experienced by so many indigenous persons, clinicians ultimately determined younger generations were suffering from the transmission of traumas from their great grandparents, grandparents and parents. It has come to them through successive generations. The trauma communicated by prior generations is exacerbated for younger generations by disadvantageous conditions that indigenous people are now confronted by and have to contend with. Intergenerational trauma is identified as a major contributor to social ills facing indigenous peoples in Alaska and the continental United States (Braveheart, 1999, 1998; Braveheart & DeBruyn, 1998; Charles, 2009; Grey, Comer & Freyd, 2005; King, 2012; Lomawaima, 1994; Philips, 1983).

In Tlingit culture, participation at ceremonial potlatch gatherings and naming ceremonies involves interactions where mutual understanding and agreements arise out of the connections people have with places, historical events, and kinship relationships. A sense of being kindred goes beyond familial connections (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994, Thornton, 2012, 2008, 2004). Intersubjectivity is also a relational dimension in portraiture. Interpersonal connections and shared subjectivities of the portraitist and participants are key elements in “building productive, benign relationships” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 135).

2.14 Interrogating Structures of Dominance

Fenwick’s fourth experiential learning focus is on emancipatory learning and critical cultural perspectives that support learners to interrogate structures of dominance. A key component of cultural dominance is power. Interrogations about who have power and how it is

wielded are found in structuralism, and critical and emancipatory learning. To say that non-Native hegemony and structural misuses of power disaffect indigenous people is an understatement (Churchill, 1994; Bodine, 1973; Deloria, 1969, 1991; Elden, 2016; Freire, 2004, Giroux, 2011, 2016; Giroux & McLaren, 1997; Grande, 2004; Kincheloe, 2008). The issue of legal land claim contests between Alaska Native and the U.S. Federal government was and continues to be salient in discussions and actions that interrogate resistance, dominance, and inequality in Alaska (Berardi, 2005; Berger, 1985, 1999; King, 2013; Lazarus & West, 1976; Metcalfe, 2015).

During the '50s, '60s, and '70s, indigenous women struggled with racism and sexism, which were difficult to confront. Forms of discrimination and sources of inequality such as non-Native cultural hegemony remain sources of struggle for indigenous women everywhere. In Alaska, discrimination and inequality are especially significant given the extreme rates of domestic violence and sexual assault suffered by Native women (Hill-Wit, 1973; Grande, 2004; Green, 2007; Green, 1980; Jaimes, 1992; Katz, 1977; Medicine, 1987; Mihesuah, 2003; Trask, 1993).

For participants in this study, who are of mixed Tlingit, European, and Filipino ancestry, issues of privilege, dominance, and inequality are complex. The relationships between Tlingit women and Filipino men are rich areas for more study (Pegues, 2013, Lee, 2005; Omatsu, 1972). The historical and ethnographic research on Tlingit women strongly refutes stereotypes of all Native women as passive and silent (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1987; Kan, 1991, 2015; Klein & Ackerman, 2000). Tlingit women were powerful leaders, dominant participants in trading, effective in clan politics, active in Shamanism, and even active as warriors. Tlingit culture is a matrilineal culture with living roots. The matrilineal clans and the power they once held is now

located in new social structures emerging in language revitalization, Alaska Native art, and Alaska Native corporate businesses (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994, 2004; Kan, 1989; Williams, 2009).

2.15 Complexity and Ecological Learning

The fifth focus of experiential learning, which takes up complexity and ecological learning, is congruent with indigenous ways of knowing, values, and worldviews of natural interdependency (Cajate, 2000). This form of experiential learning aligns with the importance of grounding within place, experiences of emplacement, and the significance of the environment to study participants (Thornton, 2008). It also manifests in a characteristic of indigenous knowledge: the perspective that knowledge exists between knowers, and could be described as an intersubjective quality of relationship (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Tollman & Brydon-Miller, 2000).

The understanding that knowledge does not exist solely in the individual, or as the property of the individual, but rather exists and is known in the interstices of complex relationality, is contrary to Eurocentric views that separate individuals construct knowledge in isolation (Barnhardt & Kawagely, 2010; Greenwood, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Learning this way fits with contemporary research in social constructivism and complexity theory (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Kassam, 2001; Maturana & Varela, 1987; Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2008).

2.16 Co-construction of Knowledge and Collaboration

I was motivated as a researcher to engage in collaboration and co-construction of knowledge with my participants; on the other hand, collaboration directly involves issues of power and crossing borders. Collaboration is a contested area; some believe it is not possible to overcome the gulf between members of white society and indigenous others. Counter to a

classic Hegelian view of the ultimate accessibility and knowability of things, researchers working at the borderlands of cross-cultural research have come to understand that complete knowability and access are beyond one's grasp. There is much that is unknowable or uncertain, therefore, a notion has gained traction that it is basically impossible to learn all the things a non-Native collaborator needs to know to be informed and educated on Native ways (Jones & Jenkins, 2011).

But surely that is too categorical and extreme a position to be supportable. Some things can be learned, some things can be known, and in concert with good will and awareness of self and other, genuine collaboration can occur. But for authentic collaboration to occur, both parties must enter into any such engagement fully voluntarily. In this study, collaborative dialogue is invited between Native participants and me. As a non-Native researcher conducting research with indigenous subjects, conditions to enable collaboration were created, but due to its complex and tenuous nature, it could not be demanded or ensured.

In the academy, much research typically involves learning *about* the different indigenous other from sources separate from research participants, who actually are those indigenous others. This study is not typical, however, because I sought to learn about difference directly from my indigenous participants (Chu, Martínez-Griego & Cronin, 2010; Jones, 1993). This, in my view, is one of the critical values of doing portraiture study.

2.17 Voice

Voice is a multi-pronged construct used to theorize, design, and conduct some forms of qualitative research (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Goldberger, Clinchy, Tarule & Belenky, 1996). Qualitative researchers define voice and “represent its omnipresence and its restraint” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, pp.

86-87). Donald Freeman (1996) offers three nuanced orientations toward perspectives on voice: (a) voice is epistemological position; (b) voice is ideological, socio-political position; (c) and voice is methodological position. The first regards voice as a source for constructing knowledge. The second regards voice as speaking for an intentional purpose, often in protest, or as an alternative to silent collusion (Freedman, Jackson, & Boles, 1983). The third perspective refers to voice as what is recognized through analysis and construed from the data (Carter, 1993; Freeman, 1996).

Indigenous persons' voices are historically and structurally marginalized; Native women and men's voices were silenced, demeaned or ignored. For participants of this study though, experience of voice does not align well with stereotypes of indigenous peoples as silent or inarticulate. As an epistemological position, however, voice has traction in conceptually representing the experiences of many Native persons. Yet an even more nuanced notion holds that indigenous women are not necessarily silent as an epistemologically mute position, but choose to be silent as way of showing respect and culturally appropriate behavior (Goldberger, 1996, Greenough, 1993).

Silencing effected the development of many indigenous women (Green, 2007; Jaimes, 1992; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). However, intentionally self-silencing from a place of respect, or conversely, choosing to speak up, falls into the second orientation of voice, exemplified by participant's experiences of sticking up for themselves, fighting back, and resisting parents or other authorities. This is an area where more research would be welcome, especially in higher education with Alaska Native students.

The third orientation to voice in qualitative research is that of a lens used to examine and interpret the data interviewees provided. This dimension of voice is, of course, as relevant to this

study as the others are. I expose their voices, supportively and through challenge, as well as reveal their voices, by giving them opportunities to represent themselves as experts on their own personal experience in the act of contributing to their portraits (Josselson, 2004).

In addition to these three orientations, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) advance several forms in which voice functions in shaping a portrait. These qualitative researchers use voice as a lens to explore the researcher's multiple roles as witness, as interpreter, as preoccupation, as autobiography, as a way to discern other voices, and in dialogue. This study used a methodology based on an analytic voice-centered relational method to listen for the voices of participants (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinburg & Bertsch, 2003).

2.18 Lifespan Development

Erik Erikson's lifespan development research provides a framework for the data analysis and discussion of the social and political contexts while participants were growing up, constructing their identities, developing generative capacities, and finding meaning in their lives (Erikson, 1978, 1993, 1994; Fenwick, 2003). Erikson's developmental theory is useful for interpreting psychosocial development of indigenous adults due the explanatory power of its elegant system of developmental dilemmas. In his model, developmental challenges involve tensions between pairs of polarities. Self-determination and dependency, or autonomy versus doubt, are conflicts theorized by Erikson as faced by all adults; these are certainly conflicts many Native persons experience in culturally relevant ways. For example, struggling with deciding whether to leave a rural community and move to an urban center while determining what to let go of from one's traditional culture and what to keep, has precise elements of the conflicts and crises Erikson described in his theory of development. There is an acknowledged lack of racial and ethnic diversity in psychology research in general, but Erikson's research with Native

American groups, such as the Yurok in California and Oglala Sioux in Dakota, is perceived as cross-culturally inclusive and relevant to scholars (Sneed, Schwartz, & Cross, 2006).

Erikson's theory is faulted for having an androcentric bias that places men and male interests, preferences, and characteristics at the center of the action; it is also critiqued for its lack of emphasis on relationships and for its omission of an ethic of caring (Gilligan, 1982).

Relationship is an instrumental element in the formation of identity for women and girls, who tend to emphasize the primacy of relationships in ethical decision making processes (Gilligan, Brown, & Rogers, 1990). Erikson assigned the virtue of care to his later stage of generativity, but his description of women's forms of caring is represented as passive and less worthy.

Women are represented in Erikson as readily willing to sacrifice their own self-development; however, there is support for the argument that caring about and caring for others constitutes a basic element of female socialization (Beal, 1994; Gilligan, 1982; Lips, 1991, 2001). In this view, women develop, but in a different way than men do: caring and connection do not foreclose development for women; they drive it differently.

Lifespan researchers McAdams and Kim (2004) connect nurturing and caring activities to Erikson's stage of generativity. Valliant (1977, 2012) calls individuals at this stage in their lives the "keepers of meaning," signaling how individuals in their middle age are also guardians of culture and have the responsibility of passing the torch to the next generation. In this view, such individuals successfully negotiate developmental tensions between positive and negative forces, between going forward and being pulled back that chart the lifespan from birth to death.

Much less is known about how issues and dynamics involving self and other, and self-agency and communion with others play out for Natives, especially those who are gay, as is my male participant. This clearly indicates a need for more research on issues of caring and

connection to others. Plus, there is a need for more critical analysis of institutionalized social-cultural structures that foster sexism and racism and generate socio-economic inequalities for women, lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender persons, and men and women of color (Duke & McCarthy, 2009; Edwards & Brooks; McIntosh, 1988; Pharr, 1997).

Women's socialization plays a role in the formation of female identity, which may mean intimacy can precede identity formation for women (Horst, 1995). Standpoint feminist theories explore, with contested results, whether intimacy must precede Erikson's stage of identity, particularly for women (Sorrell & Montgomery, 2001). This research recognizes androcentric bias in Erikson's theory, however, as a researcher I appreciate that Erikson was developing his theory at an earlier time, and believe that it should not be abandoned, but supplemented with more current theorizing. Scholars critique the androcentrism of Erikson's lifespan framework, yet recommend the model for its beauty and richness (Horst, 1995; McAdams, 1990; Sorrell & Montgomery, 2001). The relevance of Erikson's theory to adult learning and portraiture are important connections to my research.

2.19 Portraiture

Portraiture study explores how human beings are socialized and looks deeply at the developmental trajectories of the lives of participants (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, 1994; Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture lies within the constructivist paradigm. Conceptually, constructivist epistemology is based on the notion that knowledge is socially constructed. People learn through social interactions and make meaning of their experiences with others. Persons also learn from the meanings that stories have for them individually and collectively. Portraiture is a qualitative research method that seeks to elicit from study participants the meanings they make of phenomena they encounter in their worlds (Creswell, 2007).

Because qualitative research is grounded in participants' experience of their worlds, it includes interpretive representations designed to make the world of the participant visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In conducting a portraiture study, a researcher listens not just passively to stories from the participant, but also actively for stories that the researcher helps to identify and shape, even co-create (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture thus fits squarely into the narrative branch of qualitative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Portraiture is also a bridge between rigorous empirical inquiry and the arts (Davis, 2005).

The narrative approach to generating knowledge within qualitative inquiry can take different forms in service to a variety of purposes across disciplines (Chase, 2005; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Personal narratives reveal the sense individuals make of their lives within changing socio-historical contexts (Phinney, 2000). Portraiture study is well suited for research with indigenous peoples, because it relies on the importance of stories. A narrative report of an individual's experiences may be a methodology or it may itself be the object of an inquiry (Pinegar & Daynes, 2006; Polkinghorne, 1995). This understanding clearly echoes Freeman's nuanced perspective on the multiplicity of voice (Freeman, 1996). Either way, narrative accounts chronologically connect participants' experiences and actions or series of actions (Czarniawaska, 2004).

The orientation of portraiture is toward health; it showcases strengths and triumphs. This positive stance makes it a promising research method with indigenous peoples (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983), who are too often portrayed as damaged (Coles & Coles, 1978; Goldsmith, Anvik, Howe, Hill, Leask, Saylor, & Marshall, 2004). Lawrence-Lightfoot articulated her rationale for this view, stating she is seeking "...to formulate a view that recognizes the myriad ways in which goodness gets expressed in various settings; that admits imperfection as an

inevitable ingredient of goodness...that reveals goodness as a holistic concept, a complex mixture of variables whose expression can only be recognized through a detailed narrative of institutional and interpersonal processes” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 25).

Despite vulnerabilities participants may have around mistakes, disappointments, or failures, the portraitist, by being a supplicant learner—that is, by not being an expert—can build trust. A climate of safety can be achieved through respectful listening, power sharing, and learning with participants. In these ways, the portraitist can elicit the participant’s authentic voice and support expression of tender aspects of a person’s identity (Hackman, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1994; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Ngunjiri, 2007; Wilson, 2008).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology

This study seeks to contribute to the literature on adult learning and development with a positive focus on strengths and triumphs in three Native adult persons. Toward that end, my research question asked, “What can be learned from three Alaska Native teachers about successfully becoming educators and community leaders?” Because this question explored subjective human experiences and meanings, a qualitative approach was best suited for this inquiry. My rationale for using the qualitative research approach known as portraiture for this study was that it explores and highlights what is good in participants. The existent research literature focuses primarily on pathologies and problems among Native Americans (Berman, 2000, 2014).

This study seeks to counterbalance that focus on problems. A study with a small sample size such as this seeks to contribute to the literature through rich details, dense context, and personal resonance. The form of research that features such qualities, and is therefore optimal for doing this inquiry, is qualitative research. Qualitative research broadly defined means “[A]ny kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). Quantitative and mixed methods forms of research certainly have their place in the generation of knowledge. However, a qualitative approach is best suited for this task, and portraiture is an optimal fit for my research design (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

This study sought to enhance the fund of knowledge within the field of adult learning and development by illuminating meaning and adding value through the very particular, idiosyncratic, and personal experiences of its participants. To do so successfully would add to

what is known about how Alaska Native adults can be successful as educators and leaders despite their challenges and adverse experiences. Clearly, portraits could make a valuable contribution toward that goal.

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983, 2004) developed the methodology of portraiture; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis (1997) expanded on the initial ideas of portraiture into a rigorous combination of art and science. Portraiture uses a verbal rather than visual medium to create a portrait, hence its name. Portraiture is in-depth study of what people do, how they feel about themselves, and who they think they are; in other words, it is about their subjective identities. Identity is developed within social, historical, psychological, economic, and cultural contexts, among others. All these contexts feature in portraiture, which goes beyond merely obtaining participants' life stories; it explicitly focuses on strengths and goodness in participants rather than dysfunction and pathology. The researcher/portraitist's identity, social historical, psychological and cultural contexts are also fully present and embedded throughout the study in terms of phrasing, emphasis, interpretation, commentary, and so on.

This chapter describes the methodology of portraiture; and the particular methods used to conduct this study. It offers a brief overview of my study, including the type of information needed for the portraits; the research design; data collection methods; forms of data analysis and interpretation; ethical issues; considerations related to trustworthiness; and limitations and delimitations of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

3.2 Research Participants

The study participants are long-time residents of Juneau. All experience themselves as immersed in this place. Two of the three participants were born and raised in Juneau; they are Tlingit, which is the predominant local indigenous tribe. The third participant has lived in

Juneau for most of her life. She is American Indian from the Taos Pueblo in New Mexico, and is married to a Tlingit man.

All three participants have attained a level of success and are widely acknowledged by their peers in the community of Juneau. One participant is lauded for work in continuing the venerable tradition of ceremonial blanket weaving, an exacting and painstaking form of craft that has historical, cultural, and artistic significance. Another participant is heralded for work in cultural preservation and language revitalization, specifically by having learned to speak Tlingit and teaching it to schoolchildren. Given their cultural importance and increasingly vulnerable status in Southeast Alaska, there is a sense of urgency, even desperation, to try to preserve Native languages here. The third participant has achieved a high level of professional accomplishment and inhabits a position of power and leadership in national educational consulting work. The form success has taken for each participant varies, but the fact of it is something they all have in common, and is an important dimension to this study.

3.3 How Participants Were Chosen

Criterion sampling, a means of recruiting persons considered most likely to have rich information to contribute to an inquiry, was used to select participants for this study (Creswell, 2007). Participants were identified beginning in 2012, when I discussed my research project with several Native elders at a regional conference of Tlingit clans. I sought their advice about possible participants for a portraiture study of Native teachers who were also leaders in the community. I described what portraiture research involved and asked them to identify individuals they thought were exemplary teachers and leaders. They identified two persons whose work in the arts and Tlingit language revitalization they viewed as important. Subsequently those two persons agreed to become participants. The elders also suggested a third

participant, a respected leader and educator from Taos Pueblo in New Mexico, whose portrait they believed would make a valued contribution to a study with a focus on learning from local indigenous leaders and educators.

I explained to prospective participants that I would be using a form of narrative research called portraiture. They each agreed to meet to discuss details of the process. I described how portraiture focuses on goodness in study participants and their triumphs (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). I gave each participant a printed copy of a portrait from Lawrence-Lightfoot's book *I've Known Rivers* (1994) as additional information. After answering their questions, reading the statement of informed consent (see Appendix A) aloud, and discussing confidentiality, each agreed to participate in the study.

3.4 Data Collection

Procedures for data collection in portraiture research include recorded informal conversations and interviews of participants, generating naturalistic field notes from observations of participants at work, providing participants with opportunities to read and remark upon transcribed data (i.e. member checking), and collecting participant artifacts and relevant documents. Additionally, the researcher maintains a journal of reflections and observations on all processes related to portraiture research. This section will consider each form of data collection in turn.

Data collected for a portrait begins with in-depth descriptions of the physical environment, including arrangements of furniture, placement of art, and the general ambience of sites where participants work. Participants' appearance, their attire, mannerisms and gestures, facial expressions, body language, and behaviors are all included. Because context is paramount in portraiture, these descriptions help to provide rich layers of information about participants and

what matters to them. My thoughts and feelings as researcher about observed details, recorded in a journal, are also a part of the collected data.

I had at least two informal conversations with each participant that were not based on predetermined interview questions; participants decided what they wanted to talk about. These conversations were recorded. Beginning with informal conversations to “get the story,” is a first step in data gathering (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, and Bertsch, 2003, p. 157). These conversations were open-ended and guided only by participants’ interests.

Based on inclusive and intuitive information gathering in informal conversations, I became convinced that broadening the scope of my interview questions to make them more inclusive would be a good idea. As a result of what I learned in the informal conversations, I decided that the questions I had planned for formal interviews were too narrow, so I revised and expanded them. The revised questions did not strictly conform to Erikson’s developmental tasks (1963) as initially planned, but became more responsive to participants’ life experiences.

By at first formulating my questions based on Erikson’s developmental stages, I followed in the footsteps of Lawrence-Lightfoot (2009). However, after initial informal conversations with participants, I became convinced that my construction of questions based on Erikson’s lifespan stages was too restrictive. I did not reject Erikson as a way to theorize information; generating interview questions about participant childhood, adolescence, and adulthood provided rich empirical and aesthetic data for this study. Nevertheless, my revised line of questioning was more geared toward elaborating on detailed information provided by participants that was not necessarily best organized in keeping with Erikson’s theoretical model.

Adhering to Erikson’s model eclipsed important issues and life themes for participants. Revised questions were formulated that addressed participant self-efficacy, their abilities to

create or grasp opportunities, and how they were affected by social, cultural, and political events occurring at different times. Therefore, interview questions do not elicit information in chronological order from childhood to adulthood. Revised questions are included with initial questions in Appendix B.

After the initial informal conversations, I scheduled four interview sessions with each participant lasting two or more hours. Interviews were conducted at a variety of public or private places chosen by participants based on their convenience. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by me. Once the interviews were transcribed, participants were given multiple opportunities to review transcripts and give feedback on factual matters. Any revisions they requested were made to the data.

I asked participants if they had artifacts and documents they wanted to include about themselves as supporting data. Clarissa Rizal responded by sending a link to her blog and her website. Reading her posts, I learned she was illustrating a picture book for four to eight year olds entitled *Mary's Winter Feast* (2015). She also has a book about her first fifty ceremonial robes. In addition I discovered from reading her blog that this creative and industrious woman had written a handbook about Chilkat blanket weaving. *Jennie Weaves an Apprentice* (2005) is about her teacher Jennie Thlunaut, their relationship, and Jennie's weaving techniques. I obtained copies of both the children's picture book and the handbook on weaving, which I used for data collection purposes along with the blog and website.

Nila Rinehart responded to my request for supporting data by sending me a copy of her resume. From it I learned about several presentations, which were sources of information about her experience, and expand on details from the interviews. Among other artifacts and documents I have collected by or about Nila is an article by Harold Goss Mann, an Oglala Sioux educator,

accompanied by an article by the participant entitled *Another Point of View*. These are in the June, 1989 journal *Child Care Exchange*. The participant also has a book chapter titled Native American Perspectives: Connected To One Another and to the Greater Universe, in *The Politics of Early Childhood Education*, edited by Lourdes Diaz Soto (2000). She also has documentation of a presentation she did on revitalization of language and culture where she presented with other members of the indigenous working group at the World Forum for Early Childhood Education in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in the summer of 2014.

Another procedure for gathering data was to conduct on-site observations of participants, and the field notes I wrote to collect my feelings, thoughts, and reflections. The format I used to make observations was to bisect each journal page into two vertical columns. One column was headed factual information, to record what was seen and heard with no editorial remarks or interpretations. The other column was headed editorial comments, to record my thoughts, feelings, and editorial remarks and interpretations.

The observation process was informal, open, and transparent. Participants were told they would be observed in some situations, for example, a weaving session or classroom setting, and permission to observe was requested and granted. After observations were completed, and first observation column notes were read, I then recorded my interpretations, thoughts, feelings, speculations, and questions in the second column. Observation notes were offered to participants for their comments; any additional comments of mine were likewise checked with participants. Observing Nila, who works out of town in Colorado, was not possible since I was unable to go with her to the Community Design Institute (CDI) in Denver or other sites where she works with her teams. Therefore, I asked her if she would observe herself and keep notes on her perceptions

then share them with me. She agreed to do so, and they have become an additional source of data.

Hans Chester did not have as prolific a selection of artifacts as the other two participants, but provided ample opportunities for observations. I observed him teaching standard elementary school subjects such as math, reading, and writing in his classrooms with third, fourth, and fifth graders. I also observed Hans teaching Tlingit dancing to his pupils, engaging in Tlingit dancing at a community event, interacting with elders at a presentation on Tlingit language camps during a Tlingit clan conference, and interacting with two of his education mentors at meetings and events.

3.5 Data Analysis

The method I used to analyze data gathered from interviews is based on the *Listening Guide: A Voice Centered Relational Method*, developed by Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch (2003). The listening guide follows a pattern used in many forms of qualitative analysis focused on personal narratives (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Voice centered analysis involves listening and re-listening to what a person says in recorded interviews. The listening Guide is “intended to offer a pathway into relationship, rather than a fixed framework for interpretation” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 28). The Listening Guide aligns well with portraiture as a method designed to open a door into the lived world of another person and foster deeper understanding of that person’s inner life. Because relationship is fundamental to indigenous worldviews, the listening guide is particularly suitable for this study.

I listened carefully to each interview for basic elements identified in the voice centered relational approach. Each participant’s voice revealed her or his inner world. For example, I listened for how resonant a participant’s voice was, not in terms of acoustics, but in how voice

was imbued with qualities such as conviction, passion, and fidelity to personal, social, and culture commitments. How the voice of each participant resonated was marked by that person's history and culture. Each participant's voice embodied culture and relationships with self and others. It was through this process of reading and listening for different voices, that I, as portraitist, heard how each person's multiple voices related to each other and understood how they combined into a coherent whole.

The listening guide is composed of several steps designed to help the portraitist listen to participants' interview narratives to foster deeper understanding of underlying meanings, subtexts, and perhaps even the essence of what they meant in what they said. The first step is listening for and getting the story. I followed the suggestion of Gilligan, et al. (2003) to start with informal conversations with participants. This was helpful in establishing a relaxed approach within the comfort zone for indigenous participants and consistent with their relational cultural mores. Subsequent interviews were conducted with an informal quality as well, but without losing sight of their purpose as means of gathering data for the portraits.

The portraits themselves begin the voice centered analysis process. Given the fact that there is usually a separation between conducting an interview and analytic processes such as coding, this is clearly a departure from the norm. In light of this, it is important to emphasize that in voice centered relational analysis, the portraits themselves comprise the first part of the analysis. That this is methodically unconventional is duly noted. The practical upshot is that the chapter five analysis starts with the second step of the voice centered analysis method.

The second step was listening for self by identifying first-person participant I-statements and then creating I-Poems. In this step of the analysis, I-statements are understood to reveal what the participant knows, thinks, and feels about him or herself. Listening for a sense of how

others affected participants' selves based on what others thought and felt about participants was also part of the process.

The third step, listening for contrapuntal voices, involved listening for views that provided counterpoints to each other, as in a musically complex composition. This meant the researcher noticing tensions, contradictions, or discrepancies in what participants said. This step in the analysis was informed by earlier work of Gilligan, Brown, and Rogers (1990), in which the researcher listens for three kinds of statements that reflected conflict, caring, and justice in relationships. When re-listening to and re-reading the interviews, I included listening for those three elements within the third step of the voice-centered analysis. After repeated instances of listening, each with a different emphasis, the final step involved generating researcher interpretations within the analysis.

3.5.1 Step One: Getting the Story

I read and re-read written data at least three times to foster a deeper understanding of the researcher's response to the interviews (Hackman, 2003; Gilligan, et al., 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Ngunjiri, 2007). I also attended to the multiple contexts within which participants' stories were embedded (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). The main point of reading and re-reading the transcribed data at least three times was to hear what stories participants were telling as a way of getting at the plot, or the basic arc of the story. I paid special attention to surrounding contexts in addition to the content of each participant's story; this included listening for the attitudinal tone and my overall impression of the person who was talking. I did not code for specific words in the transcribed data, but listened for themes and significant statements, which I highlighted using colors to visually track and group statements and themes that were similar or identical.

Gilligan, et al. (2003) advised the researcher to pay explicit attention from the very beginning of the process of analysis to her own feelings, reactions, and responses to what is being said. This advice follows the reflexivity principle of noting my own social location in relation to participants, the nature of our relationship, and each person's emotional responses to the data (Manthner & Doucet, 1998). It is noted in the Listening Guide that a researcher is not, and cannot be, a neutral, disinterested observer, which conforms to my own perspective on the matter. Consequently, I documented my responses to what was said in a journal and by attending to the notes made in margins of transcribed data (Bell & Waters, 2014; Carlson, 2010). This was congruent with advice from Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis (1997) to pay close attention to the presence of the researcher's voice.

3.5.2 Step Two: I Poems

The second step in the listening guide is the creation of I poems, which were created from each participant's transcribed interviews. I attended carefully to participants' first person statements to hear how they spoke about themselves and what they know about themselves. Then, as per suggestions by Gilligan, et al. (2003), I constructed I poems by combining first person statements from participant interviews. Some I poems were short; other I poems were longer.

I color-coded to distinguish between the content and context of participants' I statements. The colors were used to identify statements that have a distinctive rhythm, tone, and cadence, the identification of which helped me to think about the context in which these statements existed. As portraitist, I reflected on what participants' first person statements meant. For example, I asked myself if their I statements strongly voiced a position of confident autonomy, or a position that was more tentative.

As researcher, I observed two rules prescribed by Gilligan, et al. (2003) in the creation of I poems. The first rule was to underline every statement that begins with “I” along with the verb and any other words that seemed important (Gilligan, et al. p., 166). The second rule was to adhere to the sequence of the phrases as they appear in the text, and let the I statements fall naturally into place as an I poem. Thus, one of the valuable uses of I poems was to pick up the associative stream of consciousness in the participants’ language. This moved the aspect of subjectivity into the foreground. I poems from participants are in Appendix C.

3.5.3 Step Three: Listening for the Contrapuntal Voices.

The third step of voice-centered data analysis was listening for contrapuntal voices, which Gilligan, et al. (2003), believes brings analysis back into relationship with the research question. This step is critical in identifying relationship of dissonant voices to each other. This step suggests listening to the interview with increased appreciation for complexity, much as a person would listen to a piece of classical music, for sounds of individual instruments emerging within rich orchestration. I identified individual voices by statements that speak to relationships where conflict, caring, or justice was present. Statements that had one of these elements often were in relationship to another element; for example, concerns with conflict and justice pointed to a participant’s strategy for self- or cultural-preservation.

This whole process was iterative. Listening several times for contrapuntal voices produced a large amount of data to be managed. I kept track of each voice with an ear to the subtle meanings and complex perspectives of the myriad of voices contained in each interview. Each re-reading or re-listening offered an opportunity to hear and identify emergent themes and how they converge and diverge from each other. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) emphasized the importance of not ignoring voices that deviate from the norm or split off from

the main narrative thrust. Vigilance by the portraitist to discrepant or discordant perspectives created the possibility to “use anomalies heard in many voices, for a more reflexive analysis of perspectives that are outside the trend” (p. 191-192).

3.5.4 Step Four: Composing an Analysis

After articulating the plot, creating I poems, and highlighting contrapuntal voices, the final step of the Listening Guide process is composing the analysis. As Gilligan noted:

Although listening for one voice at a time in earlier steps can illuminate different aspects of a person’s experience as expressed in an interview, these separate listening must be brought back into relationship with each other to not reduce or lose the complexity of a person’s expressed experience (Gilligan, et al., 2003, p. 169).

The portraitist composes each participant’s portrait. The portraitist returns to the research question that began the inquiry to finalize the study findings. Gilligan, et al. (2003), suggested that researchers doing portraiture ask what they have learned through this process and how they have come to know it, and what evidence their interpretations are based on. From an indigenous perspective, it is also important to ask how creating the portraits enhanced relationships, and whether the information collected fostered relational accountability between participants and myself as the portraitist.

Interpretations of the interview data were again searched for statements with significance and relevance to relationships, and what had been learned from the entire process as it relates back to the research question. Returning to the research question throughout this process enhanced what I have come to know related to the participants’ experience.

3.6 Ethical Issues Working with Indigenous Study Participants

Protocols have been developed and articulated by Native researchers and Native community members for non-Natives doing research in indigenous communities. The research guidelines developed by the Alaska Federation of Natives is one example of such a protocol (see Appendix D). Māori scholars have developed much stronger protocols for non-Māori researchers who want to conduct research within Māori communities (Chacon & Mendoza, 2011; Cram, 1997, 2001, 2009; Smith, 1997, 2003; Smith, 1999, 2007). Central to both of these guidelines is the principle of doing no harm.

The principle of doing no harm means adhering strictly to respectful consultation and involvement when doing research with indigenous peoples. In order to minimize the potential for research to do harm, a researcher must practice self-reflection and vigilant awareness of biases and subtle feelings manifested as an emotional tone or attitude (Jones & Jenkins, 2010). This requires a willingness to be vulnerable and to engage in an open process of sharing with participants so they have opportunities to critique and make corrections in any misunderstanding or misconstrued information.

The academy has various requirements for the protection of research participants and their communities. I spoke with each participant about informed consent and provided consent forms, which they signed after being given an opportunity to make any desired changes. We discussed confidentiality, participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time, implications that the study may have for others related to them, the process of my making observations and their potential ramifications, and my responsibilities as researcher. It was critical that each participant was fully informed about details of all aspects of portraiture research. The participants understood that the letter of informed consent would be periodically

revisited to ensure their continuing agreement with it. If it is necessary for participants to obtain consent from anyone else, participants can reproduce the informed consent letter.

It has been noted by indigenous scholars that the criteria developed to protect participants have also been developed to protect the academy (Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2008). Criteria addressing participant confidentiality and anonymity are well established in the academy, ostensibly with good intentions. However, it is important to understand that these requirements can be antagonistic to the principles of relational accountability among Native American peoples.

Because appropriation of indigenous knowledge, stories, songs, and artifacts by non-Natives has been so commonplace in research, participants must have access to the researcher's documentation, observations, and collected materials to ensure indigenous knowledge and property are not appropriated (Smith, 1999). If there were conflicts concerning compliance with protocols for doing indigenous research where stories or property belonging to a clan were at issue, permission would have been sought from clan leaders for their use. This has not been an issue, but if permission was needed and not obtained, any related names, songs, stories, and artifacts would not have been used.

Participants were given a timeline for interviews, observations, and when they could expect to receive transcribed interviews. The length of time allotted for conducting interviews and reading transcribed data was clearly discussed. A schedule for conducting interviews, their approximate length, and processes for sharing interviews for member checking was established but kept flexible. Understanding of the need for flexibility was maintained through frequent telephone contact and emails between the participants and researcher.

3.7 Credibility

Views on rigor, validity, and reliability have been deeply influenced by inquiry within the natural sciences. Quantitative research relies on communities of experts to critique, evaluate, and advise the wider community about the value of research (Moustakas, 1994). In quantitative natural science research, for instance, a review process by a community of professional, academically certified, scientific peers establishes or denies empirical validity to research (Polkingthorne 1995). That kind of research seeks to be free from emotional content and contextual influences or ambiguities inherent in human interactions. Therefore, quantitative research takes pains to deliberately screen messy dimensions of human experience out of experimental research settings.

The value of portraiture methodology is assessed using a different metric than quantitative research. Research rigor is addressed through combining artistic representation along with empirical data gathered from interviews, observations, and artifacts. The elements creating portraiture arise through the blending of art and science. The art is in creating a rendering of the empirical data in an aesthetically pleasing or at least engaging way. Portraiture is not phenomenology in the purest sense, but the portraitist works to achieve something like an essence or at the very least a resonant expression of participants' experience.

Indigenous peoples find authenticity and believability more important criteria for deciding if research is meaningful and useful than objectivity and emotional detachment could ever allow (Lincoln, 1997). Community and relationships are fundamental to deciding the value of research (Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson 2008). For example, a community of sea ice hunters, fishermen, or woodlands hunters and gathers may not have academic credentials; nevertheless,

they comprise communities of practice with hands-on expertise and can assess the worth of research to their enterprise.

In indigenous communities, elders and individuals who have established themselves as medicine men and women, hunters, whalers, fishers, weavers, skin-sewers, or persons with knowledge of plants and childrearing are recognized as experts. Just like with communities of indigenous persons, social science participatory action researchers are not and cannot be free of context (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Kassam, 2009). Qualitative research using an indigenous paradigm relies on relationships within a community of participants to critique, evaluate, and advise about the value of the research to their community.

The way that credibility and authenticity were attained in this qualitative inquiry was by soliciting continuous input, including feedback on drafts and by checking interpretations and construed meanings with the participants (Wilson, 2008). This checking and rechecking could be described as a form of active listening to participants. I also attended to my feelings to see if they had changed (Kassam, 2009). Sending transcribed interviews to participants did this, as does staying in touch regarding what participants were thinking and feeling about the transcripts (Castellano, 2010; Flyvbjerg, 2001).

The paradigmatic assumptions under-girding this study are experiential learning and social constructivism, because they fit well with indigenous ontological worldviews where the basic nature of all things is relationship. Within experiential learning and social constructivism paradigms, it is recognized that human beings have multiple realities about what is true or valid (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mishler, 2000).

In this study, participants make what matters in their lives visible to the researcher, and to their wider Native communities. Credibility in portraiture is largely based on the response to the

portrait from the participants and readers (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Research participants and readers from their communities will optimally determine what is truthful and of value in this inquiry as much as academic researchers (Castellano, 2004; Graveline, 1998; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2008).

That participants were significantly involved in the process of engagement could be seen in our frequent interactions on the questions and emergent themes found in the portraits. There are multiple sources of data, for example, interviews, observations, and collection of available artifacts from participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The evidence from member checks suggests that my biases, whether positive or negative, have not influenced how participants' views are portrayed; therefore, I have succeeded in keeping my biases from distorting or eclipsing data. Readers can determine for themselves whether they believe I have been faithful and consistent in monitoring and managing my subjectivities.

Participants' input on the truth or falsehood of what was written about them is fundamental to our relationships; they played a large role regarding how the portrayed data addressed my research question. Whether participants agreed or disagreed with the transcriptions and interpretations, when they elaborated, clarified, or refined some phrasing, there was a transparent process for assuring the veracity of intended meanings.

Chapter 4: Portraits

4.1 Individual Portraits

Clarissa Rizal

Clarissa Rizal was born in Juneau, Alaska of Tlingit and Filipina ancestry. Clarissa is a renowned weaver of ceremonial Chilkat blankets, which are robes that have complex designs of cultural significance to Tlingit clans; she also weaves an even older robe design called Ravenstail. Additionally, she is known for her traditional Tlingit button blankets made of heavy wool felt and worn at events as diverse as Tlingit dancing, weddings, and graduation ceremonies. Clarissa's Chilkat weavings and button blankets are in museum collections and displayed in public buildings. She also creates contemporary paintings using acrylic and watercolors that incorporate the traditional Northwest Coast Native aesthetic called form line design. She is the founder of Art Stream, a non-profit collaborative arts organization for indigenous artists. She is a mother of three children, and a grandmother of seven.

My first formal meeting with Clarissa was at her friend Margie's house on Douglas Island, across from Alaska's capital city, Juneau. Clarissa wanted to meet early to get things done, starting with our meeting. The east facing windows of Margie's house look out on Gastineau channel, a waterway separating Juneau from Douglas Island. The channel is cerulean blue, and the room was flooded with warm yellow sunlight.

Clarissa was wearing a grey and white-striped t-shirt with a long shirttail over comfortable grey cotton knit pull-on pants. She looked stylish yet casual at the same time. Her long earrings are silver with sky blue and yellow stones set in the shape of flower petals. They were eye-catching and I found myself glancing at them frequently. Clarissa has long luxuriant

dark brown hair with some threads of grey; this morning her hair was loose and flowing down her back. Clarissa at age 59 radiates energy and youthfulness.

Clarissa's Chilkat blanket loom was set up with a Chilkat weaving started on it. Clarissa travels with her loom, which weighs little and fits into a traveling case she has designed. With my tape recorder, notebook, and pen, I sat down in a sunny spot and we began. Clarissa started by talking about her family:

I am Filipina on both my mom and dad's sides of the family. My mom's dad, Juan Sarabia was Filipino. There was a lot of intermarriage among Tlingit women and Filipino men from the late '20s to the '50s.

Clarissa was speaking here of changes in Tlingit society's social structures. Juneau, like many of the racially mixed larger towns in southeast Alaska, has a large Filipino population. As traditional clan structures for determining appropriate marriages weakened, intermarriage occurred with Filipino or white men and men from other Alaska Native tribes that Tlingit girls met at boarding school. Clarissa gave more background information:

My grandmother Mary Wilson Brown was married to Paul Brown, a Tlingit man. Paul Brown died and she married Juan Sarabia. Juan was my mother Irene's father. My mother, Irene follows her mother's moiety and clan, which is *Taak'dein taan* (Black footed Kittiwake) from Hoonah. I am also Raven, *Taak'dien taan*. Grandpa Juan Sarabia was from the Aklan province, Philippine Islands. He left the Philippines with the United States army in 1918.

The surname "Brown" is an example of how names were imposed on Natives by non-Native employers or Protestant church missionaries during the first part of the American period (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994; Thornton, 2008; Lomawaimia & McCarty, 2006, indigenous

names were too difficult to pronounce for the foremen and business owners in the canneries and other places where Tlingits worked, did business, or worshipped.

Clarissa's father, Bill Lampe, was born in Manila in 1929. Bill Lampe's father Frederic was from Minnesota of German decent; he was a medic in the US Army during the Spanish-American War. Frederic married Patricia Rizal, first cousin of Filipino revolutionary hero Jose Rizal. Bill Lampe's family experienced terror and upheaval when Japanese invaded the Philippines in the early 1940s. Bill's family was forced to flee their home in Manila and live in the jungle. Frederic and Bill were imprisoned and, after his father hoisted him over the prison fence with the order "Run for your life," Bill never saw his father again. Patricia and her family lived in the jungle for several years, successfully avoiding capture by the Japanese.

In 1945, after the end of WWII, the Lampe family immigrated to Seattle, Washington. The first time Bill saw Irene Sarabia was in the Seattle area when she was singing in the Sheldon Jackson boarding school choir. During a choral performance, Irene claimed that Bill called out to her, "I am going to marry you someday!"

After graduating as valedictorian from Sheldon Jackson high school, Irene moved to Juneau from the Native village of Hoonah. She worked as a waitress and married a white man with whom she had two boys. Eventually she and the man divorced and then Irene went to work at a cannery outside Hoonah in Excursion Inlet with her parents.

Bill Lampe came to Kodiak, Alaska in 1947 to work in the salmon fishing industry. Later he moved to Southeast Alaska to work at the Excursion Inlet cannery; Mary and Juan Sarabia worked there too. Bill and Juan were both from the Philippines; they became fast friends. Filipino cannery workers' solidarity was notable in that they unionized and were able to

successfully negotiate for better wages than had previous Asian groups who came to Alaska to work in the fish processing industry.

Bill met Irene again when they both were working in the Excursion Inlet cannery. They got married in 1955, just as Bill predicted they would years earlier. The Eagle/Wolf clan in Hoonah, later adopted Bill Lampe so that he would appropriately be of the opposite Eagle/Wolf moiety and of a different clan than Irene. Clarissa, her parents' first daughter and second child, was born in 1956. Two other children were to follow for a total of four born to Bill and Irene. They became a family of eight, counting the two boys from Irene's previous marriage, whom Bill adopted.

Meanwhile, the Lampes continued to work at the Excursion Inlet cannery during summer months through the late 50s and '60s. Clarissa described these summers in Excursion Inlet as a lot of fun:

The families lived in cannery shacks. The shacks had two rooms; we only slept there, because we played outside during the day unless it rained hard. We ate in a big mess hall. Kids all played outside on the beach. The older kids took care of the little ones.

It was not unusual for Clarissa and her similarly aged cousins to be responsible for younger children. Cannery work took long hours for the adults as they processed fish after it was unloaded from fishing boats. Part of Clarissa's early experience from ages three to six was not unlike those of children in many parts of the world, where capable, responsible children care for younger siblings, often for the better part of a day. Clarissa's early persona was energetic and can-do, a child who played well, led the pack, and was admired by other children's parents. She explained:

All the other parents would say, ‘We want our boys to marry Clarissa!’ This was because I was energetic and helpful.

Clarissa’s portrayal of her parents during her childhood was generally positive, especially regarding her mother’s sense of humor and her father’s generosity:

One of my vivid memories was my dad coming home with a wheelbarrow full of salmon. He filled up the bathtub with fish, and then he gave everyone in the neighborhood some. He believed that sharing was the most important thing in life. My dad was a generous man.

Sharing, especially food sharing, and reciprocity, are key cultural elements among Tlingits and values shared by Clarissa’s father. Such altruistic behaviors maintained and nurtured social structures in communities. Bill’s generosity was notable and helped him fit into the Tlingit culture he had married into, however changed from the old ways it had become.

Her mother’s sense of humor was also an asset. In Clarissa’s online blog there is a photo of Irene and Clarissa looking at a scrapbook of favorite jokes. Irene loved telling jokes and would laugh at them uproariously. Their sense of humor was a shared highlight between Clarissa and her mother.

Yet the full story was more complicated. Clarissa disclosed some things that made it hard:

Sometimes my mom was not very nice to me. She would say, ‘You are good for nothing.’ I didn’t know it was not okay for my mom to say these things to me and didn’t have words for this, like ‘abusive’ or ‘wrong.’ It was just mom being mad. It wasn’t until I saw it happening to someone else that I thought it was not okay.

Much cultural devastation had occurred during Irene's childhood, which destabilized societal structures that provided cohesiveness and safety, plus personal and community wellbeing.

Mixed-race children and sometimes Tlingit wives of Filipino men were not accepted in either Filipino or Tlingit communities. Clarissa acknowledged there was a lack of acceptance by some people within their communities. What Irene said to Clarissa must have reflected her own experience of being judged while growing up.

But Clarissa couldn't rationalize away the hurtfulness; she simply felt the sting of Irene's words. Part of her pain was in the discrepancy between what she knew to be true and her mother's characterization of her. One day after school Clarissa went to where her mother worked, stood in front of her desk, and confronted her. Clarissa described what happened:

I said, 'Why are you lying? How is it possible I can be good for nothing when I take care of the kids and make sure the house is clean?' Mom was embarrassed and would not talk to me. She did not say she was sorry.

Clarissa also raised economic issues pertinent at that time. Her parents provided for the essentials needed to live but not much beyond the basics. This was felt by Clarissa as an absence, a lack. One privation Clarissa experienced acutely was not having her wish granted for a piano. Every year into her early to mid-childhood, she went with her parents around Christmas to the Elks Lodge in Juneau to see Santa Claus. Clarissa explained:

I asked Santa for a piano year after year and I never got it. I did not want a lot of things as a child. What I wanted was a piano; I wanted a piano the earliest I can remember, when I was very little. If I saw a piano I just had to go play on it. I knew nice people had pianos and I thought I must not be nice enough for Santa Claus to bring me a piano.

Clarissa represented herself here as a child who did not want—except for this one big thing. Her self-representation of willingness to go without yielded to an expression of a concentrated yearning, a raw need. On the surface this was about having a piano, but it could also be construed as something deeper, of wanting the feeling of being good enough to be part of an accepted group. For a family with six children, providing basics was a significant demand. But for Clarissa, not having a piano meant she wasn't good enough.

Clarissa also described her dad's favoritism toward her younger sister Jean as a form of unfairness and source of emotional pain:

I confronted my dad, but that did not change anything. I grew up in a family structure and society that were patriarchal. My dad had patriarchal attitudes. He couldn't help favoring Jean. She was his favorite child. Dad would say Jean is the pretty one, and he made no bones about it.

Clarissa accepted her dad's favoritism of Jean with resignation, having reasoned that he had no choice but to favor her, as if it was not of his own volition. Clarissa rationalized that there were circumstances beyond his control, which provided her with an explanation for his behavior. Later in her life, she figured that patriarchal attitudes within society and in her family were probable causes of this form of familial unfairness.

In the face of these wounds suffered at the hands of her parents, Clarissa retained some equanimity. She expressed a sense of her parents' humanness by shrugging her shoulders, as if to indicate that good in people always goes with bad. Given her current understanding, Clarissa does not judge how her parents were then, and she has forgiven them. Clarissa stated plainly: 'They did not know any better.'

As Clarissa grew older, married, and had children of her own, her relationships with her mother and father mellowed. They made peace between themselves and the unfinished business from their past. But lest it be misconstrued that Clarissa has emerged completely unscathed by experiences of shaming from her mother and the misfortune of not being favored by her father, she does carry scars. She elaborated:

It is funny how we can play out our whole adult lives with all sorts of pain, remorse, and regret. If we live long enough we can let these things go. I want to let go of all this by the time I am 60. I want to be free. I want to be able to forgive all this. It is a weight to me. I wear it on my face.

Clarissa is nearly sixty now, nearing her stated age for at least substantially attaining peace of mind and a sense of resolve relative to old wounds. While she has not achieved such emotional healing, there is a sense that she has traction toward that goal. She can, for one example, provide for herself what her heart desired but she had to do without so long ago.

Clarissa laughed when she said that she has a piano now, one she bought from people she knew in Pagosa Springs. She talked about buying the piano with a breathless, awe filled voice as she pretended she was speaking to the piano sellers:

‘You mean you are selling your piano?’ as though the piano were a person, then intoned in a matter-of-fact reply to her query, ‘Yes, we can sell the piano. It is something we own and we can sell it.’

It is also something she could purchase and own, because she is now willing and able to fulfill a desire that surely goes beyond wanting to establish that she has the trappings of a nice person and therefore must be one. Perhaps it also means that she can take care of herself beyond the basics; that she can provide for needs pertaining to thriving, and not just surviving.

Our next meeting was at the Juneau Public Library. I arrived with tape recorder, tablet, and waited with a thermos of tea in a soundproof conference room. Clarissa arrived wearing an olive green jacket of iridescent material. It has an interesting construction with a longer back, lots of zippered pockets and snaps. Clarissa's clothing choices reflect her artistic sensibilities and appreciation of beautiful materials and aesthetic design. I began by asking about what Clarissa remembered about unfairness and prejudice when she was in school. She replied:

I don't know; I don't think in those terms. My parents did not talk about being Tlingit or Filipino. They did not talk about politics or race. They wanted us to fit in, to assimilate. Talking about this brings up things...I think back to when I applied for a summer job with the state. I was in high school and Dove Cull was interviewing me [Dove was a well-known early advocate for women's rights and child protection services in Alaska]. She asked me, 'Are you Alaska Native?' I responded that I didn't know. She said, 'How will you know what you will do and who you will be, if you do not know who you are?' I did not have a strong sense of myself as a Native girl or a Filipina girl or of wanting to be like my parents then. I did not have a context or any language to respond to Dove's question about who I was.

It is easy to imagine that Clarissa's parents' minimized their ethnic origins in an effort to fit into the white man's world because they did not want to invite the discrimination meted out to non-white persons even in the best of circumstances. Having minimized their ethnicity, it would only be normal for them to extend the minimization to their children. It was, of course, natural that Clarissa would have the worldview of her parents, at least until she was aware of it and could decide to modify or reject it. Clarissa suggested an explanation for her mother's complicated relationship with her cultural heritage:

My mom saw a lot of devastation and torture when she was growing up. She saw her culture go away, all of it! None of it now is like it was.

Clarissa was not raised with an Alaska Native or Filipino identity. On the other hand, she now strongly identifies herself as Alaska Native, and more specifically as a Tlingit artist.

Clarissa spoke in a low voice about her parent's perspective:

Mom spoke Tlingit fluently, but she said she did not teach us because she was in the generation that was punished for speaking their Native language. She did not want us to suffer the way she had. Mom loved to speak Tlingit and to listen to elders. She was also a member of the Russian Orthodox Church because the service and songs were in Tlingit. Mom assimilated, she worked very hard not to have a Native accent; and she succeeded. Mom made it in the white world, and wanted us to make it in the white world. She wanted us to have good paying jobs and retirement pensions; what all parents want for their children, what she wanted for her life. I regret that I cannot speak Tlingit now as I have a disadvantage connecting with weavers and artists who are elders. But I can see my mother's point of view. I would do the same thing.

Clarissa's rising consciousness occurred slowly, but seems to have been inevitable. Her growing awareness of racial discrimination began in middle school and accelerated during her time in high school. She said:

I didn't realize until middle school that I was discriminated against. Native kids were not encouraged to excel. I was very angry when one of my teachers in 8th grade gave me C+ in English, which prevented me from taking a foreign language the following year in high school. Students had to have a B in English to take a foreign language. This teacher knew I wanted to take a foreign language. I talked to her about it, but she would not

change my grade; I think she wanted to cut me down a peg. But I didn't get a C grade in any other classes. I was not a C student!

Exposure to race-based politics in high school influenced Clarissa's choices and direction for her work as an adult. It was the early 1970s and the Alaska Native Land Claims Act, which had passed in 1971, changed things economically and politically for Alaska Native peoples. High school was a crucible for developing Clarissa's consciousness of what to do about bias and prejudice. She explained:

I was not very conscious of the meaning of prejudice until I was in high school. There was a lot of prejudice in high school in the '70s against Native kids. I was learning about oppression and racism from reading Akwesane Notes, a Mohawk tribal newsletter. Harry K. Bremner Sr., who was from Yakutat, gave me a copy of Akwesane Notes. Harry was a Tlingit elder who became my friend and mentor. Reading this newsletter gave me words for my experiences and perceptions. I was all fired up and excited about changing things that were not right or fair. I got involved in racial politics. Nobody talked about it then and people barely talk about it now. I became angry because I realized that I had been discriminated against throughout my schooling.

Clarissa was radicalized in high school. She was angry about unfairness, which led her to becoming involved in racial politics. In the 1970s, awareness and organizational efforts increased in the local Native community about problems such as the high dropout rate of Native students in the Juneau high school. There were increasing levels of support for Native students who were vocal about injustices facing the Native community, though a broad community initiative for anti-bias education in Juneau was still lacking. But Clarissa's political activism had a price, one too high for her to bear: her health suffered during that time in high school. She

attributed her health problems to her political engagement, and decided to forsake her involvement rather than sacrifice her health. Clarissa chose to channel her energy into her art.

Clarissa's life also changed in other ways during those fateful years in high school. Prominent among those changes was the one that followed her having met a boy whose life became fused with hers for many years. Clarissa began dating Bill Hudson when she was 16. She described it as a defiant act, and a romantic one:

I met Bill Hudson when I started high school. He had come to Juneau to visit a cousin whose family owned Hudson's, the best shoe store in town. He was a blond and blue-eyed California guy. My parents did not want me to date Bill. They really tried to discourage me from having anything to do with him.

All married members of Clarissa's family had wed persons from other cultural or racial backgrounds, so that should not be a plausible reason for their animus. Maybe it was that Bill wanted to pursue a career as an artist, which her parents felt was an unreliable way to make a living. Regardless, Bill and Clarissa's romance culminated in marriage after they had both graduated from high school. Clarissa became pregnant, and when their first child was born, Clarissa was 20.

Clarissa married Bill Hudson against her parent's wishes; they also did not approve of her pursuing a career as an artist. Being an artist was not going to provide a regular paycheck and a retirement pension. Clarissa's manifestation of herself as an artist linked in marriage with Bill was her assertion of independence. It was an act of separation from her family and an expression of her developing identity.

Clarissa's sense of self was blossoming. In going her own way, she started to travel down a path her father did not take himself, despite having had a desire to do so. Clarissa's

father Bill was talented at drawing; he had wanted to pursue art as a career but was discouraged by his family because it was considered an unreliable source of income. Choosing art as a way of making her mark on the world was at this time not yet fully realized as her path, but Clarissa's direction was set.

Pregnancy was also a way for her to make her own path, which she did despite not receiving blessings from her family. Clarissa editorialized sharply:

When my parents found out I was pregnant and was going to marry Bill, they tried to talk me out of it. They said, 'You don't have to be married for the child,' but we got married anyway. Most people now think 20 is too young to have a baby, but you don't grow up until you have a child.

Clarissa could be construed as throwing down the gauntlet with her parents by asserting that she was old enough to have and care for a child. Motherhood may have foreclosed options for her: a new baby might not have made it easy for her to get a good job with the state of Alaska and start building her retirement account, both of which Clarissa claims she would have been very happy to have done. But there are always tradeoffs in life, and whether explicitly considered or not, Clarissa was ready to proceed with a family, come what may.

Meanwhile, Clarissa had decisions to make. When she graduated from high school in the mid-1970s, Clarissa had planned to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. But being married to a white man caused Clarissa to fear hostility from other Natives at IAIA, which resulted in her decision not to attend IAIA following graduation from high school. Clarissa detailed the circumstances:

I decided not to go to IAIA at that time. My cousins there warned me of militant members of AIM (the American Indian Movement) at IAIA who were rough on Natives with non-

Native spouses or lovers. I was aware of prejudice and violence happening in places where there were a lot of politically active Native Americans. I knew there would have been a lot of prejudice toward me if I had gone there with a white guy. The fact that he was my husband would not have made any difference. It would have been very bad for me.

Several decades later, in 2009, Clarissa returned to AIAI and obtained a BFA.

Conditions were much more amenable to her going then; the tenor of her life and of American society had changed considerably. But that is getting ahead of the story.

Clarissa and Bill stayed in Juneau and started a printing and sign making business. Having a baby and running a successful local business made remaining in Juneau a rational choice. It was very important for Clarissa to pull her own weight in her marriage with Bill and their small business endeavors. Clarissa also possessed sewing skills, which enabled her to make money while staying home with her baby. She and Bill ran their printing and sign business for several years. They had a second child, their first daughter Lily, when Clarissa was 23. Clarissa chalked up the vicissitudes of the life she has lived since she went her own way as being attributable to her choice of husband:

If I had not married Bill, I would have gone to work for the state and had a conventional life.

There is a tension in Clarissa's statement: a person could work for the state and create art too, but people have only so much time and energy. Clarissa followed her own star, which was a source of vitality and pride; she also identifies strongly as an Alaska Native artist, and there are few to no state jobs with as many opportunities for making Native art as prolifically as Clarissa does now.

Clarissa seemed to indulge here a little in a fantasy of the path not taken, of an alternative reality of her being a conventional state worker. This is not a simple matter of apples and oranges, state worker or artist. Many young adults in Juneau felt proud not to be state workers. After decades passed and their values had changed, many persons regretted missing out on the perquisites that state work would have given them, such as retirement with a full pension and extensive health care coverage for life. But for many in Juneau, avoiding state jobs was *de rigueur*, a sign of their higher aspirations.

At our last meeting before she departed for Yukon Territory, Canada to teach a weaving workshop, Clarissa was wearing a striking knit tunic with black traditional Tlingit form-line designs on white fabric. She is a small woman, but she exudes style, and her presence is large. Perched on a stool behind the counter at Alaskana Botanicals, her friend Jan's store, which sold salves, tinctures, and healing preparations made from native Alaska plants, Clarissa was spinning wool by rolling wool and thin yellow cedar bark strips with a spinning mat on her thigh.

We began our discussion of her apprenticeship in becoming a weaver with Jennie Thlunaut. Clarissa motioned me toward a chair she had moved closer to the counter. She began:

I'm ready to talk about learning to weaving Chilkat. I'll sit here and spin while we talk; I need something to do. I don't think Chilkat blanket weaving was part of my family history, but in my mom's family there were women who were excellent bead sewers.

Clarissa had mentioned several times that a history of bead sewing in her family provided a jumping off place, so to speak, for her eventually learning the art of Chilkat weaving. Working with beads has an aesthetic relationship with making button blankets, however minimal, and it is also a touch point for Clarissa to connect what was done modestly in her family with the more elaborate work of weaving Chilkat robes she learned as an apprentice to Jennie Thlunaut.

Clarissa then said, with somewhat of a wry twinkle in her eye, the idea that Chilkat weaving chose her:

I think Chilkat weaving *seduced* me to go to Haines and learn to weave.

No seduction was needed to get her to go to Haines; Clarissa loves Haines. She took a fateful trip there that began with an invitation to attend a weavers' workshop organized by Jan Steinbright, the director of the Institute of Alaska Native Arts. In 1985 Jan contacted Clarissa because she had taken a Ravenstail class taught by a famous non-Native Canadian Ravenstail weaver, Cheryl Samuels, who taught summer classes at the University of Alaska, Southeast.

That summer in Haines, Clarissa attended a gathering of 18 women from all over southeast for the purpose of learning to weave Chilkat robes with Jennie Thlunaut. Clarissa confided:

What Jan did not know was I really had no interest in learning to weave Chilkat.

Clarissa laughed and explained:

This is funny, because the reason I did this was because I would get an all expenses paid trip to Haines. I love Haines and would do just about anything to get up there. I love Haines because of the light. It is for the same reasons I love the Southwest: there is warmth and light. Haines's weather is sunnier than other parts of Southeast Alaska. Getting a free ride to go to Haines where I wanted to buy land and live was my motivation to attend this workshop.

Clarissa did not have any idea at the time how important learning to weave from Jennie Thlunaut would be to her. Jennie, who was 95 years old when they met, was a very famous weaver who had woven many robes and tunics. It appeared to Jennie that the art of Chilkat weaving was dying out. Clarissa filled in the details:

When I was invited to the Chilkat weaving class, I was the youngest woman in the group. It was an unusual situation, since women usually learn to weave Chilkat from a relative. Jeannie Thlunaut, who was from Klukwan, a Tlingit village on the Chilkat River, made an exception to the traditional way women learned to weave Chilkat. Jennie Thlunaut was known as the last of the master Chilkat weavers. Jennie was very tiny, spunky, and alert. Her nickname was ‘Strong coffee.’ I liked her immediately.

While we talked, Clarissa rolled white wool into balls and continued with her story:

After I left Haines and returned to Juneau, I got a phone call from Jennie’s daughter Agnes Bellinger, who said Jennie and I are coming to Juneau tomorrow and Jennie wants to weave with you. I was dumbstruck and I had to put everything on hold to do this. Bill thought I should do it and stepped up to care for the kids. This time was intense and I spent 8-10 hours a day weaving with Jennie. We wove a pair of Chilkat leggings together. When Jennie got ready to leave and go back to Haines Jennie said, ‘Clarissa, you are the one. You are it.’ Her words did not really sink in. I did not really understand the implications of what she was saying.

Something happened in Juneau that was far bigger and stronger than seduction or wish fulfillment. Clarissa could be said to have received a bestowal or transmission of lineage in Tlingit Chilkat blanket weaving. At the time she did not realize she was receiving the mantle from Jennie, yet that is what happened. Clarissa was essentially ordained to teach Chilkat weaving.

But she did not start doing it right away. After Jennie Thlunaut died, Clarissa moved with Bill and their children to New Mexico where they lived for several years. Meanwhile, up in Alaska, Clarissa’s parents were clamoring to see their grandkids, especially the newest, Ursula,

whom they had not yet met. Bill too wanted to visit Southeast Alaska. So Clarissa, who was reluctant to leave the warm, clear light of the southwest, decided to come back to rainy Southeast for an extended visit.

Clarissa described an intuition she subsequently experienced while in Juneau that, along with a providential offer via telephone soon thereafter, clarified her path:

We had been in Juneau a little over a month. It was Labor Day, and September is usually a very rainy month in Southeast. I was outside in the early evening and it was raining. I was praying, please, give me something that will help me, something that will tide me over, something to keep me going, until I can get back to the Southwest. My inner voice, my spiritual guide, or as I call it, my left-hand corner, said, '*Chilkat weaving.*' I had not been weaving for quite awhile. I was puzzled and went to bed. I woke up at eight the next morning and received a telephone call. It was from Elizabeth Hakiinen, who was at the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska. Jennie Thlunaut had posthumously received a National Arts and Humanities grant from the Smithsonian. The grant was to pay for teaching Chilkat weaving, and they wanted me to be the teacher. I was to teach Chilkat weaving to Jennie's four granddaughters. I fell to my knees and cried. What made the experience so powerful was that I already had the message from my left-hand corner. This was a powerful validation. I knew I was meant to do this.

Despite her openness to providence and this answer to her prayer, the prospect was daunting. Clarissa is confident, but not overly so. To be too convinced of her ability would have meant she was arrogant, which she is not. Clarissa described how she felt:

I was very thrilled and also very scared. When I was working with Jennie I never thought of becoming a teacher. I had not woven anything for three years and had never taught

before. I fantasized about incorporating what I had learned into costume design and putting the designs into modern day clothing. I wove leggings with Jennie. I was young and wide open. After the weaving with Jennie was over, I was planning to continue learning with her but she died. I was sobbing but I knew that I was meant to do this.

Clarissa told a story about a dream she had after she finished her teaching project that illuminates her role in the Chilkat weaving tradition:

I was in a pale yellow room with women who were all weaving. Marie Ackerman Miller, a weaver and a Tlingit Elder, was in my dream. She died after Jennie. In my dream every time she would see me she would say, ‘We are counting on you Clarissa! We are counting on you!’

When Clarissa first started to teach Chilkat weaving, even after the spiritual instruction she received from Jennie and Marie Ackerman Miller, she only had personal and practical reasons for doing so. Clarissa explained:

After I learned Chilkat weaving, I was weaving to put food on the table. I was not seeking an identity as a weaver. It was a means to an end.

With that statement, Clarissa raised aspects of weaving Chilkat she felt some conflict about. She is responsive to worldly needs and obligations, yet Chilkat weaving comes with clear and unambiguous spiritual demands independent of worldly concerns. The Chilkat weaver has to do it all: weavers are still responsible for and engaged in all the usual tasks of living.

Traditionally, weaving Chilkat was done outside the context of a cash economy, nevertheless her teacher Jennie spoke of a relative paying so that Jennie would learn to weave. Jennie also was paid to weave robes, and had strong beliefs about saving the money and not spending it quickly. Clarissa has used it as a way to make a living from her earliest involvement

in Chilkat weaving, though only from occasionally selling robes and blankets; she charges for weaving classes. She sells her goods in the lucrative markets for Native art, but Clarissa is also increasingly concerned with upholding traditions she received from her teacher. Among the clans there was a strong prohibition to selling a Chilkat robe, because a robe is *At. 'oow*, clan property.

The clan traditions have diverse cultural aspects that guide the teacher. Some of those cultural aspects are explicitly spiritual in nature. Clarissa articulated it this way:

To teach Chilkat weaving you have to abide by the spiritual laws that your teacher has passed on to you. Jennie had rules. One of her rules was if you start weaving when you first get up you should not eat anything, only drink water, tea, or coffee. When you weave, you have to be a pure vehicle, because if you aren't, you pass your impurity into the robe and it can negatively affect the dancer wearing it.

Due to her dual relationship with it, a tension runs through Clarissa's sharing of Jennie's beliefs about Chilkat weaving as a sacred art. Clarissa has said that she does not want to weave to make robes that are for sale, yet her button-blanket robes can be seen in galleries selling for stunningly high prices. These conflicting elements of spiritual and worldly concerns are never resolved by Clarissa, but coexist side by side. It does not seem like a particularly troubling predicament for her. She sells some of her work and gives some away too. It could be said that she dances with the dilemma.

As time passed and Clarissa's teaching experiences accrued and deepened, a larger commitment developed in her. Her view of her role ripened, and the meaning she made of everything reflected her growing commitments to teach. Her commitment was not merely to the specific teaching lineage of Jennie Thlunaut, but with weaving as her vehicle, to teach traditional

Native culture, which cannot be separated from Chilkat either in theory or practice. Clarissa articulated how this feels for her:

Now thirty years later I will have kept my promise to Jennie that I would stay aligned with the goal to revive the Chilkat weaving tradition among my people. I knew I had to make time to teach people. I am happy that I am able to share Jennie Thlunaut's traditional style of weaving.

Clarissa segued to her beliefs regarding what was personally valuable to her about weaving Chilkat. Here is what she said about how it benefited her directly and indirectly:

In some sense, when you are a weaver, you surrender to your weaving. It gives you strength and you learn your boundaries. It was weaving that kept me afloat emotionally and financially during a very hard five-year period.

This period of upheaval and transition began for Clarissa when her long-term marriage ended and three family members died. Clarissa explained,

Within five years I got divorced, my parents died, and then my oldest brother Robert died. My parent's deaths were very hard on me, and my brother's death was hard to accept, as he was not able to fully live out his life.

Clarissa's marriage began to disintegrate when her renown as an artist was increasing. Clarissa described a change in Bill's interests and direction in life from art to politics; she characterized some of what had happened as due to Bill's ego getting the best of him.

Bill became involved in small town politics in Pagosa Springs. All the political maneuvering and attention went to his head. He wanted a divorce and I gave him the divorce; working things out didn't seem possible anymore.

The dissolution of their marriage was a blow to Clarissa's pride and was accompanied by a sense of failure. Divorce seemed to negate all they had accomplished together. Our conversation about her marriage and divorce ended with:

I co-created my life with Bill. It is unresolved because there are no good feelings between us. I can resolve this for me and in me, but as long as it is unresolved in him, the bad feelings are unresolved.

This situation feels less like unfinished business and more like another tension that is just part of her life. It is something she can live with.

Meanwhile, Clarissa's weaving and teaching continued to gain momentum. Her teaching schedule in Alaska is busy, with weaving workshops and follow-up gatherings with women who had previously learned weaving from her. I asked how people find out about her weaving workshops. Clarissa replied:

I don't advertise for students, they find me. I put my teaching calendar in my blog so people know when weaving workshops will be offered, but that is all I do. I usually do not teach white women, although presently I am involved with a group of non-Native women in Portland. They are re-weaving a Chilkat apron together. When it is finished it will belong to the Portland Art Museum.

Coincidentally, it was a white woman student who first heightened Clarissa's consciousness of Chilkat weaving as a sacred art. The student revealed to Clarissa what she was doing at that time, showing her that she was indiscriminate and overly generous toward her students. Clarissa explained:

I just wanted to teach everything I knew, but my student pointed out how unrealistic it was to think I could or should teach everything I knew. This woman was well educated.

She was from a wealthy family. She had seen Chilkat blankets and wanted to learn how to do it.

Clarissa described this white woman as a person who was open and wanted to learn, which characterizes a good candidate for becoming a Chilkat weaver. This woman's position as supplicant learner, one who comes asking for the teaching, turned out to be a consciousness raising experience for her teacher. Clarissa continued:

I taught her to weave using Jennie's fingering technique. She went ahead in a committed way and finished a small robe. When she finished her robe we talked about her experience of the process. She amazed me by talking about the sacred aspects of this ancient art for her. She taught me a lot. I did not have her awareness and understanding of the sacredness of what Chilkat weaving involved.

What really influenced Clarissa was this woman's choosing to limit herself based on her understanding of Chilkat weaving's cultural and even sacred value. Clarissa elaborated further:

She decided to not continue to weave Chilkat. She stated, 'I am not part of the culture it comes from. I cannot continue to weave Chilkat because I believe the process and important meanings of the art should be kept within the culture. It is critical this not die out within the Tlingit culture. I do not see how as a non-Native my weaving Chilkat robes would increase Chilkat weaving within Tlingit culture.' She had experienced the process as sacred.

After this encounter, Clarissa decided not to teach Chilkat to non-Native women unless they are married to Alaska Native men and sympathetic to their husbands' culture. As a result of the awakening occasioned by that conversation, Clarissa realized:

I don't want to teach women who will compete with Native weavers and have no connection with the culture.

So, by creating a set of conditions that would have to be met by prospective students, Clarissa endeavors to keep the practice of Chilkat weaving alive within the culture of its origins.

Clarissa has learned some hard lessons and made hard choices. For example, there have been times she has decided not to teach Chilkat weaving to Alaska Native women. She has made that difficult choice at times because she believes there are rules dictating student conduct and behavior that must be respected when practicing Chilkat weaving. When students have flouted those rules, she has refused to keep them as students.

Those rules, for example, involve prohibitions on using the color red in Chilkat weavings, weaving an anatomically correct human hand with all five fingers into a robe, and weaving one's name into a robe. It is taboo to do these things. These strictures are rigid, but aspects of them have evolved over time as the traditional practice has become more lenient. For instance, there are symbols that can be woven into the border of a robe that become the weaver's unique signature, and a weaver can weave hand shapes with two fingers and a thumb, or three fingers, but not the whole human hand with five fingers. Even Clarissa's teacher Jennie Thlunaut did not adhere to the strict tradition of only teaching relatives when she began to teach Clarissa.

To make it clear that she isn't perfect and has made mistakes, Clarissa told a story about violating Chilkat weaving taboos:

When I started weaving Chilkat, I was arrogant and determined to do my own thing. I had a logo I used for my landscaping business card. It was a hand holding a flower and I started to weave this design into a Chilkat apron. Jennie yelled at me, "No hands." This embarrassed me in front of all the other weavers, and Jennie did this more than once.

Clarissa seemed to be saying that she had to learn the hard way; her ego had to be tamed. This is significant, as it illustrates the importance of submission when involved in a practice based on learning from a lineage of teachers. People within the lineage can have their own unique voice, but are wary of dangers to the integrity of the form; consequently, they guard against compromising or diluting traditional teachings. This is also about the capacity to surrender to a teacher and to rules and requirements held by the lineage; in this case, to weave Chilkat from what Jennie taught.

Focusing on the importance of individual achievement, and viewing knowledge as something belonging to an individual is a Euro-American conceit. Non-Native weavers or Natives who have adopted Euro-American values might consequently find submitting to a teacher cultish or conceptually alien, not to mention difficult for their egos. Submitting to a teaching based on indigenous ways of knowing values and honors a teacher for her relationship with the past, with ancestors and ancestral knowledge. It may be difficult for the uninitiated, but doing this can pay dividends. Clarissa is convinced of the capacity of this traditional art to transform persons, including herself—perhaps especially herself. She said this about it:

Chilkat weaving is strong medicine. It is more than a technique or an art form. It is raw, untainted, pure power. Chilkat has taught me patience. Before I was a weaver, I had no patience. If I could not do something in a day, I wouldn't do it. After learning Chilkat, I gained the art of patience, the way of gratitude, and the action of compassion.

Clarissa sometimes said that Chilkat had saved her, and other times that Chilkat would kill her, but there is no ambiguity in her position on the meaning of weaving Chilkat. Her position is that there is no room for ego in Chilkat and subsequently there is no place for students or apprentices who will not follow its traditions and rules. Clarissa stated:

I love Chilkat and it loves me. I do this for love, and for the people who taught me. I do it for the love of humankind. I want people to be healthy.

Clarissa paused. She sighed, walked around with her arms crossed, and sat down.

Clarissa then articulated another basis that she found within her family history for becoming a weaver, that of shamanism:

There are a lot of things about how I got involved in becoming a Chilkat weaver and a Native artist that are not easily understood. I don't think there were ceremonial robe weavers in my family but I learned there were a supernatural element and a connection to shamanism in my family.

In traditional indigenous cultures shamans accessed extra-sensory information as oracles and healers. In the process they became meaningful sources of suggestive and resonant information. In Tlingit culture, women who were recognized as having a certain healing disposition, with strong intuition and a felt connection to the spirit world, sometimes became shamans. Clarissa, it perhaps goes without saying, was open to dimensions of reality beyond what is accessible through rationality and logic.

When Clarissa would say that Chilkat weaving chose her, alluding to a spiritual or supernatural reason for why she weaves, it is not at all far-fetched to call it a personal origin-myth. There are stories in Tlingit culture about women marrying or becoming impregnated by an animal. The animal, such as a bear, is usually symbolized in the crests of the clans. Such notions need not be taken literally to provide resonant extra-rational meaning for things in life that defy ordinary explanation. In this view, Clarissa's main role was to be receptive enough to submit to the call of Chilkat weaving, to let it impregnate her.

In traditional indigenous cultures, shamans were conduits to the spirit world and as such, potential sources of health and healing. Their connections to the spirit worlds were, however, capable of engendering both good and ill. A shaman could employ accessible energies and forces as a blessing or a curse. Clarissa believed that the latter understanding might help explain part of the cause for the following circumstance.

When living in New Mexico after her third child was born, Clarissa went to see a Guatemalan medicine man, analogous to a shaman. She had hoped he would have an alternative explanation for why her youngest child was different than the other children in ways that did not fit any known disability. Clarissa intuited that there were traditional ways of comprehending difference that would resonate for her.

The Guatemalan medicine man told Clarissa her great grandmother was engaged in shamanism with a Tlingit medicine woman. According to this medicine man, her great grandmother had made agreements about her work and commitments as a shaman, but failed to carry them out, with negative long-term consequences. Clarissa explained:

The story I told you about my visit to the medicine man were related to Chilkat weaving and me. I had come to understand how Chilkat could help other women. Shamanism is not part of Tlingit culture now, but when shamans were part of Tlingit life, they were our connection to the spirit world and were healers.

Clarissa visited the Guatemalan medicine man because she thought there was a connection to her pregnancy and the Tlingit myth of the woman who married the bear, and wanted to get an arational or supernatural perspective on it. There is Tlingit cultural lore about women being married to or pregnant from an animal spirit. These myths are ancient and complex. One common rendition of this story tells how a woman accidentally stepped in bear

shit and then spoke disrespectfully about bears. She was subsequently seduced by a bear (cleverly disguised as a man) and taken in marriage as atonement for her slander. Clarissa was unaware of any disrespectful behavior in her family toward bears but for some reason believed there was a connection worth illuminating, so she made inquiries with a source she thought might have something to say about it. Clarissa elaborated:

I went to the medicine man to see if he had any ideas why Ursula was different. He put it very simply: Ursula has Bear spirit. That I named her Ursula is coincidental—I didn't know the Latin root of Ursula came from *Ursus*, which is *bear*. Ursula was not sick; she was and is a healthy person. I say she was different in a Native way. He told me that my great grandmother Mary Phillips made some kind of pact with a woman shaman. The shaman said, 'If I do this [something for Mary Phillips], when your granddaughter grows up she will become my apprentice.' The medicine man told me, 'Your great grandmother [later] decided she did not want to follow shamanic ways. She became a Christian and then had a stroke. She was taken out of the picture.' The medicine man also said, 'The [spirit of this] shaman wanted your daughter; you were supposed to die when you gave birth.' It is true that when I gave birth to Ursula I was bleeding to death. My placenta was attached and would not come out. I was helped by another medicine man from Kotzebue (Alaska) who helped me deliver the placenta.

Clarissa's great grandmother's granddaughter is Clarissa's mother, and in terms of its proper sequence she does not factor into this specific narrative about a woman shaman being cheated of what was owned to her. But the fact that the chronology does not match is irrelevant, because the significance of all this does not reside in its rationality or lack thereof.

Clarissa stood up and unfolded her arms. She trained her warm brown eyes directly into mine as she made this declaration:

Hearing from this medicine man about my great grandmother, I decided my role was to teach others to weave Chilkat the way Jennie taught, with her standards and her spiritual guidelines. My role is to adhere faithfully and respectfully to Jennie's spiritual teachings. In this way I will fulfill the agreement I believe my great grandmother was not able to keep. Chilkat weaving is my medicine; I will continue to teach and use what I have been given to help others to learn this art.

Clarissa did not begin weaving Chilkat with a conscious commitment to an ancient, myth-infused art, but this commitment developed over thirty plus years and is now strong in her. Her identity as a weaver is complete; it is not just what she does, but who she is. Clarissa's mother Irene expressed this when she said to Clarissa years ago that nothing now is like it was then and people pretend now by play-acting. Irene was only part right: some things are still the same, and she would have her daughter to thank if Irene were still around to thank her. The way that Clarissa responds to the challenge to be authentic and not pretend is by upholding traditions of practice, maintaining connections between past and present, creating beauty, and cultivating dynamic relationships between herself as teacher and her students.

Hans Chester

Hans Chester was born in Juneau of Tlingit, Aleut, and Norwegian ancestry. He has two sisters; Dora is older than he and Jessica is younger. The siblings range from their middle to late thirties. They were all born in Juneau; Hans and Jessica live in Juneau now; Dora lives in Yakutat. Both Dora and Jessica have children.

Hans, at age 37, is one of the youngest fluent speakers of Tlingit. He learned to speak Tlingit when he was getting a Bachelor's degree in Social Science at the University of Alaska, Southeast (UAS). He later got a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) for elementary education, also from UAS, and teaches early primary at the Glacier Valley Elementary School. In addition to teaching Tlingit culture in public school and summer Tlingit language camps, Hans helped form a language club open to adults in the community who want to study Tlingit.

Hans agreed to meet at my house on a weekday. It was summertime, so he was free in the early afternoon. Hans announced his arrival with a knock on the front door; as is customary in Alaska, he let himself in and took off his shoes. Hans is over six feet tall; his hair is black and he has dark eyes. His handsome face was open and warm. His eyes sparkled with intelligence. He was casually dressed in khaki pants, with a plaid cotton shirt open at the neck. We crossed into the dining room, where I sat with my notebook and pen.

Our first meeting was informal; I did not have prepared interview questions or a tape recorder on the table. He seemed relieved that we were not doing a formal interview. I warned him with mock gravity that I will be doing interviews later on, and stressed that portraiture is like creating a painting of a person with words. Hans has a big infectious laugh and used it now. He said:

I love to talk about myself; I am not used to being interviewed though.

We talked about what we will do together, then I suggested we meet again after he had a chance to read one of the portraits I had given him from *I've known Rivers: Six Portraits of Black Professionals*, by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (2004). It was my hope that by reading it, Hans will get a sense of what a portrait can be.

Our next meeting was in his classroom at Glacier Valley School. It was late August and school had started, but this morning Hans had a couple of hours with no students. We had agreed that visiting his classroom was a good way to get a sense of him as a teacher.

Hans greeted me warmly and brought me an adult-sized chair. His 2nd and 3rd grade classroom is full of Tlingit cultural artifacts and photos of Tlingit elders. While his is not designated a Tlingit language immersion classroom, Hans speaks Tlingit with his students every chance he gets. Tlingit word diagrams are posted throughout the room with information on correct pronunciation. The walls were covered both with historical photos of Tlingit in traditional regalia, and wearing western clothing from both past and present. There was also a large photo of Elizabeth Peratrovich, the beautiful Tlingit civil rights activist who fought racial discrimination and ultimately helped to pass the Alaska Civil Rights Act, ending Jim Crow for Alaska Natives in 1945.

Hans's students' artwork was attractively matted and displayed throughout the classroom. He was dressed casually, wearing jeans and a maroon sweatshirt of iridescent fabric. Hans looked a little harried, and said there is always too much for him to do. As he rushed around in the classroom, he commented that in the beginning he did not know why he became a teacher. However, there was an incident in his early childhood he thought destined him to teach Tlingit language and culture.

When he and his sister were pre-school age, their parents took them to the regional Gold Medal Basketball Tournament held every March in Juneau since 1947. All villages and towns in Southeast Alaska have teams that compete in this tournament. Natives and non-Natives alike come from all over Southeast to root for their teams and see relatives and friends from other

villages. For Hans's mother, Esther, it was a time to connect with her Yakutat relatives and friends.

At one of the games Hans had a fateful encounter with one of his elderly relatives. Hans recounted it as a shameful experience that nevertheless evoked a sense of deep resoluteness:

Because we lived in Juneau, I did not know our Yakutat relatives very well. During halftime and between games mom and dad would visit with people, and we'd walk around in front of the bleachers. Mom would tell my sister and me, 'Your aunties and uncles are up there,' and she would point up the bleachers. 'Go up there and say hello to them.' Mom kind of forced us on them; she was adamant that we needed to greet them. I would complain, 'I don't wanna climb up there. I don't know them.' But she insisted and made us climb the bleachers and say hi to these old people who smelled funny and talked in Tlingit. The elders would speak Tlingit and laugh. One of my relatives was talking to me in Tlingit and then he said in English, 'You are not a Tlingit unless you can speak your language.' When he said that, I felt ashamed that I did not know Tlingit.

Hans believes that he was destined by this elder's words to become a teacher of Tlingit. Hans elaborated:

When my relative said 'You are not a Tlingit if you don't know how to speak your language,' I thought I should know it. One of my philosophies of life is things happen for a reason; and this had the impact on me of thinking that I should know Tlingit!

Hans heard these words when he was a young boy; an intention grew in him from then on, but he only began to learn Tlingit in earnest when he was in college.

Speaking Tlingit is a special bond Hans shares with his younger sister, Jessica. Hans and Jessica both learned by studying with Tlingit elders. Dora, Hans's older sister who lives in

Yakutat, is not a speaker, but is learning Tlingit and teaching it to her children. Hans expressed his philosophy about this:

By speaking Tlingit, Alaska Native children learn their history and culture in deeper ways. Language and culture are tied together. If children learn who their clans are, and the names, myths, and stories associated with the land, they will know more about the places where they are growing up, who they are related to, who their ancestors are, and more about their culture, and who they are.

What Hans meant by learning in deeper ways is that speaking Tlingit has a lot to do with the experiential, sensual knowledge that has been shared for generations about food resources, hunting and gathering traditions, geographical and liminal places, in short, cultural knowledge about the physical and storied environment. Hans lamented that he and Jessica are distant from the land in the sense that neither of them lives in a Tlingit speaking community where relationships with land, water, birds, fish, and wildlife are a vital and yet ordinary part of daily life.

However, Hans believes that by speaking Tlingit he, Jessica, and other Tlingit learners are not removed from their culture the way so many young Alaska Natives are. Being a Tlingit speaker enables Hans to connect with those persons, now elderly, whose first language was Tlingit, and who learned their culture along with their language. Being steeped in their cultural environment, elders have the greatest implicit knowledge of culture, and are therefore prime resources for increasing language fluency and cultural knowledge for Hans. Thus, speaking Tlingit for Hans is more than revitalizing a seriously endangered language with only 80 or fewer speakers; keeping the language alive is about keeping Tlingit culture alive.

Being able to communicate in Tlingit was also important for Hans on a personal level, because it was a way for him to validate his identity. Tlingit elders questioned the legitimacy of his claim to being Tlingit due to his not being able to speak the language, and, even more, to his grandmother not being Tlingit. Hans explained that his grandmother Dora Takak was an Aleut woman from Perryville, Alaska, far to the north and west on the Alaska Peninsula.

When Hans's grandfather, John Williams, was sent to Mt Edgecombe hospital in Sitka to recover from tuberculosis, he met Dora, who was also convalescing there. John Williams married and brought Dora home to Yakutat after they were released from the hospital; some of his traditional relatives did not approve. Yet others did, and subsequently an elder from the opposite Raven moiety, and Coho Salmon clan adopted Dora. In this way Dora and John's six children followed their mother in that moiety and clan. This ensured they would be clan holders and able to marry within the traditional clan structure.

Nevertheless, some of the old timers knew Dora's origins in another Alaska Native tribe, and initially held that against Hans. Hans explained:

Technically I am not considered a Tlingit by some, because my grandmother was Aleut. Those old Tlingits were hardcore; they thought children should be one hundred percent Tlingit ancestrally or they were not Tlingit at all. Later, when I was older, I was at a *Koo.eéx* and one of my elders said to me, 'You are no Tlingit.'

Hans understood, due to the matrilineal emphasis in Tlingit culture, that the elder's pronouncement was connected to Esther's mother being Aleut. Though the elder's statement was dismissive, it did not alienate Hans or deter him from identifying as Tlingit and learning the Tlingit language. Native persons who do not speak their ancestral language often say how that has cut them off from elders and the knowledge elders hold. When Hans learned the language

and started to speak it, his relationships with Tlingit elders improved dramatically. Once Hans was able to communicate with Tlingit elders in their language, understanding between them was possible and their acceptance of him was virtually assured.

Nothing can be done to change his grandmother's ancestry, but that fact can be mitigated; traditional Tlingit elders who strictly hold to purity of matrilineal lines of descent within clans are not so quick to dismiss him now that he has become a Tlingit speaker. If real Tlingits speak Tlingit, according to this logic, especially given how few speakers of Tlingit there are, Hans's bona fides as a Tlingit cannot be doubted now.

The disparagement of Hans by the elders could also be construed as reflecting despair and anger about loss of language and so much else of importance to their Tlingit culture. Tlingit persons who are elderly have had numerous experiences of hearing their language and themselves as speakers demeaned and derided. They have had to endure white missionaries describing Tlingit language as sinful and ugly, as a language so limited that so-called higher Christian thought could not be expressed using it. The arrogance expressed about Alaska Native languages by whites revealed their ignorance and ethnocentricity. Such racist attitudes and behaviors are common in colonizers, with expected effects on the colonized.

The elders' pain, anger, and anguish is understandable, yet in disparaging Hans's cultural affiliation, they disregard the richness of Hans's connection to people and places from Dry Bay village in the Yakutat Forelands, later Yakutat; in short, his ancestry. Dry Bay itself is significant in Tlingit history, and Hans has a direct personal and family connection with this place. Hans's great-grandfather John Williams was from the Tlingit Eagle moiety, Thunderbird clan. He was a man of status, accomplishment, and wealth. John Williams was Emma Marks's maternal uncle. Emma Marks was a high caste woman also from Dry Bay and her daughter;

Nora is a renowned poet and translator of Tlingit oratory and aristocratic elders' life stories.

Nora Marks Dauenhauer, now an esteemed elder herself, is, along with her sister Florence Marks Sheakley, a Tlingit language teacher with whom Hans has studied.

As a child, Hans learned bits and pieces about his ancestry from his mother, who grew up in Yakutat in the late '50s and early '60s. Hans acknowledged his connection to his Tlingit ancestors and the place they lived is through his mother. He described it this way:

I have a strong connection to Yakutat because of my mom. It seemed like every day my mom would say, 'You are a Raven Coho from Yakutat.' Or, when we were in Yakutat, 'That is your grandfather's house down there.' I never saw it. I could not see anything down the shoreline; it was too misty. Mom would say, 'They stayed out there until they got their fish.' I think it was part of the oral tradition mom was raised with. The house mom was talking about was named 'Far Out House.'

The people of the Far Out House, Hans's ancestral clan house, had moved into the larger town of Yakutat long before Hans's mother was born. However, the significance of the clan house in Dry Bay is still very much alive. Their clan was located in one of the largest villages in Dry Bay. Many myths, stories, and fables of Raven's activities are situated on the Yakutat forelands where Dry Bay is located. The name and the creation of the Far Out House, also translated as Raven's Repository, is from the Raven cycle stories. In Tlingit mythology, Raven is the creator of the world; in one story Raven possesses magical power. That magical power was demonstrated when Raven pulled a canoe loaded with animals and fish from far out in the sea to the place near Dry Bay where the Far Out house was located.

Another important myth for Hans was the story of the Raven and Sculpin (a kind of fish). This story is specifically connected to Hans's great-grandfather and shamanism. Hans said:

I woke up this morning thinking about shamans. One of my great grandfather's names was *Seita'an* and he was shaman of his clan. Auntie said we were descended from shamans.

After the American purchase of Alaska, shamanism was only practiced in remote northern villages of Southeast Alaska, like Klukwan and Yakutat, where it continued secretly into the twentieth century. In the larger villages, closer to towns heavily populated by non-Natives where Christianity had a strong foothold, shamanism was considered evil and had been eradicated by Protestant missionaries and by the US military.

Hans's great-grandfather's role as a shaman was different from the kind of shamanism practiced when Russian fur traders first arrived in Alaska. Shamans were initially very visible, and openly observed characteristic purification rites and rituals situating humans in a cosmology where everything was interconnected and alive. Shamans were part of clan social structure; key figures in every clan, they were crucial to ideas of maintaining balance and reciprocity with the spirit world. However, at the time Hans's great-grandfather practiced shamanism, he had to be secretive about it. He had to appear like every other adult Tlingit male, and had to make use of his shamanic tools, such as a mask, in private.

Hans pulled out a photograph of a mask that belonged to Hans's great-grandfather, John Williams. The mask is called the Sculpin, or Pleiades, mask. Hans's connection to this mask is associated with the context of place, in this case including even the star constellation Pleiades, and the history of Hans's family. Hans explained:

This mask is from my great-grandfather's grave house on the Akwe River in Dry Bay. The story associated with this mask is that Raven wanted Sculpin to stay near him because he coveted Sculpin's ancient age and sage knowledge. Disingenuously, Raven

argued that he was older and wiser than Sculpin, who was having none of it, and ran away. Angry Raven tossed Sculpin up in to the sky, where he became the Pleiades.

Clan names are associated with places Tlingits traveled to, where hunting and gathering were done over long periods of time. This helps explain the significance of the Pleiades to Hans's ancestors, who traditionally used star constellations to locate important places. People's names, place names, and clan names are all associated with important cultural events and food resources in the geographical context. This way of integrating language with culture, history, and place are among the reasons knowing Tlingit is so important to Hans.

My next meeting with Hans was again in his classroom. We spoke at length on grief and loss. Hans described his environment as a young child and later as a school child as filled with grief. I raised with him the topic of intergenerational grief among Alaska's Native people. Many current social ills suffered by Alaska Natives are attributed to devastation from multiple epidemics caused by introduced pathogens, the degradations of colonization, and intergenerational grief. Hans confirmed that colonization and its degradations did affect his mother and her family, filling them with grief and despair. Hans gave a sense of that:

Our life at home was filled with a lot of grief. My mom's grief was connected to her parents. My grandmother and grandfather both died when my mother was still in her teens.

It has been said that Tlingit culture revolves around funerals and memorials. In the present day, these *Koo.eex* ceremonies are among the few ways Tlingits practice traditional reciprocity to provide balance between moieties and clans. When someone in the Tlingit community dies, tradition-minded Tlingits regard it as mandatory to show up and pay respect to the deceased and the ancestors at the funeral. The hosts of a *Koo.eex* present their crests along

with the stories behind them, where they receive recognition and are witnessed; guests and host moieties provide mutual validation in an alternating pattern of back and forth witnessing and acknowledgement.

Some of the funerals Hans attended as a young child were in his mother's home village of Yakutat. Hans's experience at funerals was suffused with Tlingit culture in the forms of traditional foods and stories. His experience was also overflowing with others' expressions of grief. Hans described it like this:

There was all this hard crying like I never heard before. I had heard a lot of crying by then but this was deeper and more emotional. I was a little freaked out by my mother taking me to see the corpse. I did not want to look at a dead body. I did not understand the whole process was something I had to do. There were very powerful moments at these funerals. I was being taught something. I was learning what to do and how to act.

What Hans learned was how the two clans gathered to share, to reciprocate, to bring balance between the moieties. Oratory was prepared and offered by the opposite moiety for removal of grief. Both moieties shared their clan stories and songs. Hans also learned what to bring to a funeral, what foods would be valued, and how to approach, speak to, and treat elders. This training would be helpful both at future funerals, and at interacting with elders in any situation. But while this learning should be construed as beneficial, the reality was that Hans lived in a pervasive climate of loss and grief that mirrored the experience of his mother in particular and Alaska Natives as a whole since white contact.

In addition to the amplified sense of loss that permeated his family's experience, chaos and abuse were ordinary parts of life at home when Hans was growing up. Hans said this about his early life at home:

My mom was very unpredictable and reactive; it seemed like she was often in an uproar about everything. I spent a lot of time not knowing what to expect. When she came home from work, was she going to be angry or sweet? How could I stay out of her way if she was angry? One of the things I had to learn to do was set boundaries with my mother. I could not do this when I was little.

Hans was challenged to find ways to maintain his equilibrium and survive in a chaotic household with a volatile mother. It took Hans time to figure out how to set personal boundaries and to develop the capacity that enabled him to do so. Unfortunately his father was not helpful to him at that time. Hans had this to say:

My dad did not express a lot of judgment about mom's behavior or set any boundaries. He would not tell her to stop or intervene in anyway. He would leave to go out into the yard or somewhere else. His passivity was as harmful to us as her unpredictable emotional outbursts, haranguing, and physical punishments were. Sometimes I would leave and go out in the yard too.

Things were not better for Hans at elementary school. His experience was frequently painful due to being teased. Additionally, he was filled with the anxiety of trying to figure out how to fit in with other children. Hans articulated some of what he went through:

Dora and I were just 16 months apart and were inseparable when I was younger. I played with her at recess until she told me to play somewhere else. I couldn't play with her and her girlfriends anymore. I spent a lot of time wandering around by myself and trying to figure out which elementary school boy I should be like. I was teased a lot. The boys called me a girl.

There was no teacher intervention or support that would stop teasing or bullying. This experience left an impact on Hans that was formative; it may have scarred him, but the scars shaped him in a way he came to welcome. As an adult, when he had the power to do so, Hans resolved to prevent such quotidian forms of harassment. Years later as a teacher he would take it upon himself to keep this from happening to children at his school.

Hans's experience of elementary school was also devoid of Native culture, which was not reflected in school buildings, classroom environments, or in the curriculum. I brought up the Juneau School District's *Indian Studies* program with Hans. From my perspective Indian Studies was a crumb tossed to the Native community by non-Natives who dominated the district. There was a single week of Indian study per school year. I asked Hans what he remembered about it. He replied:

The Indian Studies Program influenced me a lot. I got to be part of that from kindergarten through the fifth grade. The week of lessons we got here at Glacier Valley held the pleasure of being immersed even for a short time in something that was Native.

Hans's passionate statement moved me, yet I was surprised that his memories of the Indian Studies classes were so positive. But anything done in school that focused on Tlingit culture was something Hans craved, so why wouldn't his memories be positive? Hans had more specific memories too:

I remember taking long thin strips of wood and soaking them to make a bentwood box. I have vivid memories of Nancy Douglas [an Alaska Native teacher who for many years has been actively involved in Native studies in the Juneau school district] holding my hands and wood in the water, telling me, 'You have to thank the tree for giving its life so

you can make this box.’ That stuck with me for years and years. For whatever reasons, these things had a big impact on me.

These words revealed how Hans was learning traditional ways of showing respect to all living things. Hans was starved for something that nurtured his Native identity that was languishing in a context dominated by non-Native values. Those weeklong interludes featuring Tlingit history and culture were like water to his parched soul.

Meanwhile, Hans’s parents’ marriage fell apart. They divorced in 1985, during Hans’s elementary school years. The divorce was both beneficial and detrimental for Hans. He offered this summary:

When my parents split up, it was very tough on my sisters and me. But in the long run the separation turned out to be a good thing for us.

When his parents divorced, Hans’s father moved out and his mother Esther lived in their trailer with the children. When Esther remarried six years later, she and the children moved into her new husband’s house near Glacier Valley School and the trailer park. After that, the children’s father Mark purchased their old trailer and moved back into it so he could be nearby.

Mark’s purchase of the trailer gave Hans and his sisters the option of living with him and not their mother. Within a year Dora left to live with their dad. Hans soon followed, then Jessica. Things changed dramatically for Hans after he moved in with his dad. Life with Mark was different then than it had been previously when his dad had been so passive. Mark had been seeing a counselor and his behavior had changed considerably. He now set boundaries with his children, and they had purposeful outlines or lists for chores and duties at home.

Hans was in middle school at that time. Middle school was better for Hans than elementary school had been because he was actively involved in learning to play an instrument.

Music was especially satisfying to him. Even more therapeutic was going to a counselor. Hans explained:

Dad decided that we were going to counseling; he knew we needed help. He was going to counseling himself. It was in counseling that I learned about boundaries and that I had been raised without any. I spent hours working with the counselor. I did not want to be there, but this was my life: not wanting to be me, not wanting to feel my emotions. Our counselor helped me grow up.

The time Hans spent in counseling helped him mature and develop more psychological integrity, but it did not help him avoid all rough patches later, during and after high school. He was still struggling then with issues of identity, with questions about who he was and how he wanted to be. Complicating matters for Hans was his coming to terms with being gay.

I spent my high school years feeling very pissed off. It is completely understandable now why I was so angry. I did not have any friends. I really struggled with who I was and what I was supposed to do. Was I going to be straight, get married, and have children? These were the options outlined by the Mormon Church, which Mom was active in. My dad was completely accepting of my budding gayness, mostly by not saying anything critical.

Hans's sexual identity was still truncated by society's expectations and his own lingering confusion. He proceeded to go through a period of acting out before he settled into a more comfortable and stable relationship with himself and others. Hans spelled it out:

When I graduated from high school I was partying a lot. I pretty much did not give a damn about anything. I graduated and I went to the University of Alaska in Anchorage (UAA) with Dora. I spent two semesters at UAA but did not do well there. I decided to

drop out and come back to Juneau. I knew I needed my dad's help. I went back to counseling, stopped partying, and came out. I was able to be who I am. An important part of this was meeting Steve. I was 18 when we met. Steve has been my life partner since I was 21. We have been together for 18 years.

The decision to drop out of college in Anchorage was a major change of direction for Hans. He knew he needed to stop partying. Hans was aware that if he continued going in that direction there would be negative consequences. Despite the earlier time when his father's lack of guidance was problematic for Hans, at this point in his life he needed less guidance and more nurturing and support. Hans intuitively sought out the help that his father had to offer. He explained:

I knew deep down that I needed my dad's help. I realized that my dad's passivity was not all bad. He had a kind of organic acceptance and willingness to let things unfold.

Hans is very close to his father and described their relationship as open and safe. Since Hans's middle and high school years, his father has been a source of stability and nurturance. He was also able to provide guidance and financial support for Hans to continue college in Juneau. Hans elaborated:

I was able to do good things with my dad. My dad and I built a smoke house and I learned how to smoke fish. I love doing things like that.

Hans's relationship with his father went beyond doing activities that allowed him to have fun learning traditional food preparation and preservation methods for food storage. His growing connection with his father enabled Hans to become more true to the self he wanted to be, and face up to his problem drinking. Hans continued:

My dad has always accepted me without judgment. If I kept drinking I would have had all the baggage from that. I cannot put into words how I understood then what that would do to me. Deep down I knew that it was okay to be me, and alcohol was not part of who I am.

Hans frequently observed the ravages of alcoholism in the Native community, and it was a factor in the deaths of his mother's parents. He realized that simply knowing that alcohol is a dangerous drug was not enough to prevent him from becoming addicted. He needed more than mere knowledge; he needed acceptance of who he really was, a solid sense of self that precluded using alcohol. He was able to start forging his true identity at that time. Hans is still sober now, eighteen years later. He does not miss drinking, and relishes the positive affects of sobriety on his life.

Another transformation in Hans's life occurred around that time when he received his Tlingit name. He shared his name in Tlingit:

It was not until I was 19 when mom was able to get all the arrangements made with Tlingit elders in Yakutat and other places who would be required for Dora, Jessica, and me to receive our Tlingit names. My name is *Naakil.aan*. It is a ceremonial name that is not translatable.

A naming ceremony is a *Koo.eéx*, which requires a lot of logistical planning, money, and social cooperation. Both mother and father's moieties and clans must be there to give the name ceremony its culturally necessary balance and reciprocity. Tlingit elder Nora Marks Dauenhauer, a relative of Hans's, spoke eloquently at a recent clan conference about receiving a Tlingit name:

Having a name is critically important in Tlingit society. Names are connected to places, which you are related to, and fundamentally who you are. If you don't have a name, you are just floating around out there without any connection to your clan or who you are.

Your name is going to carry you for most of your life (Nora Dauenhauer, speaking at Sharing our Knowledge, Tlingit Clan Conference, 2015, Sitka, Alaska).

Fortified with his Tlingit name and clarified sense of identity, Hans re-entered college at the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) and did well, graduating with a bachelor's degree in Social Science. He then entered the UAS Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program in elementary education. In addition, Hans continued his study of the Tlingit language. He elaborated:

From the time I began my college education at UAS, I was also studying Tlingit with Florence Marks Sheakley. Florence had a tremendous influence on me, which deeply contributed to my worldview as a Tlingit. She continues to be a source of support and a model for me.

Hans's learning of Tlingit was characterized by hard work and perseverance. He shared this:

I was extremely determined that I was going to learn Tlingit. I spent hours with those Beginning Tlingit language tapes that Nora and Richard Dauenhauer and Fred White (who was from Yakutat) created. I listened and re-listened; I was glued to those tapes. I listened until I could perfectly pronounce Tlingit.

Tlingit elders recognize Hans as a fluent speaker not only for his facility with the notoriously difficult pronunciation of Tlingit language, but also for his range of vocabulary and his comprehension. Hans attributed his capacity to speak with understanding and fluency to many occasions of speaking with Tlingit elders.

One afternoon at Glacier Valley School, Hans taught Tlingit culture with a mixed-age group of children. This activity was available to all primary grade classes before school was dismissed; Native and non-Native children from several grades gathered to dance. Florence Marks Sheakley was there to help Hans make changes if needed in the language used to sing songs. I was there to observe Hans teach Tlingit dance, drumming, and singing.

Tlingit scholar Nora Marks Dauenhauer and her non-Native husband, the folklorist, linguist, and historian Richard Dauenhauer, have noted that Tlingits today are more likely to learn Tlingit songs and dances than Tlingit language. Because learning Tlingit as a second language requires such hard work, it is much more demanding in terms of time and effort than learning discrete songs and their associated dances. Nevertheless, the fact that cultural practices such as singing and dancing are accessible is something to celebrate, since they are widely practiced.

Hans regularly sings and drums for dance performances. He described teaching singing and dancing as an expression of his love of music and its importance to him culturally:

To be Tlingit is to be connected to music. If there is music, I just want to be near it. I can sing and Tlingit drum. I really got into music in middle school. I think teaching Tlingit songs is a way for children to begin learning the musicality of Tlingit. Even if they do not go on to become full-fledged Tlingit speakers, it is a start.

Our next meeting was arranged for late afternoon at Hans and Steve's home in the downtown area, which they have been renovating. Their living room is very pleasant, with a high ceiling; two large windows have simple linen drapes with stenciled flowers along their hems. I noticed several historical photographs of Tlingit men and a totemic carving of a sockeye salmon among the paintings decorating the room.

We gathered our materials at a table near the pellet stove and got started. At one of our earlier meetings Hans had said he did not know why he became a teacher and I logged that away as something I wanted to know more about. I revisited his remark, and expressed my curiosity about it now. I also wondered if he had thought of taking a job in a rural Native community. Hans answered my question about relocating to teach in a rural community with a firm no. He continued:

I do not want to leave my teaching job. I have taught at Glacier Valley for nine years, and I have tenure. I also believe my experiences have given me perspective on why some children hang back or cry so easily. A big part of why I am a teacher is because I can relate to these children and support them. I tell my principal sometimes: I know why that kid is in my class. She is just like me.

Hans also believes he became a teacher to build a legacy at the school for teaching Tlingit culture. He realizes that we live in a time when indigenous cultures are endangered, as Tlingit surely is, especially its language, and wants to do his part to support and preserve something that means so much to him. He feels it is his responsibility to impart the teachings of Tlingit culture to his classroom in ways that are meaningful to his students, both Native and non-Native alike.

Much of the cultural knowledge he teaches is through stories. Hans knows the Raven cycle stories told by Tlingit elders and tells them any chance he gets. During opportune moments, Hans relates stories such as how Raven Created the World to scientific knowledge and connects past and present. In this way, Hans makes sure Tlingit knowledge is kept alive, even if taught in English. He went into detail:

I like connecting Tlingit stories with western science in my teaching. Last week, we had an earthquake drill and I taught the class in terms suitable for second grade children about

plate tectonics and what causes a tsunamis. We studied some areas on the map where there have been some large earth slides, and I used one of the important Tlingit stories about an event that happened in Southeast long ago. I was teaching science and culture at the same time. I told them the story of *Whooskeeta*, a young girl from Yakutat who witnessed a huge slide of mud and rocks causing a large wave that killed all her brothers.

Hans, whose family has a historical connection to Glacier Bay, used a historical incident in the traditional way elders would use a story to teach. Tlingit elders would tell a story and then retell it. Meanwhile, listeners/learners were offered opportunities to say what they thought the story was saying. Hans continued to elaborate his teaching process:

I am passing on what I know from my education, my learning with elders, and my knowledge of Tlingit language. I can teach contemporary scientific knowledge about earthquakes, and related events that happened here, such as tsunamis and earth slides. Native kids need to learn about their culture and what it means to be Native in positive ways. They need to know who they are related to and where their families are from.

Hans also acknowledges the importance of teaching Tlingit culture to non-Native kids, so that they benefit from the local knowledge contained in it, and so it is clear to them that Tlingit culture matters even if it is not their own.

Hans does not advocate for the children in his classes by using Euro-centered theoretical perspectives and child development terminology. Hans emphasized his strength when he said he is culturally attuned; his teaching is based on how he was taught by Tlingit elders. This way of learning could be summed up as experiential: learning by watching, listening, and doing. That is how Native kids traditionally learned. Hans offered this:

My dad seemed to have a good sense about letting things be, waiting, and not pushing.

This is valuable in my teaching now. There are teachers who have influenced me with a variety of their teaching styles, but my dad's approach, although he is not Tlingit, is consistent with Tlingit ways of teaching: waiting, respecting others' views, and finding what will be best for everyone.

Hans mused on something his mentor David Katzeek, a Tlingit elder from Klukwan, taught him: Tlingits are not afraid to put their feelings and thoughts on the table. David taught Hans that it is possible to talk about almost anything if respect is present. I commented that it may continue to be difficult at times to put feelings and thoughts on the table and Hans agreed. What David expressed is not solely a Tlingit perspective, however, it contradicts a common stereotype held by many that Natives are silent or inarticulate.

David Katzeek's encouragement to Hans to say what he has to say enables Hans to reflect on how Tlingit culture and history have affected his personality. Hans said:

I have things inside myself as part of who I am; things that already live inside my being.

I never sought to stand out or to be in the forefront, but I am learning to give myself permission to access those parts of myself.

Hans and I prepared to end our meetings. He summed up the experiences and commitments that have helped him become the teacher and cultural-elder in training that he is today, informed as they are by his cultural values and experiences:

There have been a lot of different things I have been exposed to, different environments where I see all these different patterns connect to Tlingit culture. Grieving, for example.

How did I manage? I accepted that it has always been there. It was always around us.

There was a lot of grieving. I say that I grew up in a happy household, but there was a lot

of grief. Those experiences give me the background, the schema, to be where I am right now. I am a product of my environment, and I am here for a reason. Tlingit culture is at the forefront of who I am and what I do.

It would have to be said that Hans is attuned to a range of worldviews and complexities. His experiences have allowed him to form commitments and goals to teach something Hans has learned implicitly and explicitly: Tlingit culture. Tlingit culture lies within layers of context, predominantly including those of place: traditional Tlingit land, personal memory, and tribal history, all within a dominant non-Native culture that is largely indifferent to Native culture when it is not actively hostile toward it. That Hans is ultimately bi-cultural allows him to stand in two realms at once. His demeanor in the classroom is authoritative, but kind; he is definitely in charge, yet gentle. He is professional and warm with his colleagues at the school, both Native and non-Native alike. He knows who he is and is not afraid to be himself, a teacher of Tlingit language and culture, a man who loves what he does.

Nila Rinehart

Nila Rinehart was born in New Mexico, homeland of Tiwa speaking Taos Pueblo Natives. Taos Pueblo is both a UNESCO World Heritage site and a National Historic site; it is also an American Indian reservation. Taos Pueblo people have inhabited the area for over a thousand years.

In the early 1980s Nila moved to Juneau, where she has held positions of professional responsibility starting at the local level then extending to the entire State of Alaska; the work she currently does is on a national level. Nila is married with two children and two grandchildren.

It was afternoon when Nila greeted me at her door. She is a small woman with medium length, thick black hair. Her beautiful dark eyes, framed by thick lashes, captivated me. Nila

wore a soft coral colored cotton shirt; its brightness contrasted with her warm brown skin and black hair. Her eyes sparkled with anticipation as she motioned me to a chair at her dining table. I took out my notebook and tape recorder, and we settled down to begin.

Nila's early childhood was spent nurtured by two sets of grandparents, plus a fifth grandparent through marriage who lived with her immediate family. Her grandparents were exemplars of relationship with their environment, each other, and others in their community. For Nila they modeled an indigenous worldview based in collective values of reciprocity and relationship, particularly within the context of spiritual ceremonies relating to the seasons, stages of life, roles in Pueblo society, and status in the community. Nila's childhood on the pueblo was spent in a world full of Indian traditions; it was quiet, peaceful, close to nature, and outside the hubbub of modern life.

Pueblo is a Spanish word for town. Nila explained:

Most people think *pueblo* refers to an adobe building with ladders going up to different levels as seen on postcards. But the pueblo is more than the large many storied adobe building of family apartments; it includes the gardens, pastures, fields, and forests all around the actual houses where Taos people live.

The town of Taos Pueblo and its surroundings is more than the houses, gardens, forests, and hillsides that are its constituent parts. It is the beginning of Nila's story. Nila recalled her childhood with her grandparents as if time had stopped, and described it as like living in another world. Both sets of grandparents were a source of wonder for her, especially in how they manifested older traditions in their manner of self-presentation.

For example, her grandmothers kept their very long hair bound up and tied in the traditional style at the nape of their necks. This and other style choices were increasingly out of

fashion among people of the pueblo, but her grandparents persisted in the old ways. This fascinated Nila. She explained:

My maternal grandparents Lorencita and Teofilo wore traditional handmade clothing. Grandma Lorencita wore long, flower-print, calico cotton dresses with long sleeves and always had a shawl to wrap around her shoulders. Teofilo wore handmade cotton shirts; he often carried a blanket he could wrap around himself when it was cold. They both wore moccasins instead of shoes. I remember watching my grandparents getting dressed in the morning and marveling about their handmade clothes and moccasins. They did not change to more modern clothes when they went into town. At one point, I asked my father if I could dress like them.

Both sets of grandparents represented for Nila ways of living that are now and were even then mostly no longer practiced in the modern Taos Pueblo. The outdoor clay bread baking ovens called hornos are a visible remnant of this older time. Hornos are a common sight while driving by any pueblo in New Mexico today. Despite options of baking bread in their kitchen oven or buying it from the store, Nila's grandmother Santanita consistently did it the old way. It seemed like there was always a special occasion or ceremony when she would bake bread. Nila elaborated:

When it was baking day, Grandma Santanita wore one of her calico dresses that she did not wear on any other occasion. Baking began with building and tending a fire to heat the horno. This took a lot of time. When the heat was just right, dough would be put into the horno on shelves along the sides. Santanita spent half a day, sometimes a whole day, making bread. When I told her I have a bread-making machine that does it automatically in hours, she was amazed. 'You have a machine that makes bread?!'

Nila and I laughed about Santanita's incredulity that there are such new-fangled things as bread-baking machines.

Nila's grandparents represented continuity with the past, with something Nila believes was sacred in its timelessness. This timelessness was especially exemplified for Nila by the upstairs space she and her little sister Nola slept in at their grandparents Eliza and Telesfor's house. Nila found it exciting and mysterious. No one else slept there, and it was full of fancy dresses, beaded purses, and women's shoes belonging to Eliza. A serious art collection was stored upstairs too. Eliza modeled for artists in town, so she and Telesfor were recipients of many works of art given as gifts from the artists, who were their friends and employers. Nila's childhood in the pueblo was magical to her, given experiences such as those spent living among the art and artifacts of her early life with Eliza and Telesfor.

Home may have been the center of Nila's existence, a place from which she began and to which she returned at the end of the day, but she ventured out frequently into the farther reaches of the pueblo. Nila described going with her cousins and other young relatives up to the pine trees above the pueblo on foot and by horse. She said:

We would scrounge around for food to take with us out of our grandparents' cupboards.

On the way we would stop at our cousins to pick up other kids. We let the little kids ride on the horse; the bigger kids would walk. That horse was literally covered with kids. We made our way into the foothills where we would play all day. There was a shallow river where we would wade, swim, play in the water, take naps, and eat.

Nila described these jaunts onto the side of the mountain as completely child-directed. No adults went with them; no adults were around to solve their problems or promote adult agendas. The children, from toddlers to primary and middle school age, exclusively decided

what they were going to do with no intervention or supervision. For Nila, the crucial point was that the children made their own decisions for what they would do. They were limited only by the necessity of getting home for supper before dark. Nila said:

It is with great joy that I remember how we organized our days as we wanted. We helped each other solve problems and cared for each other. Sometimes we ran into other groups of kids and had rock fights with them. We would run to get away, carrying the smaller ones to safety. We settled our own fights.

Nila's experiences of autonomy in childhood stand in stark contrast to the prevalent situation of children today, with adults nearly constantly intervening with and supervising them. Nila believes the freedom she experienced then helped her negotiate challenges later in her life as an adult. She told me:

I knew I could do things—get things done—and I was not afraid to try to solve them when we kids had problems. Both Grandma Santanita and Grandpa Telesfor said, 'You can figure it out,' when my cousins and I were arguing.

Nila described both of her grandfathers as modeling leadership for her. Her grandfather Teofilo was governor of the pueblo, esteemed as a spiritual person, and a Kiva leader. His political engagement was focused primarily on local pueblo-centered affairs, while her grandfather Telesfor was engaged in statewide politics, sometimes taking it national by going to Washington, D. C. Teofilo was one of the founding members of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, and Telesfor spent years helping his people work to obtain freedom for religious practice.

Nila's father also became involved with political issues. His main initial focus was on the return of the Taos Pueblo's sacred Blue Lake and in particular, the adjoining land tracts. In

later years her father again served to protect this sacred region from fly over sightseeing and U.S. Air Force practice runs in an agreement negotiated for the protection of airspace in 2011.

The Taos Pueblo people were successful in the fight to get their land rights for Blue Lake back under Taos control; Blue Lake was restored to Taos Pueblo in 1970. This was a major turning point for American Indian self-determination, religious freedom, and Native land rights. It was also an important family story. Nila was a young child at this time, but she was so proud of her people's successful efforts on behalf of getting Blue Lake back under Taos Pueblo control. Her eyes shining with pride, Nila said:

Taos Pueblo lost their religious use of Blue Lake and surrounding areas when President Teddy Roosevelt established national forests. Many leaders from our village went to Washington, D.C. to work with congress and testify to get Blue Lake re-established as a sacred place for Taos Pueblo people. My grandfather Telesfor also was involved in writing and testifying on behalf of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978; I found his name in the congressional record.

Her father and grandfather's political activism were an inspiration for her subsequent leadership on increasingly expanded levels of organization. From their example, Nila learned the importance of initiative taking, persistence, passion, and resilience. She explained:

My dad and Grandpa Telesfor would talk about their concerns of how cultural changes were affecting the community and our people. And they would talk about how Taos people cannot let the bad things that happened tear the community apart. Bad things happen but you have to keep going. Grandpa Telesfor and my dad would sit at the table after supper talking about what was happening in Taos Pueblo. They were so serious about the importance of community. I would sit on the porch in the dark, just outside the

screen door and listen to them. Their commitment to community became engrained in me. Listening to them talk about how they could help and what they were going to do was so inspiring; it taught me how important it was that everyone in the pueblo was doing well and was flourishing.

When Nila and her family were not living on the pueblo, they lived on Indian reservations and in cities and towns where Nila's father worked as an administrator for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The BIA has offices in many towns and cities throughout the United States, and Nila's father was transferred to a number of them. Nila and her family lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Winslow, Arizona; Winnebago, Nebraska, and various smaller Native American communities where her father worked. Nila and her family were social outsiders in those communities.

During the time spent moving around to those various communities, Nila's grandmother Hattie cared for her. Hattie was the mother of her father's deceased first wife Stella. Stella died young, leaving her husband and two young sons behind. When Stella died, her mother came to care for the two young boys, and Hattie was incorporated into the family before Nila and Nola were born. Hattie, like her other grandparents, was crucial to Nila's early and later development. Nila's admiration for her grandparents was woven throughout stories she related during her meetings with me. Nila enthused:

Grandma Hattie was a baby whisperer; she just knew how to care for children. Hattie was a source of safety, continuity, and unconditional love for me. All my grandparents made me feel special and created a path for me throughout my life in the ceremonies they led for me. They believed that I could do anything I wanted and said this to me time and again. They prayed out loud for me during ceremonies at important times in my life.

Their blessings and prayers built up in me a feeling of support that I could hold onto. I always felt a sense of peace and grounding when I was with them. I drew closer to my grandparents for support, nurturance, and a sense of security when my parents seemed unavailable to me. My grandparents were incredible people with such strong connections to the environment, community, spirit, and me.

The security and love provided by her grandparents, nurturing as it was, could not protect Nila from hardship and deprivation. Nila's mother Santanita left her husband Richard (Nila's father) and their children when Nila was twelve. This was a critical time for Nila, then entering adolescence. Nila articulated the biggest change from that time:

My mom disappeared from our lives. I think the reason was her struggle with alcohol. It was a terrible trap for her. She felt shame and despair, and just disappeared. We had no more contact with her. I was an adult when my brother's wife was processing death certificates while working for the Indian Health service; it was she who found out my mom had passed away.

Because of the fact that Nila had Hattie as a well-established source of loving care, Santanita's departure was not nearly as traumatic as it could have been otherwise. Nila explained:

I think my mother knew that Hattie would be there for us, and we would be okay. The wonderful thing was she made sure both Nola and I had traditional ceremonial preparations to make us ready for womanhood as we entered puberty. This was important to my mother, and I realize now how important all the ceremonies were that my parents and grandparents did with me.

Nila spoke vividly about the consequences of another less than perfect moment in her family life, when her father drove off without having made sure his kids' needs were met. She described it this way:

There was a party at school; all the kids were supposed to bring something. My dad, who was the only driver in the family, had taken the car, so Grandma Hattie made sandwiches from what we had on hand: some freezer-burned bologna and old bread. I felt miserable bringing a plate of ugly sandwiches. When I arrived, one of my teachers, Mr. Torres, took the sandwiches, put them on the table along with all the other fancy sandwiches, cakes, and cookies, thanked me for bringing something to the party, and, one by one, ate all my sandwiches. I watched him eat every one. I will always remember his kindness; he knew how embarrassed I was.

Her eyes flashing, Nila continued:

When my dad came home, I confronted him. I was really angry that he had left us without decent food and told him he could not do this. I was the one who confronted him on everything.

While such confrontations were predicated on problems she would have rather not had, Nila thought her father was raising her to be a leader. She believes one of the ways he was teaching her was by giving her repeated experiences of working through difficult conversations with him regarding his behaviors and their consequences. Whether or not that was his intent, she was able to build up a store of confidence from the accrual of this kind of challenging encounter that would help her later in life as a professional.

Meanwhile Nila continued to make her way through school. As with most Native students, she had only non-Native teachers, and was not recognized for her academic abilities at school until her junior year in high school. Nila's feelings about her schooling were ambivalent. She had this to say about it:

I had a lot of mixed feelings about school. I can't say that school was a great experience for me, even in high school. Everything was very rote. I found out when I went to college that I was not well prepared by school. I felt short changed. The most important things I learned were at home, and by playing in nature. Playing school was one of the things I liked best. I just had an eye for children. I think I got this from Grandma Hattie. In all those towns we lived in, I would play school with the kids who were roaming around with nobody to take care of them. I had school in our garage and we did everything, reading, math, and the bookmobile. We put on plays and made all the props and costumes—we did everything you do in school and more. It was natural that I would go into work that involved making things better for children. I have been doing it all my life. I have been playing it all my life.

Nila graduated from high school with expectations from her father and grandparents that she go to college. Nila's father was the first person in his family to get a college degree. Nila learned from his example that with a college education and a professional job, she could be treated with respect by non-Natives. Nila deduced that without an education she would have less influence in educational and political affairs, and diminished access to areas where academic credentials are important, such as institutional and organizational leadership. Nila had known since childhood what was expected of her regarding school and its role in subsequent professional accomplishments. She stated this seriously:

It was a given that I would do well in school and obtain a college education. I was able to be self-motivated, even driven, because I had internalized my family's high expectations. My dad never came to school, not even to meet with my school counselors. Being on top of meetings with counselors was regarded as my responsibility by both my dad and me. I talked to counselors about colleges, picked out the schools where I thought I should apply, and I applied for scholarships myself.

This autonomy harkens back to the self-directed choices she made as a child playing with her cousins on the forested hillsides at Taos Pueblo. As a young adult, the calculus for her decision-making was based on considerations such as financial cost. Nila's initial choice of college yielded to another when the price was right. She said this about it:

I was going to Iowa State in Ames, Iowa partly because some of my high school friends were going there, but having a full scholarship was the main determining factor. I had applied to Stanford University, but had decided I was going to Iowa State. I was already in Iowa when Stanford University called my dad and asked 'Why isn't she here?' My dad said it was about money, so Stanford offered better financial terms than Iowa, which made me reconsider my choice of school. My dad drove up to Ames to get me, and off we went to Palo Alto, California. I know Stanford wanted Native American students from everywhere. I think they wanted me because I was from Taos Pueblo, even though I was so unprepared I had to take remedial math.

Nila described what gave her strength to handle the rigors of college academia:

I knew my earlier schooling had not prepared me for college but I was prepared by my elders to find my way and face what I had to do. Throughout my childhood and adolescence, at various different stages, there was always a ceremony to prepare me for

the next step. It did not come from school; it came from my elders. It felt to me in my heart like my grandparents were totally present for me, surrounding me. All my elders were there for me as a whole community, praying, giving blessings.

Ceremonies, held at important transition points, were times when she was asked to speak about what she wanted to achieve in her life and hear in return what her elders wanted for her; thus were expectations and standards established. These ceremonies were also liberating. They gave Nila the feeling that many possibilities were open to her. She explained:

Once I asked my elders who I was going to be and what I was going to do. They basically said ‘You do not have to make a choice between Taos Pueblo and the white world.’ That gave me tremendous freedom.

While at college, Nila married Albert Rinehart, a Tlingit from Southeast Alaska who came from a Native culture thousands of miles away from Taos Pueblo. Albert came to Taos and participated in ceremonies to facilitate their marriage. In marrying him, she married outside the pueblo, which was accepted by her family because they believed he understood indigenous ways of life and worldviews by virtue of being Native himself.

After she and Albert graduated, with Nila’s father’s and grandparent’s blessings, they, along with their infant son Vincent, left the golden brown, rolling hills of Palo Alto, California for the green rainforest of Southeast Alaska where Albert Rinehart had grown up. Albert had taken a job with the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA), a tribal government social service organization in Juneau. He and Nila were on their way to the next chapter in their lives.

Nila also went to work for CCTHITA Head Start (a federally funded early education program for low-income children) as their Special Needs Coordinator. Head Start is an agency that strives to positively impact children and families in poor communities. In this work it is easy to focus on what is wrong. Nila was determined to focus on what is good, and make improvements so that things would be even better. She shared these perceptions of her work:

When I started my work with Head Start, I saw opportunities to make things better. It seemed very easy to just get stuck in accepting the way things were. I saw a lot of things that I thought were important for children and communities and families. I had a strong drive to continuously improve things; I thought Head Start did some good things, but could do even better than it was.

Nila lived and breathed Head Start. Within a short period of time she became the new Head Start program manager. Nila came to this job with beliefs and ideas about building and strengthening relationships, about reciprocity, that she gleaned from her dad and her grandfather while she listened through the screen door as they talked in their home in Taos Pueblo. Nila described how she saw her work with Head Start:

My drive to continuously improve Head Start integrated culture with community and was connected with doing what was going to be good for everyone.

Nila wanted a better understanding of what the programs' children needed, and so required her field staff to ask what children in the programs were learning. She explored what communities wanted and what would make Head Start better at each field site. Among her goals was to improve what the children experienced in their programs everyday.

Nila held meetings in each Head Start community to brainstorm with field staff and community members at their program sites. Using what she learned to improve the programs, she became deeply involved in coaching teacher-directors and building partnerships through collaboration with other groups to work with the Head Start programs in each community. It became clear that trauma was an issue for both children in the programs and program staff. Nila felt she had a lot to learn about the affect of trauma on people. This is what she said:

Directors and teachers were all dealing with trauma. I learned a lot about the affects of trauma on Head Start families and children, but felt I had more to learn about trauma and intergenerational grief. Those things affected my family. My grandparents were orphaned by disease epidemics and went to Indian boarding schools. My father experienced trauma as a Korean War veteran. He had PTSD. Sometimes my dad would cry; he grieved throughout his adult life about the men he killed or thought he killed in the Korean War.

Nila believed that trauma was such an important issue in human development that she needed to formally study it. She learned of a program that focused on trauma, applied to it, and was accepted. Nila and her family of four (by then she and Albert had two sons) subsequently went off to Cambridge, Massachusetts. Nila spent the next two years studying fruitfully at Harvard Graduate School of Education focusing on risk and prevention in early childhood education.

Nila's return to Southeast did not immediately result in her going back to work for Head Start. She was appointed as a Special Assistant to the State of Alaska, Office of the Governor, to administratively manage activities for the Children's Cabinet. The cabinet was composed of commissioners from Alaska State Departments in charge of programs affecting children and

families to prevent child abuse and neglect. It was a prestigious appointment. However, Nila left the position fairly soon, because she did not have enough contact with the people the children's cabinet was supposed to be helping.

Nila then returned to CCTHITA Head Start, which at the time was suffering a serious decline in leadership. There was a pervasive sense of despondency and discouragement among agency employees about their ability to change things themselves and solve problems. In some cases, people had bought into thinking things were hopeless. Nila worked hard to overcome that deficit mentality and as a leader she was successful in transforming the attitudes and behaviors of staff.

Her return to Head Start was a positive experience. Nila was understandably gratified from being able to marshal stagnant energy for action. She successfully refocused employees' internal resources onto what could be done rather than merely lamenting what they were unable to do. At this time, Nila also began important work developing two video series titled, *A Parent's Journal*, and *Family Feathers*. Nila described her vision:

In making these videos, I was trying to document from the Tlingit perspective how children are raised to be healthy and engaged in all there is to do in life. I wanted the videos of Tlingit parents to show other Tlingit parents what their opportunities were, and all the different options they had for their families through increased engagement with their infants.

While Nila worked on the video projects at CCTHIA, a new work opportunity emerged and she decided to take it. Nila articulated her reasons for making the leap into a new endeavor:

An opportunity came to work with a Colorado-based agency called Community Development Institute (CDI) that was doing some extraordinary work with Head Start programs on the national level. I had a desire to step out of the mold and try something new, so I took it. I wanted to see what was different, do more, try more, and get work experience outside the Southeast Alaska Native community. I wanted to see if the strengths that I knew are in the Native community were still applicable in other settings.

CDI engages in many different kinds of community partnerships, but specializes in work with Head Start programs. Nila began working on the national level with tribal governments in some of the poorest areas in the United States. This work entailed devising complex interventions with Head Start programs that are in trouble and at risk of failing. The agency uses an approach called Appreciative Inquiry that Nila can relate to, because it focuses on the best in people. Nila summarized her involvement this way:

I had something to contribute that fit with the strength-based values of this agency. The work is about people development, helping people realize there are possibilities even when they feel hopeless. There really are always options.

Nilā has not just dealt with overcoming a deficit mentality in her work right from the beginning of her professional career, she has focused on strengths, both her own and others, since she was a child. Her past experience has honed her ability to seek solutions and act in the face of adversity. She is a problem solver by inclination, and has now found an especially resonant professional setting for her to do in service to others that her personal experience has prepared her to do throughout her life.

Nilā is aware of the pitfalls of imposing outside interventions on communities, particularly those with a history of boarding schools and colonization. The best intentions are

not helpful if well-meaning programs erode the self-determination, self-knowledge, and control indigenous communities want over their children's education. The early childhood education offered through Head Start, though it could be construed as imposed from outside, has done much good. But it is not without its problems, including bad management and deficit thinking. Nila shared her perceptions of how her work at the CDI has helped overcome this deficit orientation in client agencies:

I witnessed over one hundred program failures in the first few months of my work with CDI. This was a tremendous learning experience. There is so much at stake in these situations. Lots of our client communities are in the hardest hit poverty areas in the country. Some programs were failing because of misappropriations of funds, or the programs had used funding for the wrong purposes, or the services were so bad that they were unhealthy and unsafe places for children. I have helped staff to realize the importance of children in poor communities having places to go everyday where they learn about and experience the positive values of their indigenous communities.

Nila's job as an executive requires constant decision making for crisis control. She supervises teams of managers who work with Head Start programs that have lost their funding. These programs are waiting for new grantees to assume the administration of their programs. Coaching the executives who run teams that work with teachers and program managers is a main focus of her work. Nila explained:

My work involves spending a lot of time on what teams believe about the work they are doing and why they are doing it. I need to be insightful about what team leaders are doing, and what values they have. I have to have relationships with them that allow us to work together to help develop others so they can do this important work. A key element

is honesty. This means maintaining my own integrity, and being honest with others. Sometimes I have to tell highly trained executives honestly what they are doing that needs to be changed. There has to be trust to create a strong safety net, allow experimentation, make mistakes, fail. And there needs to be someplace for the people who are doing the hard work with teachers and kids to go to figure it out, to debrief, to get coaching.

Nila's agency creates a psychological space both at field sites and in home offices where teams and their leaders know they can put problems on the table, get coaching, and safely talk about what they think and feel. Nila described the coaching she does as sewing pieces together; this metaphor expresses Nila's unwavering commitment to integration and fostering community within and outside her agency. It also could apply to her resolve to enable her staff to build from their strengths, to gather power and effectiveness into themselves as they proceed from strength to strength to get things done.

Nila views cultural complexities in her work as having influenced her development as an executive. She is bicultural in the sense that she can work with non-Natives and with people from many Native tribes. She is adept at code switching and other abilities used by those who work well within different cultures. Nila has an appreciation of the fact that people are a blend of attributes that are distinct from culture. People are composed of a variety of qualities including sex, race/ethnicity, and personality, among many others, and Nila does not collapse inherent complexity into any one single dimension, including the cultural, important as it is.

In spite of cultural and other forms of complexity, power dynamics and differentials in CDI are like those in many agencies where administrators are mostly white even though the values of the agency are based on honoring diversity. Values of her agency include

accountability, integrity, equality, diversity, and open communication, but no matter how explicitly stated, values do not automatically eliminate or displace entrenched attitudes. Nila pointed out how complex the issues presented by race are in the workplace, and persons in racial minorities have extra layers to work through in order to be fully present.

Also, professionals can contradict their expressed values. Nila shared her experiences with the discrepancy that follows from that contradiction:

I am one of very few Native Americans working for this company, and I have at times been troubled over whether viewpoints about my skills, abilities, work practices, and ways of being were overshadowed by my race, heritage, and experience in life. In fact, I have been challenged on multiple occasions about these intersections, and invariably thought that was inappropriate. When working with other organizations in different cities, towns, and with different workgroups, I regularly experience situations where my presence gets a double take. My being there elicits questions and curiosity about who I am and where I come from. I am very aware of how, when others meet me, they do not expect to see a small Native American woman. Who they expect to see at this level of leadership is someone other than me. I believe white persons can go into situations and not have to face questions about who they are, or have to prove that they belong. This is the experience of white privilege. Sometimes I wonder if it is just I reading in all of these nuances, and I blame myself for feeding into these situations. But I haven't felt this way in primarily American Indian/Alaska Native organizations when I am among Native people.

Nila deals with the challenges posed by confounded expectations such as these with a finesse that underscores the complexity of her understanding and her solid commitment to focus

on the best in people. It could be said she takes it in stride because she views race-based bias as another layer of deficit-thinking in human experience, and is determined to play her part to help overcome it.

Nila believes that becoming bicultural and able to function in diverse cultural settings is part of the solution. She explained:

Being able to get along well, or moving smoothly in a culturally diverse setting, is not just a matter of being bicultural. Being bicultural is so much more complex than a person being Native American, African American, Latina, or any other ethnic minority functioning well in the dominant culture. It involves multiple layers of being human: sex, race, everyone's different upbringing and background. The harm racism has done is there. I can only relate by recognizing what has happened to me on a personal level, then I have to do something about it, otherwise it would really make me crazy.

This statement reflects a theme woven throughout Nila's story, of going forward and doing something positive about what was once considered only problematic or even hopeless.

We ended our interview with a plan to meet again after Nila returned from a trip to Wrangell, Alaska, for a meeting of the Raven *Teey hit'taan*, the clan Nila was adopted into, and Albert's Wolf/Eagle, *Kaagwaantaan* clan. Both clans will participate in a naming ceremony for their grandchildren. Another ceremony will formalize the adoption of their non-Native daughter-in-law Becky, mother of Nila and Albert's two grandchildren, into Wrangell's Wolf-Eagle *Naanyaa.aayí* clan, so the children will be Wolf/Eagle moiety, appropriately opposite their dad's moiety.

This will be a full-on *Koo.eex*. A *Koo.eex* has cultural and spiritual dimensions; both moieties participate in reciprocal sharing of songs, dances, and teaching stories. There will also be displays and presentations of Nila and Albert's clans' regalia: hats, ceremonial robes and tunics, beaded shirts and vests, all garments that tell important stories. These are among ways Tlingit clans have always taught their culture, and Nila is nervous about all the things she has to do to get ready for such big ceremonial events.

I arrived at Nila's house in the afternoon a couple of weeks later. This will be our last meeting; a new school year is about to start and Nila's work in Colorado gets busier. Nila had just returned from Wrangell and was walking on air from the Tlingit ceremonies for her two grandchildren, Benicia and Edelio, and their mother, Becky. Nila was highly energized, and ecstatically shared her experience:

I always felt that I did not know enough and had an intense desire to know more about Tlingit culture so I could provide this knowledge for my children. Elders from both moieties and their clans were there; it was a *Koo.eex* where a great deal of teaching occurred. This provided me with the grounding I needed; now I feel like I belong, and my grandchildren have a cultural place where they belong.

The *Naanyaa.aayí* clan leaders told stories of the Wrangell people and how they used cedar ropes to follow a marmot and climbed up to safety from floodwaters. A Marmot clan hat had just been repatriated and some of the male clan leaders wanted to put off the naming and adoption ceremonies to ceremoniously present the Marmot hat to the clans present. But Carol Brady, a clan mother from Wrangell, intervened and insisted the naming ceremony had to go on, which it did. Carol Brady's moral authority was recognized and respected because it was anchored by the Tlingit matrilineal clan structure.

Nila cried as she passionately declared the importance of ceremonial events for forming an identity, connecting with culture, and learning history:

I was in awe in the ways all this happened, and what was given. I learned so many cultural things I did not know. My Taos training was applicable during the food offerings at potlatch. I helped prepare the fire plates for the elders who had died, and my ceremonial training from my Taos Pueblo girlhood meant I was able to do this well.

Nila's tears were of both joy and relief. Her yearning for ceremony and culture as a part of daily life is a longing Native people feel everywhere. She summed up her gratitude:

My desire is to have a solid sense that I have culture in my daily life. I feel like a circle has been completed and I can step into my role as a grandparent. I can teach what I learned at the naming ceremony to my grandchildren. I have started to learn Chilkat weaving from Lily Hope, who is Clarissa's daughter. If you start a circle design in this weaving tradition, you have to finish it. I feel like I have closed a circle with my grandchildren and daughter-in-law with this ceremony.

Nila crossed a threshold with this experience; she went from thinking she did not know enough about Tlingit culture to feeling like she was fully participating in it. Prior to this breakthrough, Nila had had some deficit thinking of her own, namely that she did not know enough about it to engage fully in teaching her sons their Tlingit culture. She realizes now that she does not need to know everything in order to help her sons and grandchildren learn. Nila's willingness to participate in passing on culture while still learning it herself is evidence of her strength-based orientation to life. She is taking on new learning for the possibility that things could be better, no matter how good they are.

Chapter 5: Analysis

Thought flows in terms of stories — stories about events, stories about people, and stories about intentions and achievements. The best teachers are the best storytellers. We learn in the form of stories. Frank Smith (http://myquoty.com/Thought-flows-in-terms-of-stories-stories-about-events_--id776.html)

5.1 Discussion

In this study, I sought to explore the experiences of three Alaska Native adults who became successful educators and community leaders, with the goal of contributing to the adult learning and development literature. Portraits of each participant were co-constructed to place their experiences within a narrative context, which provided a vehicle to present information in story form (McAdams 1990, 2013). Co-construction of portraits is standard practice, because neither participants nor researchers exclusively author them. My role in their co-construction, besides shaping the narrative arc, entailed embedding commentary and analysis within portraits to integrate background context or to elaborate on various details. All such involvement on my part was done with the aim of more clearly illuminating the life-worlds and felt-experiences of participants (Gendlin, 1981; Habermas, 1987).

Because the portraits are grounded in participants' experiences, they include interpretive representations designed to make the world of the participant more visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Interpretation as a cognitive activity involves recognizing, sorting and organizing perceptions toward a cohesive construction of understanding. This activity of discerning the qualities of a subject that are necessary for understanding is a kind of active search for connections and coherence (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 30).

Cohesion and coherence are crucial to narrative story structures, but they cannot in of themselves guarantee relevance or resonance, because those qualities are in the mind of the reader. Even less can stories within qualitative social science inquiry be assured of being correct. But while there may be no way to determine if portraits, or any form of social science, is correct on some objective level, it was my goal to make the portraits feel useful and illuminating, and for their analysis to be interesting and meaningful.

I believe these portraits enrich the adult learning and development literature by adding their previously unheard perspectives to the discourse. Those perspectives outline conditions that made it possible for participants to overcome layers of adversity and succeed as educators and community leaders. As such, they could inspire reflection among educators on adult learning with culturally diverse students, and inform conversations between Native and non-Native adult educators about educational practices and policies that would create optimal structures and experiences to foster success for Alaska Natives.

I began the data collection for this study with interview questions based on Erik Erikson's (1982, 1963, 1959) life-span research to gather information from participants on their developmental life-trajectories. I explored formative early childhood experiences to learn what influenced participants as they grew-up, because I wanted to learn their thoughts on what was foundational to their becoming successful as adults. I hoped to learn if there were specific events, persons, interpersonal dynamics, cultural resources, and mental or emotional capacities that made a difference for them.

I chose my participants because they all, in different ways, come from a population category frequently found in North America: with indigenous roots in one or more tribes, speaking English as their first language, schooled in a colonial system, mixed with other cultural

groups, and having lost much of their culture, especially language and ceremony. The participants in this study have become, purposefully and resiliently, leaders in these aspects of cultural restoration.

Their portraits are testimonials to how participants experienced various challenges at different periods from their childhoods into adolescence and early adulthood. A key point here is participants had to overcome a measure of adversity, but chose productive pathways rather than succumbed to difficulties. This was critical to their surmounting obstacles and creating successful, satisfying, and generative lives.

In this chapter I make connections between experiences revealed in participants' portraits and adult learning theories. The internal logic behind what I selected to explore can be understood as enacting what Geertz (1973) believed about culture and social science. Human beings reside within webs of significance, the analysis of which is "[N]ot an experimental science in search of a law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (p. 5). Other portraitists may be drawn to other areas for interpretation, which is as it should be.

Toward that end, I offer my thoughts on how theorists of adult learning and social scientists could benefit from this research. Furthermore, Tlingits, and Juneau's white and Filipino community members could also gain from this study of my participants' successful lives. In what follows, I will briefly re-present each participant in turn, and discuss several specific areas of adult learning or development that could be seen operating in their narratives.

5.2 Clarissa Rizal

Clarissa Rizal is Filipina and Tlingit. Her father was Filipino and German; her mother was Filipina and Tlingit. Her German heritage is not important in Clarissa's life experience; however, her Filipina and especially her Tlingit heritages are. Clarissa was born in Southeast

Alaska to a mother from the small Native village of Hoonah. Her mother's first language was Tlingit, but she did not teach the language to her children. Her father's first language while growing in the Philippines was Pilipino, but he too did not speak his native language with his children as they were growing up in Alaska. English is Clarissa's only language.

English was the language spoken in the schools Clarissa attended along with other children of several ethnic and racial backgrounds, primarily white, Native, and Filipino. In fact, English was the language of the dominant culture, spoken in commerce, government, and most dimensions of public and private life. Along with the language, much Tlingit culture was also lost, but by the time Clarissa graduated from high school, she had been exposed to traditions of Tlingit weaving. This seemed to have planted a seed or triggered some resonance in her that eventually put Clarissa on a path that would lead to her work in weaving, and in so doing help restore this aspect of Tlingit culture.

Thematically linked experiences in Clarissa's portrait lend themselves to interpretation through several areas in the adult learning and development literature. Those areas are situated learning within the context of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991); indigenous meaning making and spirituality (Cruikshank, 2005; Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer, 1987, 1990 1994; Thornton, 2008); and the development of a generative identity (Erikson, 1963, 1982; McAdams, 1990). I will make those connections next.

5.2.1 Communities of Practice and Situated Learning

Clarissa first learned to weave in 1983 as part of a group of Southeast Alaska Native women in a two-week long workshop in Haines lead by elder weaver Jennie Thlunaut. The women learned fingering techniques and other concrete aspects of weaving traditional Chilkat

design, along with their master teacher's rules, philosophies, and cultural values. Altogether, it epitomized situated learning in a community of practice (Lave, 1991).

Clarissa's participation in the activities of learning to weave initially felt clumsy and awkward to her (Hudson, 2005). These experiences were uncomfortable and unsatisfying for her, but despite feeling discouraged, she sporadically continued to practice. A year or so after the workshop in Haines, Clarissa was back in Juneau when she received a phone call from Agnes Bellinger, Jennie's daughter, who said her mother wanted to teach Clarissa how to weave. Although this occurred out of the blue and Clarissa was otherwise fruitfully engaged, she dropped everything to weave with Jennie. Clarissa subsequently studied directly with Jennie one-on-one for six weeks; they spent nine to ten hours a day weaving. At the end of that unwitting but successful audition, Clarissa had learned Jennie's fingering technique, and Jennie told Clarissa that she was her chosen successor.

It was not until several more years had elapsed that Clarissa's identity as a weaver crystallized when she was asked to teach weaving to Jennie's granddaughters. The process was not without its challenges; in fact, Clarissa had to pass through an initial crisis of insecurity and self-doubt. In her anxiety, Clarissa prayerfully called upon her deceased teacher's spirit for help, and was immediately rewarded by remembering what she thought she had forgotten. Her skill seemed better than ever as her fingers flew across the loom. Giddy with joy and relief, she danced around her room at three in the morning.

Traditionally older women family members taught Chilkat weaving to younger women family members; so in effect, by teaching Jennie's granddaughters, Clarissa functioned as Jennie's surrogate. After teaching Jennie's granddaughters, Clarissa went on to teach many, many different women. By then it had become routine for the teachings to be offered to non-

family members. It could be said that Jennie initiated Clarissa into a practice lineage where she belonged to a community of weavers whose members were joined by the common pursuit of attaining mastery in the art of Chilkat weaving.

Clarissa's subsequent weaving workshops were all situated learning experiences where participants practiced fingering techniques, refined their designs for robes, and problem solved on a wide array of weaving related issues. Many of Clarissa's students continued to weave together over time in a context of mutual teaching and learning. Clarissa has truly helped to weave together a community of practice centered on the manifestation of this culturally significant art form.

5.2.2 Indigenous Meaning Making and Spirituality

Meaning making is well theorized in the adult learning and development literature as an innate activity engaged in by all human beings (Dirkx, Mezirow, Cranton, 2006; Erikson, 1959; Freire, 2004; Gilligan, 1982; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Mezirow, 2000). By making meaning, we make sense from the raw material of our lives. In a type of feedback loop, our experiences are both causes and effects of our prior and future meaning making, which is connected in explicit and implicit ways to culture. Culture supplies the ground of suppositions that frame the meanings persons make, in the form of beliefs and assumptions about the way things are, were, or have to be (Geertz, 1973).

Indigenous meaning making, as distinct from other cultural forms, is characterized by its valuing of a web of relationships with all things, and the understanding that knowledge is collective and not possessed by individuals (Battiste, 2000, 2008a; Cajete, 1994; Kassam, 2009). It is also manifested in how Native history, beliefs, and stories specifically animate the meanings of indigenous persons' lives. In Tlingit traditions, meaning is constituted by a history that

features geographical and cultural emplacement; by having been in this place from time immemorial; by connections to one's ancestors, relatives, animals, spirits, food sources and harvesting practices; by myths and stories, in short, by virtually everything (Cruikshank, 2005; Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer, 1987; Swanton, 1909; Thornton, 2008).

Clarissa accessed indigenous meanings to make sense of experiences that were otherwise unintelligible to her. The most evident occasion for this was in her narrative about her daughter Ursula, who she characterized as being "different in a Native way." The notion of a Native way was not qualified or explained, but simply presented as an irreducible fact. This fundamental quality of her daughter's difference was, however, not without keen interest for Clarissa, and something she sought to understand by delving even more deeply into Tlingit mythology.

The myth cycle relevant to this particular matter concerns the connection between Tlingits and bears, their proximally and culturally close neighbors in the animal kingdom (DeLaguna, 1972). The myth of *The Woman Who Married the Bear* provides a narrative that aligns with Clarissa's indigenous meaning making orientation (Cruikshank, 1990b; Dauenhauer, & Dauenhauer, 1987; McClellan, 1970, 1975; Thornton, 2008). The story offered not just a ready-made system for meaning-making, though it did do that, and not just a way to make sense of the difference Clarissa perceived in her daughter, although it did that too, but it also provided a context for Clarissa to clarify ultimate meanings associated with fulfilling her highest purpose in life.

Part of the broader context of making meaning for Clarissa also involved her recourse to a medicine man who offered a psycho-historical story of an ancestor of hers that practiced shamanism, the preeminent traditional source of ultimate meanings for indigenous peoples (DeLaguna, 1987; Kan, 1991). This medicine man identified Clarissa's daughter Ursula as

having *bear spirit*, and so answered the question about her difference; he also offered Clarissa a narrative way to make sense of her choice to teach Chilkat weaving as the fulfillment of an outstanding psychic or spiritual debt incurred by her great grandmother. This understanding cemented not merely Clarissa's identity as a culture-bearer and teacher of weaving, but also offered her a resonant sense of supernatural meaningfulness in doing so.

Spirituality for Clarissa was not limited to her use of traditional Tlingit myths to make ultimate sense of her life as a contemporary woman; it was also concretely connected to her relationship with Jennie Thlunaut and her teachings. Spirituality could be said to have first manifested through grace for Clarissa, who felt called to weave Chilkat by some force outside her conscious awareness or control. She heeded the call at first without even realizing she was doing so. It is appreciated in the traditions of some spiritual teachings that if one takes an instrumental action such as raising a sail, grace may generate the desired wind (Leonard and Murphy, 2005). Clarissa acknowledged the importance in her life and to her work of grace as providential forces over which she had no control (Hudson, 2005).

Clarissa experienced her apprenticeship with Jennie in many of the same terms used by adherents of spiritual or religious disciplines with traditions of rigorous teacher and student relations, also conceived as guru and devotee relationships (Gross, 1990; Klein, 1987; Shaw, 1994). In immersing herself so thoroughly in the process of learning Chilkat weaving, Clarissa had to finesse challenges of submitting her ego to her teacher and the teachings; of subduing arrogance and relinquishing individualistic expressions of whimsy or willfulness; of accepting limits and finding freedom within restrictions of form. But there were dividends for her efforts: she acquired emotional, moral, and existential capacities she had not had before, such as patience, heightened feelings of gratitude, and a compassionate desire to be of benefit to others.

5.2.3 Developing a Generative Identity

Clarissa was not raised as a Tlingit *per se*, but her eventual identification as a Tlingit artist was the product of whom and what she chose to align herself with. This identity was borne of struggle, initially within her family, before she even knew that having an ethnic identity was an option, then within a dominant society that devalues indigenous peoples. Clarissa's identity as a Tlingit artist was doubly earned within the context of her family, who neither fostered her indigenous cultural identity nor supported the pursuit of art as a means to her livelihood and an expression of who she is. She actualized this identity against the odds of her parents' at least partial repudiation of their own cultures due to their desires to fit into the dominant society, and the fact that her father had failed to realize his own goal of pursuing art. While it is certainly possible to imagine though that Clarissa's father may have secretly wished for her success as a way for him to live vicariously, Clarissa's identity formation was a nevertheless a developmental accomplishment (Erikson, 1969; McAdams 1990).

Pursuing art seemed at first to be an alternative to explicit political involvement for Clarissa, but ultimately she seems to have achieved by that path the same desired ends of fostering authentic indigenous cultural engagement and promoting Native values in spite of their diminishment within the dominant culture. Clarissa first embraced her identity as a Native artist well before she used being a weaver of Chilkat as her vehicle to add cultural value to other Tlingits. In fact, she claimed a Native identity initially for herself, but that was a preliminary necessity for her eventually extending herself generatively as a culture bearer in service of other Native persons. Though she started teaching Chilkat weaving before she thought she was ready,

over time Clarissa accrued such personal and cultural capital she was able to richly give the gift of herself as an artist and teacher of weaving to others (McAdams, 1990).

5.3 Hans Chester

Hans Chester is Tlingit, Aleut, and Norwegian. Hans's father is Norwegian; his mother is Tlingit and Aleut. In an echo of the way Clarissa's German heritage does not feature in her story, Hans's Norwegian heritage does not factor into his cultural life experiences. Neither does his Aleut heritage, except insofar as it is part of a narrative of cultural rejection most directly experienced at the hands of traditional conservative Tlingits by Hans's mother, but also by Hans himself. Hans was born in Juneau and grew up attending the same school system as Clarissa. Despite the fact of, or conversely, because of the fact of those painful familial experiences of cultural rejection mentioned above, Hans was powerfully inspired to learn Tlingit. Even though traditional Tlingit culture was not his entire milieu while growing up, he had brief but deeply meaningful cultural experiences while visiting his mother's ancestral Native village with her. The combination of these and surely other unknown and unknowable qualities combined to instill a burning desire in Hans to learn Tlingit language, which he did, fluently. This eventually led to him teaching it, and in this way, to becoming a major resource in local efforts at Tlingit language revitalization.

Thematically linked elements in Hans's portrait lend themselves to interpretation through several areas in the adult learning and development literature. Those areas are motivation and culture (Wlodkowski, 2008); narrative learning (Brunner, 1991); and the development of a generative identity (Erikson, 1963, 1982; McAdams, 1990). I will explore those areas next.

5.3.1 Intrinsic Motivation and Culture

Wlodkowski, understanding culture to be “the deeply learned mix of language, values, beliefs and behaviors that pervade every aspect” of a person’s life, believes that it significantly influences motivation. But while motivation, “the natural human process for directing energy to accomplish a goal” (2008, p. 2), is helpful in getting things done, whether a person has it, how much of it a person has, whether it is toward one goal or another, are issues that speak to the particularities of a person’s life. Even the influence of culture on motivation is not a definitive determinant when it comes to these matters; a person’s motivation, especially if he or she is deeply motivated, is a singular expression of self (Deci & Ryan, 2010; Kinman & Kinman, 2001).

The effect of culture on motivation is also made more complicated when more than one culture exerts its influence. In Hans’s case, what seems most salient is that his most powerful motivation was to resurrect within himself one culture that was in decline and to live much more within its ambit. The threatened Tlingit culture is his own birthright, but if he did not make it come more alive for himself, his own life would be thereby diminished. The key to this for Hans was learning the Tlingit language.

Hans was fiercely determined from a young age to speak Tlingit. His motivation could be viewed as linked to tacit knowledge on his part that it would give him access to aspects of Tlingit culture that he would not encounter otherwise (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1987, Thornton, 2008). His motivation to learn the language also seemed clearly connected to his desire to deepen his identity as a Tlingit. Hans’s propulsive feeling of shame for not knowing Tlingit is inseparable from these sources of motivation, and arguably was an expression of them. Often denounced as only a negative or disabling emotion, shame can function positively as an impetus to move into closer alignment with a particular social group or cultural milieu (Leach &

Cidam, 2015). Regardless of the precise causes for his desire, it is explicable in theoretical terms of culture, identity, and as an expression of intrinsic motivation on Hans's part (Wlodkowski, 2008).

While Hans may not have consciously articulated a rationale to himself for his initial motivation for learning to speak Tlingit, he clearly could have followed other paths and disappointed no one. It has been posited that individual motivation is inseparable from culture (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) but in Hans's case, the question of *which culture?* could be asked, given the appeal of the dominant culture to Hans's peers, most of whom never learned, nor wanted to learn, Tlingit. The point here is that the confluence of his particular life experiences to that point would not have necessarily led irrevocably to his felt desire to speak Tlingit.

His desire was, however, clearly an expression of self-determination that manifested in self-directed learning (Tough, 1989). The fact that Hans had a great deal of energy to pursue this considerably difficult learning project was driven by the importance it had for him emotionally and existentially (Deci & Ryan, 2000). His motivation of course did not arise in isolation; it was configured within a matrix of historical and cultural values, persons and relationships, worldviews, and places, all through interaction with his singular yet connected self (Clark & Rossiter, 2006).

Once Hans learned enough of the language to become better versed in Tlingit culture's fund of rich indigenous local knowledge, he had another rationale for knowing it and could see how he wanted to use it to teach multiple things, all of which are important to him. He wanted to use it to teach Tlingit culture to Native and non-Native students; he wanted to use it to support identity formation as Tlingits for those so inclined; and he wanted to use it to supplement the

mainstream teaching of science Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008). There were many opportunities for him to do so, both in terms of process and content, in the very accessible form of Tlingit stories.

5.3.2 Narrative Learning

As a Tlingit speaker, Hans understands how much information is coded into and contained by seemingly prosaic details like Tlingit names of places and persons (Basso, 1984; Hunn, 1994; Kruger, 1996; Thornton, 2008). Tlingit names contain information about geography, history, genealogy, and identity; a name is in some sense an entire narrative that can both anchor and liberate a sense of who one is. Names are not the whole story, although they are an important aspect of it, but Tlingit stories, even translated into English, are rich resources for information that may be mined to illuminate a variety of topics (Weber-Pillwax, 2001).

Hans realizes that Tlingit stories carry information of cultural significance in terms of history, geography, food resources, worldviews, and relationship the natural world. Such stories contain potential for disseminating all these types of information and more, which is why Hans employs them early and often in his classes. It is increasingly appreciated how stories can offer richly layered accounts that have the power to take hold of one's attention and maintain it.

“The oldest and most natural form of sense-making” (Jonassen & Hernandez-Serrano, 2002, p. 66), stories also can make the learning of scientific facts more accessible and easy to remember. “Using stories to engage students in ideas that are part of course content may be the only way to allow understanding to occur” (Merriam, Cafferela, Baumgartner, 2007, p. 210). For that reason, among others, Hans uses Tlingit stories to teach natural sciences to his students.

The teaching of science through story is not new, but it is relatively recent (see for example, Brian Swimme's *The Universe Is A Green Dragon*, 1984). Commenting on the

storying of science, Astrophysicist Eric Chaisson references Swimme that, "...not merely a collection of facts, science should be a student's guide to a grand world-view, including, if possible, meaning, purpose, and value..." (2002, p. 9). It should be no surprise that these words, although used when talking about science, are virtually identical to those used when describing culture. In fact, Hans reaped the very same benefits from Tlingit stories that he now hopes his students' gain in their science classes.

5.3.3 Developing a Generative Identity

Generativity is often thought of as the ensuring of future generations through procreation (Erikson, 2006). Hans, who is not a father, thinks of his sister's children as his own, referring to them as "*Shagoon*" (Tlingit for ancestors, those relatives that are here now, and those that are coming). This aligns well in Tlingit culture, where the uncle traditionally has primary responsibilities for teaching his nieces and nephews (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1987). Yet although Hans clearly has assumed that duty, he has also taken on the much larger role of being an uncle to the many children that populate his classroom at school.

Hans enacts the role of uncle in multiple ways: he extends an empathic understanding toward his students and their feelings/difficulties that has at its core a kind of self-identification with them; he protects them by creating a safe environment where bullying is not allowed; and he extends his love of Tlingit culture to them in many forms of cultural teachings. These teachings include traditional Tlingit songs, dances, stories, art and artifacts, photographs, and so on. Perhaps more to the point, he is able to project his pride in being Tlingit to all those able to perceive and benefit from that. Most importantly, Hans teaches Tlingit language both in school and outside it in community Tlingit language learning groups and Tlingit language camps.

Hans had to earn the opportunity to be generative by undergoing difficult processes in his own life. Generativity was by no means the guaranteed outcome of his own struggles during a challenging childhood filled with the fallout of intergenerational grief compounded by his erratic and sometimes abusive mother, his not adhering to conventional norms of gender and sexual orientation, and his facing the prospect of problem drinking or even alcoholism, problems suffered by higher than normal numbers of Alaska Natives (Braveheart, 1998a, 1998b, 1999; Duran, 2006; Gray, Comer, & Freyd, 2005). However, in Hans's case, he was able to surmount the obstacles he faced, and was able to form a generative identity (Doucet & Rovers, 2010).

5.4 Nila Rinehart

Nila Rinehart is from Taos Pueblo, New Mexico. Her parents are Taos Pueblo; culturally their heritage was primarily indigenous agrarian with strong Spanish influences, especially in the form of the Catholic Church. Nila's parents spoke Spanish and English, plus Tiwa, their local indigenous language. Nila's relationships with her grandparents were very influential and her extended kinship connections within the pueblo were formative. Much more so than with Clarissa and Hans, who were raised in a community dominated by non-Natives, Nila was enculturated early in her life within her family's indigenous culture.

However, like Clarissa and Hans, Nila's first language was English, which was the language spoken at the schools she attended. Those schools were operated by the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, and were attended by students from various Southwest Native American tribes. Surrounded in the schools as she was by Native students and adults, the dominant cultural values were nevertheless non-Native, but while Nila was not always immersed in the rituals and rhythms of Taos Pueblo, she was still grounded in them. It was not until as a young adult, when she married a Tlingit from Southeast Alaska and moved to Juneau, that Nila

found herself separated from renewing sources of culture. Similarly to Clarissa and Hans, Nila had to make a move to claim her own connection to her adopted Tlingit culture, which she did through the form most resonant and accessible to her: ceremony.

Thematically linked elements in Nila's portrait lend themselves to interpretation through several areas in the adult learning and development literature. Those areas are leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Parks Daloz, C. Keen, J. Keen, Daloz Parks, 1996); voice (Belenky, et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982); and the development of a generative identity (Erikson, 1963, 1982; McAdams, 1990). I will explore those areas next.

5.4.1 Leadership

Nila believes that she was prepared all her life for her work as a leader. The foundations for her work in leadership as an adult began with the autonomous play of her childhood, listening to her father and grandfather discussing important community challenges in the pueblo, the many confrontations she had with her father that necessitated difficult conversations, and the supportive and loving relationships she had with her five grandparents. The cumulative effect of these influences on Nila was to anchor her identity as a resilient person with a strong commitment to helping bring out the best in people and the communities they live in (Leon, 2012).

Nila's community-minded and politically engaged family members engrained in her the crucial importance of leadership to strengthening community. Her upbringing practically seems to have been a prolonged training in leading for the common good; by word and deed she was continually encouraged to make a difference in the world. This should not serve to minimize the difficulties and hardships that Nila endured growing up. But her occasions of suffering and how she was able to experience renewal also served to fortify her commitment to work for the

betterment of others. Ceremonies, the main occasions for the emotional, mental, and spiritual sustenance Nila experienced in her formative years, have continued to be sources of renewal, purpose, and commitment.

Nila's qualities, prominently including an unrelenting focus on strengths as opposed to deficits, a belief in the value and power of community, consistently high standards, faith in others to learn and grow, a willingness to engage, and her refusal to accept that a situation is hopeless no matter how bleak the outlook, all echo aspects of leadership well documented in the literature on leading for social benefit and the public good (Daloz Parks, Keen, C., Keen, J., Parks Daloz, 1996).

Nila's confrontational encounters with her at times wayward father were practically a blueprint for the importance of mastering difficult conversations to finesse leadership challenges (Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, & Switzler, 2011; Scott, 2004; Stone, Patton, Heen, 2010). Additionally, a capacity for moral judgment, of knowing right and wrong and being willing to fight or work for what is right, is important to the concept of servant leadership, a construct easily applied to Nila (Greenleaf, 2002). Nila's professional work, and work-as-play long before it, has been long animated by a core concern with fairness and justice.

It is understood in community based participatory research circles that if a problem is in a community, the solution is in the community (Friedel, 1997; Harrison, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This understanding could serve as a central tenant for Nila, who works to not merely transform individual workers' attitudes and practices, but also organizational cultures and ultimately neighborhoods and communities. Her goal is to infuse work structures with powerful existing community resources, so that an organization can draw upon an inexhaustible source of renewable cultural energy to sustain itself. As appreciated in work done in favor of the common

good, among other forms of work as well, the aim is to make leadership self-sustaining and enduring (Kenny & Frazer, 2013). In empowering agents to increase their capacity to perform in ways that are more responsive to the needs of the persons they serve, Nila wants things to keep improving long after she is no longer directly involved with an agency.

This process is not without its challenges for Nila, especially given complexities in her workplace involving intersections of race, personality, background, rank/role in the organizational hierarchy, and many other dimensions (Brayboy, 2005). Nila is especially aware of power issues such as race-based expectations of who should wield authority (Cunningham, 1983). For instance, Nila frequently encounters the soft discrimination of confounded expectations in her work; most persons expect her to be white like almost all the other executives are. The way assumptions of competence are automatically extended to white executives, or how the benefit of the doubt is extended to white persons while Nila is met with, in her words, questions and curiosity, is generally understood as related to white privilege or a lack thereof (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Collins, 2008; Lund, 2010; McIntosh, 1988).

As a rule, Nila does not take white privilege head on. But she feels the fatigue of having to prove herself time after time, and the exhaustion of hyper-vigilance; she is well aware of how much more relaxed and at ease she feels when in groups consisting of all American Indians or Alaska Natives. She does not want her race or culture to matter in ways that have nothing to do with their assets, but she knows the reality that they do. Nila experiences this as being what it is, namely white privilege, yet chooses to deal with it on the level of competence that lets her actions speak louder than her words. She sees what needs to be done and takes action because it is what is needed, and also because that is who she is.

5.4.2 Voice

Voice, an important theoretical construct in the adult learning and development literature, is a useful lens to consider Nila's success as an educator and leader (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Daloz Parks, Keen, C., Keen, J., Parks Daloz, 1996; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). In Taos Pueblo, as in so many places, women are characteristically expected to play a supportive role to men (Brown, 2013). While men do the work of running things in the pueblo, women's options are clustered around providing care (Coles, 1974; Mihesuah, 2003; Ortiz, 1972). Caring is clearly important work, but women have not always been free to choose ways of expressing their agency that are true to their authentic selves. Colonization effected how indigenous women were perceived and treated. Non-Natives who viewed indigenous people as sub-human were not interested in what they thought or the languages they were speaking. In many cases remaining silent for Native people was a self-preservation strategy. Nila, however, has been uniquely empowered to operate with a remarkable degree of autonomy that was modeled by her father and grandfather as they engaged in dialogue about problems facing Taos Pueblo that were bigger than them.

In Native American societies, as well as in American society as a whole, "Women often think they have to chose between listening or talking" (Belenky, et al, p. 144; Hurtado, 1996). While women in Taos Pueblo kept their thoughts to themselves unless they felt it was necessary to speak, Nila's voice became well-developed over time as she spoke up and talked back to her dad while confronting him about things she thought were wrong (Collins, 1998; Jaimes, 1992). In this perspective, Nila used voice as a socio-political position. She was the person who was doing the talking; her purpose was to let her father know how she and other family members felt (Freedman, Jackson, & Boles, 1983).

In her work now, Nila engages the people she is working with in the kinds of real talk she listened to while sitting outside the screen door. Real talk is not didactic, lecturing, or telling people what they need to do, but finding or making meaning through dialogue. Rather than using one's voice to hold forth, it is a mutual, inter-subjective process that can lead to new understandings (Belenky, et al., 1986).

Through formative experiences of listening to her grandfather and father as they discussed their efforts in leading the Taos Pueblo community in its long, arduous battle to regain rights to sacred Blue Lake, Nila was schooled in the importance of political action and building consensus (Davis, 2001; Leon, 2012). This is related to an important principle found in indigenous ways of knowing that important decisions are only successful if all voices are heard (Kasaam, 2009). Nila's voice is used in this sense from an epistemological position as a source of knowledge and understanding (Belenky, et al., 1986; Britzman, 1991; Goldberger, Clinchy, Tarule, & Belenky, 1996).

Nila's use of Appreciative Inquiry in her work with many different tribes and types of programs is an exquisite expression of alignment between her values and her work. Appreciative Inquiry is a constructivist organizational management framework developed by David Cooperrider, Sri Srivastva, and their colleagues at Case Western University (1995). It was developed for persons seeking to engage organizations, groups, and businesses in self-determined change. It was further expanded in partnership with Diana Whitney (2001) into a positive, strengths-based movement in American management and organizational change.

By using Appreciative Inquiry, Nila connects her use of voice in a leadership process of exploring in dialogue with Native people what is and isn't working in their communities. She asks how they envision what could work better to meet their communities' needs, and then goes

about helping to design and employ processes that would work. Rather than having to build from scratch a system that embodies her commitments to a positive focus on strengths and on what is good in people, Nila was fortunate to find an existing approach to leadership so simpatico with her own core principles and voice as an indigenous woman.

5.4.3 Developing a Generative Identity

Nila's story includes commonly understood aspects of what it means to be generative, that is, the procreation of children and grandchildren to ensure the survival of the species. But her generative life script goes beyond common understandings of reproduction and raising children (Erikson, 1963; Noddings, 2003). The construction of a generative narrative began early in Nila's life; her story describes the presence from early on in life of supports and challenges that energized and directed her behavior (Kegan, 1994; McAdams, 2013).

Nila's story begins with tender and safe experiences of growing up with her grandparents, who made her feel special and able to move through her life on a path of love and nurturance. Feeling fundamentally embraced and nurtured by her grandparents' love, Nila had a solid foundation from which to extend care toward her siblings and peers in their self-directed play as young children. A little later, but while still a child herself, Nila further developed this ability when facilitating school play with the young children who, in her words, were wandering around with no one to take care of them. Her capacity to offer nurturance and care clearly did not need to wait for a more advanced stage in her life, or was, as Erikson's (1959) model might have it, available only after Nila moved through a linear progression of stages into adulthood. It was a capacity consistently evident from early on and throughout Nila's life. This seems attributable to an abundance of loving care and encouragement she got from her grandparents, both in ordinary day to day moments, as well as in cultural ceremonies during times of personal transition.

Nila's strong foundation of caring and affiliation with others supported the initiative taking, self-motivation, and autonomy with which she entered adulthood; her desire to work for the benefit of others was as strong as ever, but she had even more skills to perform authentically and overcome obstacles (McClelland, 1953). The two dimensions of communion and agency are well represented in Nila's story (McAdams, 1990, 2001). Communion is defined as joining with the environment or others, relinquishing individuality to a larger whole, of which the individual is a part, and is linked to concepts of intimacy, love, and cooperation. Agency is defined as separation from others and mastery over the environment by the individual; it is linked to concepts of achievement, power, control, and isolation (Becker, 1973).

Both the tensions and complementary effects between these dimensions are themes of great stories in Western cultures, though they may seem to be at odds with each other from more limited perspectives (de E. St. Aubin, McAdams, & Kim, 2004; Kegan, 1982, 1994). But there is a way these two dimensions can complement each other, and that can be seen in Nila's work. The clarity of purpose and personal drive she brings to help improve failing Head Start programs to benefit communities nationally, or to learn more about Tlingit culture and so forge a path of belonging rather than alienation for her sons and herself, illustrate how those two poles of human experience can work in tandem. The dimensions of communion and agency are joined in Nila's struggle to be successful as an executive level professional making life better for children, and as a woman of her people whose goal is cultural well being for her extended family in Alaska and her family and relatives still in Taos, Pueblo. Both of these qualities ensure that she is able to keep giving of herself as the gift of generativity that is her life and work.

5.5 Preserving Culture

The overarching theme apparent across all three portraits is cultural sustainability, or protecting and preserving culture. Cultural sustainability in this context concerns fostering ways of knowing, codes of behavior, and activities recognized as vital within the values, worldviews, behaviors, and art forms of the Tlingit people. Cultural sustainability for all participants was exemplified in their work but also in their personal identities and lifestyle choices. Participants engaged in preserving their culture in characteristic ways that respectively center on art, language, and ceremony. Clarissa engaged in creating and teaching the art form of Chilkat weaving; Hans engaged in learning, speaking and revitalizing Tlingit language; and Nila engaged in learning and teaching cultural ceremonies to foster belonging and enhance identity.

Mirroring the way that Nila's generativity is supported by both agency and communion, participants' cultural sustainability work also has a dual nature that is individual yet communal too. They fostered cultural sustainability with a desire to serve and protect threatened Tlingit culture, but they also did it for themselves, as expressions of who they are and who they wanted to become (Elder, 1998; 1999; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2009). When Clarissa teaches Chilkat weaving, Hans teaches Tlingit language, and Nila participates in learning and teaching culture through ceremony, they each fortify and renew their own sense of self as Tlingits (Nila holds dual tribal affiliation as Tlingit and Taos Pueblo). There is no tension between these two dimensions at all. A personal sense of belonging as an individual within a cultural community is fundamental to all humans, but perhaps even more so for persons who are members of American Indian or Alaska Native tribes (Battiste, 2000; Brayboy, 2005, Jojola, 1998).

Identifying as a Tlingit was not a given for any of the participants for a variety of reasons. The popular, dominant, non-Native culture exerts a powerful attraction on many Natives, even

though they are disadvantaged within it. Both Clarissa and Hans have one parent that was not of Tlingit ancestry, and even Clarissa's Tlingit mother prioritized assimilating into non-Native society. Nila, for her part, was raised outside Southeast Alaska, ancestral homeland of the Tlingit tribe. But they all felt compelled to deepen their identity as Tlingits for reasons that were personally irresistible.

Clarissa was already familiar with Tlingit stories and myths, but her exposure as a young adult to her Chilkat weaving teacher, and then her later encounter with a non-Native woman who paradoxically helped Clarissa solidify her commitment to Tlingit culture, were instrumental in her deepening Tlingit identity. Hans was initially motivated partially out of a reaction to rejection and shame to learn the Tlingit language and thereby establish his authentic identity as a Tlingit, but then once he was accepted as a well-connected member of the cultural community, his knowledge of Tlingit culture became a deep and enduring aspect of who he is. Nila has always been attuned to her need to be connected to and nourished by her tribal community's cultural life, and is especially aware of the special dual role of ceremony in reinvigorating culture while simultaneously renewing her own sense of self as a person.

5.6 How This Study May Benefit Others

The exact sequencing and meaning of events and experiences of the participants' lives are unique, and cannot be replicated, but suggestive reflections may be offered to adult learning theorists, social science researchers, and family or community members seeking to learn from the lives of these three successful Alaska Native teachers and leaders. A robust personal connection to rich cultural traditions is not only good for sustaining a culture, especially if it is an endangered one, as Tlingit culture has been, it is also good for the person. Making it a value to learn and then teach core Tlingit cultural activities such as Chilkat weaving, speaking Tlingit, or

participating in naming and adoption ceremonies has paid personal dividends for the three participants in terms of adding meaning to their lives. Other emblematic Tlingit cultural activities could surely be learned and taught with similar valuable effects.

Connecting deeply to Tlingit culture as a member of the tribe enhances personal identity and feelings of belonging. Doing so also gives a liberating sense of being more rooted to this particular place. Feeling like one belongs is a valued experience for socially oriented human beings, and was explicitly important for all participants, especially the two whose connections to Tlingit culture were more challenged and disputed (Hans) or tenuous (Nila).

Adversity is not an impediment to future success and personal fulfillment, if qualities such as support, love, guidance, and opportunities for honing skills in resolving conflicts and building capacity for resilience are available from multiple sources starting early in life. Each participant experienced difficulties and struggles while growing up, but they also had access to supportive interpersonal resources that rendered them able to surmount the challenges they faced to create satisfying lives for themselves.

Learning the traditional Tlingit worldview on the interconnectedness of everything in a web of relationships, can lead to, for example, acknowledging the tree that contributed its wood to the making of a bentwood box, in one specific instance recounted by Hans. This could enhance ecological awareness, and increase the appreciation of the effects we have on the environment and perhaps take more responsibility for it. Knowledge of Tlingit stories can also enrich personal understandings, such as that regarding Clarissa's daughter Ursula's difference, they can enhance understanding in professional practice by *storying* history and science, as Hans does in teaching his students.

This study offers perspectives on and insights into the lives of three successful Alaska Native teachers and leaders. With a sample size of three participants it cannot hope to answer broad questions, but my intention as a researcher is to illuminate some important issues and give researchers, theorists, and all interested persons something to think deeply about. After decades of degradation by the dominant non-Native culture, Tlingit culture is experiencing a resurgence of pride among Tlingits, and an increase in respect from non-Natives. Effects of colonization are still present, reaching directly from the past into the present lives of each participant, but those influences have to a large extent been mitigated in their lives for the reasons discussed above. The precise fate of Tlingit culture from this point forward in time is presently unknown, but working to preserve and sustain it is good for the health of the culture, and of the persons who are committed to that work. The generative work of these three remarkable people could prove to be instrumental in leaving a legacy of personal renewal in the context of cultural preservation.

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Figures



Figure 1. Map of Southeast Alaska



Figure 2. Map of Hoonah Area

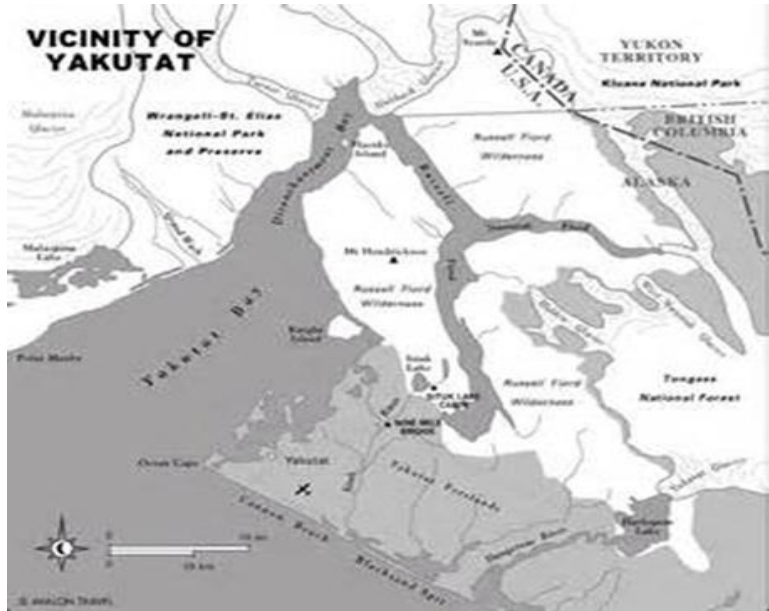


Figure 3. Yakutat Area

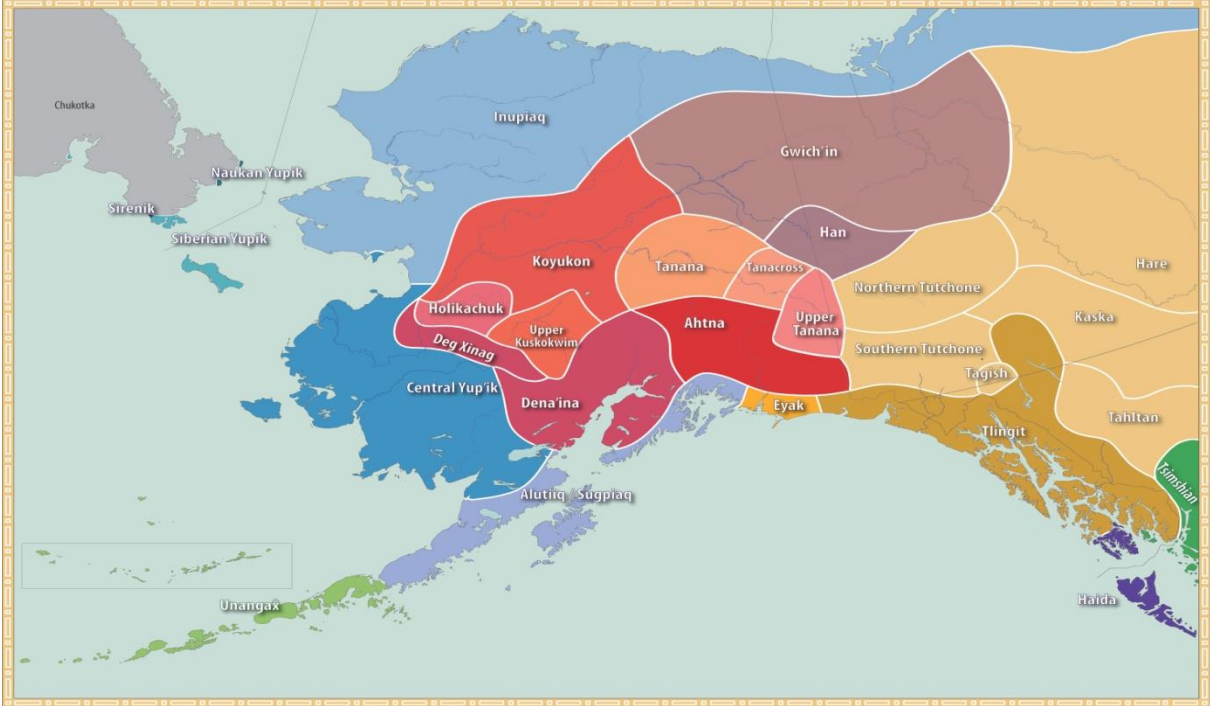


Figure 4. Alaska Native Languages Map

Appendix A

Letter of Informed Consent

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Please read this letter carefully. If you are interested in participating in this study please feel free to contact the researcher prior to the beginning of the study if you have any questions.

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a dissertation research project. The title of the study is Portraits of Three Native Teachers: Stories of Resilience. The research question is “What can be learned from listening to unheard, missing voices of three Native teachers about their experiences becoming teachers and community leaders. The study involves creating a portrait with words. It is an in-depth life history with aesthetic elements, which the researcher and participants create together.

In this study I am attempting to compose a narrative of educators lives, which includes social, historical, cultural and political contexts. I am seeking to learn from participants what their experience was in becoming educators, what their experience practicing their craft as teachers is, and how they arrived at where they are now as educators and leaders in their communities. I will use pseudonyms for individuals, places and institutions if participants wish to remain anonymous.

Methods: Portraiture methods involve semi-structured interviews and observations of participants. Interviews and observations are held at the participant’s convenience. Observations are not evaluative. Participants can chose use their names, or remain anonymous. Participants

may choose to use a pseudonym. Other persons who are observed will be unnamed and the places and settings where observations occur will be unnamed and unidentified.

The observations and interviews will take place from October to December, 2013. The three interviews will take place in a location chosen by the participant(s). The researcher will provide lists of questions before hand. The interviews are digitally recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions will be coded and analyzed to find themes. The transcripts will be emailed to the participant(s) for the purpose of checking the accuracy, and the meaning of what has been transcribed.

Participation in interviews is voluntary and you can answer only those questions you comfortable discussing. The information that is shared will be held in strict confidence and discussed only with the research team.

Benefits:

By participating in this study, you are producing knowledge and contributing to the field of adult learning. The voices of Alaska Native and indigenous people are missing from the education research, thus your voice will adding to the knowledge Alaska Native education and adult development.

Risks:

There are minimal risks that information obtained in doing research with participants from other cultures will be misused or misinterpreted. The ownership of indigenous knowledge must be established and protected through consent and if necessary the consent for the participation of elders and community members as the research proceeds. The researcher will take all necessary precautions to ensure that you are informed at every step about the nature of the study and you will have access and support from the researcher at any time. Your confidentiality will be protected and this letter is to clarify the clear intention of the researcher to protect your personal and professional confidentiality. You will have access to all the written documents contained in the dissertation.

How data will be stored and protected

The data will be stored in locked cabinet by Kathrin McCarthy, and will be destroyed when the study is completed.

Right to withdraw

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you withdraw at any time, all the data you have contributed will be deleted and destroyed.

By signing this letter you are giving your consent to participate:

Your name: _____ Date:_____

Appendix B

Original and Revised Interview Questions

Interview 1: Questions

Original interview questions are indicated by a number, for example, [1.]; revised interview questions are indicated with a number and a letter, for example, [1a.].

1. Where did you play and what did you like to play with when you were a young child?
 Prompt: Do you remember playing with any particular person?
 1a. Do you remember if pretend play was important to you and if it was what do you remember?

2. Were you free to play where you wanted? Prompt: Was safety a big issue where you could play?
 2a. What do you remember about having choices for things you wanted to do?

3. Who were the adults that you liked to be around when you were little? What did you like most about being with them? Prompt: What did you like about the way older people looked or what they acted?
 3a. Who were the adults in your life that supported and appreciated you as a child?

4. Were there stories or songs that you really liked? Prompt: Did any stories you heard thrill or scare you? Did anyone sing to you before you went to sleep?
 4a. What Tlingit stories are important to you now, and why?

5. Do you remember going with your family to gather foods, to fish or hunt?
 Prompt: Do you have any vivid memories of putting food up for the winter? Do you value food gathering and preserving experiences now?
 5a. Did you know the names of particular places you went to gather foods? How were the places associated with your clan or family?

Interview 2: Questions

1. What are your earliest memories of school? What did you know about school?
 Prompt: was there anyone in your family that was in school and did they talk about or tell stories of what school was like?
 1a. Do you remember being excited about school? Looking back, how did you thrive at school?

2. Was there a teacher or an adult at school that inspired you? Prompt: Do you remember this person having qualities you admired and wanted to be like?
 2a. Do you remember situations where you knew you were especially good at something and were appreciated for it?

3. Do you remember thinking that you wanted to be a teacher? Prompt: Were there teachers in your family? Did your family express positive opinions about teachers and school?
 3a. What were the events, artifacts, or materials in your experiences at school that communicated positive ideas about being Alaska Native?

4. Were the relationships you had in school very important to you? Prompt: Did you spend more time with your peers than with your parents and siblings?
 4a. What do you remember from the school years that influenced you to be the person you have become?

5. What are the experiences that are the most engaging for you now that you are a teacher? Prompt: Were there people and events that have inspired you as a teacher?
 5a. What do you consider the most important and valuable things you have to give as a teacher?

Interview 3: Questions

1. What were your contributions to teaching that you feel most proud of in the past? What about more recently?
 - 1a. Have you had a critical set-back in your work that you had to overcome? How did you do it?

2. What do you remember about the leadership qualities of teachers you admired?

Prompt: What are the positive qualities you remember in people you would describe as leaders.

 - 2a. Were there Alaska Native and Native American leaders you looked up to? How would you describe them?

3. What are the most critical challenges you have faced in your teaching? Prompt: Were there any people who were supportive and helpful?
 - 3a. Did you create opportunities for yourself that lead to work or experiences that were advantageous to you?

4. Do you remember having a conflict with someone you worked with or a parent that has been especially valuable? Prompt: Think about conflicts you have had when you learned something that you needed to learn about yourself or your work.
 - 4a. What memories do you have about these conflicts that led you to have the energy to make important changes?

5. What are you most excited about in work teaching or related work? Prompt: What do remember inspiring you as a teacher?
 - 5a. Are there any aspects of your work that you have let go of or moved on from that has been good for you?

Appendix C

I poems

Clarissa's I poems

I poem 1

I was the kid who always had ideas for doing stuff
 I was the mastermind that other kids counted on for what we were going to do.
 [When] I learned something
 I wanted to run around and teach it to someone.
 I said, "Why are you lying?
 [How is it] I can be good for nothing when
 I take care of the kids and make sure the house is clean?"

I poem 2

I think Chilkat weaving chose me and seduced me to go to Haines and learn to weave.
 I had no interest in learning to weave Chilkat.
 Now I think Chilkat weaving chose me.
 "You are the one," Jennie said,
 "You are it."
 I did not really understand the implications of what she [Jennie] was saying.

I poem 3

I taught her [a non-Native student] to weave using Jennie's fingering technique.
 I did not have her awareness and understanding of the sacredness of [what] Chilkat weaving involved.
 I don't want to teach women who have no connection with the culture

I poem 4

I came to see how Chilkat could help other [Native] women.
 I made a decision at the time, meeting this medicine man.
 I will fulfill the agreements my grandmother was not able to keep.
 I will continue to teach and use what I have been given to help others learn this art.

Hans's I poems

I poem 1

I did not know our Yakutat relatives very well.
 I don't wanna climb up there.
 I don't know them.

I would complain.
 I felt ashamed that I did not know Tlingit.
 I thought I should know it.
 I reflect
 I know why that stuck in my head
 I was supposed to feel shame in order to learn

I poem 2

I spent a lot time just trying to figure out how to deal with not knowing what to expect.
 I stay out of her way if she was angry.
 I had to learn to set boundaries with my mother.
 I could not do this when I was little.
 I have a strong connection to Yakutat because of my mom.
 I never saw it [Grandfather's house, "the far out house"].
 I could not see anything down the shoreline.
 I think it was part of the oral tradition Mom was raised with.

I poem 3

[When] I graduated from high school I was partying.
 I did not give a damn about anything.
 I was 18,
 I went to University of Alaska in Anchorage [UAA].
 I spent two semesters in Anchorage.
 I was not doing well there, in school and anything else.
 I decided to come back to Juneau.
 I knew I needed [my dad's] help.
 I went back to counseling.
 I was able to be who I am.
 I was 18 when I met Steve.
 I became partners with Steve when I was 21.

I poem 4

I think
 I have been exposed to in so many different environments
 I see all these different patterns connected to Tlingit Culture
 I manage
 I grew up in a really happy household but there was a lot of grief
 I manage
 I don't know if it is either here or there
 I can see why now
 I did not have a clue
 I am right now
 I told them the story of Whooskeeta, a young girl from Yakutat

I am able to bring what no one else [here] knows.
 I am passing on what I know from my education, my learning from elders, my knowledge of Tlingit language.

Nila's I poems

I poem 1

I could do anything I wanted and they [grandparents] said this to me.
 I remember them praying for me during ceremonies at important times in my life.
 I was supported.
 I could grasp onto this.

I poem 2

I liked best. [Playing school was one of the things.]
 I just had an eye for children.
 I think I got this from Grandma Hattie.
 I would play school with the kids who were roaming around with nobody to take care of them.
 I had school in our garage.
 [We] did everything reading, math, and the bookmobile.
 [We] put on plays and made all the props and costumes
 [We] did everything you do in school and more.
 I would go into work that involved making things better for children.
 I have been playing it all my life.

I poem 3

I felt under attack; I had to keep my head down.
 I have not been able to immediately figure out what to do or how to do.
 I have been criticized for being too outspoken.
 [If I held back] I was criticized for not participating.
 I have the prayers and songs my Dad taught me.
 I have my healing plant garden on my desk.
 I do not always have the time to use them.

I poem 4

I realized what I was missing from Taos.
 I was missing ceremony and connections with those who have connection to culture.
 I was so moved in the ways that everyone helped and all the food and gifts that were brought by elders.
 I needed this grounding.
 I had intense wanting to know more about the Tlingit culture
 I wanted to provide this knowledge for my children.

Appendix D

Alaska Federation of Natives Guidelines for Research

The principles were sent out to all Native organizations and villages in the hope that compliance by researchers will deter abuses such as those committed in the past which have lately come to light.

Alaska Natives share with the scientific community an interest in learning more about the history and culture of our societies. The best scientific and ethical standards are obtained when Alaska Natives are directly involved in research conducted in our communities and in studies where the findings have a direct impact on Native populations.

AFN recommends to public and private institutions that conduct or support research among Alaska Natives that they have included a standard category of funding in their projects to ensure Native participation.

AFN conveys to all scientists and researchers who plan to conduct studies among Alaska Natives that they must comply with the following research principles:

- Advise Native people who are to be affected by the study of the purpose, goals and timeframe of the research, the data gathering techniques, the positive and negative implications and impacts of the research
- Obtain informed consent of the appropriate governing body.
- Fund the support of a Native Research Committee appointed by the local community to assess and monitor the research project and ensure compliance with the expressed wishes of Native people.
- Protect the sacred knowledge and cultural/intellectual property of Native people.
- Hire and train Native people to assist in the study.
- Use Native languages whenever English is the second language.
- Guarantee confidentiality of surveys and sensitive material.
- Include Native viewpoints in the final study.
- Acknowledge the contributions of Native resource people.
- Inform the Native Research Committee in a summary and in nontechnical language of the major findings of the study.
- Provide copies of the study to the local people