

**TELLING THE STORY, TOGETHER: INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE(S) AND DECOLONIZING
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AT OCEAN WISE
(THE VANCOUVER AQUARIUM)**

by

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Abstract

Located on the unceded homeLands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, skwxwú7mesh, and səliłilwətaʔ Nations is the head office of Ocean Wise Conservation Association and the Vancouver Aquarium. This action anthropological research investigates the efforts of Ocean Wise and the Vancouver Aquarium to better include Indigenous voices and knowledges within their organization. The data is drawn primarily from two departments within Ocean Wise: the education department and the Arctic research department. In the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), many public educational institutions have begun the process of reckoning with decolonization and ‘reconciliation’ practices in their organizations. This research is utilizing Ocean Wise as a case study to examine the practices of decolonization and ‘reconciliation’ writ-large.

Chapter 1: Wayfinding, outlines the histories of Ocean Wise (and its entanglement with social justice and environmental conservation), and the Indigenous Lands upon which the organization is located, through storytelling and place-remembering. I also situate myself (the author) and outline the methodologies of participant-observation, interviews, and research. Chapter 2: Current Headway, looks at some of the contemporary projects and perspectives that are currently surfacing in the education and research departments of Ocean Wise, in their attempt to decolonize their organization. Chapter 3: Navigating the Rough Waters, outlines some of the themes and tensions that were raised during the interviewing process about Indigenous knowledge(s) and ‘Western’ science; storytelling; consent and sovereignty; and the capacity of both organizations and Indigenous peoples to do this work. Finally, Chapter 4: Suggestions and Conclusion, offers suggestions for movement through the ‘reconciliation’ and decolonial process by advocating for Indigenous language inclusion, support for Land and Water protectors; and equity, diversity and inclusion practices demonstrating that representation matters. My hope for this thesis and research is that they will act as a call-to-action, and encouragement, for Ocean Wise and other public educational organizations to continue navigating the sometimes murky waters of decolonization and ‘reconciliation’.

Lay Summary

This action anthropological research investigates the efforts of Ocean Wise and the Vancouver Aquarium to better include Indigenous voices and knowledges within their organization. The data is drawn primarily from two departments within Ocean Wise: the education department and the Arctic research department. Research questions include: How can an organization like Ocean Wise work towards reconciling their role in Indigenous dispossession and displacement, both in a physical and intellectual sense? Is it possible for Settler-Colonial organizations and institutions to partner with Indigenous Nations, communities and peoples in a meaningful way, in order to tell a story together that outlines the complicated and layered histories of what we now call ‘Canada’ – and what might that story look like? Finally, I offer suggestions for movement through the ‘reconciliation’ and decolonial process by advocating for language inclusion, support for Land and Water protectors; and equity, diversity and inclusion practices demonstrating that representation matters.

Preface

This thesis is an original intellectual product of the author, Nancy Kimberley Phillips. The fieldwork discussed and quoted throughout this document was approved by Ocean Wise Conservation Association and by the UBC Behavior Research Ethics Board (BREB) under the title “The Water is Our Teacher: Traditional Indigenous Knowledges at Ocean Wise,” certificate number H19-00526.

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**huy chexw, haaw'a,
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Killer Whale Poem

A sounding resounding astounding confounding rebounding whale.

A magnetic prophetic kinetic whale.

A magical tragical whale.

A rollicking frolicking hyperbolicking whale.

A fearful cheerful in full career full whale.

An upleaping unsleeping watchkeeping down-deeping whale.

A fragile agile high style worthwhile whale.

A headstrong sing-song long gone whale.

A fraternal nocturnal supernal eternal whale.

A chilling killing willing thrilling whale.

A broaching encroaching approaching whale.

A far ranging unchanging... fast dashing barrier smashing fluke crashing star splashing whale.

A dream bringing song singing free swinging change ringing whale.

An ascendant resplendent transcendent whale.

A significant magnificent whale of a Haida whale.

- Yaahl Sgwansung (Bill Reid), 1983

Written while working on *Chief of the Undersea World* for the Vancouver Aquarium
(Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art)



Figure 1.1: Model of *Chief of the Undersea World* at Three Rainbows House in Gaw (Old Massett, Haida Gwaii). Photo taken by Gwaliga Hart on March 4, 2021.

a Haida artist and the Xaayda kil language, while being located on the unceded homeLands² of the x^wməθk^wəyəm, sk^wxwú7mesh, and səliłilwətaʔ Nations. There is a complicated history on these Lands; of both overlapping Indigenous territories and the laminating of a Settler-Colonial history on this place. James Bartram, the Vice President of Education and Youth at Ocean Wise, when asked about past Indigenous involvement with the organization, recalled:

I think there is some past history, as far as I can tell with the organization and certainly past appreciation. But I think it's been on a very superficial level, and I don't mean a disrespectful level. The Haida statue in front of the building, it is, and it has been, a source of pride for the leadership of the organization for a long time. And I think that's actually a good representation of the good intention, but perhaps not a sophisticated understanding. Having Haida artwork on the traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm and the səliłilwətaʔ and the sk^wxwú7mesh is challenging and unfortunate... so I think that's an example of we can do better. (Bartram interview, September 18, 2019)

I use *Chief of the Undersea World* as a lens from which to begin this research because it is a clear example that illustrates the dedicated people and good intentions, but inevitably flawed action, that Ocean Wise has taken towards Indigenous knowledge and decolonization of their organization. At its very core, this thesis is about the efforts of Ocean Wise to include and represent Indigenous voices within their organization. Using *Chief of the Undersea World* to enter the conversation around decolonization, Indigenization, and 'reconciliation'³ in public educational institutions can also function as a broader social commentary. Here, we have a world-famous Haida artist who was asked to carve a piece for a conservation organization, that will be placed on the homeLands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm, səliłilwətaʔ and sk^wxwú7mesh, less than 300 meters from the Coast Salish village site of χ^wayχ^wəy. Thinking about the dilemma of *Chief of the Undersea World* as perhaps, in James Bartrams words, 'not a sophisticated understanding' of Indigenous inclusion within a conservation organization like Ocean Wise, suggests the key questions examined in this thesis: How can an organization like Ocean Wise work towards reconciling their role in Indigenous dispossession and

² I intentionally capitalize words like Lands and Waters, throughout this thesis. Drawing on the works of Kanien'kehá:ka scholar Sandra Styres who writes, "... Land (capital "L") is more than physical geographic space. Land expresses a duality that refers not only to place as a physical geographic space but also to the underlying conceptual principles, philosophies, and ontologies of that space" (2019, 27). Understood in this way, Land embodies more than the ground on which we walk (though it is certainly that), but it also holds teachings, ways-of-knowing, stories and relations that are core to many Indigenous communities' pedagogical practices.

³ Throughout this thesis, the term 'reconciliation' appears in quotations because it is a very political, contested and loaded term. Reconciliation refers to the restoration, or the returning of friendly relations, which implies that there are friendly relations to return to in the first place; from history and current violations of Indigenous sovereignties, we know that this is not always the case.

displacement, both in a physical and intellectual sense? What is Ocean Wise doing in order to build better relations with the host Nations on whose unceded Lands their buildings occupy? What might this movement towards including Indigenous voices, knowledges, communities, and peoples look like in a way that is authentic and non-tokenizing? Is it possible for Settler-Colonial organizations and institutions to partner with Indigenous Nations, communities and peoples in a meaningful way, in order to tell a story together that outlines the complicated and layered histories of what we now call 'Canada' – and what might that story look like?

These questions are complicated and there is clearly no single path forward in navigating these waters. There is not a single 'right' answer, but there has been a lot of work and labour done by BIPOC peoples and communities to provide a guide for how to begin the journey and to rethink the stories that we tell ourselves. Throughout this thesis I will examine Ocean Wise in its push to better include and represent Indigenous voices and knowledges within their organization, as a method to more broadly examine these themes in public education settings writ-large. Chapter 1: Wayfinding, outlines the history of Ocean Wise and the Lands upon which it sits, and provides the positionality and methodologies of me, the author. Chapter 2: Current Headway, looks at some of the contemporary projects and perspectives that are currently surfacing in the education and research departments of Ocean Wise, in their attempt to decolonize their organization. Chapter 3: Navigating the Rough Waters, outlines some of the themes and tensions that were raised during the interview process between Indigenous knowledges and 'Western' science, storytelling, consent, and capacity. Finally, Chapter 4: Suggestions and Conclusion, offers some suggestions for movement through the 'reconciliation' and decolonial process.

1.1 A Note on the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 global pandemic has had a dramatic impact on daily life in the past year of writing this thesis. From the time that I sat with participants to interview for this research (2019), until the writing of this thesis (2021), so much has changed. This new, socially-distanced, Zoom-driven, masked world is the one in which I am writing. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the individuals whom I interviewed for this project no longer work at Ocean Wise. I do not know what the impact of their absence from the organization will be with regards to moving forward with decolonial work. I also do not know what the conversations around 'reconciliation' and decolonization look like

since the pandemic has begun, as I am no longer privy to the current discussions as I do not live in the lower mainland, nor am I currently an employee of Ocean Wise.

When the COVID-19 pandemic first started, the operation of the Vancouver Aquarium and many other Ocean Wise programs came to an abrupt halt. The doors were closed; however, the care of animals never stops. According to the 2019 Ocean Wise Annual Report, 51% of the revenue that is generated to operate both the Vancouver Aquarium and Ocean Wise, comes from door admissions to the Aquarium (OW 2019, 20). The closing of doors, with no clue when they could reopen, caused a near-catastrophic financial situation for the organization. There was a push on social media with the hashtag #SaveVancouverAquarium that encouraged the public to donate funds to the Aquarium. At the end of August 2020, a statement by the Vancouver Aquarium was released with the headline “Vancouver Aquarium pausing public programming to focus on transformation” (VA 2020). Beginning on September 7, 2020, the Vancouver Aquarium indefinitely closed its doors to the public in order to “allow us to focus our resources on providing uninterrupted care to our animals, while also undergoing a strategic planning process addressing how to reinvent the Aquarium” (OW 2021). In April 2021, it was announced that ownership of the Vancouver Aquarium was transferred to Herschend Enterprises, and is no-longer owned by Ocean Wise. It is yet unclear of how this transfer of ownership will impact the relationship between Ocean Wise and the Vancouver Aquarium, or how it will impact the work that has been taking place within these organizations regarding Indigenous inclusion, decolonization and ‘reconciliation’.

My hope during this time of self-proclaimed transformation, is that Ocean Wise continues to consider how best to navigate the murky waters of decolonization and ‘reconciliation’. The work of actively imagining, creating and enacting decolonial futures doesn’t stop during a global pandemic. In fact, a global pandemic may be one of the largest pushes for us to create a new normal while reimagining our world and the ways that we move through it. I look forward as a witness and accomplice to see what a decolonial future could possibly look like in this new COVID/post-COVID world.

Chapter 2: Wayfinding

... it's seeing where you're going in your mind.

Knowing where you are by knowing where you've been.

- Māui, from Walt Disney Pictures "Moana" (Clements and Musker 2016)

The title of this chapter is 'wayfinding' – wayfinding is a practice that many Indigenous Nations (most famously located in Polynesia) have utilized and continue to utilize in order to navigate and orient themselves to the waters. To be successful in navigating, it requires one to know where they have been in order to know where they are, through a process called dead reckoning. I believe that it is also crucial for us as individuals and organizations to understand where we have come from, the legacies that we are enmeshed in, and the histories that inform our present, in order to know where we want to go moving forward. This section first acts as a double-history overview by charting a path through the history of the Vancouver Aquarium and Ocean Wise, and then, situating this conversation firmly in the context of an Indigenous world/Waterview.⁴ Then, I include my own voice to situate myself within this work and the methodologies that were used to conduct this research.

2.1 The Vancouver Aquarium and Ocean Wise Conservation Association

Our vision is a world in which oceans are healthy and flourishing

- Ocean Wise vision statement (2019)

Ocean Wise Conservation Association is a not-for-profit organization that is located on the unceded Lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, sḵwxwú7mesh, and səliłilwətaʔɫ peoples, located in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia. Originally called the Vancouver Public Aquarium Association, it officially opened its doors in Stanley Park on June 15, 1956 and became Canada's first public aquarium. It operated on a shoestring budget and "over the years, the Vancouver Aquarium grew piece by piece, gallery by gallery, until it became a major biological institution, internationally recognized for its exhibits and its programs in education, conservation and research" (Newman 2006, 24). The organization eventually rebranded in 2017 to become part of Ocean Wise Conservation Association. Ocean Wise is now the umbrella organization that oversees many different departments and has over 300 employees, 800 volunteers, and 70,000 animals held in 9.5 million

⁴ This term is drawn from an article titled "Introduction: Indigenous peoples and the politics of water" written by Melanie Yazzie and Cutcha Risling Baldy, who write: "'Worldview' is 'water view,' a view *from* the river not a view *of* the river. We move upriver, or downriver, to the river, or from the river. So, our theoretical standpoint is one that foregrounds *water view*, (re)claiming knowledges not just for the people, but also for the water; not just looking at our relationship to water, but our accountability to water view." (2018, 2)

litres of water (Newman 2006, 10). The organizational structure of Ocean Wise is similar that of many non-profits: they are governed by a Board of Directors who oversees senior management comprised of a CEO and Vice Presidents of various departments. It should be noted that the Board of Directors and senior management at Ocean Wise are predominately comprised of non-Indigenous men.

Some of the main areas of focus for Ocean Wise include the Vancouver Aquarium⁵, Education, Research, Shoreline Cleanup, Ocean Wise Seafood, Plastic Wise, Marine Mammal Rescue and Arctic Connections. Housed within each of these departments are constantly evolving projects, programs, priorities and perspectives on what is happening at Ocean Wise. There is some collaboration and exchange of information between these different areas of focus, however, as an organization that is quite large, there are barriers in communication between departments. The research for this thesis focusses on two of the Ocean Wise areas of focus: education and research. These areas of focus repeatedly arose in the data as sites of movement towards building relations with Indigenous communities and including Indigenous voices in their programming. Within the education department at Ocean Wise, there are 5 main streams: Children & Youth, Curriculum Programs, Mobile Programs, Service Learning and Online Learning. The individuals that I interviewed for this project primarily worked within the curriculum program and mobile programs streams. Within the research focus, there are teams focused on marine mammal research, Howe Sound (Átl'ka7tsem) biodiversity, plastics and pollution, and the Arctic. The interviews I conducted in this focus primarily centered on the Arctic, but I want to note that there are some exciting things happening between other research teams and Indigenous Nations (like the Howe Sound/Átl'ka7tsem Marine Reference Guide). The Arctic connections team has been working with Northern Inuit communities for many years, and their programming can act as a model that many of the other departments in Ocean Wise can look to when embarking on the journey of decolonization and 'reconciliation'.

It is next to impossible to discuss the history of the Vancouver Aquarium and Ocean Wise without addressing the ongoing controversy and conversations about keeping cetaceans in captivity. In 1964, the Vancouver Aquarium was one of the first organizations in the world to capture and display a live killer whale (*Orcinus orca*). Named Moby Doll, he was a member of the extremely endangered J-Pod of the Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) population and died after 87 days

⁵ As explained in the above note on COVID-19, as of April 2021, Ocean Wise no longer operates the Vancouver Aquarium. The research for this thesis was completed before this transfer of ownership to Herschend Enterprises.

in captivity at the Vancouver dry-docks (Macarenko, 2019). Moby Doll played an extremely important role in shifting public perceptions of killer whales from animals that deserved slaughter in the wild, to animals that are intelligent and deserve protection (Newman 2006). This sparked a massive boom in the blackfish trade during the 1970s and '80s, when live orcas were captured from their pods and families, and then shipped to various aquariums and marine-parks all around the world. In later years, the Vancouver Park Board issued a municipal bylaw in 1996 that prevented the Aquarium from capturing cetaceans from the wild for display purposes, but could still obtain animals from other facilities or rescued and deemed un-releasable. In 2016, within days of one another, two belugas (Aurora and her calf, Qila) at the VA both passed away suddenly which reignited public controversy surrounding captive cetaceans. In 2017, the Vancouver Park Board passed a cetacean ban to end the display of cetaceans at the Aquarium. Finally, in 2019 the *Ending the Captivity of Whales and Dolphins Act* became law in Canada which prevents organizations from capturing, breeding, or acquiring cetaceans. In the law, there is a grandfather clause that allows the continued care of animals already in captivity; Helen, a pacific white-sided dolphin, is the only cetacean as of 2021 that still remains at the Vancouver Aquarium. There has been, and continues to be, fierce opposition by organizations such as #EmptyTheTanks who routinely protest outside the gates of the Aquarium. Such societal tensions that are present around the nature of aquariums have instigated the move away from keeping animals in captivity for education, conservation and activism as well as for spectacle.

2.1.1 Environmental Justice = Social Justice

Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, from an Aboriginal perspective, also requires reconciliation with the natural world. If human beings resolve problems between themselves but continue to destroy the natural world, then reconciliation remains incomplete. This is a perspective that we as Commissioners have repeatedly heard: that reconciliation will never occur unless we are also reconciled with the earth.

- Awakaaseena (Dr. Reg Crowshoe) (TRC 2015, 18)

Ocean Wise is, first and foremost, a marine and ocean conservation organization. It is therefore necessary to briefly disentangle the violent exclusion of Indigenous bodies and voices in the legacies of environmental conservation. The emergence of 'conservationist' organizations in North America cannot be separated from Indigenous dispossession from the Land as a method of colonization. The National Park system is the backbone of conservation organizations in Canada, and

they carry a deeply colonial and violent history of dispossession because in a ‘Western’ model, conservation does not include human-beings. Siksiká scholar Wacey Little Light writes:

Parks Canada has deployed ‘conservation’ as justification for continued colonization in Alberta and elsewhere. ‘Conservation’ included protection for some of our four-legged relatives, our Grandmother Trees, our Grandfather Rocks, and our Lands. ‘Conservation,’ however, did not include our buffalo, which were hunted to near extinction in an effort to clear the plains and starve our people into submission to accept colonization. ‘Conservation’ did not include preserving our original cultures and practices on these lands, which were viewed as being ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ and in need of destruction. ‘Conservation’ did not include protecting our children, who were violently stolen and sent to residential schools at the same time that many of the parks were being created. ‘Conservation’ did not include taking care of our women, girls, and two-spirit folks, who have been continually targeted since settler arrival. ‘Conservation’ only included Indigenous peoples and our cultures when it was deemed profitable and consumable for [White] tourists. (2019, 2)

Ocean Wise, although not part of the National Park System, has inherited the legacies of conservation in North America. In many environmental conservation organizations, like the Park system, there is a strong tendency to separate ‘nature’ from ‘culture’, creating a false-binary and division between humans, animals, and the rest of the natural world. Disrupting these binaries, and including stories of how humans connect to, interact with, protect, learn from, and impact the Lands and Waters is a departure from this history. In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the entanglement between environmental justice and social justice issues. In 2014, the Native Youth Sexual Health Network in partnership with the Women’s Earth Alliance, released a report titled *Violence on the Land; Violence on Our Bodies* and in it they write “...the waters of the Earth and the waters of our bodies are the same; for better or for worse, there is an undeniable connection between the health of our bodies and the health of our planet” (2014, ii). This is a knowledge that has existed in many communities since time immemorial, but in our current North American society there is a tendency to perpetuate false-binaries between land/body, nature/culture, and human/animal. Ocean Wise is situated in this potentially impactful space of already being an environmental organization with a focus on activism, and perhaps there is space here to further disrupt some of these binaries and legacies. James Bartram told me:

... maybe even more importantly, we are an ocean conservation organization and we're in the business of healthy and flourishing oceans. And the simple truth is arguably the best managed conservation areas on the planet are Indigenous. And arguably the sort of flagship gold standard of conservation in Canada is Gwaii Haanas. And it is respected around the world because it doesn't differentiate between the people and the land and the ocean. And,

I think that's really critical. I think it's the way forward. (Bartram interview, September 18, 2019)

The purpose and vision of the Vancouver Aquarium and Ocean Wise have shifted dramatically over the years from a tourist destination focused primarily on entertainment, to an educational facility with a dedication to conservation and activism. John Nightingale, the former CEO and President of the Vancouver Aquarium, writes that beginning in the early 1990s, “the organization realized it could no longer be content with displaying marine animals as curiosities or even showing them in simulated natural habitats. It was one of the first to recognize that aquariums need to be a force in raising public awareness and mobilizing the desire to participate in sustainability and conservation. Helping people become part of the solution, not the problem, now guides almost everything the Aquarium does” (Newman 2006, 85). In his office one afternoon, Lasse Gustavsson, the CEO and President of Ocean Wise, told me that “... the purpose of the Aquarium is to turn people into activists. That's never been the purpose before, but that's actually what it is now” (Gustavsson interview, November 15, 2019). He views the role of the Aquarium as a platform that can inspire, educate, and empower everyday people to become activists in protecting the oceans and waterways, wherever they call home. This notion of ‘activism’ is a shift away from more traditional aquarium and zoo spaces with a focus simply on entertainment, and paves the way towards the questions being raised in this thesis around Indigenous relations, inclusivity, ‘reconciliation’ and decolonization. However, Lasse said during our interview that despite the progressive momentum, that “this is a White man's aquarium” (Gustavsson interview, November 15, 2019). It is in the aftermath of the TRC that we see Ocean Wise begin many of the steps they have taken towards ‘reconciliation’, with the acknowledgement that pockets of the organization have been doing this work for much longer.

2.2 Indigenous Voices: Place-Remembering and Storytelling

Sustained Violence

We could have recovered from smallpox

we had Xway-Xway

we had medicine

we had healing songs and dances

but they were banned

- Lee Maracle, excerpt of Blind Justice in *Talking to the Diaspora* (2015)

It is exceedingly important to situate this thesis and these conversations, on the Lands and Waters that Ocean Wise is located on, because Stanley Park (and Vancouver as a whole) is a site of

explicit dispossession and violence towards Indigenous communities. The buildings of Ocean Wise and the Vancouver Aquarium are quite literally sitting about 300 meters from an ancestral Coast Salish village site named $\chi^w\text{ay}\chi^w\text{əy}$, located where Lumberman's Arch currently sits. Underneath the small hills leading up to the beach are shell-middens and it is well known that this area has been inhabited since time immemorial by $x^w\text{m}\theta k^w\text{əy}\text{əm}$, $s_k\text{w}\chi^w\text{w}\acute{u}7\text{mesh}$, and $s\text{ə}l\acute{i}l\text{w}\acute{\text{ə}}\text{t}\text{a}ʔ\text{t}$ peoples travelling on the waters of $s\text{ə}l\acute{i}l\text{w}\acute{\text{ə}}\text{t}$ (Burrard Inlet) and the Salish Sea. Indigenous peoples living in $\chi^w\text{ay}\chi^w\text{əy}$ were physically removed, dispossessed and relocated from their Land for the purposes of creating Stanley Park in 1887, as a draw for tourists. Historian, Jean Barman, in her article titled *Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity in Vancouver*, explains how Indigenous peoples were forcibly removed and dispossessed from their Ancestral Lands and “their homes were then burned to erase any indication of their long-time presence on the peninsula” (2007, 26). Ironically, then multiple Kwakwaka'wakw totem poles were raised in Stanley Park, to assert a sanitized and romanticized version of Indigeneity that was more acceptable to tourists and visitors (Barman 2007, 28). Here, I wonder if the presence of *Chief of the Undersea World* is yet another example of a sanitized, ‘safe’, and romantic form of Indigeneity being asserted on these Lands.

Places like Vancouver (and much of Canada) carry multiple histories “laminated” onto the land/seascape which overlap with one another (Marker 2018, 462). There is deep Ancestral knowledge and memory about the Pacific Northwest Coast that lives in Indigenous communities; and there is a more recent Settler-Colonial history that often attempts to erase Indigenous presence on the Land. There is rarely just a single narrative⁶ that exists in places like Vancouver, and more specifically, there is rarely a single story that permeates through organizations like Ocean Wise. We have seen in the previous section, the celebration of the Vancouver Aquarium and Ocean Wise as being ‘pioneers’ in the realm of entertainment, education and environmental conservation. We must also acknowledge the compliance of Ocean Wise and the Vancouver Aquarium in their complacency with and alongside of Indigenous dispossession on these Lands. Settler-Colonialism always has been, and always will always be, about control, power, occupation, and access to the Lands and Waters:

Land is at the root of any issue or conflict you could care to name involving Indigenous and Settler peoples in Canada. The land is what sustains Indigenous communities and identities.

⁶ Here, I am reminded of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk titled “The Danger of a Single Story”. In it, she speaks about the importance of engaging with **all** stories of a place and/or person, not just some of them or the ones that fit neatly into our stereotyped understandings of the world (2009).

The land is what Settler people need in order to have a home and economic stability. The land is what colonialism seeks to turn into a commodity for power and profit. The land is what is contested, what is shared, what is danced, and what is discussed without words. (Battell Lowman and Barker 2015, 48)

What I am talking about here, is the notion of place and place-remembering. Lhaq'temish scholar, Michael Marker, writes that “[w]hile over-run with urban and suburban development, the landscape is still recognisable by Salish people and they retain a memory of the stories of ecological wisdom from familiar places on the landscape” (2018, 462). Coast Salish peoples still know the names of, uses for, and stories about the animals that live under the water; Coast Salish peoples still actively maintain a connection to the Lands (and Waters) that Vancouver is built upon (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018). Throughout my interviews, the concept of place and being situated in place was continually raised as an important method of connecting people-to-place, bringing through the thread of environmental conservation and social justice. Lasse Gustavsson, the CEO and President of Ocean Wise, said:

... place is important, because in conservation, if you're serious about conservation, place is everything. Because conservation is not a philosophy. Conservation is not a belief system. Conservation isn't an intention. Conservation isn't a policy. Conservation is a practical interference in the natural systems with the purpose to increase the protection, to improve the way we use them and increase the sustainability. So, place is everything because if conservation doesn't hit the place, it's just intention. (Gustavsson interview, November 15, 2019)

The concept and practice of storytelling repeatedly arose as a method used in connecting Ocean Wise to place. Story may act as a method to tackle some of the questions and concerns around the ‘how’ of proceeding with place-based knowledge, partnering with Indigenous peoples and communities, and of navigating the perhaps murky waters of ‘reconciliation’ in general. Through mobilizing the tool of storytelling, within a predominantly ‘Western’ scientific organization, it challenges some of the deeply engrained biases around knowledge production, validity, and ‘truth’ that are often held in public educational settings. Lasse Gustavsson, shared that:

When I look at where we are, I'm thinking, what's the most exciting species here? It's not the killer whales, it's not the grizzlies. It is the salmon! Why? Because what is it that the world doesn't understand about conservation? Everything's connected. What's the big connector here? Salmon... But in order to tell those stories, you need to be relevant. In order to be relevant, you need to be where people are, and here they are. So, telling this story about the salmon here, is telling the story about the place. There's no way you can tell the story about the Sound without having the Indigenous component being a big part of the story... so, I'm

reaching out to these guys [Indigenous communities] because I know they're important. They may not be the most people in Vancouver. Squamish is what, 2000, 3000 people, it's tiny. You could easily ignore them. We've been successfully ignoring them for a long time. But you can't tell the story about this place without having them here because they are an important part of the story. We can't tell that story about them. They all need to tell the story with us. So that's why I'm talking to Indigenous [peoples]. (Gustavsson interview, November 15, 2019)

In this quotation, Lasse is bringing together the concepts of storytelling and placemaking in order to illustrate the current approach within Ocean Wise to Indigenous inclusion. In many Indigenous Nations, storytelling and place are entangled and inform one another – stories are often situated on, and cannot be separated from, the Lands and Waters which a community calls home. For an organization like Ocean Wise, to shift its focus towards the notion of Indigenous storytelling inherently forces a recognition and emphasis on place-based knowledge. From the interviews that were completed, it appears that much of the goal is for Ocean Wise to figure out how to tell stories about place, together/with/alongside of Indigenous Nations.

2.3 Aboveboard: Self-Location

Something that I often heard being spoken about at Ocean Wise was the notion that we are all connected to water systems, whether we consciously acknowledge it or not. Rita Wong and Dorothy Christian write that, “when we tell the stories of ourselves, we are also telling the story of the specific waters that move through us at a particular moment” (2017, 7). When I stop and take the time to think about it, I can trace the timeline of my life by the Waters that I’ve lived alongside of and have developed relations with. These different Waters have nourished my body, imprinted themselves upon my cells, taught my mind, and helped inform my perspectives on the world. In order to follow the protocol that I’ve been taught, I must first introduce and situate myself in this way: I am a Queer-Settler-Woman from the place where the Bow River and Elbow Rivers meet (now known as Calgary, AB). In siksikáí’powahsin (the Blackfoot language) this place is called Mohkínstsis⁷ (or ‘Elbow’) and is located in the heart of Treaty 7 territory, the homeLands of the Siksikaitapi (Siksiká, Káínaa, Aapátohsipikáni & Aamsskáápipikáni), Îyârhe Nakoda (Bearspaw, Chiniki and Wesley), Tsuut’ina and the Métis Nation, Region 3. This is a sacred place where people have gathered since time immemorial; a place where the beavers swim; a place where both the Waters and stories collide

⁷ The confluence of the rivers is also called Wíchîspa in the Siouan Îyârhe Nakoda language; Guts’ists’i in the Athabaskan language of Tsuut’ina Gunaha; and the nêhiyawêwin (Cree) term is otôskwanihk.

with each other. For the first two years of my Master's program at the University of British Columbia, I lived on the unceded homeLands of the x^wməθk^wəy^{əm}, sk^wx^wú7mesh, and səliłlwətaʔ Nations in Vancouver, BC. There, I was nourished by stal'əw' (the Fraser River) and was taught about the ocean by səliłwət (Burrard Inlet) and the Salish Sea. In December of 2019, I moved back to Treaty 7 just before the COVID-19 global pandemic took hold. Since then, I have written the majority of this thesis far away from the Lands on which the initial research took place.

I am a person who is deeply in love with both the Prairies and the Pacific Northwest Coast. In 2013, I enrolled in Mount Royal University in Calgary, to pursue a Bachelor's degree in anthropology. During my second year, I accidentally ended up in a general education course called "Indigenous Voices" and all at once, the direction of my life shifted dramatically. I was angry that I hadn't learned anything about the Lands that I grew up residing upon, or the communities who have lived here since time immemorial. I immediately declared a minor in Indigenous studies and began spending all of my free time at the Iniskim Centre on campus, along with attending any public-talk, field school, or event that I could, in order to learn more and become involved. In the fall of 2017, I decided to finish my Bachelor's degree by doing a program about 'reconciliation' on Haida Gwaii, hosted by the Haida Nation, the Haida Gwaii Institute, and the University of British Columbia; it was an incredibly intense, transformative, world-crumbling and life-rebuilding experience.

Fast forward to the beginning of 2019 – I was living in Vancouver while attending the University of British Columbia. I had seen a job posting for an Education Generalist through Ocean Wise, and though I felt that I was wildly unqualified, I took a risk and applied anyways. To my surprise, I got the job. I was originally hired by Catriona Wilson, who is interviewed throughout this thesis. She knew about my backgrounds in museum education, Indigenous studies, history and she took a chance on me to join the team, even though I was not a scientist and was not a marine biologist. Through the routes of anthropology, Indigenous studies, and education, I ended up teaching about marine biology and environmental sustainability. While on the bus going to campus one normal Vancouver day, after I began my job at Ocean Wise, I was thinking about Indigenous inclusion in the space of the Vancouver Aquarium and Ocean Wise. It was there, on the bus, that this thesis began to crystallize in my mind and I knew that this research could offer some important feedback to the discussion of decolonizing public institutions that are dedicated to education.

My employee role at Ocean Wise was to be able to 'float' between the five different education departments at Ocean Wise, however I spent the majority of my time with the mobile programs and

curriculum program teams. The mobile programs team travels all around the country in a very large truck-trailer vehicle called the AquaVan, which is complete with mobile aquariums and ‘artifacts’ (like animal bones, pelts, and images), in order to deliver programming to schools and events. The majority of my time with the mobile team was spent travelling to different schools and events in the lower mainland (primarily Vancouver, North Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, and Surrey). Occasionally however, we would venture further and I got the chance to spend time on Vancouver Island, Squamish, Bowen Island, and a 3-week tour to Alberta (stopping in the Bow Valley, Edmonton, and Red Deer). As a team, we were responsible for animal-care, water quality checks and changes, travel, truck maintenance, set-up and take down of events, teaching the programs, and a whole host of other duties that constantly kept us on our toes. Once I moved back to Treaty 7 at the end of 2019, I shifted from being a staff member of Ocean Wise, to a participant in the Ocean Bridge volunteer youth program for the 2020 Pacific cohort.



Figure 2.1: This photo was taken May 2019, at the base of the Banff Gondola in Banff National Park. I am pictured on the right, behind one of our mobile aquariums; my co-worker is on the left, behind tables of touchable artifacts. Behind us is the AquaVan that is used to haul all of the equipment, salt water, tanks, animals, artifacts, banners, tents, tables, and anything else needed.

2.4 In a Good Way: Methodologies

For this research, the methods of engagement that were primarily utilized were participant observation, interviews, and external research. I have been privileged to sit at an interesting place between researcher, student, and employee which has allowed me to access spaces and people that I may not have been able too otherwise. This allowed me to observe and listen during moments that

were a bit less ‘formal’ than an interview setting. Being privy too, and involved in, a lot of the conversations that were happening at Ocean Wise gave me a more well-rounded understanding of the dimensions (and tensions) present around decolonization and ‘reconciliation’ within the organization that I likely would not have gotten if my role was only as a researcher. I inherently carry biases towards Ocean Wise due to my own experiences. My goal is not to be a ‘neutral’ party, as that is impossible to begin with, but to acknowledge, be critical of, and reflexive of my positionality.

The interviews took place between August and November of 2019 at Ocean Wise. I initially reached out to individuals that I already knew and whom I had spoken with about this research, and then they suggested other people that I could contact. The individuals that graciously allowed me to interview them for this project are (in alphabetical order): Abigail Speck, Indigenous Knowledge Specialist; Catriona Wilson, Manager of Mobile Programs; Eric Solomon, Director of Arctic Programs; Holly Neate, Mobile Programs Coordinator; James Bartram, Vice President of Education and Youth; Jordan Fish, Education Curriculum Coordinator; Lasse Gustavsson, President and Chief Executive Officer; Laura Van Doormaal, Manager of Curriculum Programs; Myia Antone, Indigenous Knowledge Coordinator; and Tamara Loney, Mobile Programs Coordinator.

From the time of interviewing participants, until now, the direction of my thesis has shifted. Many of the questions that I had originally asked focused on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) as an entry point for Ocean Wise to engage with Indigenous voices, knowledges, and peoples. Some of these questions were: “what is the history of Traditional Knowledge and Indigenous communities being included, or not, at Ocean Wise and the Vancouver Aquarium?”; “why has Traditional Knowledge not been publicly incorporated into Ocean Wise and the Vancouver Aquarium up until recently? What prompted the change?”; and “what do you envision this future looking like? Can you tell me about some projects that you or others are working on regarding Traditional Knowledge and Indigenous communities?”. These questions acted as a launch pad for participants to tell me about as much, or as little, as they wanted to share regarding their opinion, perspective, involvement, or knowledge of the things that were occurring at Ocean Wise. The final question about imagining the potential future(s) of Indigenous knowledge at Ocean Wise stems from the concept of Indigenous Futurisms. The type of language I am using here is quite specific; the term Indigenous Futurisms is well written about among Indigenous scholars. Lindsay Nixon, a Cree-Métis-Saulteaux scholar, writes that “Indigenous peoples are using our own technological traditions—our worldviews, our languages, our stories, and our kinship—as guiding principles in imagining possible futures for

ourselves and our communities” (2016). Indigenous Futurisms is a way of imagining what the future(s) can look like, oftentimes beyond the grasp of Settler-Colonialism. Through utilizing the concept of Indigenous Futurisms, it allows individuals to imagine any outcomes or dreams, even beyond the current structure of the organization.

In Treaty 7, where I am from, part of the protocol whenever one is seeking counsel, knowledge, time, or wisdom, is to offer medicines in exchange. Tobacco ties, in the way I was taught, are gifted as a form of reciprocity, gratitude, prayer, witnessing and good relations. Although this practice isn't as widespread on the coast as it is in the prairies, it was important to show deep gratitude to the individuals who willingly gave me some of their time and offered their knowledge. These are people who are not only participants in my research, but to me, many of them also sit at the intersections of colleague, peer, boss, and friend. Here, the concept of relationality became crucial; it was important that I conduct this work in a way that allows me to 'return home' once it is done. This is a concept that Kanien'kehá:ka scholar Audra Simpson draws upon: she asks the question “can I do this and still come home?” (2007, 78). Return 'home' both in a physical sense, but also to be able to return to and uphold those relationships with the people and the organization with which I was both researcher and employee. Opaskwayak Cree scholar, Shawn Wilson, writes that “what is more important and meaningful is fulfilling a role and obligations in the research relationship – that is, being accountable to your relations” (2008, 77). Relationality is a way to keep the home fires burning, while also ensuring that there is minimal/no harm done in the process. Part of this 'returning home' was following proper protocol: the protocol of a University research ethics board, but also following the cultural protocol that I have been taught and that must occur in order to engage in research 'in a good way'.⁸ My hope is that this research honours the people who have generously spent their time with me and that this thesis can act as one document among many, that calls upon Settler organizations to craft better, decolonial futures.

⁸ According to the University of Calgary ii'taa'poh'to'p Indigenous Strategy, the phrase 'in a good way' is a “concept used by many Indigenous peoples to recognize work that is conducted in authentic and meaningful ways, with intention and sincerity, through reciprocal and respectful relationships” (University of Calgary 2017, 13).

Chapter 3: Current Headway

During my very first week working at Ocean Wise, I was invited to an all-teams education meeting in one of the classrooms located on the main floor of the administration building. It was here that I first met Myia Antone. Myia is a youth from Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, also with Ukrainian and Norwegian roots. She is the founder of a non-profit organization called Indigenous Women Outdoors and is actively involved in language learning in her home community. When I first met her, she was also working as the very first Indigenous Knowledge Coordinator in the education department at Ocean Wise. In 2018, the role of Indigenous Knowledge Coordinator was created in response to the organization-wide push towards ‘reconciliation’ and developing better relations with Indigenous communities in the lower mainland. During this particular all-teams meeting, Myia was giving a presentation to all of the education staff about Land acknowledgements and some of the work she was doing within the organization. We all sat in a circle and she spoke about her background, her perspectives and understandings of the Land/Waters, and the practice of Land acknowledgements. I learned afterwards, that this was one of the first times that any sort of presentation or active discussion about Land acknowledgements had taken place within the education department. Sitting in this meeting, I was absolutely thrilled at this movement and knew that Myia was about to play a key-role in pushing Ocean Wise towards a better relationality with place and people. When I began drafting a list of people I wanted to speak to about this research, Myia was unquestionably at the top. I wanted to learn more about her perspectives as a skwxwú7mesh woman working within a conservation organization that is located on her unceded homeLands and what Ocean Wise was doing in pursuit of ‘reconciliation’.

In this section, I will highlight some of the spaces within Ocean Wise where the process of including more Indigenous voices and perspectives is actively underway. Ocean Wise is quite a large organization and it is very likely that there are pockets of this work being undertaken that I did not get the chance to hear about from participants in this research. For this reason, this is not intended to be a complete overview of the decolonial work that is happening at Ocean Wise, rather it aims to be just a snapshot of a select few examples found in the education department and research areas.

3.1 Education Department: “Our Knowledge is a Living Being”

The education department is one of the streams within Ocean Wise where the movement towards the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge(s) is the most prominent. I interviewed quite a few people within the education department (this is also the department that I worked in), all of whom

had different roles and perspectives about how an organization like Ocean Wise should and/or could navigate 'reconciliation'. Within the education department, there was a noticeable emphasis on place-based understanding and a dedication within the team to learn more about how to go about the business of becoming better educators, allies, and guests on unceded Lands. As mentioned above, perhaps one of the most tangible shifts towards Indigenous knowledge and community inclusion in Ocean Wise comes from the creation of the Indigenous Knowledge Coordinator position. Myia explains that her role at Ocean Wise was focused,

Really in the on-sites curriculum programs. So, we have programs at the Aquarium that students and classes come to on site and do wet-labs or other experiences with our animals. And I was there to run programs, but also to incorporate more Indigenous content into the programs. And incorporate more of my perspective and culture as an Indigenous youth into the programs and also kind of redesigns some programs. (Antone interview, November 6, 2019)

The position of Indigenous Knowledge Coordinator within Ocean Wise was originally titled "Traditional Knowledge Coordinator", but was changed after input from Myia (it has since been changed again to "Indigenous Knowledge Specialist"). The vision for the creation of this position has clearly changed over time as evidenced through the evolution of the job title and the shift in responsibilities. There are many different terms that have been coined as an attempt to build a bridge between Indigenous ways-of-knowing and 'Western' science: Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Indigenous Knowledge (IK) to name a few. Historically, non-Indigenous scholars have created English terminology to describe or 'capture' Indigenous conceptualizations of relations, concepts, understandings, teachings and worldviews. The English terms used to address Indigenous knowledge(s) are extremely limited, problematic, and can never fully capture the complexity or the breadth of Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies. Myia shared with me that she prefers the term 'Indigenous Knowledge' because for her as a *skwxwú7mesh* youth, she wanted to be able to talk about a diverse number of topics outside of just 'ecology'. She told me:

I was kind of only ever asked about Indigenous issues or Indigenous content, and that was really just about the animals that we had, and the land. But as an Indigenous, especially an Indigenous woman, I find myself to be a very political body because as Indigenous people, no matter what, you are a political body... I wasn't allowed to bring it into a full scope of Indigenous issues. (Antone interview, November 6, 2019)

and that,

I found that if you ask mainly non-Indigenous people what Traditional Knowledge is, they will instantly think back to pre-contact and the way that we lived before contact. They understand Traditional Knowledge as that way of life, when in reality Traditional Knowledge is lived every day from we as Indigenous peoples live this knowledge every day. And we add to it... our knowledge is a living Being, that has its own way of growing and being, and we add to it every day. (Antone interview, November 6, 2019)

As individuals and organizations, the language and terminology that we use, or don't use, matters immensely to the project of decolonization and 'reconciliation' - *all* language is political. The terms that are used, like Indigenous Knowledge(s) over Traditional Ecological Knowledge matters, because it discusses the scope of content that is deemed 'acceptable' to include in public spaces. In our conversation, Myia Antone said that "I'd imagine a space like Ocean Wise and the Aquarium, really honouring the land that they're on" (Antone interview, November 6, 2019). One method of doing this is through the practice of Land acknowledgements which has become increasingly more common across Canada. The practice of Land acknowledgements stems from Indigenous protocol in many communities, as a method of situating yourself, introduction, relationality and kinship. Due to the nature of protocol surrounding Land acknowledgements, it is important for them to be *personal*, not standardized.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, Ocean Wise is situated on Lands and by Waters that carry deeply storied and complex histories. Despite this, as of August 2021, Ocean Wise and the Vancouver Aquarium do not readily include a Land acknowledgement on their website, emails, programs, in the physical space, or any other engagements with the public. The act of doing a Land acknowledgement is an extremely important (and relatively simple) part of honouring the place that an organization, or a person, is situated. One section of Ocean Wise that has repeatedly made Land acknowledgements a consistent part of their programming, is the Ocean Bridge program. James Bartram, when asked about Indigenous knowledge(s) being incorporated at Ocean Wise said, "the best example, although arguably reaching a small number of youth, is through the Ocean Bridge program. So Indigenous ways of knowing is really part of the DNA of that program and it was built into the program design" (Bartram interview, September 18, 2019). Ocean Bridge "connects Canadian youth and young professionals from coast to coast to coast empowering them to take action for ocean conservation. Each year 160 young people (ages 18-30) form a national team engaged for eleven months in co-creating and delivering ocean and waterway service projects for their home communities" (OW 2020). In 2020, the year that I participated in Ocean Bridge, there were four regional cohorts:

Atlantic, Great Lakes, Pacific, and St. Lawrence. In a ‘normal’, non-pandemic, year the cohorts have regular check-in meetings with a mentor, plan a service project in their home communities, attend monthly National Calls, and participate in two learning journeys (‘remote’ and urban). Within the Ocean Bridge program, there is a position titled Indigenous Knowledge and Engagement Program Specialist and it was clear to me that the Pacific Ocean Bridge team made a conscious effort to include Land acknowledgements at the start of each National Call. Participants were often asked to talk about where we were located and the lands upon which we live. Every month, each cohort holds a virtual National Call that participants could tune in and learn about a variety of topics related to ocean literacy, conservation, education, or research. Some of the National Calls related to Indigenous knowledge for the 2020 program year were: “Indigenous-Led Stewardship” by Eli Enns; “Haida Cultural Heritage” with Jisgang Nika Collison; “Listening as Wayfinding” with Lindsay Dobbin; “Indigenous Worldviews” with Brenda Wastasecoot; and “Indigenous Relations with Water” with Abigail Speck.

3.2 Arctic Research: “By the North, for the North”

On one afternoon in early October 2019, I met with Eric Solomon who is the Director of Arctic Programs at Ocean Wise, in a small office located in the education department. I had gotten Eric’s name from a few other people whom I had spoken with, and they insisted that the work that Eric and his team have been doing for years would be a great addition to this research. Going into this conversation with Eric, I had never really engaged with the Arctic department at Ocean Wise, outside of getting a tour of their office space, marvelling at the huge narwhal skull mounted on the wall, and viewing the Arctic exhibition space located in the Aquarium. At the Vancouver Aquarium there are many different gallery spaces, exhibits, and outdoor viewing areas. Outside is where you will find the larger tanks that are home to the resident marine mammals - the walruses, a Pacific white-sided dolphin, a California sea lion, Steller sealions, sea otters, seals and penguins. In the middle of all of the marine mammals, there is a set of doors that immediately descends to a flight of stairs – it could easily be passed by unnoticed or mistaken for a staff-only area. It is here, in the literal basement of the Aquarium, that we find the Canada’s Arctic gallery space. In this gallery space that was created in 2009, the walls are lined with information panels that discuss the Arctic, climate change, Arctic animals, and Inuit. There are also the skeletal remains of a narwhal and tanks containing live fish like Arctic cod. To date, this is the only space in the entire Vancouver Aquarium that actively discusses Indigenous people, knowledge, and presence within the gallery spaces.

project on behalf of their community... If there's interviews to do or other things in the community, they're the ones doing that. And then they also, it's not just about co-design and implementation, but they also, rather than have that researcher take all the data, go off, come up with a conclusion, and then come back to the community and say, OK, here's what we found. The youth work with them to look at the data, to understand what kind of stories does this data tell that may be relevant to the community. And how do we then analyze that in a way that's relevant and then how do we interpret the results and communicate them in a relevant way for the community? (Solomon interview, October 4, 2019)

Eric gave two examples of research projects that the Ikaarvik youth have undertaken in the last several years that took place in Kugluktuk (ᑦᑏᑦᑏᑦᑏᑦ) and Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet). Kugluktuk (ᑦᑏᑦᑏᑦᑏᑦ) is located at the mouth of the Coppermine River. One of the main concerns that the community voiced was about the health of the Coppermine River, as they had observed a lot of changes over the years. The youth worked with each other, the community, and externally based researchers to set parameters and locations in the river that can be monitored over time. The youth have just finished a second year of monitoring the river, with equipment that now belongs to the community, with another year left of funding for the project.

The community at Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) expressed concerns about the potential for invasive species resulting from both climate change, and a huge mine that has been bringing ships in past the community. The ships are of special concern because large ships often hold ballast water in the hull, which then drains into the surrounding environment. Large ships moving across the oceans have the potential for transporting small plant and animal species in the ballast water, which when they are released, can become invasive species that threaten Indigenous plant and animal populations. The Ikaarvik youth learned sampling techniques to survey the foreign species, and track their impact over time, on the health of the Waters and other organisms present.

The projects that Eric and his team have been a part of creating are unique and extremely significant, however because they take place in the far North, thousands of kilometers away from Vancouver, they are often overlooked within the organization itself. Both of the above examples illustrate the localized context in which these projects are taking place, where the concerns of the communities are unique to the places that they are located. Research projects, such as the ones the Ikaarvik youth have been undertaking, cannot be transplanted from other locations if they are to accurately address the concerns of the communities, in a beneficial manner. To have capacity training within communities, and empower the youth to make their own decisions as Inuk, with their

community in support and as guidance, is a powerful shift away from harmful extractive research practices. Eric told me that “one of the whole goals of Ikaarvik is to sort of empower Indigenous youth, Northern Indigenous youth and their communities to set and address their own research agendas. And so, the program was really conceived up in the North, and has been driven by the North, for the North” (Solomon interview, October 4, 2019).

Chapter 4: Navigating the Rough Waters

In this section, I will draw out specific themes that arose in conversation with participants that require further exploration. Many of these themes reveal tensions or concerns that are present within Ocean Wise with regards to navigating the waters of ‘reconciliation’ and decolonization. The tensions and themes explored in this section are: Indigenous Knowledges and ‘Western’ science compatibility; storytelling as a bridge between ways of knowing; consent and sovereignty of intellectual property; and the capacity of Indigenous Nations, with the allyship of organizations to do this work in a good way.

4.1 Indigenous Knowledge(s) with/and/or ‘Western’ Science

Two eyed seeing is to normalize Indigenous knowledge in the curriculum so that both Indigenous and conventional perspectives and knowledges will be available – not just for Aboriginal peoples, who would be enriched by that effort, but for all peoples. Aboriginal knowledge serves to ground our interrelationships with each other – all things, animate and inanimate; to honour the land, the animals, the ecology that gives us all sustenance; to honour our relationships with one another and respect our diversities...

- Marie Battiste, *Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (2010, 17)

One of the most prominent themes that continually came up in the interviews is the tension between ‘Western science’⁹ models and Indigenous knowledges/worldview (and Waterview). Ocean Wise, like many other environmental conservation and aquarium organizations, is heavily based in ‘Western science’ models – many of their employees have degrees in biology, chemistry, oceanography or other generally recognized ‘scientific’ backgrounds. Indigenous knowledge(s), up until recently, were often not included in the curriculum or syllabi of academic programs because they were thought to be irrelevant and fundamentally ‘unscientific’, ‘less’ than, and ‘Othered’. Recently, among academic educational and research organizations there has been a shift to look towards including complex Indigenous understandings of the world and the Land into various research models. This is where Ocean Wise fits comes into the story: as an organization that understands itself as ‘scientific’, often the first step towards the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge(s) into their mandate is through a turn towards TEK or other ecologically based understandings.

⁹ The term ‘Western’ is deeply problematic because it assumes a division between the ‘West’ and the ‘East’. I reluctantly use it throughout this document because it is the term that many of the scholars whom I am quoting utilize in their works.

Potawatomi scholar, Robin Wall Kimmerer, writes that “the legacy of traditional ecological knowledge, the intellectual twin to science, has been handed down in the oral tradition for countless generations... Like scientific information, traditional knowledge arises from careful systematic observation of nature, from the results of innumerable lived experiments. Traditional knowledge is rooted in intimacy with a local landscape where the land itself is the teacher” (2003, 101). Using anthropologist Paul Nadasdy’s terms, in the literature and in practice, Indigenous knowledge(s) and ‘Western’ science may appear to be incommensurable because “traditional knowledge, is assumed to be qualitative, intuitive, holistic, and oral, science is seen as quantitative, analytical, reductionist and written” (2000, 117). However, assuming that ‘Western science’ is based on observable, measurable, repeatable experiments through utilizing the scientific method; Indigenous knowledge also mobilizes the same methodology. Former Mobile Programs Coordinator at Ocean Wise, Holly Neate, explained:

You can go through those six distinct steps in a lab with a lab coat on and do ‘science’ like a typical scientist that you think of; but you can also walk through a park and make observations and ask the person beside you a question and that person says, “oh I’ve seen this same thing and I heard this from my mother, or my father, my grandparents, that they saw this same thing and this is what they know”. In and of itself, the walking around in nature and talking to other people about what you’re seeing and using the understanding and the experiences that people before you have seen and noticed. There’s no way that you can’t consider that science because you’re doing an experiment. And that never happened in a lab, and you never wrote a paper about it, and it wasn’t published in some journal that only the top academics can understand, but like 100% that is scientific research and that’s science. (Neate interview, August 27, 2019)

Therefore, Indigenous knowledge(s) *is/are* science. It is not ‘Western’ science, but it is science in and of itself. Indigenous systems of knowledge, knowledge production, and knowledge dissemination are created, as Métis scholar Zoe Todd from Amiskwaciwâskahikan asserts, by “dynamic Philosophers and Intellectuals [and Scientists], full stop” (2016, 7). Perhaps Indigenous knowledges and ‘Western’ science are two different methods of coming-to-know various different truths about our world, and that potentially together, they can inform a new perspective that includes a multiversity¹⁰ of understandings. Lasse Gustavsson said that he believes “knowledge can be

¹⁰ I was first introduced to the concept of multiversity at the Museum of Anthropology (MoA) at the University of British Columbia through their Multiversity Galleries, in which their aim is “... to evoke the guiding principle of multiple ways of knowing, categorizing and organizing tangible and intangible culture, the space is intended to decolonize older systems of museum classification” (Kramer 2015, 490). The term multiversity was created by two post-colonial scholars, Paulo Wangoola and Claude Alvares, meaning multiple universes, or multiple ways of knowing.

4.2 Storytelling

Stories remind us of who we are and of our belonging. Stories hold within them knowledges while simultaneously signifying relationships. In oral tradition, stories can never be decontextualized from the teller.

- Margaret Kovach (Sakewew p'sim iskwew) (2009, 94)

At Ocean Wise, treating Indigenous knowledge(s) with the same validity and reverence as biology, chemistry, or environmental science, is a dramatic shift away from the historical legacies that public educational and scientific organizations are steeped in. One of the methodologies that emerged in the data to bridge this apparent gap between Indigenous knowledges and 'Western' science at Ocean Wise, was through the mobilization of storytelling as a connector. Myia Antone, in her position of Indigenous Knowledge Coordinator said that "I focused a lot on storytelling" when she rewrote many of the curriculum programs, because storytelling is a medium through which a person can personally connect, create, and relate through language (Antone interview, November 6, 2019). It isn't just Ocean Wise who is beginning to explore the connections between conservation and storytelling either. In 2018, Álvaro Fernández-Llamazares and Mar Cabeza published a review of Indigenous storytelling and its role in conservation practices. They write, "...deeper consideration and promotion of Indigenous storytelling can lead to enhanced understanding of diverse values and perceptions around biodiversity, while offering a constructive approach for greater inclusion of Indigenous peoples in conservation pursuits" (2018, 1). Indigenous stories, as explored earlier in this thesis, carry deep knowledges of biodiversity, ecology, geology, medicine, and ecosystem management. These knowledges are intimately connected to, and bound by, place. At Ocean Wise, storytelling emerged as a method of situating oneself, students, the organization, and the animals participating in these teaching moments firmly on the Lands of the Lower Mainland. Myia further explained,

I showed an Inuit cartoon story that I found on YouTube instead of... my first idea was to share an Inuit story and then a Squamish story. But because one of my teachings is, you can't tell a story unless you know the story. And I don't know Inuit stories, those aren't my teachings. So, I ended up finding this really cool video and showing the kids and using storytelling as a way to show them that this was a way that my community and my family, my ancestors always learned. And it's a way, when you think of your teacher standing in front of you, in a way they're still storytellers and telling stories, but it doesn't leave as much space for us to figure out what they're trying to teach us. (Antone interview, November 6, 2019)

Myia drew on principles of storytelling from her own community, and encouraged others to do the same. Staff were often encouraged to do their own Land acknowledgements at the beginning

of programs and this didn't follow an organizational script or example – these types of Land acknowledgements were meant to be personal. Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes that “...getting the story right and telling the story well are tasks that Indigenous activists and researchers must both perform” (2012, 357). In a place like Ocean Wise, that is both a place for activism and a place for research, there is a responsibility to get the story right and tell the stories well. Eric Solomon said that:

For example, a big part of my job is to find and help our organization tell the kinds of stories that we need to tell about the Arctic. Again, these are not necessarily our stories to tell. And so, it's really important that we build and maintain strong relationships in the North and that we as much as possible are finding ways for people in the North to tell their own stories to our various audiences and that sort of thing. (Solomon interview, October 4, 2019)

James Bartram told me that “it's not about *us* telling stories. It's about, we need to figure out how we can work with the Indigenous Nations to tell those stories together.” (Bartram interview, September 18, 2019). The notion of telling the story, together - of Indigenous communities and Nations partnering with organizations like Ocean Wise – has consistently emerged in these interviews as an imagined future of navigating the waters of decolonization and ‘reconciliation’.

4.3 Consent & Sovereignty

A third theme in several interviews was the concept of free, prior, and informed consent. Consent is crucial for everybody to understand – individuals, groups, communities and especially organizations or corporations. On these Lands and as part of the Settler-State Nation building project, Indigenous communities have continually had their consent violated for generations. However, the issues surrounding consent are not simply about access to Land, but it extends to the access of intellectual property and community knowledge as well. At its core, consent is ultimately about sovereignty; land-based sovereignty, bodily sovereignty, political sovereignty, and intellectual sovereignty.

In many Indigenous communities it is understood that not *all* things are meant to be known by *everyone*, but select individuals are chosen to become knowledge holders for specific things. These knowledge holders do not ‘own’ the information, but it is safeguarded and held for the betterment of the whole community. Tamara Loney, a Mobile Programs Coordinator for Ocean Wise, shared her understanding of this by saying:

... there is traditional knowledge specific to that location. There's traditional knowledge that's specific to family lines. There's a lot of different types of traditional knowledge, whether it's

like a regional thing, a family thing, a direct descendant thing. (Loney interview, September 11, 2019)

Therefore, there are some knowledge(s) that will not be shared outside of specific contexts; some knowledge(s) are not meant for ‘outsiders’; some knowledge(s) are protected by communities. During our conversation, Myia made it clear that for Ocean Wise “I wasn't going in and writing down all of this knowledge that my community has and letting everyone share it with the world” (Antone interview, November 6, 2019). We must acknowledge that communities and community members, hold and exercise agency and sovereignty with regards to the engagement of Indigenous knowledge(s) outside of the community of origin. This issue of consent is crucial because there is a long history of researchers who enter Indigenous communities (usually without consent or consideration of sovereignty) and mine community members and Elders for data, knowledge, and information.

Drawing from my conversation with Eric Solomon, he recounted that “we [Ocean Wise] don’t do anything in the North that we are not *invited* to do” [my emphasis] (Solomon interview, October 4, 2019). This point is of the utmost importance. So much of the history of Canada, and academia, hinges on predominantly White individuals and organizations entering Indigenous communities without consent, and bringing the assumption that they somehow know what is best. To make sure that there is permission, and the consent of the community to do this work, is a method of honouring the sovereignty of these Nations. Here, there is a required shift in the ways research is done: it is not about the researchers wants or desires, but rather it is focused on the community, by the community, for the community.

4.4 Capacity & Allyship

The final tension that was raised during the interview process is in the interest of capacity. In a conversation about the museum exhibition *c̓əsnaʔəm, the city before the city*, Jordan Wilson recounts:

I think, it seems as though these types of projects garner a lot of attention for the museums, that they benefit in a lot of ways from engaging with these collaborative projects, especially in this day and age where there’s a lot of attention being paid right now, in light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and there’s a lot of visibility right now around First Nations territory, in terms of Vancouver acknowledging its location on unceded territory (quoted in Sparrow, Wilson and Rowley 2018, 51)

Due to the pursuit of ‘reconciliation’, there has been an increased demand on communities and community members to meet with, and be available for, primarily non-Indigenous organizations like museums and the Vancouver Aquarium. Laura van Doormaal, during our interview said that “I know that in a time of reconciliation, there's quite a lot of demand on those communities” (van Doormaal interview, August 22, 2019). It is important that organizations recognize that the work of Indigenizing and decolonizing public institutions can be quite taxing on the resources, time, and energy of individuals and the community more broadly. James Bartram said that “we have to be careful and respectful not to overburden [Indigenous communities]” (Bartram interview, September 18, 2019).

However, it is not just the demand on the communities that organizations and institutions must be conscious of, but also the capacity of employees as well. Myia Antone, shared with me that the Indigenous Knowledge Coordinator position required a lot of emotional labour as a *skwxwú7mesh* woman: “I didn't know how much emotional labour it was also going to be...a big thing is having that capacity as an organization to support that person” (Antone interview, November 6, 2019). It is important that if organizations like Ocean Wise are to seek out Indigenous voices, input, consultation or perspectives, that the correct forms of support are available to do that work in a good way.

Fundamentally, it is not the responsibility of Indigenous peoples to do the heavy lifting of teaching predominantly Settler-organizations how to become better. Kwakwaka'wakw scholar Tłaliłila'ogwa (Sarah Hunt) and Cindy Holmes write that “we suggest that allyship requires accountability on the part of members of the dominant group and is not predicated on reciprocity by those who are marginalized” (2015, 162). There are endless amounts of already available information, books, workshops, flyers, and data, created by Indigenous and POC people, that discuss these topics. This is where the concept of allyship becomes significant. Myia began by saying:

... and also, understanding what allyship is. Because allyship isn't, oh, I did a land acknowledgement. Done. I'm an ally. My perspective is [that] you can never call yourself an ally. You're always working on it. So, you can say, I'm practicing allyship, but you're never an ally. It's not a finish line. And that's obviously still a conversation that has to be had in Ocean Wise in total, but also within the little teams. (Antone interview, November 6, 2019)

Being an ally is “about disrupting oppressive spaces by educating others on the realities and histories of marginalized people” (Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK 2019, 3). Allyship, as Myia outlined in the above quotation, is an ongoing and continual process that does not have a finish

line or a completion date. Allyship, although enacted by people on the ground, is not reserved for only individuals; organizations or institutions as a whole can move towards embodying and implementing allyship as a method to better supporting communities and community members. Educating employees about allyship is a great method of ensuring that the capacity of Indigenous communities and employees are respected. Organizations like Ocean Wise in the pursuit of Indigenization must be conscious of their demand on communities and individuals to ensure that the relations developed are healthy and sustaining for all parties.

Chapter 5: Suggestions and Conclusion

I hope that we're an organization, or certainly a department within an organization, that's open to having some of those conversations... But I feel better today than I did two years ago because I feel we're now moving and it's kind of like we don't have all the answers, obviously.
-James Bartram (interview, September 18, 2019)

Here, I offer some recommendations for potential next steps that Ocean Wise and the Vancouver Aquarium may take to address some of the concerns and imagined futures that have been raised by staff members through this research. These suggestions are by no means exhaustive, or represent the full extent to which Ocean Wise could engage with 'reconciliation' and decolonization practices. The thoughts shared here are only meant to be a starting (or continuing) point.

5.1 Language(s)

*the city paved over with cement english cracks open, stubborn Halq'eméylem springs up
among the newspaper boxes and mail receptacles in the shade of the thqa:t
along the sidewalks lined with grass and pta:kwem waiting to grow anywhere they can
around the supermarkets full of transported food – kwukemels, tomatoes, chocolate and
chicken
under the wet green shelter of chestnut and p'xwelhp leaves
carried on the tricky wings of skwówéls, also known as qukin, gaak, gwawis, setsé7 and more
languages of this land
more to tree & bracken & cucumber & oak & raven than meets the stiff I
root & stomach & seed speak glottal, gut & gift
return*

- Rita Wong, Q'élstexw in *undercurrent* (2015, 59)

In the *Treasures of the BC Coast* gallery space in the Vancouver Aquarium, which opened in 2000, there is a panel that still utilizes the phrase "Queen Charlotte Islands" to refer to the archipelago of Haida Gwaii. In my conversation with James Bartram, Vice President of Education and Youth, he recounts that:

I think where we've struggled sometimes is, with the best intentions, we've tried to, maybe not even cognitively or consciously, but we've separated community from knowledge. So, for example, in some of our exhibits, I'm sure you are aware in *Treasures of the B.C. Coast* still refers to the Queen Charlotte Islands, which is, that's part of our history, too. But I think that's unfortunate. And, I think we can do much better. (Bartram interview, September 18, 2019)

The term "Queen Charlotte Islands" was repatriated to the Crown by the Haida Nation on June 17, 2010 and no longer is used to refer to the archipelago (Hart 2017). Considering that Ocean Wise has a fairly strong connection with the Haida Nation through *Chief of the Undersea World* and the Ocean Bridge program, it is a bit surprising to me that the accurate name for Haida Gwaii is still

continued presence, may end up repurposed as “box-ticking” inclusion without commitment to any sort of real change. (2016)

As Vowel writes, it is important however that the act of doing a Land acknowledgement is more than just a ‘box-ticking’ inclusion. A way for organizations to potentially teach and educate their employees on how to create personalized Land acknowledgements stems from the workshop that Myia hosted with the education department. Encouraging individuals to deeply reflect on their position, relations, and understanding of the Lands and Waters that nourish them, and then guiding them in the practice of becoming comfortable with Land acknowledgement inclusion is a good way of creating more personalized, not standardized acknowledgements.

5.2 #WaterBack

In the famous article titled “Decolonization is not a metaphor”, Tuck and Yang write “Decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically” (2012, 7). All too often, when the term ‘decolonization’ is used, it is not in a literal sense of the word. Kwakwaka’wakw scholar Tłaliłila’ogwa (Sarah Hunt) and Cindy Holmes write that, “decolonization has been taken up in theoretical terms within postcolonial theory or other academically based knowledges, but is frequently disconnected from the place-based nature of ongoing colonialism in the lands and communities in which we live... Decolonization involves actively challenging or disrupting systems of knowledge that do not fully account for the lives of Indigenous people, queer and trans people, and many others whose lives are erased through epistemic and material violence” (2015, 157 & 159). Nêhiyaw scholar Billy-Ray Belcourt writes that “decolonization is apocalyptic” and that in order to truly decolonize, the result must be different than our current reality (Belcourt and Roberts 2016). If decolonization is really not a metaphor, and the term is meant to be radical, then that pushes us towards the current movement of #LandBack (and perhaps in this conversation, #WaterBack). #LandBack is a phrase that has gained traction in the past few years with the publication of *Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper*, which calls for the reclamation and re-occupation of the Land by Indigenous peoples as sovereign Nations. I think the concept of #LandBack can be extended to also include #WaterBack, the reclamation and re-occupation of the Waters by Indigenous peoples as sovereign Nations.

Perhaps, in order to pursue the vision of “healthy and flourishing oceans”, organizations like Ocean Wise should mobilize their incredible power and privilege to actively advocate for Indigenous controlled, operated, and protected Lands and Waters. In the *Yellowhead Institute Red Paper*, they write:

While an apocalyptic future certainly awaits without transformational change, the [UN’s Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services] report – the largest of its kind ever produced – finds some hope in the land management practices of Indigenous peoples globally. While biodiversity is declining in all parts of the world, it is declining much less rapidly in those lands still managed by Indigenous communities. (2019, 64)

There are many examples of Indigenous land-management and conservation practices, like the Burrard Inlet Action Plan created by səliłilwətaʔ Nation, which is a “science-based, First Nations-led initiative to improve the health of the Burrard Inlet ecosystem by 2025” (Tsleil-Waututh Nation 2017). Ocean Wise, who are situated on the banks of səliłwət (Burrard Inlet) could utilize their political influence to support səliłilwətaʔ Nation and other Indigenous initiatives that protect the Lands and Water systems in the lower mainland (and elsewhere). This includes not just supporting the more ‘formal’ Indigenous initiatives introduced through Chief and Council, but it also means supporting grassroots Land and Water protectors who are putting their bodies on the line in order to protect ecosystems from environmental damage due to large-scale resource extraction projects. Public organizations and institutions can have a large impact on the perspectives of their visitors, and perhaps Ocean Wise could mobilize their platform to advocate for/with/and alongside of Indigenous communities in the pursuit of ocean health and wellbeing.

5.3 Representation Matters

The phrase ‘representation matters’ has become increasingly popular in recent years in connection with dialogue around BIPOC representation in media. ‘Representation matters’ is a phrase that advocates for the inclusion, centering, amplification, and visibility of BIPOC stories, bodies, voices, and perspectives. Here, I am utilizing this phrase to discuss the imagining of more Indigenous and diverse employment opportunities within Ocean Wise.

Ocean Wise faces a dilemma that many organizations, especially in the non-profit and education sectors face: the dilemma of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Myia Antone observed that, “the aquarium is like... a lot of the educators on the ground are mainly women and then all the higher up are mainly male” (Antone interview, November 6, 2019). As of August 2021, a majority of

the senior leadership and Board of Directors at Ocean Wise are comprised of middle-aged White men. In the education department, an overwhelming majority of staff are women. These dynamics are common (although not always desired) in organizational structures, and it does not accurately represent the demographics and diversity of specialized individuals in a given field.

Myia shared her imagined future of Ocean Wise as having a whole team of Indigenous leaders and educators all across all departments, so that the work was not on the shoulders of a single person and they could be better supported by each other. It is obviously a necessity to have Indigenous employees when undertaking the work of Indigenization and decolonization, but organizations also need to ensure they have the correct capacity in order to support those individuals. However, it raises the question of how to ensure that Indigenous, POC, LGBTQ2+, and female representation in organizations is not simply tokenistic. James Bartram explained:

For example, we might say, 'right, arbitrarily we will set a target that within five years, 20 percent of our interpreters will be Indigenous', and that might seem tokenistic. But at some point, we'd like [pause] if we don't make a kind of proactive and sustained effort to recruit and train and partner with Indigenous people, then it'll always be tokenistic. (Bartram interview, September 18, 2019)

Ultimately, it often comes down to intention. Holly Neate shared with me that she thinks "We [Ocean Wise] need to be doing this on purpose!" (Neate interview, August 27, 2019). *Why* is it that Ocean Wise is engaging in conversations of 'reconciliation' and decolonization? *Why* do they want to hire Indigenous staff? Are these actions coming from a place of genuine allyship, or is it because most other organizations have begun this journey towards decolonization and 'reconciliation' practices? These are not questions that I, or any other single person at Ocean Wise, can fully answer. Organizations are comprised of many individuals, all of whom may have differing perspectives. However, with a critical mass of dedicated people with good intentions, open minds, and a willingness for action within an organization, there is always hope that the representation desired and changes needed will emerge.

5.4 Pulling the Canoe, Together

... you have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told... the truth about stories is that that's all we are.

- Thomas King (2003, 10)

In conclusion, I am reminded of a teaching that was shared at the Indigenous Studies Student Symposium in 2019, by x^wməθk^wəyəm scholar, Heather Commodore: that to paddle a canoe, it

requires everyone to pull together to move forward (2018). She invokes the metaphor of paddling a canoe as a method of speaking about the academy, but I believe that it is applicable for other public organizations that are undertaking ‘reconciliation’ and decolonial work. In order to move forward, it requires all partners to pull their paddles in sync with one another – it requires everyone to do the work. For Ocean Wise, there is a tentative history with Indigenous Nations through things like *Chief of the Undersea World*, but the real work of paddling the canoe with the x^wməθk^wəy^{əm}, skwxwú7mesh, and səliłilwətaʔ Nations in the lower mainland has only just begun.

There is movement within the education and research departments to begin building and maintain relationships with the host Nations. The creation of the Indigenous Knowledge Coordinator position is a big step towards carving out space specifically for Indigenous voices to make themselves heard within the organization. The Ocean Bridge program actively creates space for Indigenous knowledges, voices, scholars and students. The Ikaarvik program has been doing the good work of capacity building, providing resources and support, and maintaining relationships with Inuit communities for many years. There are many people within the organization that both individually and collectively are imagining and working towards a more inclusive future. Progress has been made.

However, at the time of writing this thesis, Ocean Wise is still quite far behind many other public educational organizations on their ‘reconciliation’ journey. Ocean Wise as an organization that has quite a lot of influence within the environmental conservation sector has not publicly supported Indigenous Land and Water protectors. They do not have an organization-wide Land acknowledgement or actively include Indigenous knowledges in the physical space of the Aquarium, outside of the Arctic gallery. As an organization, Ocean Wise is yet to acknowledge the physical Lands on which they sit, the relationship to place, or the presence of x^wayx^wəy in their backyard. The upper leadership is primarily composed of cis-gendered White men and adequate supports for Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty to do the heavy lifting of ‘reconciliation’ hasn’t yet been provided. There is still a long way to go.

My hope for this thesis and research is that it will act as a call-to-action, and encouragement, for Ocean Wise and other public educational organizations, to continue navigating the sometimes-murky waters of decolonization and ‘reconciliation’. Doing this type of work is never easy, but it is meaningful and transformative. Perhaps, through learning how to tell stories together, with intention and care, we can imagine a world in which oceans are healthy and flourishing.

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