

APPENDIX



Fig. 64. “Ludwig Richter’s sketch of a spinning room makes it clear that women may have held a monopoly on spinning, but not on telling tales” (Tatar, 2003: 113).

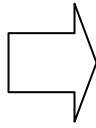


Fig. 65. “*German Popular Stories*, for which this vignette by George Cruikshank served as a frontispiece, is evidently a big hit with men and women, old and young alike” (Tatar, 2003: 112).

Impact

Invasion

Development and military projects on indigenous lands trigger a crippling sequence of events. Indigenous peoples fight for survival. Some never recover.



Disease

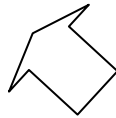
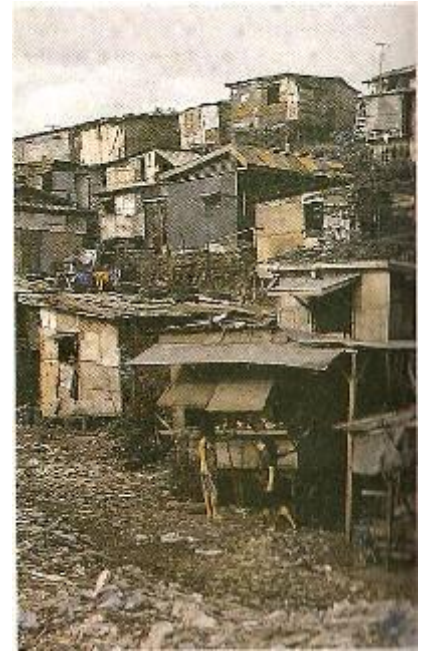
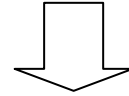
Measles, influenza, and sexually transmitted diseases, brought in by outsiders, are a common cause of death among indigenous peoples.

Violence

First peoples try all legal means open to them to stop damaging projects but governments have used guns to impose development.

Loss of Home

When their land is invaded, indigenous peoples are either forcibly removed or find they can no longer survive. Where new land is given it is rarely adequate.



Loss of Personal Identity

When people lose their cultural identity and are cut off from their spiritual roots in the land, they lose the meaning of their lives, their self-esteem, and their sense of belonging. They are left with a profound sense of demoralization. Frustration can lead to alcohol and drug abuse; despair can end in suicide.

Loss of Cultural Identity

Without land and economic independence traditional values break down and customs and group ties splinter. This brings loss of dignity, of language, of respect for elders and relationships and a sense of disorientation.

Crime and Prostitution

In order to survive, some turn to petty crime or prostitution. Others are vulnerable to exploitation or depend on food handouts.

Move to Towns

Without land and livelihood they are forced to make their homes in squatter camps (see above) or town slums, where conditions are poor and unhealthy. Often they are forced to live on social welfare or travel hundreds of miles in search of work.

Discrimination

Since they have few of the accepted qualifications, indigenous peoples are considered unsuitable for employment. And many suffer discrimination from bosses who consider them lazy.

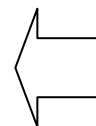


Fig. 66. Effects of Colonisation (adapted from Julian Burger, 1990: 82)



Fig. 67. Kevin Ned, Education Manager for the Okanagan Indian Band, answering some of my questions.



Fig. 68. Jeannette Armstrong explaining concepts, worldviews and making important comments on her books, during our interview at the En'owkin Centre.



Fig. 69. Virginia Gregoire, at the Children's Day Care Centre on the Okanagan Indian Band, in Vernon, where she helps with the babies and teaches them the Okanagan language.

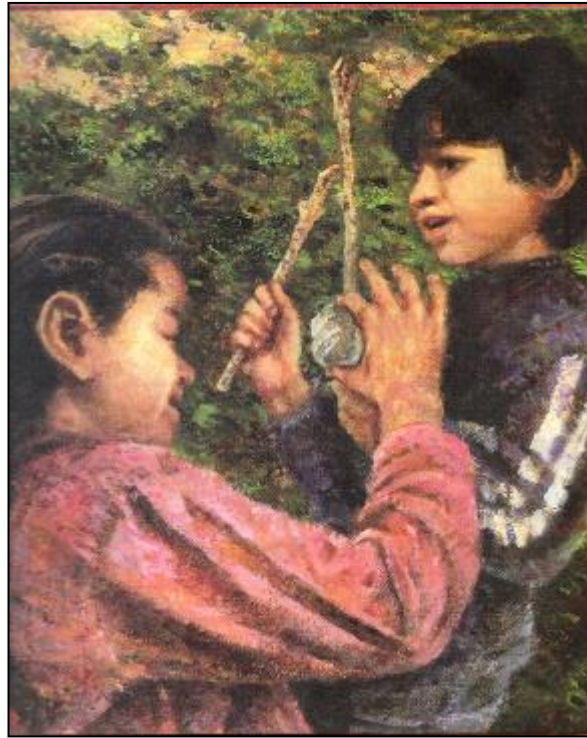


Fig. 70

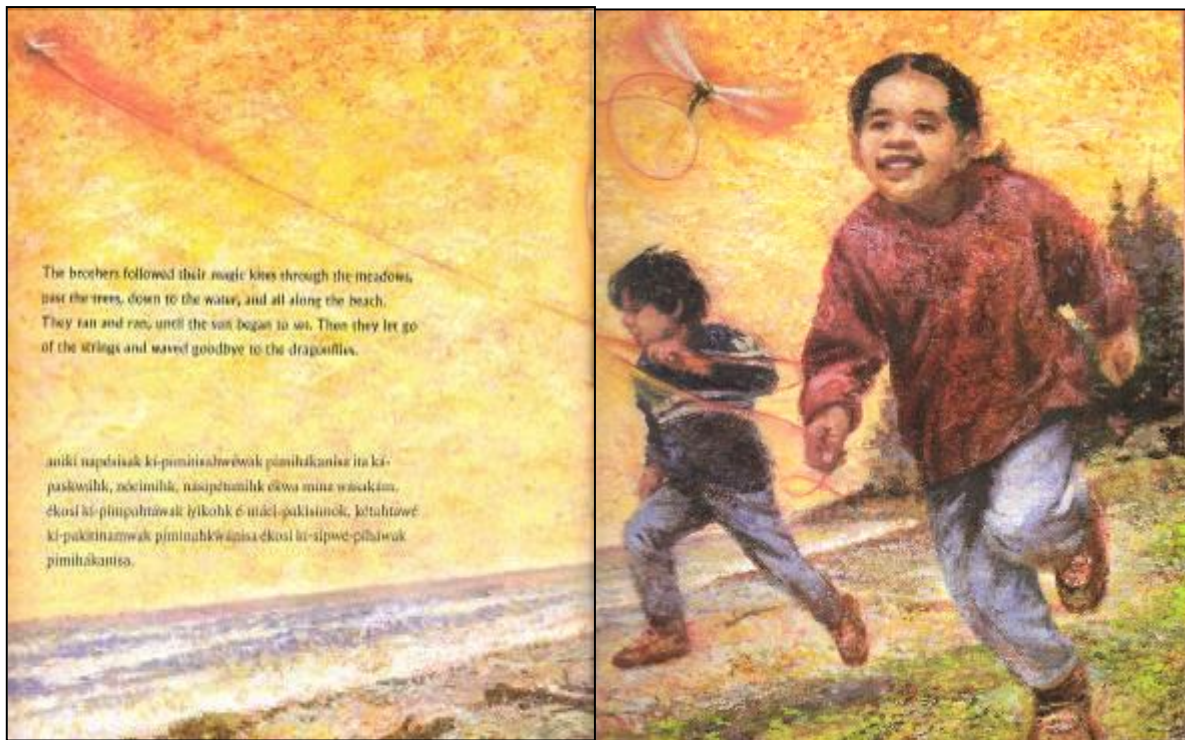


Fig. 71

Figs. 70 and 71. Illustrations by Brian Deines in Tomson Highway's *Dragonfly Kites* (2002).

Fig. 72

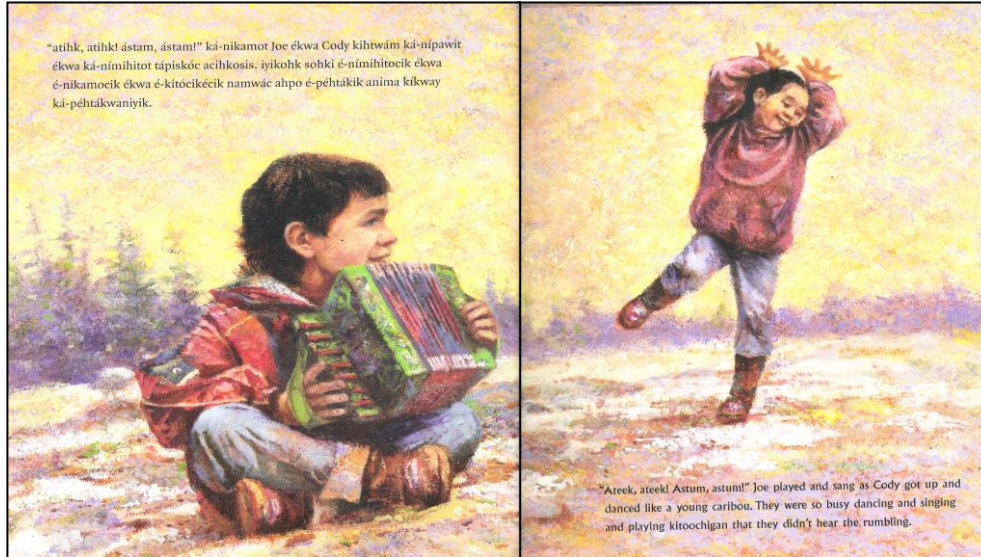


Fig. 73

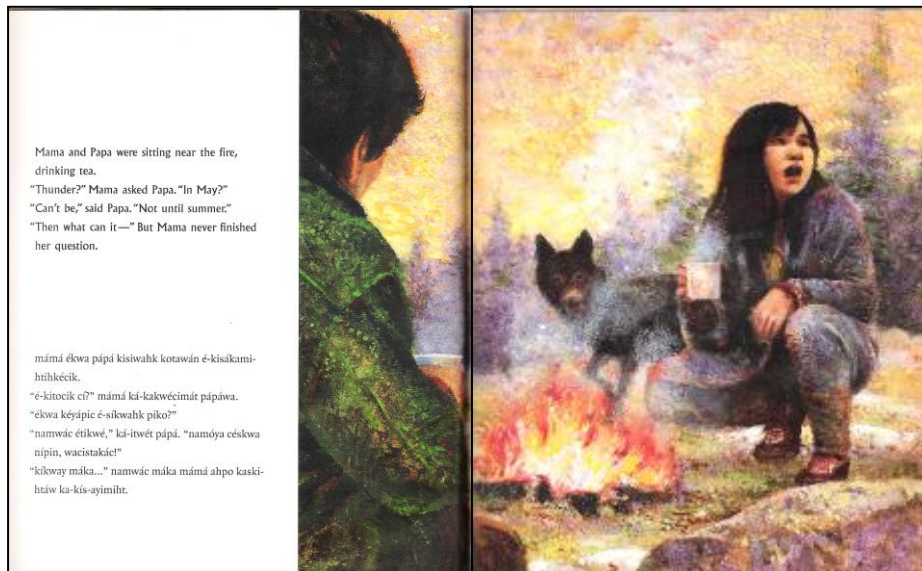
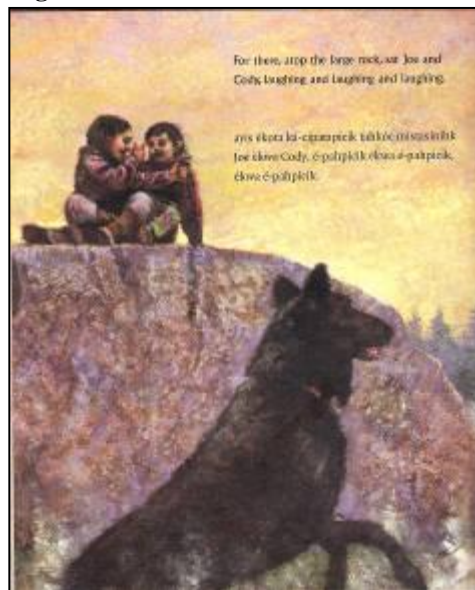


Fig. 74



Fig. 75



Figs. 72-5. Illustrations by Brian Deines in Tomson Highway's *Caribou Song* (2001).

Fig. 76



Fig. 77

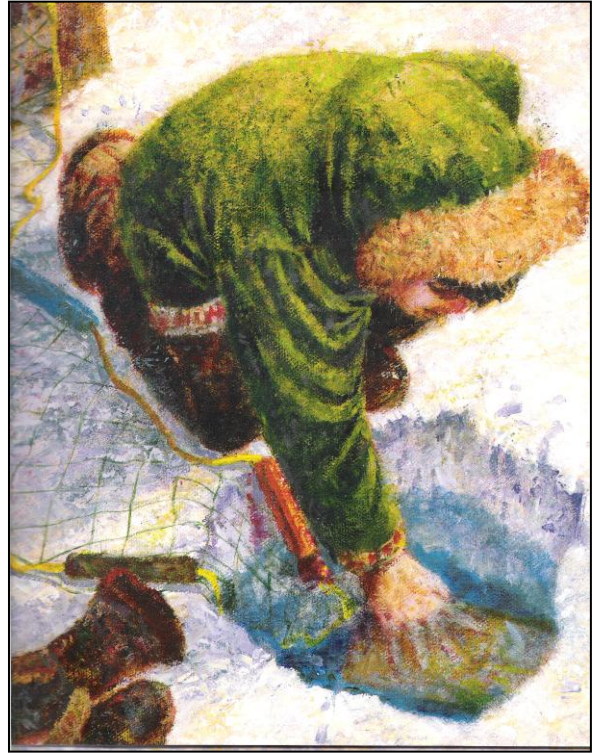


Fig. 78

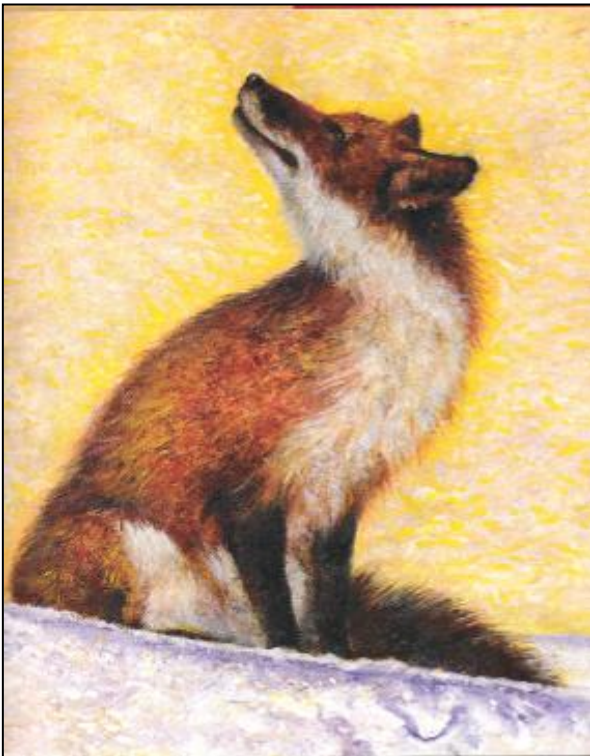


Fig. 79

Figs. 76-9. Illustrations by Brian Deines in Tomson Highway's *Fox on the Ice* (2003).

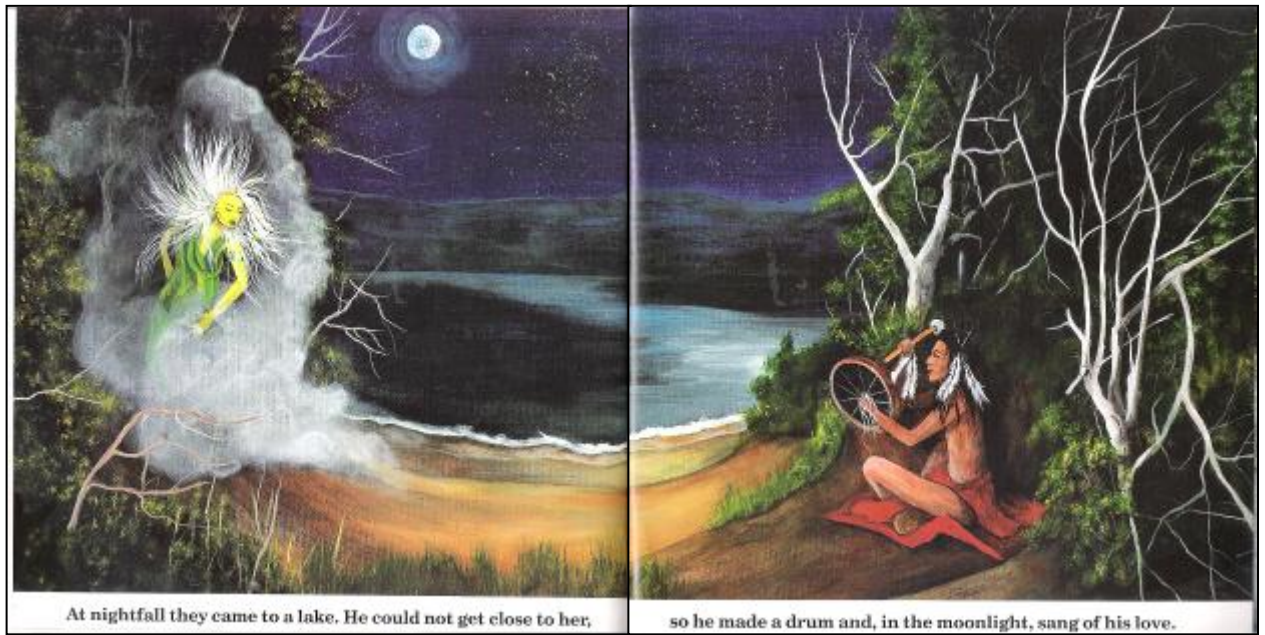


Fig. 80



Fig. 81

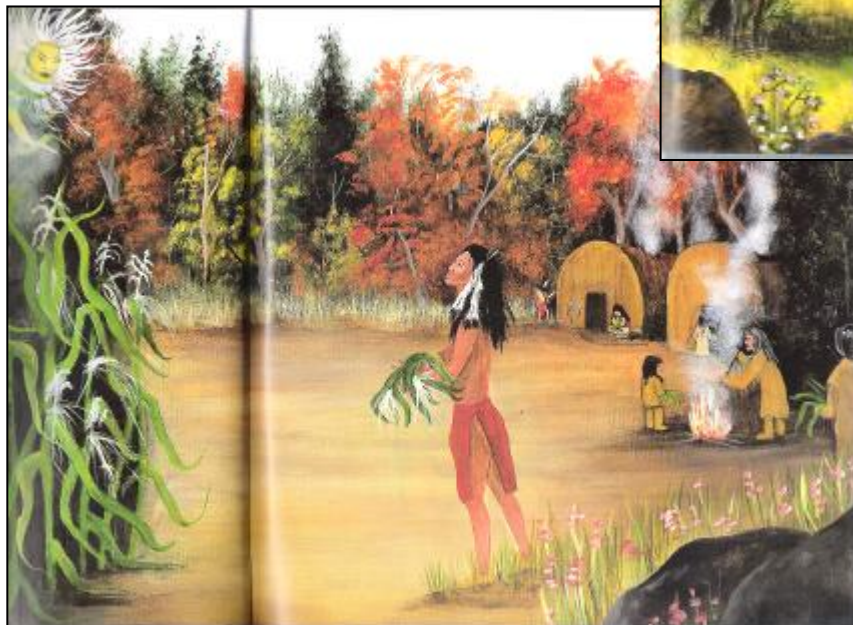
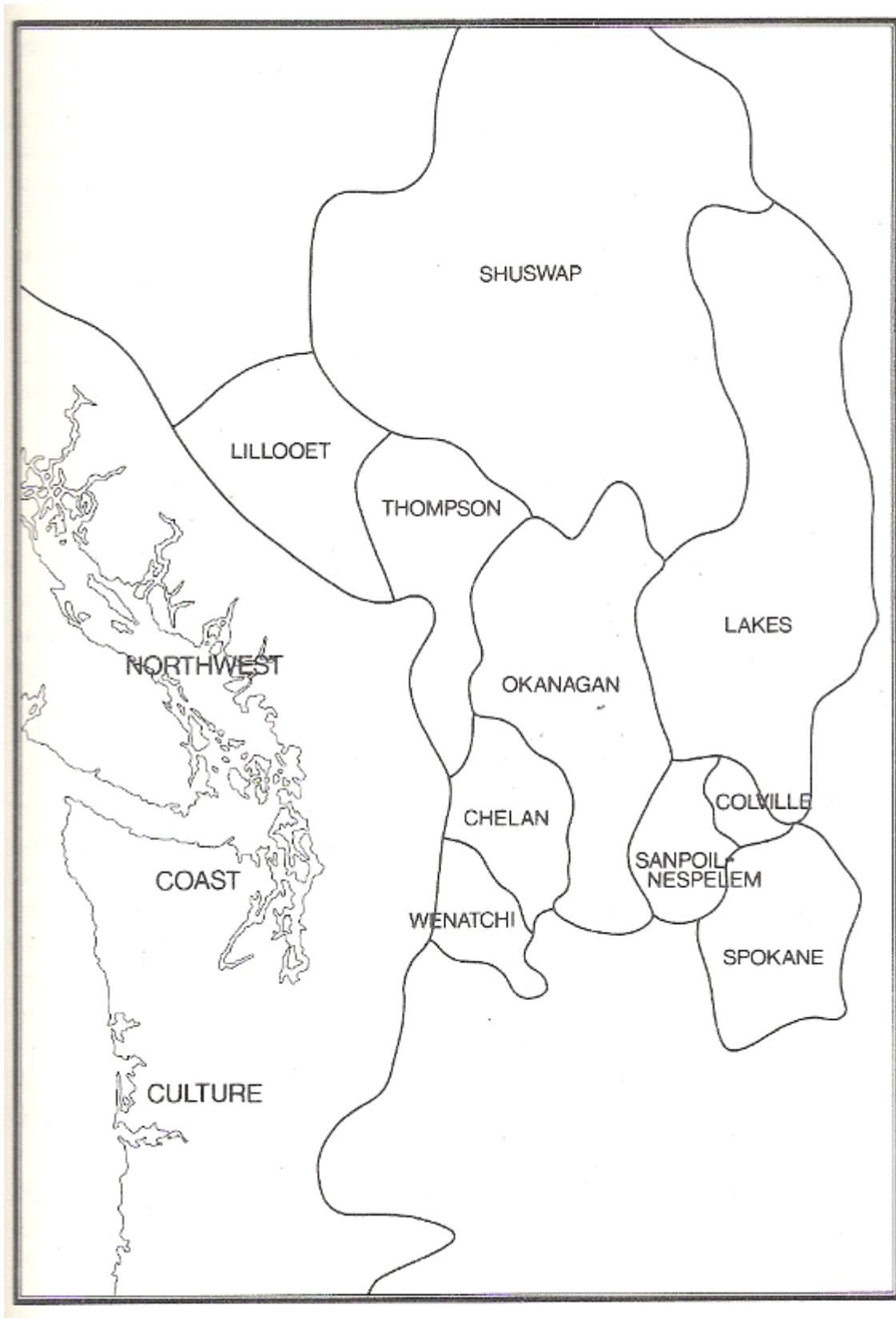


Fig. 82

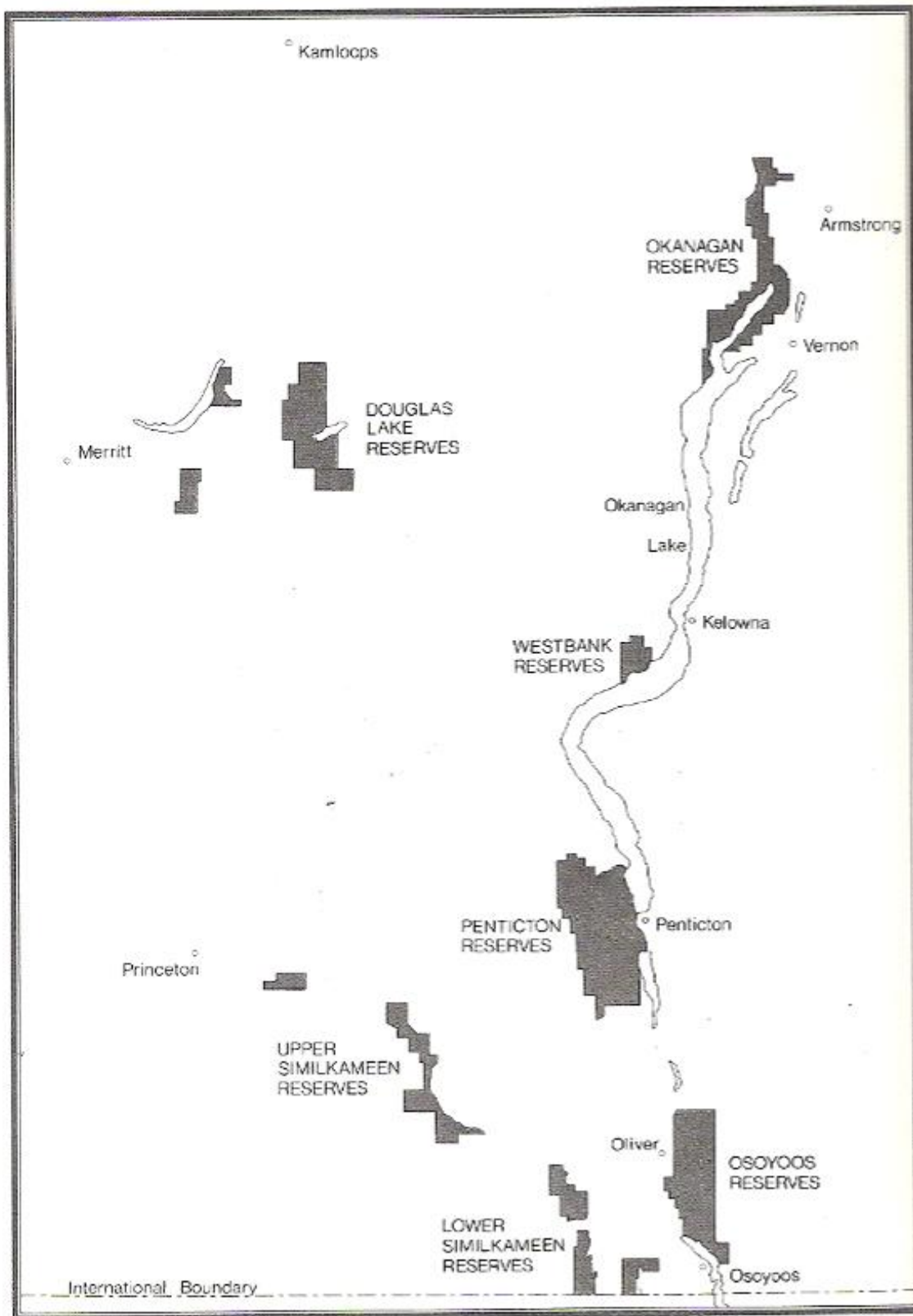
Figs. 80-82. Illustrations by C. J. Taylor in his *How Two-Feather Was Saved From Loneliness* (1990).



Fig. 83. First illustration in C. J. Taylor's retelling of the Mohawk legend "Creation" (Taylor, 1994: 21).



Map 1. Okanagan and their neighbours before 1800 (Carstens, 1991: 27)



Map 2. Okanagan reserves, 1990 (Carstens, 1991: 270)

Once on a time there lived a boy and his elder sister, by whom he was reared; Clothed-in-Fur was the name of the boy. (...)

At once up spoke Muskrat: "See what Clothed-in-Fur has in mind! 'Would that I might eat my sister-in-law!' he thinks."

Now ashamed became the man. Whereupon said the old man: "Well, let him go ahead and eat her!" Thereupon, after they slew that woman, they cooked her. And so he was fed. "Don't break the joints at any place!" After he had eaten, then the bones were gathered up; to the water then were the bones taken and thrown in. And after a while in came the woman again; she was alive. And that was always what was done to the man whenever he had the desire to eat them; sometimes it was his mother-in-law, and sometimes it was his brother-in-law, he ate. And once he pulled apart the foot (of the one he had eaten). So when the one he had eaten came in, it then had two nails. That was what Clothed-in-Fur had done to it.

Now, once said Muskrat: "To-morrow by a being with a full set of teeth shall we be given a visit." And on the morrow, sure enough, a human being came walking hitherward. He climbed upon the dwelling, whereupon they all gazed upon him to see how he looked. Laughed the beavers when the human being started on his homeward way. They addressed (Muskrat), saying: "Muskrat, do go and listen to what the human being may have to say!"

So Muskrat slid on his feet off the log, and then started away. And when Muskrat came back, they asked him: "What did the human being say?"

"Very troublesome is the dwelling-place of the Beavers," he said."

"Yes," they said. And when evening was come, (the stem of) a pipe moved into where they lived (as a sign of invitation to smoke). Thereupon to his wife said the old Beaver: "Come receive the pipe!"

The old woman then received the pipe; she gave it to her husband; and then all drew a puff from that pipe. Back moved the pipe after they had all drawn a puff.

So on the morrow came the people, they had come to get some Beavers.

And all gave themselves up to be killed. And all were taken away except Clothed-in-Fur; he was not slain. And in the evening they all returned alive. On another occasion up spoke Muskrat: "To-morrow by a being with a full set of teeth shall we be given a visit."

So on the morrow, sure enough, a man came walking hitherward. There was very little water where they lived. Once more climbed the man upon the dwelling. Again they laughed at how he looked. After the man had gone back home, again Muskrat was commanded: "Do go and hear what he may say!"

And truly Muskrat went. And when home Muskrat was come, he was asked: "What did the man say?"

"There is very little water where the Beavers dwell, and all we have to do is simply to go to the Beavers," he said.

Then angry became the old Beaver. "Therefore let us hide!" Thereupon way they went from the dam. They drew along a great tree that was there at the dam, and to that place was where they went. Furthermore, they closed it up. After they had concealed themselves, they made a beaver-hole, into which they went.

On the morrow came the people for the purpose of killing some Beavers, but they did not find them. Back home they went.

On the next morning a pipe came moving in, but they did not receive it.

So on the following day back came the people. All day long they worked in vain to kill the Beavers, but they did not find where they were, even though they had fetched their dogs, that were good at hunting, and even though they went to where the Beavers were. And the Beavers spoke to the Dogs: "Away, away, away!" Yet (the Beavers) were not barked at. In the evening all went back home, they did not kill a Beaver.

(Overholt and Callicott, 1982: 62; 71-2)

INTERVIEW WITH JEANNETTE ARMSTRONG

January 28, 2008

(Susana Amante shows Jeannette Armstrong her PhD project)

Jeannette Armstrong: I just don't like that one.

Susana Amante: Which one?

J.A.: This one statement: me being a voice of pan-Indianism, because that's one of the things that I... I mean, you're allowed to write whatever you want to and I can't tell you, you know, what you're going to write, but I always work to dispel the idea of Pan-Indianism. I've worked against it, resisted it, because Pan-Indianism basically is saying that there is no such thing as an Okanagan culture or Mohawk people's culture or separate cultures... It's just...

S.A.: Oh, no... I'm aware that there are several cultures and...

J.A.: Several? It's more like several thousand cultures in North America.

S.A.: Obviously, and that's precisely linked to one of the questions that I had for you: what distinguishes, for example, the Okanagan people from the Cree? What are the specific values, worldviews, ...

J.A.: But when you're saying here...

S.A.: Here I meant... Well, I meant that you are a voice in favour, obviously, of your Native values. I know that you don't like the word Native, because I read that in an interview with Janice Williamson.

J.A. For the same reason, because there isn't any such thing; it doesn't exist... It's...

S.A.: So you prefer to be called an Oanagan, instead, but you don't dislike the word Indian, do you? Because you said in that interview that it is "in with Deo/God".

J.A.: Yeah... Yeah... But I'd rather make sure that you're clear that I'm not a voice of Pan-Indianism. I don't want to be portrayed that way. I really resist the idea of being Pan-Indianised (laughter).

S.A.: Ok. So, what would you say... a voice of... the Okanagan people?

J.A.: Yeah, that's the way I always see it, because, otherwise, it's kinda like lumping everybody in.

S.A.: Ok, alright. Now that it's clear, first of all I would like to ask you about your first novel[s], if you consider that *Slash*, for example, and *Whispering in Shadows* are children's books, because...

J.A.: No.

S.A.: No? What about books for adolescents?

J.A.: *Slash* is juvenile fiction, but not children's.

S.A.: Ok, juvenile, which means it's for adolescents...

J.A.: But not *Whispering in Shadows*, and *Slash* was designed for juvenile fiction which, in Canada... the categories are like, you know, sixteen up... fifteen, sixteen upward.

S.A.: And I read that you first thought about writing *Slash* as part of a curriculum.

J.A.: Yeah, grade eleven, grade twelve. That would make... a person of about seventeen, eighteen.

S.A.: What about *Whispering in Shadows*, it is...?

J.A.: No.

S.A.: Is it for adults?

J.A.: For adults. I never conceived that as being for children or adolescents.

S.A.: Thinking about these two, Neekna and Chemai and Enwhisteetkwa, ...

J.A.: Yeah, those are children's.

S.A.: They are based on traditional worldviews, ancient knowledge. I'd like to know what you understand by oral tradition, oral heritage... hum... who told the stories, if it was women or men...

J.A.: Yeah, we can talk about that. Is it filming now?

S.A.: Just let me check. Ok, it's recording. Who used to tell the stories in your community? Men? Women? The elders?

J.A.: Pretty much everybody, because in oral tradition everything is transmitted orally, all the information. I think in a lot of ways people who are accustomed to the idea of written tradition, of writing, don't understand the concept. They sort of think of it as books, or literature, which is one sort of segment of communication. You can put books on the shelf and then go and find them to dig up the information, but in an oral culture everything is transmitted orally, everything. So that means that the stories are really not thought about in the same way as books and stories are today, which is sort of entertainment, some of the times. Stories are really about everyday life and everyday

transmission of information and the carrying on of that transmission of information between generations. So, in a lot of ways, it's very different conceptually, you know, that... literature having a specific place for reading or for learning.

S.A.: But, for example, in *Enwhisteetkwa/Walk in Water*, I've got this idea that the grandmother was the one that used to tell the stories.

J.A.: Well, in a lot of everyday situations, of course it's the grandparent that would be most available, while everybody else was working and that's the same today. In today's society, if grandparents weren't put in the old age homes, they would be the people who would be there, available to be with children and grandchildren.

S.A.: I visited the Okanagan Indian Band in Vernon and I found it very interesting to know that in the kindergarten and the day care school there were elders and they told the stories to children and interacted with them.

J.A.: Uhuhm, Uhuhm. It's good for young and old people alike.

S.A.: What about the role of women and men? Once you said that their role was very balanced, that women and men shared their tasks, but...

J.A.: They didn't share all the tasks. They shared what's reasonable to share.

S.A.: No? But men used to fish and hunt, while women...

J.A.: Well, yeah, just think about... I mean, just logically think about, as a woman, if you've got a little child that you're breastfeeding or that you're carrying inside your womb, you're not gonna climb up the mountains or down into the river to fish. So, obviously, the work would fall on people who was most capable, but it wasn't divided so that you couldn't do this or you wouldn't do that work. When work had to be done, everyone took part in the work and equally everyone participated in [it] and, within reason, people who are capable or incapable didn't participate; otherwise, you did. There are really some good papers that have been written about the division of labour, the sharing of labour. There weren't any taboos or whatever you call them. Of course

there were some things that could be interpreted that way, that there was this division, but I think that on checking and on living cultures it's not that way, no.

S.A.: What I also realised from what I've read was that everything was very organised: for example, children had to wait until the elders had finished their meals. At least that's the idea I got from reading *Walk in Water*. Is it true?

J.A.: Well, not in... that's in formal, when there is a formal ceremonial feast, and even now when there's a formal ceremonial feast the elders are always served first and then everyone else. They don't wait to eat later, they just wait until the elders are served first. Even in gatherings now, you'll see, if all of the young people could, they'd serve the elders first... and, once they have been served, then everybody else go and serve themselves. They don't wait until they're done eating. It's just out of respect to make sure that the elders are taken care and that's formal. I mean, when everybody's home that's not the case.

S.A.: What other values – because we've talked about the elders and the importance of respect towards them, and about storytelling –, what other values and traditions then would you say that are important to the Okanagan in particular?

J.A.: Well, of course, family is a priority value and that means extended family; it doesn't mean a nuclear family, because cooperation and work and being able to... to make sure that the whole family group is included... the provision of whatever resources there might be, food... that's a value that's still very much present in our communities, because the extended family, the family group is the basis of our culture.

S.A.: And the community then is...

J.A.: The community is really just a collection of extended families and they operate that way. So that's really different than other bonding of communities. You'll find that all the people in our Okanagan communities go to family first to make decisions before they go anywhere else. I guess another value... hum... that's to do with being a part of the natural world, being a part of everything else. That value isn't just... It really is a value that has to do with understanding that the natural world is your life. If you think

of yourself as outside of it, or if you think of yourself as being a puppet or somehow in control or a superior being, then you have some hard lessons to learn about being a part of the natural order. So the respect for the natural order, and the stories and the information... that's all put together to allow that, including some of the practices that are related to the idea... the knowledge that people must have. We, for instance, think of a non-Indian people as very uncivilised, very unschooled and actually really ignorant in their lack of knowledge related to how, you know, how critical that is to know and how critical that is to develop your customs and develop your society rules, because if you don't know that, then you're sort of drifting around and trying to pretend that you're connected... So that's one of the golden values...

S.A.: And what about spirituality, how do you...

J.A.: Well, that's WHAT spirituality is.

S.A.: In your books you talk about the Great Spirit Creator. On the reserve where I was previously, I asked about it and they told me about this entity here, which they didn't know how to spell, so I don't know if the word's well written or not; they told me to ask you (she shows Jeannette Armstrong a piece of paper). How would you say it?

J.A.: That's Gitche Manitou (she writes it down).

S.A.: This Great Spirit...

J.A.: It's not a Great Spirit... That's a European concept that whole idea. You can say that, but it's sort of like saying that God's a person. Definitely we don't think of God that way, we don't think of Gitche Manitou that way.

S.A.: Is it in any way similar to what Tomson Highway named Ksi Manitou or Ksi Mantou?

J.A.: I don't know anything about what Ksi Manitou means, but I know that from the Okanagan point of view that is everything. So when you're looking at the trees, for instance, or the ground or the water... all those things are physical forms of God. The

way that we think about it is that everything that exists is existing because of the way it works together. So it's not a person, it's a life force of everything... The idea, like a creature, a God or a human being up there somewhere, it's just not the idea. All this means is that it has the ability to continuously create itself, so it's a continuous... self... perpetuating life force and that is our... our understanding of... that's why the natural world... that's what the sanctity of life is. We in fact are part of that. As human beings we're the hands of that spirit working; so we have to see ourselves as being responsible and, ethically, we have to see ourselves as, you know, knowledgeable in terms of being able to maintain what our responsibility is... as human beings is, and it's not like the idea that there's a creature out there who's looking bad at you or striking you down or whatever. You are going to strike yourself down if you don't act within your responsibilities.

S.A.: Yeah, that's pretty much what you claimed in *Whispering in Shadows*.

J.A.: Yeah.

S.A.: For example, in this last part (S.A. opens the novel)... where is it? I think I haven't marked it, but when Penny, when Penny is... (she keeps trying to find the page) hum... knows that she is going to... she has a disease and she is going to die, she talks about... about the concept of the Great Spirit Creator and the way that we Europeans think about it, which is completely different.

J.A.: Uhuhm, Uhuhm.

S.A.: Another value that I believe that is very important is language and I'd like to know what you think about the fact that most people, most Okanagan people, don't know their language nowadays. I was told that it was, in part, because of the residential school system, but isn't losing one's language... hum... losing a part of your identity?

J.A.: Yeah.

S.A.: For example here (she points at *Slash*), I read that people need to know their language in order to be connected to the Okanagan reality, to their worldview. I believe

that nowadays children are learning their language again. Why do you think that this has happened? This, I mean, there's a generation that does not know it, but they are starting now to learn it. What do you think that it means? Is it a revivalism... reviving the Okanagan spirit? What do you understand by that?

J.A.: Well, we deliver adult language recovery here. Every year we have students that come here so that they can recover language, recover the use of the language or learn the language. Some of them are just recovering the use and some of them are learning, but one of the very clear indications, as soon as the adults come to the language, is they begin to see the world differently, because the language is constructed from a different worldview and as soon as they begin to learn the language and they begin to understand the meanings, it reconstructs the worldview and the values that are part of that worldview become important and become clear in terms of understanding how those values are connected to one and one's responsibility. And even in contemporary lifestyle one must be able to live in a certain manner and be responsible to community and family and to the land, in a certain way.

S.A.: I realised that most people in their... their thirties, they don't know much about their culture.

J.A.: No, and that's really a very sad state of things for almost everyone in the world, because the homogenisation of culture created this world... huh... huge world modern culture. It's devastating local cultures, wherever those local cultures might be. Local communities and local cultures are being eroded and, with that, local customs and family traditions and so on that have sustained peoples. And in your country it's no different. Even though you might be speaking Portuguese, but the monoculture that is coming from the U.S. and westernisation is very... very attractive to young people and very much creates... huh... I guess an exploitation of their minds and so mediating that and changing that becomes really difficult. If you don't have a mechanism or tool to work within... for us, the language is a mechanism and a tool to mediate that kind of cultural erosion. So, teaching the language isn't just a matter of learning the language. It's also a matter of mediating the cultural erosion and reconstructing values and more appropriate, more useful in terms of our communities, because our communities have broken down and have suffered and the symptoms of that suffering are here.

S.A.: And people move to cities.

J.A.: Yeah, and alcoholism and drug addiction, suicide. All of those symptoms are there. And so the idea isn't so much to create a separatist cultural group, but to mediate through our culture. The idea that there is something, there is a better perspective and there is a more healthy response and a more hopeful perspective that can be implemented through Indigenous cultures and... I think, in a lot of ways, other communities and other cultures of the world need that same kind of mediation and need, in a sense, to be "re-indigenised" in terms of community and family and the land, because if they can't, the disassociation between land and people, the separation becomes larger... And community and the family, that whole mix is where it has to take hold, where it has to work. It can't be done just intellectually, it has to be done as a part of living, as a part of being, so to speak, and so, you know, for me, it's the language, for us it's important... There may be other tools in other situations that work better but for us it's... hum... the language is the key.

S.A.: For example, thinking about Slash, the only way that he could be healed was to return to his place, to his reserve. Do you think that there can be some sort of healing in cities or that it's completely impossible and just when one is together with the community will that be enabled?

J.A.: Well, the idea of the urban Indian, for me is... it's nothing to do with the work that we're doing here. In a sense, I wouldn't waste my time to try to transport our culture into an urban setting, because our culture requires the land and requires connection to community, like the whole community on a land, and so if there's any way of a person identifying as Okanagan and... huh... like one question that somebody asked me and I can't remember who it was: "Would you still be Okanagan if you lived in Florida and spoke your language and so on", and I said: "That's a really... that's really the best question to ask because from inside my perspective here, no it's not possible to be Okanagan, even if you spoke Okanagan and thought in Okanagan and lived in Miami, you're not Okanagan, because being Okanagan isn't about the political identity. It's about the connection to a community and the land".

S.A.: So would you consider...

J.A.: And that connection can't be transported anywhere, you know, you interact; it's the interaction, the responsible interaction that you have to family and community in that sense. So, in a sense, the individual is not visible in terms of that wider context of being Okanagan and so you can't take the individual out of the Okanagan (laughter), you know, that's a political idea; that's not a reality, a living in an everyday level.

S.A.: And how do you perspective the... huh... authors such as Lee Maracle and Beth Brant who are Métis and they've got both cultures, but they identify themselves more as... as Native? Is that possible for them to hold both identities?

J.A.: Well, the whole issue of the Métis in Canada is a separate issue from Indigenous peoples on their land. The Métis have been living in diaspora for five, six generations and in terms of the culture and remnants, the roots of that culture are embedded in Cree or Anishinaabe or whatever... whatever roots they may have come from and so the memory of that and the cultural... the development of a Métis culture has taken a number of generations so that some aspects of it are retained and maintained specifically because it can be transportable. So the culture really has to do with material culture rather than a lived culture. You have to be able to drag different... huh... sort of... like the people who are Jews in the diapora... the retention of the language and the retention of the ceremonies and the retention of the rituals that are involved and the... of course, some of the rigidity in terms of marriages and so on. That aspect of it has been a container and a framework of Jewishness centuries upon centuries because of the diaspora, but when you take that idea of Jewishness and you look at the idea of the Israeli, Israel and the government of Isarael, the person, are we talking about the same thing? No, we're not. There's a political reality of that people who live in Israel and who are Israeli and who have an Israeli form of government. That's the same kind of difference you can draw in terms of the Métis and the diaspora from a specific land base and so the... huh... in my mind, those are two different realities and two different cultural phenomena. What I'm saying is that I don't judge or pre-judge or pretend to know anything about the experience of the Métis. All I'm saying is I know that the experience of the Okanagan has to do with being on the land, connected with all of the things of our land and connected within our communities to each other... connected to our past and our present, in that way. That's what constitutes being Okanagan, being Syilx.

S.A.: So, you talked about our... huh... your past and your present. That's another thing that I believe is important to you: the present time more than the future. Am I right?

J.A.: (long silence) I think it all connects to the future because we... hum... the idea of creating and deconstructing, you know, like a... programme like this. This idea of creating that kind of attitude in literature and in the arts and in the language and being really at the forefront, not only advocating it but actually putting it in the face of the actuality... and the actualisation of it is always in my mind and... about... hum... the legacy that we leave to the future generations... about our identity. We are that link, and if we cannot responsibly re-embed, reinvest in our people and values and attitudes – which to me are more... the most important reasons, not the politics – if we can reinvest, you know, that's what it's in *Slash*, that's what's in *Whispering in Shadows*, that's what's in the children's books and we can reinvest in the... in the next generation; we do the work now and we're investing in that work now so that the next generation has as much of it as can be transferred to them and benefits from that. Then, in a sense, the work that has to be done now... has to be done now or the future possibilities will lose out. So in that sense it is for the future, but really in my mind the... maybe the best way to think about it is that the pragmatic process in my mind is the best process, because in terms of pragmatism, if you can, you know, if you can produce twenty speakers out of the programme and those twenty speakers then become teachers, then become users of the language, the exponential effect, in terms of their children and their grandchildren and them being able to transfer... hum... that is not going to happen if you... unless you would decide: "well, twenty people is all I got, that's what I'm gonna work with and be pragmatic about it and work with those twenty people and not worry, you know, about the rest of the three thousand people in the nation. Then, in a sense, you're not trying to fix the three thousand people who aren't speaking. What you're trying to work toward is to get as many as possibly can... work in that direction and time will tell, time will take care of it. So, if it turns out... hum... whether that is going to make a difference in the future, to the future... three thousand people that will be there and I think it will (laughter), I think it does. So, in that sense, that pragmatic work, being involved and continuously trying to make room for one more person, one more person, you know, is extremely critical. I don't think it can happen any other way. I think it's the only way that it's going to happen and that has, it has. I've seen changes in many communities as a result of the work that... that we have concentrated on, as a result of the work that you

are writing in the Arts. I have seen tremendous changes from where it was in the nineteen fifties, sixties and seventies, tremendous changes, culturally in our community.

S.A.: You say that you don't think about politics so much, but *Slash* has much to do with it...

J.A.: It's very political.

S.A.: Yes, indeed. *Slash* travels to the United States. I'd like to ask you how different it is to be an Okanagan, I mean, I know that there are Okanagan bands in the U.S. Is it different or is it the same reality?

J.A.: It's... huh... different, but the people are the same. The culture and the attitude and the values are very much the same. There are the same kind of losses in terms of the language and the same kind of losses in terms of culture.

S.A.: So what differs? In what way is it different?

J.A.: I think the only... There are, you know, some differences because of the way the government is restructured. Some of the reserves system down there is quite different than the reserves system here. And so their tribal entity does not operate the same way that our tribal band, government entities, organisations operate. Those would be the main differences, I think. In terms of everyday family and everyday life and the restoration and recovery of the languages and cultures, it's happening there at the same time that it's happening here.

S.A. You've been talking about language. Something which I haven't understood yet has to do with... huh... can we say that you speak Okanagan or you'd say that you speak Syilx?

J.A.: Well, that's...

S.A.: The same?

J.A.: Okanagan is a... is the name of this valley. So, it's a geographic designation. That's what Okanagan is. Syilx is... Nsyilxcen is the language that we speak and Syilx are the people, you know, that speak that language.

S.A.: So the most accurate way is saying that you speak Nsyilxcen...

J.A.: Yeah.

S.A.: Huhum, ok, though saying Okanagan is not completely wrong, is it?

J.A.: No, it is not wrong because it's like saying... you're Portuguese, you know, and Portugal is an actual place, right? I guess you speak Portuguese...

S.A.: Yes, yes.

J.A.: So, the idea for us was, you know, the land as... like it's... a location, it's not the people. The people, we have our own word for who we are and the language we speak. It's not connected to the geographic location because there's the Okanagan and the Similkameen and the Kettle River... All those are geographic locations and all of them speak the same language. They all speak our language.

S.A.: Ok, yeah, yeah.

J.A.: So to say that we're Okanagan would limit it just to one little valley. That's not the case.

S.A.: Ok, now a different subject. I'd like to ask you if and why you think that Native fiction for youngsters has received little scholarly attention, I mean, it has started to bloom, but very recently. Why do you think that it has happened? You said that children are our future, right? So... authors like you... huh... write for children because they want to pass... to hand out their knowledge, values and so on. Why do you think that Native writers started writing autobiographies for adults and only recently for children?

J.A.: I can't answer for all the writers, of course (laughter).

S.A.: Obviously, but what is your point of view?

J.A.: I would say that children's books in Canada... children's literature in Canada has really not received the attention that it should. It still doesn't. It's still kind of like: "Oh, these are children's books and here's the literature" and I think that, in a lot of ways, that area of children's writing and children's stories has really been overlooked by everyone in Canada. Other than the fact that books have to be written, you know, for schools, libraries, children to read, but... it's not really looked on as literature, like scholarly examinations, as literature. I have not seen any real scholarly work related to critical examination of any... in children's literature in Canada. Have you?

S.A.: It's actually very difficult to find...

J.A.: See?! A scholar would actually say: "Well, I'm gonna take this book and examine it, critically examine it from a literary point of view". In fact, very few children's... pieces of children's literature have gone through that process. Maybe *Alice in the Wonderland* and, you know, books like that have gone through that process, but very few, and so I would say that Aboriginal writing in children's literature's simply in the same sort of wreck that all the children's literature seems to have followed. I think that if people did start reviewing it from a critical framework designed to look at children's literature, that could create some really important scholarly work and reveal some really important... I think really important aspects to the development in children's literature.

(A male voice is heard in the whole building announcing a public reading by Eden Robinson)

S.A.: Those children's books are often based on, for example, legends, myths that were passed down orally. As far as you are concerned, what are the differences between myths and legends? I've got here a book... huh... the name of a book (she tries to find it)... this one by C.J. Taylor *Bones in the Basket* or even *How We Saw the World* that are legends... At least, on the first pages, they are said to be legends. What I understand by legend has to do with an event that is historical, it happened historically, while myth has to do with the spiritual life and I believe that what those books are in fact are myths, not

legends. Could you explain, as far as you understand it, the difference between myth and legend?

J.A.: I have no idea. I think both are completely off track (laughter). Really, I am seriously... I don't think... huh... I think... huh... the idea of a European concept of mythology, you know, like Greek myths and European myths... for instance, Beowulf as an example, what do they mean when they say that... when they say it's a myth? What they mean is that it has supernatural, fairy-tale, kind of qualities that sort of talk about historical events that may have been exaggerated or mythologized. That's the word that they use, and so then they can look at it and critique it from that lens. For instance, the Greek myths... they can say: "well, for me, this is... huh... metaphorically and symbolically about this aspect of the human, you know, human interaction or whatever, or the human psyche or whatever". In a sense, if we're looking at the myth in that... characterising it in that way and not simply looking at it as superstition or simply characterising it as a way to explain what is unexplainable, if we're looking at it truly as myth, then what you're looking at is the psychology, the psyche of the human and how they relate to each other and all that...

(Another interruption: someone asks how much longer we will take)

J.A.: We can move.

(J.A.'s presence is requested at the event)

J.A.: Ok, give me five minutes.

If we're looking at that definition of myth, then I would say... well... maybe we are closer to talking about what those may have been in that context, but I still don't think that... huh... there's a whole range of other things that are contained within those stories that need to be given a framework and critically examined in a different way than either as folklore, or a myth or a legend. I am facing that on the stories that come from the Okanagan, which I know not to be myth or legend or folklore, but a combination of all of those aspects and other things. They happen to also contain other uses and if they're critically examined in that way, then they reveal... For instance, some of the pre-symptoms of values in society are contained within how they're organised and how

they're developed. So, taking a critical approach to that within each tribal group, I think it's really important and I don't think it's a good idea just to simply classify them as myths, legends or folklore because that diminishes what those stories really are, what they might be, what might be revealed in an appropriate critical analysis. I'm not gonna take much longer because we have to get ready for this event.

S.A.: Ok, just one more to finish up. What are the common characteristics in the Okanagan children's books, I mean, is it everything that you were saying: nature, storytelling, the values of the family and community, which are pretty much the same as the ones that are part of the novels that you wrote for adults, as well?

J.A.: To some degree, yeah, but I think that the... maybe the style and the format... huh... if it were examined, you'd find that it's sort of like a theatre of the absurd in a sense that... huh... a lot of... the way that the stories are told are to create these absurdities and these kinds of juxtapositions of the real world versus the internal exaggerated kind of world. And looking at that, one of the things that you begin to see is that there's a process in terms of how the stories are put together and how they create meaning, how they develop that understanding and how they develop appreciation. What I mean is that in a lot of ways that hasn't been examined and it hasn't been developed in literary style. Stories simply have been sort of regurgitated in English; but they just don't hit the mark (laughter).

S.A.: Yeah, ok. I won't take you any longer. I'd just like to thank you for your...

J.A.: You're welcome to stay and hear Eden Robinson who is a very well known Canadian Aboriginal writer. She's going to be reading here at En'owkin, so you're welcome to stay.

S.A.: May I attend?

J.A.: Oh, absolutely.

S.A.: Oh, thank you.

J.A.: And meet some of the other writing instructors.

S.A.: Thank you for this chance.

J.A.: Don't forget the machine over there and I'll still be around if you need to talk more about other questions. Make use of the library.

S.A.: Is there one I can use?

J.A.: Sure. I'll show you the way. I would spend a little bit more time with you; I'd be glad, but we have this public reading.

S.A.: No prob. Thank you.

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