

IDENTIFYING STO:LO BASKETRY: EXPLORING DIFFERENT WAYS OF
KNOWING MATERIAL CULTURE

by

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ABSTRACT

Coast Salish coiled basketry has been a much-neglected area of research. Previous investigations into this topic have been primarily concerned with geo-cultural distributions, and discussions pertaining to stylistic attributes. In recent years several scholars have turned their attention to the topic of Salish weavings, but they have focused their efforts quite narrowly on textiles made from wool and other similar fibres to the exclusion of weaving techniques such as basketry which utilise local roots and barks. This thesis will focus exclusively on one type of Salish basketry – coiled basketry.

In this thesis I explore different ways of identifying, or “knowing”, Coast Salish coiled cedar root basketry. I specifically focus on Stó:lo basketry and identify three ways in which Stó:lo basket makers “know” these objects. First I discuss the Halkomelem terminology and what insights it provides to indigenous classification systems. Secondly, I situate coiled basketry in a broader Coast Salish weaving complex in order to discuss how basketry is influenced by other textile arts. This also enables me to explore how Stó:lo weavers identify a well-made object. In the final section I discuss ownership of designs by individuals and their families.

This research draws primarily from interviews conducted with Stó:lo basket makers between May and September 2000 in their communities and at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC. It is supplemented by interviews with basket makers from other Salish communities and by the ethnographic literature on this topic.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines indigenous perspectives on one area of a broader Coast Salish weaving complex – coiled cedar root basketry. Typically researchers write about the geographical and cultural distribution of “Indian” basketry or basketry styles and attributes (Haeberlin et al. 1928; Mason 1904; Harvey 1986; Peabody Turnbaugh and Turnbaugh 1986; Jones 1982; James 1972). For example, coiled basketry is usually classified by examining foundation materials and stitching methods as detailed in James Adovasio’s book, *Basketry Technology* (1977). While these types of studies contribute to our understanding of how “Indian” basketry is made, they fail to explore what baskets can tell us about the people that make and use them. Similarly, they also fail to report on how the people who make these objects talk about and describe them.

Contemporary museum professionals, such as Susan Pearce, are trying to reconcile the gap that exists between visual perception and oral description. Pearce notes that:

This huge gap between our ability to perceive material and our capacity to express what we see linguistically suggests that objects play a larger part in the processes which produce social structure than we are usually prepared to admit: suggests, indeed, that our ability to produce a world of things is a fundamental part of our ability to create social lives and to feel at ‘home’ in them. (1992:23)

In essence, the language we use to describe objects reflects our attempts to situate the material within a specific system of cultural knowledge. Academic disciplines also develop specialised language to describe and classify material culture. Yet what do these technical descriptions and typologies really represent if not our own knowledge frameworks? Where do we locate the ethnographic other within these knowledge

frameworks? Why have we often given precedence to western classification systems rather than those which reflect an object's origins?

In this thesis I will address some of these questions by exploring multiple ways of knowing Stó:lo coiled basketry. While my analysis is influenced by several methods, I employ conversation analysis as a primary tool for understanding how Stó:lo basket makers construct and relate emic knowledge frameworks when speaking about their coiled basketry. Typically, conversation analysis is used within an ethnomethodological theoretical framework, since ethnomethodology:

is especially attuned to communicative activity. From this perspective, conversation is the machinery of reality construction. Ethnomethodological method talk, then is largely "talk about talk." Its mandate is not only for the researcher to watch, but also and especially to *listen*, in order to discern how reality is produced (Gubrium and Holstein 1997:8).

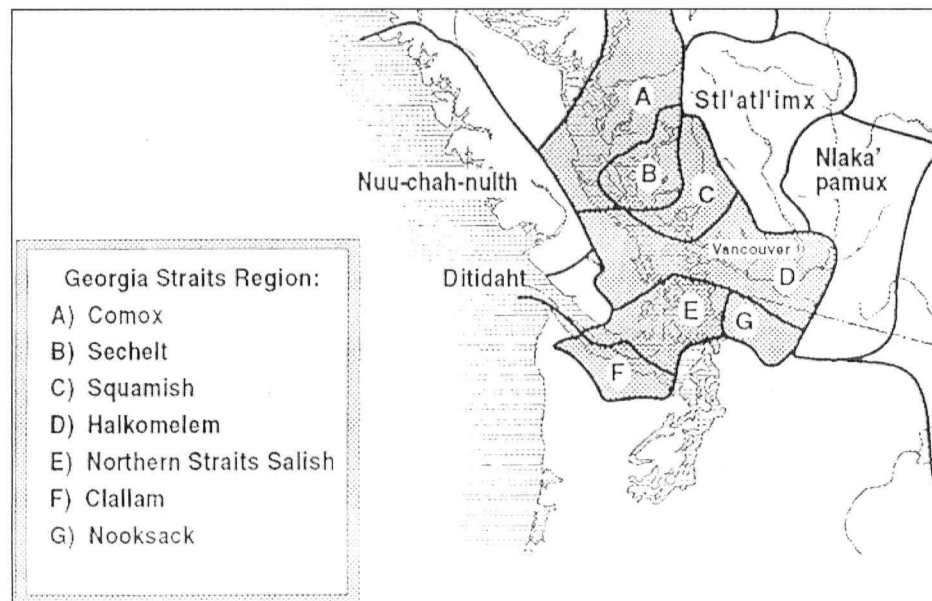
With conversation analysis the researcher examines dialogue to identify underlying patterns which show "how people, in their everyday lives, constitute the world as a recognisable state of affairs (Watson 1996:74)."

While ethnomethodologists use conversation analysis only for "naturally occurring" conversation, I decided it could also be employed as a tool for analysing transcripts from my interviews with Stó:lo basket makers since these interviews were unstructured in nature. By unstructured I mean that I did not follow a rigid list of interview questions. In addition, I often employed silence as a means of eliciting further information on a topic, as well as to ensure that a speaker had finished relating a particular thought. I also was not concerned if the answers to my questions seemed to diverge from the original topic of the question, since I felt that in such instances the question and the response were most likely related in the mind of the speaker. I felt certain that later analysis would clarify and reveal these connections. This is how I came

to formulate the three emic perspectives on coiled basketry that I present within these pages – identification through language, technique and aesthetic, and design ownership.

Along the Northwest Coast coiled basketry is only associated with the Coast Salish. It is thought to have diffused into coastal communities from the adjacent Stl'atl'imx peoples to the Northeast and the Nlaka'pamux peoples to the East (Haeberlin et al. 1928; Johnson and Bernick 1986; Suttles 1987). In the ethnographic literature, and in present day communities, it is not uncommon for Coast Salish basket makers to discuss coiled basketry in terms of "Lillooet," "Mount Currie" and "Douglas" (Stl'atl'imx) or "Thompson" (Nlaka'pamux) styles, lending support to a Plateau origin. Since no archaeological Coast Salish coiled basketry has been recovered at this time, many researcher believe that it has been recently introduced into the region, perhaps in the last two centuries (Haeberlin et al. 1928; Bernick 2000).

Figure 1: Map identifying Distribution of Coast Salish Languages (shaded areas). The Stó:lo are Upriver Halkomelem speakers.



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The Nlaka'pamux and Stl'atl'imx live in geographically distinct areas with variations in available plant resources and so use slightly different materials when constructing their baskets. The Nlaka'pamux style, which uses pieces of cedar roots as the foundation for the coils, is typically characterised as finer work and results in rounder and tighter coils. By contrast Stl'atl'imx coiled baskets have coils which are flatter and more rectangular in shape since the cedar roots are sewn around a foundation made from strips of cedar sapling wood. Along the Coast, specifically among the Stó:lo peoples of the Lower Fraser Basin, it is common to see the two styles used both separately and in combination. Contemporary Stó:lo basket makers distinguish between the two by calling the former "coiled" and the later "slat", although from a western perspective both are considered coiled basketry.

Coiled basketry represents a large portion of Coast Salish ethnographic material in Canadian museums and interpretive centres such as: the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta; the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, BC; the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, BC; the Vancouver Museum; Xá:ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre near Mission, BC and Shxwt'a:selhawtxw – the House of Long Ago and Today in Sardis, BC.

In addition to these institutions, other museums in North America and Europe formed large ethnographic collections of Northwest Coast material culture in the late part of the nineteenth century and the early portion of the twentieth century (Cole 1985; Jonaitis 1988). Their collection mandates were oriented towards preserving the last vestiges of what they perceived as the dying cultures of the First Peoples of North America. Ethnographers like Franz Boas were especially concerned with assembling

complete collections that represented every aspect of the daily life of these peoples (Jacknis 1985; Jonaitis 1988). Since the Coast Salish were situated in the areas of British Columbia and Washington State that were most densely populated by colonising peoples, it is not surprising that many of these collections contain large numbers of Coast Salish objects including coiled baskets. Given the gender biases of the profession of anthropology during this period, it is also not surprising that little was done to document the provenance of the many baskets that were collected from this vast area of the Northwest Coast, since weaving is traditionally associated with women in this region. When contrasted with the monumental wooden sculptures and houses that characterise the region as a whole, baskets must have seemed insignificant to many museum collectors by comparison.

In addition to ethnographic field collecting, many of the baskets that made their way into these larger museum collections were originally privately owned. During my research I reviewed accession and catalogue records from the Museum of Anthropology and the Vancouver Museum, as well as those held by the Stó:lo Nation Archives for Xá:ytem and Shxwt'a:selhawtxw. The basket collections of these institutions are partially, and sometimes totally, comprised of the private collections of individual collectors – usually women who made their homes in British Columbia during the later portion of the nineteenth century and the early portion of the twentieth century. Baskets were also, and continue to be, acquired individually through direct gifts and purchases from basket makers or other owners.

During this period basket making was an important economic activity for indigenous women with higher numbers of women learning and practising this skill

(Laforet and York 1998; Knight 1978; Wright 1996). Many of the contemporary basket makers with whom I have spoken recall past excursions to sell and trade baskets in local and distant communities. For them, baskets were a means of obtaining food, clothing and other household items during the lean interwar years. The baskets that they made were easily transported and thus widely dispersed. Provenance was often lost during this flurry of basket making activity and subsequent dispersals, and while today there are many coiled baskets residing in museum collections around the world there are very few with known makers or communities.

This lack of documentation was central in my mind while I was defining a research project for my Master of Arts degree. After deciding to focus on coiled basketry as a topic, I wondered if it would be possible to produce an identification guide of regional styles and designs that might be used to classify museum collections and other anonymous baskets. This would require investigating whether each family, community or region has its own distinctive style of basket making in terms of technique and design elements. It would also require an understanding of how the knowledge of basket making is shared within these social units. Since this topic could conceivably encompass many years of research, due to the many communities and bands which occupy the Coast Salish traditional territories, I narrowed the focus of my research to examining Stó:lo basketry.

There are twenty-four reserves within the Stó:lo territories located along the Lower Fraser River; currently twenty-one of these reserves or bands are affiliated with the larger political body known as the Stó:lo Nation (Kew and Miller 1999). I spoke with basket makers from six of these twenty-four communities while conducting my field

research. They lived on the following reserves near Chilliwack, Agassiz and Hope: Skwah, Squiala, Skowkale, Seabird Island, Chehalis and the Peters Reserve.

The basket makers that I spoke with were chosen in consultation with employees from the Aboriginal Rights and Titles Division of the Stó:lo Nation. An appendix from Priya Helwig's unpublished resource booklet, *Contemporary Stó:lo Women Artists* (1993), assisted with the selection process by identifying the communities with known basket makers. The basket makers chosen included five Elders, each from a different community, and two younger women who were students of two of the former group. Four of the Elders selected had previously contributed to an exhibit called *Through My Eyes* held at the Vancouver Museum, the fifth was highlighted in the Vancouver Art Gallery's *Topographies* exhibit, and thus were known to be receptive to researchers.

After completing the UBC ethical review process, and gaining approval from Stó:lo Nation Aboriginal Rights and Title staff, I conducted initial interviews with these seven basket makers in their homes or offices at the Stó:lo Nation. These interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed. I then made the transcripts available to the basket makers and they were given the opportunity to remove or edit content. With the consent of the basket makers, I also made copies of the final version of each transcript available to the Stó:lo Nation Archives.

I later invited the basket makers to the Museum of Anthropology to view and discuss baskets and other weavings in the permanent collections. These two sessions were also audiotaped and transcribed and the resulting transcripts were again shared with the basket makers. Final versions of these transcripts were also deposited with the Stó:lo Nation Archives and with the Museum of Anthropology at UBC. Funding was provided

for this second portion of my research by the Museum of Anthropology through a Museums Assistance Program grant for collection documentation projects. Later I also received additional funding for a graduating exhibit to accompany this thesis.

I selected 100 baskets for the Stó:lo basket makers to view on their first visit; twenty-two were baskets known to be from the Stó:lo area. The remaining seventy-eight baskets were selected because catalogue records suggested that they may have been acquired within the vicinity of the Fraser River – traditional Stó:lo territory. A small number of new acquisitions with unclear cultural designations were also included in this sample. During the second visit the basket makers viewed items from their area that they were unable to see on their first visit: basketry cradles and textiles such as wool blankets and tumplines.

The basket makers from Stó:lo communities who contributed to my research were: Rosaleen George of Skwah, Elizabeth Herrling of Seabird Island and her granddaughter Frieda George of the Squiala, Joan Chapman of Chehalis, Rena Point Bolton and her daughter Wendy Ritchie of Skowkale, and Nlaka'pamux Elder Minnie Peters of the Peters Reserve. I have included Minnie Peters with the Stó:lo basket makers because she has spent all of her married life in a Stó:lo community. In addition, Minnie learned basket making from her grandmother and a great aunt in Spuzzum – a community which sits on the border of Nlaka'pamux and Stó:lo traditional territory.

While I had identified a clear set of research questions, as mentioned previously, interviews were kept informal in nature. My objective was to encourage reminiscence about basketry, rather than following a rigid set of interview questions, so that I could

understand the necessary cultural framework and ask appropriate questions in later interviews.

Figure 2: Stó:lo Basket Makers at the Museum of Anthropology during their first visit on July 4, 2000.



**Front Row, L-R: Verley Ned, Rosaleen George
Second Row, L-R: Elizabeth Herrling, Frieda George
Third Row, L-R: Anita Herle (Curator, Cambridge University Museum), Joan Chapman, Minnie Peters, Sharon Fortney (Graduate Student, Department of Anthropology)
Back: Dr. Elizabeth Johnson (Curator, Museum of Anthropology)**

As my research progressed it became apparent that identifying distinctive traits, which would delineate firm borders in the transmission of knowledge, would require imposing artificial and incorrect typologies. I observed that many designs and techniques

are located throughout the traditional territories of the Stó:lo and beyond in the territories of neighboring Salish groups. This pattern of dispersal mimics the long standing and contemporary marriage practices of the Stó:lo, demonstrating the strengthening of local and regional political connections through high status marriages with neighboring, and sometimes distant, Salish communities (Barnett 1955; Suttles 1987). Young basket makers draw upon the experience of a variety of older family members, and these family members may all live in the same community or they may be scattered in many geographically separate areas.

Rather than imposing a classification scheme on Stó:lo basketry, which would not be true to what I have already learned while working with basket makers and museum collections, my thesis will instead attempt to explore the meanings that these baskets have for the people that create them today. By exploring the Halkomelem terminology that distinguishes techniques and forms I hope to provide the reader with insight into how the Stó:lo identify, or “know”, these objects. Next I will situate coiled basketry within a broader tradition of weaving by discussing how various forms of textile production, including coiled basketry, influence each other, and by exploring the traits that characterise a well made basket or weaving. Finally I will explore several social and political themes surrounding the ownership of the knowledge of basket making and designs conveyed to me by the basket makers themselves. Thus my thesis will draw upon three different ways of knowing or identifying Stó:lo coiled basketry.

The presentation style that I have chosen for my work was inspired by a chapter in Crisca Bierwert’s book *Brushed By Cedar, Living by the River* (1999). In this chapter, called *Figures in the Landscape*, Bierwert presents five ways of knowing a place to

convey to the reader how the Stó:lo perceive the landscape around them as having layers of multiple meanings, each in its own way containing truth and power. I hope to achieve a similar experience for the reader within these pages and hope to convey that a basket can be much more than a utilitarian or aesthetic object, and that there are many ways to “know” a basket.

EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF LANGUAGE: HOW THE HALKOMELEM TERMINOLOGY DEFINES A BASKET

When looking at an object westernised peoples often describe it by labelling or listing its features or by talking about the function that it serves. The importance that we assign to any particular feature, such as colour or size, gives insights into what we, as members of a social group, think is necessary to logical classification. Often we assume that our cultural norms and categories are universals – that they are representative of those used by other cultures who occupy a contemporary time period with us. Similarly we may assume that our standards of logic are the same as those understood by our predecessors, and we may erroneously judge their past behaviours and accomplishments by our contemporary knowledge of the world. We forget that the rationale behind any classification system shapes the knowledge of the people who use it; in other words our classification systems are based upon what we as a society “know” or “recognise” about the world we live in. Since cultures are dynamic and not static entities, these systems of knowledge change and differ accordingly.

In his writings cultural historian Michel Foucault explores changing categories of knowledge which he calls *epistemes*. In the preface of his book, *The Order of Things, An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, he declares:

what I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field, the episteme in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or its objective forms, grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility (1994:xxii).

It is the last portion of this statement which is key to my discussion, the “conditions of possibility” which define any system of knowledge. Since objects are by their very nature

enmeshed with the cultural epistemes which contain them, museum professionals and other social scientists must wrestle with the task of comprehending the worldview of others since much of what they do is centred around representation.

In another work, museum theorist Eilean Hooper-Greenhill embraces Foucault's epistemes in her search for an *effective history* of the museum. She defines an *effective history* as one that:

focuses on those very long-term movements that span the centuries, which are often ignored by normal history which prefers to look at more immediate and short-term activities. Effective history also prioritises the breaks and ruptures which signal abrupt endings and painful new beginnings, violent change and disruption. These too are often not analysed, precisely because links and continuity are sought in order to justify and sustain present day practices (1992:11).

In essence, *effective history* exists in opposition to normative accounts which mask differences and homogenise the past. A parallel can be seen in how objects have been represented in museums. Exhibits often feature specific types of objects arranged in ways that are meaningful to a general audience, allowing them to draw upon their daily experiences to interpret them. Art Historian Michael Baxandall critiques such arrangements stating that "faced by an assemblage of culturally coherent objects, the viewer is less alerted to his own cultural distance; cultural distance is not built into the display (1991:40)."

In the past museums have sought to emphasise similarities by employing typological arrangements that encouraged cultural comparisons (Chapman 1985; Jacknis 1985; Hinsley 1981; Jonaitis 1988). Today in the wake of post-modernism these institutions are now seeking to redefine their role in representation, moving away from the Euro-centric accounts which characterised them in the past towards multi-vocal accounts which reflect diversity. Cultural relativism is once again guiding the politics of

display, yet the slow changing permanent galleries of many museums do not yet reflect the changing approaches of the professionals responsible for their upkeep. Not surprisingly, the institutions which best represent the emic knowledge systems of the ethnographic other are the ones that are run by those people themselves (Conaty and Janes 1997; Clifford 1991).

In a recent paper, Canadian museum professionals Gerry Conaty and Robert Janes noted that:

Native worldview is so fundamentally different from the scientific perspective that the two do not really mesh. Usually, it is the Native knowledge that is relegated to quaint sidebars in an exhibition, while the museum remains the temple of knowledge as defined by the curators... We can see the results of these assumptions in the ways that artifacts are catalogued and cared for, and in the exhibits and public programs of our museums. When artifacts are catalogued they are grouped into Western technological categories (e.g. clothing and adornment; hunting, fishing and warfare; cooking tools). Often these systems work well, providing an accessible guide to collections. Just as often, however, these categories obscure important cultural attitudes... Efforts at the Makah Cultural Center in Ozette, Washington have been directed towards using Makah categories, so that canoes, for example, are grouped with containers, not transportation gear. Alternative, non-western systems of classification do provide insights to the diverse nature of culture (1997:32).

While systems of classification are used to group different types of objects together in a culturally cohesive way, they are also used to identify the various components which comprise the object as a whole. During interviews with Stó:lo Elders Elizabeth Herrling and Rosaleen George I sought to explore how the Halkomelem terminology employed to describe coiled baskets identified the emic classifications of these Stó:lo weavers. Since I do not have a background in linguistics Verley Ned, a textbook writer for Stó:lo Shxweli, kindly assisted me by transcribing the Halkomelem words.

All of the Stó:lo basket makers that I spoke with differentiated between the two types of coiled cedar root baskets – those made with cedar slats as the foundation and the finer work or **ts'a:th'** made with cedar roots. This is also a linguistic distinction for the

Stó:lo. The following excerpt from an interview with Elizabeth and Rosaleen demonstrates this distinction:

- Sharon: ... Was there a difference in the way you would say a name, like a bark basket versus a coiled basket? Were they called differently?
- Elizabeth: Yeah that's **ts'o'qw** isn't it. **Ts'o'qw**, and the other?
- Rosaleen: Ah ah, **ts'o'qw**.
- Sharon: Which is which?
- Elizabeth: That's the fine. The one that you call the coil basket?
- Sharon: Yeah.
- Elizabeth: The real fine work?
- Sharon: Yeah.
- Elizabeth: That's the only real difference, and then the ones that you make with the... make with the...
- Sharon: Bark?
- Elizabeth: Not the bark, the... [faint word] that's made with the cedar sticks like. They're wide.
- Sharon: Oh like the cedar slats baskets? But they're still kind of coiled?
- Elizabeth: Yeah. Yeah, but you wrap it with the roots like that. (2000c)

The coiled cedar root baskets made with cedar slats had two distinct names to describe them as the following excerpt from the same interview demonstrates:

- Sharon: What did you say the name of the one made out of sticks was?
- Elizabeth: That's the cedar... cedar uh... root basket I think they call it.
- Sharon: But there was no Halkomelem term or...?
- Elizabeth: It had two different names for that didn't it? **Susékw'** and **ts'emetel**.
- Rosaleen: Ah ah. **Ts'emetel** is the cedar sticks.
- Elizabeth: Yeah cedar sticks.
- Sharon: Okay.
- Elizabeth: And then the **susékw'** was the same. (2000c)

As these excerpts demonstrate coiled baskets are distinguished based upon the construction materials involved. The characteristics of size and shape are not mentioned as important for identification. While both the “slat” and the “coiled root” baskets involve the basket maker sewing coils of cedar roots with an awl, Stó:lo basket makers perceive a difference based upon what goes into the foundation of the coils and this is reflected in how they talk about and name these baskets.

When looking at a diagram depicting a group of different shapes and sizes of storage baskets (see Figure 26, Haeberlin et al. 1928:197), Elizabeth identified them all as being the types of baskets that were **ts’o’qw** or **susékw’** and **ts’emetel**. The main perceived difference between these types of baskets was technical in that Elizabeth noted that with the latter method “you can make it square.” Unfortunately I did not discover why there are two terms for the cedar slat baskets.

Questioning also revealed that Elders Elizabeth and Rosaleen do not immediately consider function when determining how to name or classify a basket, as the following excerpt demonstrates:

- Sharon: So all the shapes of baskets just went by the type of basket they were? [We are still discussing the differences between **ts’o’qw** or **susékw’** and **ts’emetel**]
- Elizabeth: Yeah.
- Sharon: It didn’t matter what size or...?
- Elizabeth: No.
- Sharon: No, no distinction?
- Elizabeth: No. No, you could just make them for putting whatever little...
- Rosaleen: Trinkets in.
- Elizabeth: Trinkets or whatever you have. And if you making a larger one, you use it for a sewing basket and you put your sewing or whatever in it and...[Laughs].

- Sharon: So... if something was a berry basket it wouldn't have a different name? Like berry basket?
- Elizabeth: The berry baskets, I don't know what they called them. [Pause] Just berry...berry basket, **slhi:m**.
- Rosaleen: That's all Granny used to say, **sitel slhi:m**. (2000c)

Although Elizabeth and Rosaleen did not stress size and function as being important when naming objects during this interview, existing Halkomelem terminology does make such distinctions. For example, in previous interview sessions conducted by staff at Stó:lo Shxweli they have recalled the terms: **si':stel** – little basket; **selistel** – little baskets; **kw'alhém** – little berry baskets; **shxwq`ó:m** – water basket; and **sí:tel** - basket.

When looking at these isolated terms it appears that functions related to subsistence activities may be important to indigenous classification. However, interviews also suggest that specific construction techniques are required to produce baskets for these specialised functions. For example, Stó:lo berry baskets are typically trapezoid shaped with narrow bottoms and wide tops. The following excerpt from an interview with Stó:lo weaver Wendy Ritchie at the Museum of Anthropology explains how the shape of a basket determines its function.

So they're tiered out like that, so that the ones on the bottom don't have all the pressure of the top berries squishing them... So when they pick berries, the layers of berries, and they put in a layer and they put in some leaves, and they put in a layer and they put in some leaves, so the juice doesn't drain down... So the weight is alleviated by the angle of the basket. So your bottom berries don't get mushed. (2000b)

It is “the angle of the basket” which identifies the function of the basket, since subsequent discussion revealed that not all trapezoid-shaped baskets are berry baskets. This shape of basket may also be used for storage, work, or transporting food and medicines.

I gained insights into this relationship during the same visit when I showed Wendy a photograph of her great aunt, Mrs. August Jim, carrying what appeared to me to

be a berry basket in the book *The Chilliwack and Their Neighbours* (see Wells 1987:101). After looking at the photograph Wendy corrected my identification stating: “I wouldn’t think that this was a berry basket... because it isn’t angled like that, how a berry basket is angled (2000b).” This statement suggests that Sto:lo basket makers have a mental template of the appropriate form a basket should take for specific functions. While the differences are subtle and may not be immediately apparent, to basket makers like Wendy they are obvious and natural.

I gained further insights into emic classifications during an interview with Stó:lo Elders Elizabeth Herrling and Rosaleen George when I asked if there was an all encompassing term used for containers. In a very detailed response Elizabeth explained to me how each type of container has its own name, and that a basket with a specific name is made in a specific way. For example, a **shxwq`ó:m** or water basket is made with the cedar roots – it is a **ts’o’qw**. Secondly it is treated with a caulking agent to further improve its water retention as the following excerpt demonstrates:

- Sharon: Is there a word for containers, that encompasses everything like wooden bowls and baskets, or do they go by their own names?
- Elizabeth: We have different names for them, all of them, but I don’t know I’ve never heard it anyway. [Laughs].
- Sharon: Yeah. [Pause] So there wasn’t a generalized word?
- Elizabeth: Because my grandmother used to make that fine work, fine cedar root basket?
- Sharon: Yeah.
- Elizabeth: And she used to use uh...uh...honey. Collect the combs, the wax, and she used to dip her roots in it.
- Sharon: Really? Wow.
- Elizabeth: And then when it... when it gets wet after you put water in it, it’ll hold water...

...There used to be lots of that a long time ago. They used to go out, go out and rob the poor bees in the wintertime. Go out and look for an old tree or something, and then they'd fall it, and then they get the...get the honey out of it. (2000c)

Once again the name of the basket, **shxwq`ó:m**, suggests a distinctive function, and interviews suggest that special treatment is employed in construction.

Yet interestingly, while a distinction is made between the different construction methods used for coiled cedar root baskets, decorative methods do not seem to be distinguished. The decorative method of imbrication was the only one with a Salish language equivalent. However, it was suggested that the term for imbrication, **banneq'**, was not Halkomelem but rather a Stl'atl'imx one and that it had been borrowed from the Douglas people who "use that design lots (2000c)."

Elizabeth and Rosaleen were also unable to report any Halkomelem equivalents for other decorative techniques, such as beading or the finishing touches like braiding and loopwork. Since coiled basketry may have been learned by the Stó:lo from their neighbours, the Stl'atl'imx and Nlaka'pamux, this might explain the absence of such terms. The following excerpt supports this possibility.

Sharon: So does the design have any other name besides **banneq'**? Was that the technique or was it also used to refer to the design?

Rosaleen: The ordinary way to say designs is **sxéles**, isn't it ?

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Rosaleen: That other thing that I said it must come from Mount Currie, because that's where my grandmother come from. (2000c)

The reported absence of terminology to describe decorative elements suggests that they are less important to Stó:lo emic classifications, perhaps because they do not affect overall construction or function in any way. Even when decorative elements are

modified, for example when the bitter cherry bark used in imbrication is dyed from red to black, it is still referred to by the same name **stelém**.

However, each of the materials used in the construction of a basket and its designs is differentiated by name. For example, cedar roots are known by a specific term, **kwemlexw**, which refers only to them and is not used generically for any type of roots. Similarly this term is quite distinct from the one used to refer to cedar wood – **xepay**. Likewise, canary grass – the variety of grass that is most often used for its white colour when decorating baskets in the Stó:lo area is identified by a specific term: **ts'áxi**.

Further support for my suggestion that the method of construction is key to emic classification can be found in the variation of names for basket components which can be manufactured separately from the body of the basket. Basket bottoms, for example, are often made by beginners, or by older basket makers who have lost their sight or agility, and may employ a different technique from the body. In the Stó:lo area it is not uncommon to see baskets with slat constructed bottoms and walls made with bundles of roots. I have seen several baskets made by renowned Stó:lo basket maker Rena Point Bolton that have bottoms which were made for her by her late Aunt – Elsie Charlie of Yale; while Stó:lo Elder Rosaleen George recalls that she and her sister began learning by making the bottoms for their grandmother's baskets. In addition, the Halkomelem language makes a distinction between weaving a basket – **th`eqwowelh**, and making its bottom **skwélech**.

Basket lids and handles also have various names, yet the body of the basket is not differentiated or named beyond being of the cedar slat or root type, as the following excerpt demonstrates.

Sharon: Is there like words for the base versus the body?

Elizabeth: Making the...making the bottom is called **skwélech**. The bottom part of the basket. [Laughs]. I don't know. I never learned the name for after you build it up. [Laughs].

Sharon: Then it's just a basket?

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Sharon: Do the lids have a name?

Rosaleen: Yeah.

Elizabeth: Lot's of them, have all different kind of names. [Pause].

Sharon: What about handles?

Elizabeth: The handles are the... What is it? [Laughs].
[Conversation become inaudible, some laughing].

Elizabeth: They called them...[Pause]. I can't think of it. [Pause].

Sharon: Want to try that one again later?

Elizabeth: Yeah. (2000c)

The types of names that Elizabeth and Rosaleen later remembered for lids included **p`áqetel**, for a flat lid and meaning "on top" according to Verley Ned, and **skwówepelh** for a lid that has a domed appearance. While handles are called **sokwechel**, buckskin straps are **yém qetel**, and woollen tumplines are **ke silstel**. The common theme that reoccurred during my interview with Rosaleen and Elizabeth was that different construction methods are required to achieve these different end products.

What I believe this discussion of the Halkomelem terminology used by the Stó:lo to describe coiled baskets has suggested is that the methods of construction determine the ways in which a basket will be named or classified. While my research demonstrated that some names reflect function, this was not consistently the case. However, specialised terminology was repeatedly used to describe components which can be manufactured

using different methods, with different materials, or in separate stages, supporting my previous assertion that these construction methods are the key to understanding how the Stó:lo classify their baskets. The apparent absence of Halkomelem terminology to describe decorative elements, such as imbrication or beading – done in conjunction with the coiling and without affecting the types of materials employed, supports this assumption.

While my previous discussion has focused on a narrow area of classification, and therefore cannot reflect all of the complexities of the Halkomelem language, it does suggest that naming a basket type is the same as naming its construction methods. It could be argued that what I am describing here is in fact the technical terminology of weaving “specialists” rather than the commonplace terminology that would be found in the vocabulary of every Halkomelem speaking person. While this may conceivably be true today, it should be remembered that these Elders with whom I spoke situate their experiences in a time when basket making and the Halkomelem language were much more a part of everyday life than they are today.

As I mentioned previously, during the early portion of the twentieth century basket makers were numerous and baskets were significant components in economic exchanges of the Stó:lo and other Northwest Coast peoples (Laforet and York 1998; Knight 1978). It was commonplace for Stó:lo women to trade baskets for clothing, groceries and other household goods with European settlers and at trading posts. While today fewer women are engaged in basket making as a subsistence activity, or even as a pastime, there are also fewer people who are fluent in their native languages due to the past assimilation efforts of our colonial government. While my investigation into this

topic is only cursory, I think that it has produced several insights worth further consideration. However, taking this investigation further would require the attention of someone with a linguistics background. I would like to take my own investigation further by turning to explore another way the Stó:lo know coiled basketry by situating it within a broader complex of Coast Salish weaving.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE: PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN AND THE AESTHETICS OF STÓ:LO COILED BASKETRY

Because coiled baskets are sewn together rather than woven, many scholars (see Schlick 1994:101; Bernick 2000:5) would not consider coiled basketry to be a form of weaving. Despite this technical distinction, it is my belief that coiled basketry should not be isolated from the other textile production methods used by the Stó:lo and other neighbouring Salish peoples. It has been my experience that some of the baskets made by Stó:lo basket makers incorporate design elements and concepts which are used in other favourite textile arts such as weaving and knitting.

I situate the recently introduced method of knitting (and also crocheting) as part of this larger Coast Salish weaving complex because I view culture as a dynamic entity, and as such, subject to change and outside influences. I am influenced in my thinking by the writings of anthropologist Homer Barnett. In his book, *Innovation: The Basis of Culture Change*, Barnett proposes an explanatory model which treats the phenomenon of culture change as a psychological process. He suggests that innovation does not occur by spontaneous invention, but in fact centres upon reorganisation – the substitution of perceived equivalents. This model also explains why some technologies and concepts are quickly transmitted between cultures while others are not. Barnett notes that:

If no meaning of any kind can be assigned to [an innovation], it has no chance of surviving in and of itself. This explains [for example] why many Christian concepts fail to pass over ethnic boundaries. Even [why] an allegedly Christian cult like Shakerism lacks prominent elements of Christian creed and practice (1953:336).

Furthermore, he suggests that the process of innovation cannot occur in a vacuum. It must instead rely upon the cultural inventory of the inventor, or instigator, and that person's experience with the natural components of his or her environment. Reorganisation fuels

innovation, yet group acceptance via transmission is necessary. When a cultural group adopts an outside technology, it is because that technology has meaning for them as a group and thus is complementary to their view of the world. Thus I am suggesting here that the Stó:lo adopted new textile forms such as knitting and crocheting in the late nineteenth century because they viewed them as being related to traditional weaving forms.

Prior to contact the Salish practised several textile arts. In recent years one form has received much attention – Salish loom weaving. In the past Salish loom weavings were done with mountain goat wool and an assortment of natural fibres including stinging nettle and Indian hemp; today sheep's wool and other commercially available products are most commonly used (Gustafson 1980). Three weaving methods are used in conjunction with the Salish loom – plain weave, twining and twill weave – all done with the fingers on a two bar loom (see Johnson and Bernick 1986). In the past weavers made blankets and other garments for ceremonial use, and clothing and tumplines for daily use. Today all of these items continue to be made, but some weavers also make wall hangings for commercial sales as well.

In the past, Salish weavers also constructed mats of cat-tail rushes for furnishing their homes (Barnett 1955; Gustafson 1980). Like the coiled baskets these mats are also sewn together. Although cat-tail mats are rarely made today, a variety of basket making methods continue to flourish. Cedar bark twining is especially popular, and this method is often taught to young children using construction paper – a material that is more forgiving if a mistake is made. Knitting and crocheting, which were first introduced by

missionaries through residential schools in the late nineteenth century (Meikle 1987), also continue to be popular among the Stó:lo.

Loom weaving is often set apart from the other fibre arts, such as basketry, because of its association with ceremonial contexts and the symbolic value placed upon mountain goat wool. Yet it should be remembered that the cedar tree and its products are also associated with ceremonial and ritual use. Cedar is an agent of purification, and although it is not discussed in much detail in the ethnographic literature, baskets are also sometimes used within ceremonial contexts (Barnett 1955; Suttles 1987; Peters 2000a). Furthermore, cedar bark is woven into blankets, clothing and tumplines as well as baskets. I suggest that it is worth considering that the division between Salish loom weaving and other Salish textile arts is one which is guided by western classification systems which separate religious from secular activities. I suggest to the reader that such a distinction is not a naturally occurring one and may not be an appropriate one for discussions of Salish weaving.

Typically, western scholars discuss the many textile arts of the Stó:lo and their Salish neighbours as separate entities. However, conversations with Stó:lo basket makers, and other indigenous weavers, suggests that such divisions are not applicable within their knowledge frameworks. Basket making is often one skill in a repertoire of many for the Stó:lo women I met and interviewed (see Table 1).

In fact, several of these basket makers participated in the “revival” of Salish loom weaving documented by Oliver Wells in Sardis during the 1960s. While it remains unclear as to whether the Stó:lo and other Salish weavers actually ceased weaving wool blankets within ceremonial contexts prior to this “revival”, it is clear that Oliver Wells

facilitated the formation of the Salish Weavers Guild and brought widespread recognition to their commercial weaving industry (Johnson 2001). Wells, himself, was well known to these women. He habitually brought old baskets to Elizabeth Herrling of Seabird Island for repair, calling her home “the basket hospital.”

TABLE 1: ADDITIONAL SKILLS PRACTISED BY THE STÓ:LO WOMEN INTERVIEWED

NAME OF BASKET MAKER	COMMUNITY OF RESIDENCE	ADDITIONAL WEAVING SKILLS
Joan Chapman	Chehalis / Harrison Lake	None
Minnie Peters	Peters Reserve / Hope	Weaving (wool), knitting, several other styles of basket making,
Elizabeth Herrling	Seabird Island / Agassiz	Weaving (wool), crocheting
Frieda George	Squiala / Chilliwack	Weaving (wool), beading
Rosaleen George	Skwah / Chilliwack	Knitting, crocheting
Rena Point Bolton	Skowkale / Sardis	Weaving (wool and cedar bark), knitting
Wendy Ritchie	Skowkale / Sardis	Weaving (wool and cedar bark)

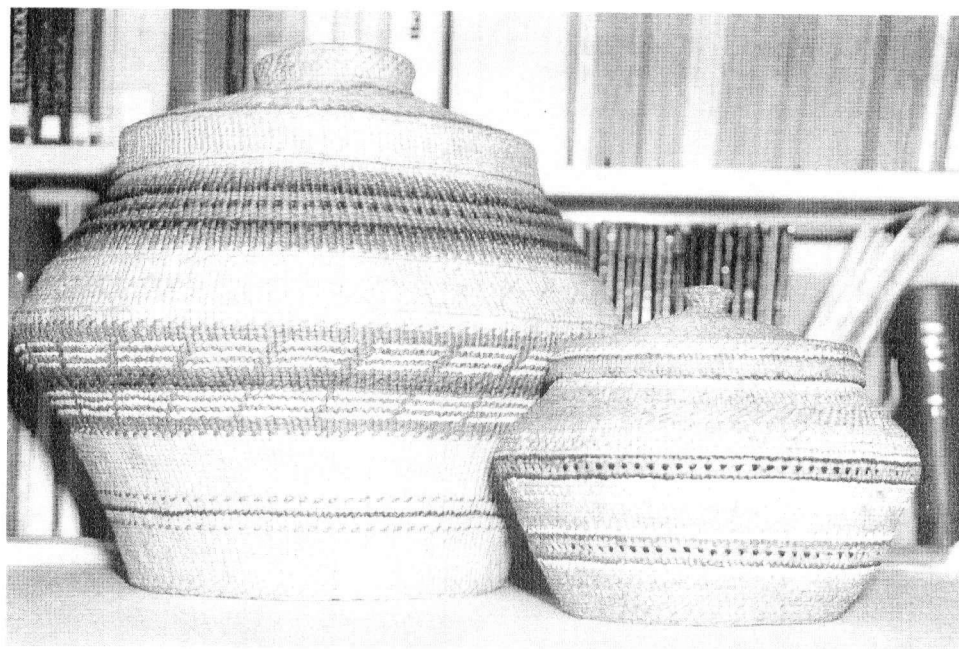
Table 1 shows that five of the basket makers I spoke with also weave with wool on a Salish loom. Three of these five women suggested that basket designs could also be used on other types of textiles. Stó:lo weaver, Rena Point Bolton, reported using the same designs on her weavings as she does on her baskets and in her knitting. She notes that:

I use the arrowhead a lot. I used to use it on my Indian Sweaters. It was sort of my signature... I'd start at the bottom of the sweater with the arrowhead, then I'd finish up here [at the collar] with them and on the cuffs. So everybody knew then that they had been mine, but I did it in such a way that it was different from the others. So every weaver like has their own insignia like, even on the Chilkat blankets they finish them so that people know who made them. They do a little bunch of ties on one corner – like on the bottom somewhere. Then you know who did them. It's like a signature. So I used to do that with my sweaters. I used the arrowhead. (2000)

Rena, who is married to a Tsimshian man – Clifford Bolton, likewise places Salish sweater designs on her Tsimshian style basketry to pay homage to her Coast Salish roots, as well as another Salish design that she calls “bird tracks” (See Figure 3). Rena's daughter, Wendy Ritchie, also notes that the designs used on both wool weavings and

coiled baskets are “pretty much the same.” Similarly Minnie Peters, an Elder from the Peters Reserve near Hope, identifies the flying goose design as another one which is extremely popular amongst the Stó:lo and commonly found on a variety of objects. The flying goose design, which is composed of chevron shaped elements resembling birds in flight, appears frequently on baskets and woven objects such tumplines in the collections of the Museum of Anthropology.

Figure 3: Tsimshian Style Baskets with Salish Design Elements. Made by Rena Point Bolton

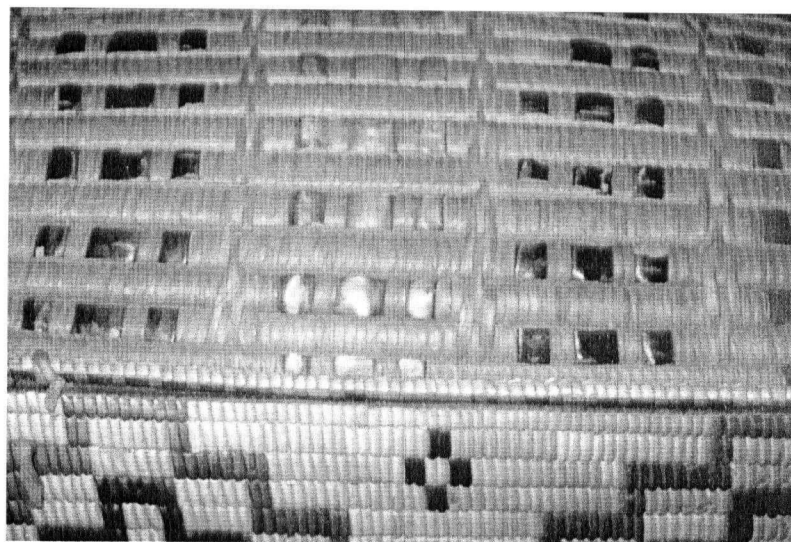


The design featured on the top portion of the larger basket is one used by Rena Point Bolton on Indian Sweaters. The small parallel rows of white designs in the center of the smaller basket are known as bird tracks. (Collection of Rena Point Bolton)

The other two loom weavers, Elizabeth Herrling and her granddaughter Frieda George, reported that they do not use the same designs for their baskets and weavings. In the instance of those that do use designs on several types of textiles, the women had strong family connections to the Nlaka’pamux. However, since marriage between neighboring

groups is not uncommon amongst the Stó:lo, the preference may be a personal or family one. Certainly, my research indicates that each family follows its own set of protocols for preparing materials and constructing baskets.

Figure 4: Stó:lo Coiled Cedar Root Basket from Burnaby Lake area.



Basket Lid incorporating a weaving technique designed to change the pattern in Swoqw'élh blankets.
Museum of Anthropology catalogue number: A4308.

Further evidence to suggest that coiled basketry should be included within a broader Coast Salish weaving complex came during a visit of Stó:lo weaver Wendy Ritchie to the Museum of Anthropology. Wendy identified two baskets which exhibited a technique employed by Stó:lo weavers when making **swoqw'élh** blankets during the visit. **Swoqw'élh** blankets are mountain goat wool blankets, which are worn by high ranking individuals, and distinguished by the fringes that decorate their edges. Wendy suggested that when weavers wish to create a change in the pattern in one of these blankets they may pass over two (or more) warp threads instead of one to signify the change, as well as to create a physical separation in the design field. This technique was

also employed by the Stó:lo basket makers who made the two baskets depicted in Figures 4 and 5.

In the case of one of these baskets, a change is demonstrated as the cherry bark elements decorating the surface of the lid shift from the black dyed bark to the natural red colored bark as Wendy notes in the following excerpt:

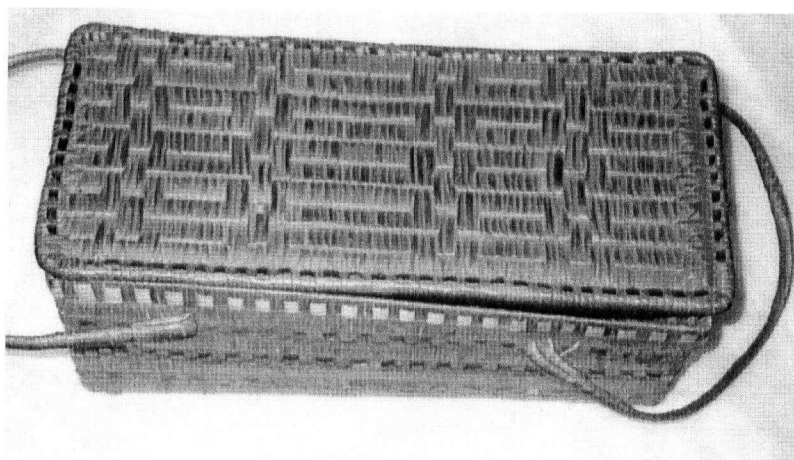
Wendy: It's called changing the pattern.

Sharon: Is it?

Wendy: Yeah that's what we use as dividers. So the pattern is going to change, because they're going to change from black bark to red bark. Black bark to red bark. We do the same thing on...the **swoqw'élh** blankets when we're going to change the pattern we do two.

On the lid of the second basket, rather than signifying a change in the pattern this technique forms the pattern. Wendy comments: "See that's what I mean, you can either put a pattern in the weaving itself or with the colours. And they do that with the **swoqw'élh** blankets too."

Figure 5: Stó:lo Coiled Cedar Root Basket from Tzeachton.



The basket maker who made this basket lid employed a weaving technique for changing the pattern in Swoqw'élh blankets to form a pattern.
Museum of Anthropology catalogue number: A1839.

Coiled baskets and twined weavings are technically dissimilar – in twining the weaver twists the fibres by hand whereas the coiled basket maker sews the coils using an awl – but the end result is visually similar. I suggest that Stó:lo weavers form a mental template which draws upon their expertise, and aesthetic preferences with other forms of Salish weaving, and that this influences the final product.

Another characteristic that coiled baskets share with other forms of Salish weaving, including the knitted Indian sweaters, is a sense of balance and symmetry. While basket making can be a spontaneous and fluid event, it also one in which the basket maker usually knows what the end product will be before she (or he) has even begun. My work suggests that Stó:lo basket makers work from a mental template which is regulated by a cultural sense of aesthetics, further defined by family traditions, and then influenced by personal preference. Similar reports have been made about Pomo basket makers from California and other “Indian” artists (Sarris 1993; Boas 1955).

Although the final form of a basket is to some degree controlled by the materials used, and the aforementioned cultural values pertaining to aesthetics, the basket maker must also be able to improvise to achieve the desired effect. Stó:lo weaver Rena Point Bolton notes:

I just go by how I feel. I imagine the basket that I'm going to make and I make the bottom and then from there I decide what is it... If it's a round basket it's a little easier, but if it's a square basket or an oval basket then you have to figure out. I have to put two designs on the sides, one on each end, so you're always mentally conjuring up what its going to look like and then if the design that you started out with doesn't quite fit then you have to fill in with something else. If there's too much of a gap there, if it doesn't balance or something, then you have to... There's a word I can't think of it. You have to fill in anyway so that the basket looks balanced. You don't want to clutter it up much, but you don't want it to be too empty either. Everything must balance. This is the nature of Salish weaving, everything has to balance even the rugs, the sweaters, everything. If you were taught properly designs must always balance, and they must mirror each other no matter which way. So you have to be creative. You have to be able to improvise. (2000)

Rena further suggests that this ability to “improvise” is especially important when working with the wider slat baskets since the basket maker is required to build up the design using fewer rows of coils. She notes that Stó:lo basket makers often compensate by using several strips of bark or grass within one row to achieve the same complexity of design when decorating their cedar slat baskets. Thus the basket maker must know ahead of time what the final product will be, and what type of space requirements are demanded to achieve it, but must be able to compensate if they have judged incorrectly. For example, an empty space will be corrected by the addition of balanced sets of smaller design elements or fillers. Similarly, a design that is too large or too small for a basket will be modified to fit the available space.

Balance and symmetry of designs are important attributes, but Stó:lo basket makers also judge the skill of a basket maker by the regularity of the coils and the appearance of the roots and decorative elements used in construction. Franz Boas discusses the former of these attributes in the opening pages of “*Primitive Art* (1955).”

He states that:

In the household of the natives we do not find slovenly work, except when a rapid makeshift has to be made. Patience and careful execution characterise most of their products. Direct questioning of natives and their own criticism of their own work shows also their appreciation of technical perfection. Virtuosity, complete control of technical processes, however, means an automatic regularity of movement. The basketmaker who manufactures a coiled basket, handles the fibers composing the coil in such a way that the greatest evenness of coil diameter results. (1955:19-20)

Boas further suggests that this practised skill produces aesthetic pleasure in the basket maker, and viewer, and thus becomes the foundation of “art”. His observations on the attributes of native basketry remain valid for contemporary discussions on this topic.

During visits to the Museum of Anthropology in July 2000 Stó:lo basket makers

repeatedly identified baskets with uneven and irregular shaped coils as being typical of the work of beginners.

A second attribute that determined the quality of the work was the roots that went into construction. An experienced basket maker knows that wood shrinks and so she dries her roots for six months, or even a year, to allow for maximum shrinkage before making a basket. The amount of time that roots are set aside to dry varies depending on the basket maker, since each family has its own ways of doing things and some individuals exercise personal preference as they become more experienced.

However, if the roots used for constructing a basket have not dried for a sufficient length of time, gaps will appear in the basket as it ages and the materials within the coils will become visible. Similarly, if a basket maker has not taken care in preparing the materials used for imbricating the surface, and they are uneven in thickness, they will split and break. This is often seen when looking at baskets with improperly prepared **ts'áxi** or canary grass – the material that is most commonly used for white design elements in the Stó:lo area. Similarly, if the **stelém** or bitter cherry bark that is used for the red and black design elements is not scraped properly the bark will be uneven in colour and a grayish sheen will mar its surface. The surface will remain mottled with darker and lighter areas even if the bark has been dyed black.

Although what I am describing sounds very obvious, it takes an experienced basket maker to notice all of these fine details and attributes (or as Wendy Ritchie says “basket making eyes”). To the inexperienced eye such things might be attributed to age or damage incurred during the life of the object. This attention to detail, which is characteristic of the work of Salish basket makers in general, has long been a source of

wonder to researchers. For example, in *Coiled Basketry in British Columbia and Surrounding Region*, ethnographers Haeberlin and Teit suggest that:

It would not be surprising if something were temporarily overlooked and mistakes occurred which were observed only when it was too late to remedy them. In fact, it is amazing that the general character of the whole product is so perfect, the stitches so even, the coils so uniform, the colors so well blended, and the designs so well adapted and spaced (1928:258).

Thus Salish coiled baskets are distinctive not only for the care that is taken in executing the designs, but also for preparation of materials.

Experienced basket makers can also identify the materials used for the decorative elements on the baskets of others. For example, Stó:lo weaver Wendy Ritchie reported that red cherry bark is differentiated from red cedar by the niches that mar the surface of the cherry bark. Anna Billy, a Mount Currie basket maker with family connections to the Stó:lo community of Cheam, noted that canary grass can be differentiated from cat-tail grass since canary grass is shiny and cat-tail isn't; and Stó:lo Elder Rosaleen George differentiated between yellow and white canary grass stating that "to keep it white it has to be dried in the shade, and [that] keeps it white and shiny (2000b)."

Previously I suggested that coiled basketry forms part of a larger Coast Salish weaving complex. In my discussion on this topic I have drawn examples from the testimony of Stó:lo Elders and other basket makers to help support this claim. The use of designs on different types of woven objects and the transfer of weaving concepts from the loom to the realm of basketry, or possibly vice versa, are tangible representations which support the existence of this broader weaving complex. During my previous discussion of Halkomelem terminology I demonstrated that how an object is made determines how it will be named, in this section I attempted to demonstrate that these diverse methods each contribute to how the weaver defines and realises her textile work as a whole. In a

previous quote about basket making, Rena Point Bolton stated that: "This is the nature of Salish weaving, everything has to balance even the rugs, the sweaters, everything."

Indicating that basketry, loom weaving and knitting are all related textile forms in her mind. Drawing upon the previously cited work of Homer Barnett I suggest that to the Stó:lo these diverse textile forms are perceived as equivalents.

Clearly it would be artificial to consider the many forms of basketry and textile production employed by the Stó:lo as completely separate entities, since conceivably the knowledge of both influence the basket maker or weaver and contribute to the formation of a mental template which regulates form. Personal choice plays a large role in determining how an object will be made and what materials will be incorporated, but the basket maker situates this knowledge within a broader cultural tradition and for the Stó:lo this tradition esteems balance and symmetry. There is, however, another framework embedded within this broader weaving complex and it is based upon kinship. Basket makers and weavers share a culturally defined aesthetic that regulates form, and they are further guided by the expertise of older family members from whom they learned their skills. Just as each family has its own history, each family has its own ways of doing things and all of these ways are correct; none can be said to take precedence over another. It must be remembered when talking with basket makers, and while looking at their work, that there is no absolute or right method for doing things, but many ways that are each equally right for the people concerned.

Thus Stó:lo basket makers situate their work within the aesthetic of a broader cultural community, and follow the traditions conveyed to them by family Elders, yet still manage to improvise and explore their individual innovations. Experienced weavers, such

as Rena Point Bolton, create and share new designs. Museum collections demonstrate how earlier basket makers have experimented with new dyeing methods (since the 1950s), and adopted new shapes since the beginning of the twentieth century – shopping baskets, teacups, tables, and cake stands, just to name a few.

Stó:lo basketry is dynamic and contemporary – reflecting the changing experiences of basket makers and their families in the twentieth century, yet it also remains a means of connecting the past with the present. Scholars such as Elizabeth Johnson and Kathryn Bernick (1986), Paula Gustafson (1980), and Oliver Wells (1969) have done much in recent years to document the contemporary development of Salish weaving, yet in the literature coiled basketry has remained situated in the past. By documenting contemporary basket makers and by situating Stó:lo basketry, and other textile forms, within the broader tradition of Coast Salish weaving we can better appreciate the dynamic cultural context of baskets as well.

FAMILY TRADITIONS: OWNERSHIP OF DESIGNS AND TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

In this final portion of my paper I would like to discuss evidence that ownership of designs was recognized within Stó:lo communities in the past and that the transmission of technical knowledge was, and continues to be, controlled. Ownership of designs within Stó:lo communities has been discussed previously by H.K. Haeberlin, James A. Teit and Helen H. Roberts in the monumental work "*Coiled Basketry in British Columbia and Surrounding Region*" (1928). Unlike the majority of this work, which focuses on the technical rather than cultural aspects of basket making, the discussion concerning how a basket maker selects a design raises more questions than it answers.

Haeberlin and Teit do not discuss Stó:lo basketry in great detail, although references are made to the Stó:lo and their work throughout the text. For example, in the introduction a recent origin for coiled basketry in Stó:lo territory is suggested. It is noted that:

The theory that the Stalo acquired their knowledge from the Lower Thompson seems to be confirmed by a study of their designs, which are not only the same but are arranged in a similar manner. Where interpretations of designs are available, they prove to be practically identical with those of the Uta'mqt (Lower Thompson)...Thompson influence in basketry prevails as far down the Fraser River as Agassiz and Chilliwack. At Harrison [Hot Springs] and below, Lillooet influence predominates. Formerly little basket work was attempted near Chilliwack, but intermarriage and increased acquaintance with the Lower Thompson tribes have given impetus to the art (1928:133-134).

Sadly Haeberlin and Teit fail to explore the most obvious reason for the similarity in execution and interpretation of designs – ownership of designs based on kinship. They mention intermarriage between these neighboring peoples almost as a footnote and do not give it the consideration it deserves.

Elaborating on the information amassed by Haeberlin and Teit I suggest that the transmission of knowledge was, and continues to be, regulated by kinship, and that this explains why Haeberlin and Teit encountered the same designs amongst the Stó:lo and their Nlaka'pamux neighbors. In contemporary contexts, coiled basketry remains a form of knowledge that is contained within families. Despite the fact that some of the basket makers I spoke with said that they would teach this skill to other community members who expressed an interest, in reality none of them had taught anyone who was not related to them through blood or marriage. Former students were always identified as daughters, sons, granddaughters or daughters-in law (See Table 2 below).

TABLE 2: RELATIONSHIPS OF CONTEMPORARY STÓ:LO BASKET MAKERS TO THEIR STUDENTS.

NAME OF BASKET MAKER	COMMUNITY OF AFFILIATION	RELATIONSHIP TO TEACHER	RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT(S)
Joan Chapman	Chehalis	Daughter	Mother; Mother-in-law
Francis Chapman	Chehalis (Nlaka'pamux)	Son	Father
Bruce Chapman	Chehalis	Son	N/A
Minnie Peters	Peters Reserve (Nlaka'pamux)	Daughter; Niece; Granddaughter;	Grandmother
Rena Point Bolton	Skowkale	Granddaughter; Niece	Mother
Wendy Ritchie	Skowkale	Daughter	N/A
Elizabeth Herrling	Seabird Island	Daughter; Granddaughter	Grandmother
Frieda George	Squiala	Granddaughter	Aunt; Sister
Rosaleen George	Skwah	Granddaughter; Niece	Mother

NOTE: All of these basket makers continue to live in their communities of birth except Nlaka'pamux basket maker Minnie Peters and her deceased brother Francis Chapman, Rena Point Bolton and Rosaleen George. Rosaleen was originally from Chehalis, while Rena Point Bolton now lives in Terrace, BC.

Students were both male and female, although basket makers generally tend to be women. However, Rena Point Bolton notes that this style of basket making is physically demanding and well suited to men. She states that:

You have to have a certain pull and that pulls up here [in the upper arm-shoulder region] and a lot of women don't like that because then they're aching all the time. But men... I remember one of

my uncles – his name was George Jim, he not only made baskets but he used to knit. He knitted socks, because he couldn't get around too well so rather than just sit around and do nothing – they didn't have television in those days, he'd be making baskets and he'd knit socks. And my brother, who also had an accident when he was young, he had a lot of problems with his legs. He got into basket weaving and he liked it, yeah. So there were many men who did weaving, but most of the men wove fish traps and things of that nature, you know. Outdoor things, while the women wove the little baskets (2000).

Several of Rena's sons have also been introduced to the skill of basket making through a brief course she ran at Skowkale for her children. At Chehalis, Bruce Chapman the son of Joan Chapman, and nephew of Minnie Peters, is learning the skill. Bruce's deceased father, Francis Chapman, was also an active basket maker throughout his retirement years. Francis is reported to have learned without formal instruction, in the old way, by observing his mother Mathilda Chapman as a child. Thus basket makers may be of either gender, but the tradition is transmitted along family lines.

A second point of contention arises from the fact that contemporary basket makers do in fact recognise regional differences in designs. The following excerpt from an interview with Nlaka'pamux Elder Minnie Peters, a basket maker who married into a Stó:lo community near Hope, demonstrates that the Stó:lo and the Nlaka'pamux favor different design elements.

The designs down here [in the Stó:lo area] are the animal patterns. More like the ravens or the eagle, they put them on. And up in the Thompson area we use the diamonds and the Indian trails and all different... for good luck and everything like that. (2000a)

While these differences may be explained in terms of Nlaka'pamux versus Stl'atl'imx influences, proper emphasis should be given to recognising the mechanism that enables the transfer of such knowledge – kinship. These neighboring Interior Salish peoples are a common source of marriage partners for the Stó:lo. Since Salish kinship systems are bilateral, children of both sexes may receive instruction from family members on both the maternal and paternal sides of the family. (See Barnett 1955; Suttles 1987)

Other arguments that can be made regarding ownership of designs stem from a topic discussed earlier in this paper – the esteem placed upon the basket maker’s ability to improvise. Haeberlin and Teit readily accept the basket maker’s ability to create new design elements, yet they suggest that:

During a woman’s lifetime certain designs and variations may perhaps be considered to belong to her in a sense that they are her particular inventions, but knowledge concerning origins is soon lost by the majority, especially after the designs have been copied or changed by others. Only in the minds of a few people like old Kalia, who once lived at Spuzzum, but has been dead for many years, are such historical details cherished and remembered (1928:300-301).

Yet my research, conducted more than 70 years later, indicates that details and protocols concerning ownership are still recognised and although some women may want to use a design that belongs to another woman, they do not do so without receiving her permission first. Despite the fact that all of the Stó:lo basket makers reported that “everyone just uses the same designs,” such statements were often followed with specific examples of how people asked for the use of particular designs. The following excerpt from an interview with Rosaleen George of Skwah is a good example.

Sharon: Were there any special designs that you liked to use or...?

Rosaleen: No she just put any design that came to her I guess. Yeah she would just... There was no such thing as patterns them days now, no...[Laughing].

Elizabeth: Whatever came into your head.

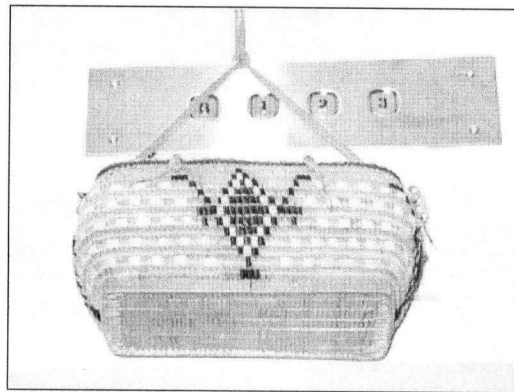
Rosaleen: Yeah.

Sharon: So people didn’t... Did people own designs? Could you borrow if you saw something somebody else made and you liked it, could you use it? Or would you ask them first or...?

Rosaleen: It seemed like they just... Well some they... I remember an old lady, this was *telisa*, she come and asked my grandmother [Saraphine Leon] if she... That was, I don’t know what kind of design that was, but it seemed like... gee I couldn’t even describe that design. But *telisa* made that too with granny. Because granny did everything – crocheting, knitting, basket making and she had a lot of her own designs yeah. (2000c)

Clearly the issue of ownership is a complex one. Joan Chapman, a basket maker from Chehalis, reports that everyone in her community uses the same designs. Her mother, Adele Peters, used butterflies and a design called waves on her work. Joan, herself, uses the wave design frequently on her work because it is one that she received from her mother. However, Joan also has one design which appears to be unique to her (see Figure 6) which is reported to have belonged to Joan's mother originally.

Figure 6: Basket Made by Joan Chapman.



Collection of Stó:lo Nation, Sardis BC.

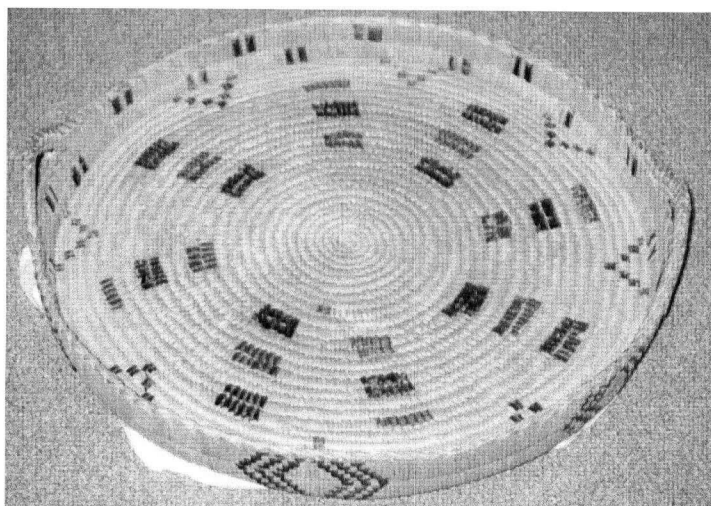
Rena Point Bolton of Skowkale also acknowledges family ownership of designs, but likewise indicates the willingness to share with others. Rena notes that:

I had my mother's design that was like the Star of David. She used that a lot. I don't use that myself, but I've given the kids permission to use it, but my mother used that a lot – the Star of David. And she used other little designs like the fly and the bee. Just like I use the pond skipper. I'll probably pass all the designs I've invented or were given to me. I'll give them to my daughters to use. Or whoever else wants to use them. [It] doesn't matter, there's not too many people out there that want to make baskets. I would just say to them go ahead and use whatever designs that appeals to them. I don't think there's any one person that can just say those are mine and I don't want anyone else to use them. I don't think its that important. (2000)

Rosaleen George also remembers being given a tree design for her baskets by an Aunt at Musqueam. Similarly Elizabeth Herrling recalls being quizzed by another woman when

she finished a basket for “Old Lady Emory” of Yale because it had one of the Emory designs on it.

Figure 7: Tray with design owned by the Emory of Yale.



Museum of Anthropology catalogue number: A8513.

Nlaka'pamux basket makers Minnie Peters and her brother, the late Francis Chapman of Chehalis, inherited diamond shaped designs associated with good luck from their mother Matilda Chapman. Stó:lo Elder Elizabeth Herrling of Seabird Island reports using the same designs as her mother Matilda Thomas – diamonds and stars. Elizabeth is also familiar with the work of several other basket makers and was able to identify several baskets with designs belonging to specific areas or people during a visit to the Museum of Anthropology. For example, Elizabeth identified the tray in Figure 7 as bearing a design only used by the Emory of Yale.

Designs such as the star, diamond and butterfly are common to many families in the Sto:lo area, but the manner in which each of these designs is executed often varies in colour and form. Although each of these Elders initially suggested that ownership is not

important, each of them uses specific designs on their work, and they commonly reported that they acquired their designs through inheritance. Interestingly, all of these basket makers are acquainted with one another and several are related through blood or marriage suggesting that basket making runs in specific families.

In the following excerpt Frieda George, a basket maker and weaver from Squiala, gives insights into how knowledge is still owned and controlled by families.

[It's] the way the Elders are. You just don't teach other people but the family. Because that's... When I wanted to learn how to do the ceremonial blanket and I asked this lady and she refused. And I said, "Okay. I just want to learn about it. I don't want to upset you or anything." And that's when I went to another lady and she's my husband's cousin. So she said, "Okay sure", and so she came over and she taught me, and it took me six hours to do that (2000a).

Today some forms of basket making and weaving are being taught in courses run through band offices, elementary schools, conferences, and interpretive centres such as Xá:ytem and Shxwt'a:selhawtxw, coiled basketry is not one of them. The situation may eventually change, however, as fewer people demonstrate an interest in learning this labor intensive form of basketry. Basket making is widespread amongst the Stó:lo, but coiled basketry is limited to a few individuals per reservation and in some cases only one. Frieda George, for example, is the only person at Squiala with the knowledge to make coiled basketry but she prefers to concentrate her efforts on Salish loom weaving. However, Frieda has recently been hired as a cultural worker for the Seabird Island School and plans to teach coiled basketry to several of her co-workers in the near future (2001).

Haeberlin and Teit also suggested that new designs quickly "become the common property of everyone (301)," and that:

There are a few designs which are inherited, but not as property or because they were invented by ancestors. They are taught to the daughters by the mother or grandmother and thus handed down. In some cases an old design may be retained in one family without really belonging there, having been forgotten by others who once employed it, or having been brought from a distance (1928:301).

Statements such as this one seem contradictory. What is inheritance if it is not knowledge “taught to the daughters by the mothers or grandmothers (301)”? Yet if we look to the responses of contemporary basket makers we see similar discrepancies. What meaning can we infer from these seeming contradictions?

I suggest that we begin by examining the historical context from which Haeberlin and Teit are writing. During the early portion of the twentieth century, when they were conducting their investigations, enormous numbers of indigenous women were engaged in basket making as an economic activity, while previously basket making was not an activity that was practiced by all women (Haeberlin et al. 1928; Bolton 2000; Chapman 2000a; Peters 2000a). At this time indigenous people were also employed as seasonal wage earners (Carlson 1997; Knight 1978). Picking hops was one such activity which brought people from diverse communities together, and undoubtedly exposed indigenous women to designs made by basket makers in distant communities. Sharing and gift giving is a culturally important attribute of the Stó:lo who deplore stinginess (Carlson 1997), and thus would also explain their willingness to share designs and the broad distribution of those designs during the post contact era.

Selection of design elements during this period was most likely also driven by saleability since baskets were a means of acquiring the necessities of daily life such as food and clothing. At the same time indigenous people were under tremendous pressure to conform to new value systems and ways of doing things. It would not be surprising if ownership protocols were relaxed during this period. Clearly knowledge of ownership continues to persist, however, since contemporary basket makers still can discern ownership of certain designs – yet the rules seem to have been greatly relaxed. Today this

might be seen as encouragement for younger community members to pursue and preserve cultural knowledge, but in the past perhaps it enabled women to provide food for their families. Basket making is entwined with individual family histories, and it is an artistic medium which reflects the changing history of the Stó:lo people. For example, new coiled basketry forms, such as tables, fishing creels, and teacups, demonstrate the influence of recently arrived Canadian settlers in the early twentieth century. Similarly, the widespread distribution of basketry designs seems to coincide with the subsequently more frequent contacts with neighboring Salish groups at hop yards and lumber camps.

Thus my research has suggested that there are two categories of designs: those that are commonly used by everyone and special designs which belong to specific individuals or families. Inheritance plays a role in what designs a basket maker will use and many basket makers have designs from each category. Joan Chapman provides a good example of this in that her repertoire includes designs popular in her community, such as waves, but also contains the unique design seen in Figure 6.

In conclusion, it is apparent that designs can be a way of identifying the work of specific individuals and their families. While some designs are commonly used, and have widespread distributions, others share a more personal relationship with their makers. Designs with widespread distribution tell us about the extent of past social networks, while unique designs tell us about contemporary ones.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Basketry expert J. M. Adovasio suggests that “no single basketry attribute is restricted to a single human population, but the basketry of each population is characterised by a constellation of construction and finishing techniques that itself is usually unique (1986:204).” Similarly the basketry of each population must be viewed as unique in terms of the cultural values and norms which are embedded in its framework and construction. In this paper I have presented three distinctive ways of knowing or understanding Stó:lo coiled basketry – identification through language, technique and aesthetic, and the ownership of designs. My objective was to demonstrate that an object can be shrouded in multiple layers of meaning which may not be readily apparent to the ethnographic other or anthropologist.

Museums often store and display cultural objects in a lifeless manner which alienates them from their original meanings, and employ protocols that seem foreign to the people that they are purported to represent. Isolated in protective cases, protected from curious hands, they are elevated to the status of art. Yet for many they are highly personal – tangible links with grandmothers and other esteemed Elders that are tantalizingly close yet still out of reach. It is important to recognise different cultural values and beliefs by developing museum displays where the curator is not an authoritative voice, but it is perhaps more important to promote accessibility. It is time to stop viewing material culture simply as objects. They are alive and they have stories to tell. Museums must stop being a barrier that prevents this.

One way to encourage accessibility is for museum staff to regularly visit local communities instead of waiting for people to approach them. For example, ethnology

staff at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary is allowed to incorporate such visits into their annual work plans. Similarly, the presence of First Nations staff, as well as spaces for prayer and cleansing, at Glenbow have contributed towards making the museum a more approachable and comfortable space. Enabling people to handle cultural objects without white gloves also makes the museum more welcoming. Preservation is important, but such measures can make First Nations visitors apprehensive and uncomfortable.

Museums can also become less sterile and more vibrant by working in collaborative partnerships with the communities whose cultural property they house. For example, I have prepared a graduating exhibit at the Museum of Anthropology called **Sátet te síwes** or “Continuing Traditions” to accompany this thesis. The exhibit is a collaborative effort which features the thoughts of 7 Stó:lo basket makers, 2 Squamish Nation basket makers, 2 Nlaka’pamux basket makers and one Stl’atl’imx basket maker.

I am also represented in this exhibit through the inclusion of a family basket made by my great grandmother Annie Chapman – a Klahoose basket maker from Squirrel Cove, Cortez Island. However, in the accompanying label I chose to reflect upon the words of another basket maker – my grandmother, Maryanne Pollner.

Rather than writing all of the labels myself I wrote a general introduction and used the words of the basket makers themselves, in the form of quotes, to inform the visitor. To show respect to the people that I worked with I attempted to find translators that could put the labels into the appropriate indigenous languages. I became aware of how endangered many of British Columbia’s native languages are through my efforts to find translators. It brought home to me the role that museums can also play in public awareness and promoting native languages through the use of bilingual label text.

By using the voices of First peoples with their native languages in museum exhibits we are able to introduce indigenous perspectives and replace Euro-centric accounts. This also provides a forum for First peoples to talk about contemporary issues and concerns. Thus ethnographic exhibits should be about the contemporary and not the past; permanent galleries must be built to accommodate change.

The **Sátet te síwes** exhibit will be located within the Gathering Strength gallery at the Museum of Anthropology. It will be one module in this larger gallery dedicated to celebrating contemporary Northwest Coast artists and their cultures. The Gathering Strength Gallery, which has been open for one year, is comprised of several modules which stand independent of each other. Each of the modules will periodically change to ensure that the gallery continues to speak about contemporary First Nations people. **Sátet te síwes** will be the first replacement module in this gallery.

With this thesis, and the accompanying exhibit, I hope to have demonstrated that baskets are more than utilitarian objects or pieces of art. Baskets have much to say about the people who make them. Their changing shapes tell us stories about their economic function and the people who were using them, while their designs tell us about their makers and their maker's families. The language used to describe them shows us how they are classified and made. While considering coiled baskets together with other Salish textile arts shows us what makes a good weaving, and how a basket maker draws upon her technical knowledge of other weaving methods when creating a basket. Thus objects can tell us many things about the people who make and use them; we only have to listen.

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APPENDIX 1: Sátet te síwes / Continuing Traditions Exhibit Labels

Qéx te sqwélqwels ye sá:letel

These Baskets Tell Many Stories:

This exhibit is meant to convey to you, the visitor, the distinctiveness of Salish coiled basketry. To do this I would like to tell you a story about these cedar root baskets, but to pick just one story is in itself a daunting task. I face a dilemma. Which story should be told? How can I convey the many interesting stories that belong to these baskets and the basket makers who weave them? The best way to do this is to let the baskets, their families and the basket makers speak for themselves. It is up to you, the visitor, to perceive the rest.

My great grandmother, Annie Chapman of Squirrel Cove, made this berry basket and several others for my grandmother's wedding in 1937. My grandmother, Maryanne Pollner, once told me that baskets were often made as gifts for special occasions in the past. In fact, all of the baskets that my grandmother made were given away as gifts to her friends. This basket made by my great grandmother is one of my favorites. Whenever I look at it I think about my grandparents.

Sharon Fortney, Graduate Student, Curator, 2001

Berry Basket

Annie Chapman, Klahoose

1937

Cedar root, cedar wood, cherry bark, canary grass, string

Collection of Sharon Fortney

Mékw' ye sxéles sxé'ath lis teli kw'e ts'elhxwélmexw

Designs Have Special Meanings

If you use red cherry bark on the rim, you finish your basket with a trimming of red that stands for love. So usually if a mother or a grandmother is making a basket for her granddaughter she'd put red around it – the finishing of the basket, or a lot of red on it. But if she's making it for a grandson or a son or a brother or any male in her family, if she especially wanted them to be strong and powerful she'd put black on the finishing and maybe more black on the designs. But most basket weavers just put designs on that they like, that's pleasant to the eye. And maybe there's designs that their mother carried or the grandmother carried. Sometimes an auntie will give you a design and say, "This is for you, you can use it", but that's kind of mostly lost now.

Sqówóthelwet – Xwelíxwiya Stó:lo siyólexwa

Rena Point Bolton, Stó:lo Elder, Terrace, 2000

The designs down here along the Fraser are the animal patterns. More like the ravens or the eagle, they put them on. And up in the Thompson area we use the diamonds and the Indian trails for good luck and everything like that.

So' mele siyólexwa skw'átets Ts'qóls
Minnie Peters, Nlaka'pamux Elder, Peter's Reserve, Hope, 2000

Table
Mathilda Chapman, Nlaka'pamux
Mother of Minnie Peters, Grandmother of Bruce Chapman
c. 1925-1928
Cedar root, wood, cherry bark
Gift of Sheila Buchanan & G. S. Scholefield
A7252

Table
Mathilda Chapman, Nlaka'pamux
Mother of Minnie Peters, Grandmother of Bruce Chapman
c. 1925-1928
Cedar root, wood, cherry bark, cat-tail grass
Gift of Sheila Buchanan & G. S. Scholefield
A7253

Shxwetalíms kw'e lheqtól te ts'élh xwélmexwelh sewíwes
Reconnecting with Family History and Heritage

Once, my sister Deanna took my mother Sophie Voght Sterling to the Museum of Anthropology, and Mum recognized her grandmother's baskets. When Deanna looked into the information books she saw that the baskets had been donated by Judge Henry Castillou, who had been the lawyer for William and Theresa Klama Voght. Mum said it was good that the baskets were in a safe place. She was so happy to see them.

Dr. Shirley Sterling, Nlaka'pamux Elder, Merritt, 2001
Elder in Residence, UBC First Nations House of Learning

All good things come from the cedar tree – our long houses, our canoes, our clothing, our baskets, and our spiritual cleansing. My grandmother knew these things, and was taught by her grandmother. In her memoirs, she talked about being a young girl and learning to weave by coal oil lamp. Throughout her life, my grandmother made baskets to help support her family of ten children. It is with great pride that I continue on with the tradition of my grandmothers, for the power of the cedar tree is to be respected, honoured and remembered.

Sesemiya, Skwxwú7mesh nexw esk'a7xwúm, eslha7an
Tracy Williams, Squamish Nation Weaver, Mission, 2001

Shopping basket
Eva May Nahanee, Squamish Nation
Grandmother of Tracy Williams
After 1965 – Before 1976
Cedar root, cedar wood, cherry bark, canary grass
Barbara Wyss Collection of Cedar Root Baskets of Eva Nahanee
Nbz810

Kwélmexwus
Eva May Nahanee, Skwxwú7mesh uxwxwimixw
Sesemiya lhen si7ls
a7awt 1965 – yewan – iwilh
xapáy t'kw'ámyexw, xpay', t'elem, sáxwi7
Barbara Wyss Collection of Cedar Root Baskets of Eva Nahanee
Nbz810

Fishing Creel
Theresa Klama Voght, Nlaka'pamux
Great grandmother of Shirley Sterling
Before 1910
Cedar root, cherry bark, bear grass, skin
Gift of Henry Castillou
Nd577 a-b

Storage Basket
Theresa Klama Voght, Nlaka'pamux
Great grandmother of Shirley Sterling
Before 1910
Cedar root, cherry bark, bear grass
Gift of Henry Castillou
Nd604

Kw'e ts'eqwewelh shxwtelistexw kw'e tále
Basket Making is a Source of Income

That's all everybody did was make baskets. You know, because we had to go from house to house and just amongst ourselves and we had to go and trade or sell, if they had money. There was hardly no cash.

Sk'ul's sKeekyick, lil'wat7úlmec
Anna Billy, Stl'atl'imx Elder, Mount Currie

There's the young girls, they're trying to learn, but they get started and they forget about it. Me, I have nothing else to do. My kids are all grown up. So I make baskets just for extra money.

Joan Chapman, Stó:lo siyólexwa Sts'íles
Joan Chapman, Stó:lo Elder, Chehalis, Harrison Lake Area

P'oth'es qeste q'esí:tel
Cradle and Tumpline
Adele Peters, Stó:lo, Chehalis
Mother of Joan Chapman, Grandmother of Bruce Chapman
Before 1930
Cedar root, cedar wood, cherry bark, cedar bark, canary grass, wool, skin, shell
Gift of Joan Goodall
Nbz800 a-b

Suitcase

Julia Peters, Stl'atl'imx, Mount Currie

Grandmother of Anna Billy, Great grandmother of Diane Billy

c. 1893-1911

Cedar root, cedar wood, cherry bark, cat-tail grass, rawhide skin, metal

Purchase funded by H. R. MacMillan

A3096

xwel'tín

Sk'ul's sJulia Peters, lil'wat7úlmeç,

kwékwa7s sKeekyick, skícza7s ku kwékwa7s sSwanamia

Pináni7 1893-1911-a ik'ul'únas

Ákwál'micw, spakwáz'am, s7iw'cw, p'ústen', sk'vl, múta7 cwik'tenálqw i
qwezenása ik'ul'ún'as.

Nilh sH.R.MacMillan na az'ental'iha

A3096

Kw'e ts'éqw'e welh tl'ó shxwthétiwel

Weaving is a form of Personal Expression

My mother Anna Billy and another Elder from Mount Currie named Margaret Lester were my teachers. When I first started making baskets like this, I had one go to England. One of my first ones and I cried. And they were an elderly couple, so they took a picture of me with my basket and they went home. And they sent me the picture, and they sent me a letter. Every year they send me a letter and tell me how my basket is doing, because I was so... I didn't want to let it go.

Swanamia, Skwxwú7mesh nexw esk'a7xwúm, wiwkem

Diane Billy, Squamish Nation Weaver, Brackendale

My mom told me that it's always best for you to get your own roots. Because you're the one that is going to put your sweat into it, you're the one that knows the type of roots that you like to work with. And if somebody else gets your roots for you then it's not going to be the same as if you got it for yourself. And they're not going to be the quality that you like.

Wendy Ritchie, Th'ets'imiye Stó:lo lhélhilt sq'ewqáyl sts'elxwíqw

Wendy Ritchie, Stó:lo Weaver, Skowkale Reserve, Sardis

Basket

Mary Jane Joe, Stl'atl'imx, Mount Currie

Mother of Anna Billy, Grandmother of Diane Billy

Before 1916

Cedar root, cedar wood, cherry bark

Mrs. Margaret Celine Gill Collection

Nd691

lhk'wálus

Sk'ul's sMary Jane Joe, lil'wat7úlmeç,
skicza7s sKeekyick, kékwa7s sSwanamia
Skéla7s lhláni7 1916-a ik'ul'ún'as
Ákwál'micw, spakwáz'am, múta7 s7iw'cw i qwezenása i k'ul'ún'as.
Nilh sMargaret Celine Gill ti wa7 we7ántal'i lhkúnsa
Nd691

Basket

Diane Billy, Squamish Nation, Brackendale
Daughter of Anna Billy
1989
Cedar root, cedar wood, cherry bark, canary grass
The Thord "Slim" and Margaret Fouberg Collection
Nbz852

Kwélmexwus

Swanamia, Skwxwú7mesh uxwxwimixw
lha Swanamia nilh mens lha Keekyick
1989
xapáy t'kw'ámyexw, xpay', t'elem, sáxwi7
The Thord "Slim" and Margaret Fouberg Collection
Nbz852

Basket

Diane Billy, Squamish Nation, Brackendale
Daughter of Anna Billy
1989
Cedar root, cedar wood, cherry bark, canary grass
The Thord "Slim" and Margaret Fouberg Collection
Nbz853

Kwélmexwus

Swanamia, Skwxwú7mesh uxwxwimixw
lha Swanamia nilh mens lha Keekyick
1989
xapáy t'kw'ámyexw, xpay', t'elem, sáxwi7
The Thord "Slim" and Margaret Fouberg Collection
Nbz853

Tray

Diane Billy, Squamish Nation; Sandra Lester, Zena Gabriel, Benita Wallace, and Ruth Williams,
Stl'atl'imx, Mount Currie
1989
Cedar root, cedar wood, cherry bark, canary grass
The Thord "Slim" and Margaret Fouberg Collection
Nd711

Hiyi lhaxí7tn

Swanamia, Skwxwú7mesh uxwxwimixw; Sandra Lester, Zena Gabriel, Benita Wallace, and Ruth
Williams, Mount Currie
1989
xapáy t'kw'ámyexw, xpay', t'elem, sáxwi7
The Thord "Slim" and Margaret Fouberg Collection
Nd711

Nlháxtsten

Sk'ul'i sDiane Billy, sqwxú7mes, múta7 Sandra Lester, Zena Gabriel, Benita Wallace, Ruth Williams, lil'wat7úlmeç.

Pináni7 1989-a ik'ul'ún'itas

Ákwál'micw, spakwáz'am, s7iw'cw, múta7 p'ústen' i qwezenítasa ik'ul'ún'itas.

Nilh wi sThord "Slim" múta7 Margaret Fouberg i wa7 we7ántal'i lhkúnsa.

Nd711

Mékw' stám e' hókwex ewéta kw'e ikw'etem

Everything is Used, Nothing is Wasted

We never throw away, no matter how small. Yeah when we're splitting the roots, it doesn't matter how small we put it aside. That goes for that fine basket making. Yeah it's the one we call **ts'a:th'**.

Yamalot, Stó:lo síyólexwa Sqwá, Sts'elxwíqw

Rosaleen George, Stó:lo Elder, Skwah Reserve, Chilliwack

Knitting Basket

Amy Cooper, Stó:lo, Cultus Lake

c. 1914-1934

Cedar root, cherry bark, cat-tail grass

Purchase funded by H. R. MacMillan

A1889

totewelem sí:tel

Amy Cooper, Stó:lo siyólexwa Th'ewá:li

1914-1934

kwemlexw, stelém, sth'á:qel

Purchase funded by H.R. MacMillan

A1889

Awl

Mandy Brown, Nlaka'pamux, Lytton

Before 1988

Deer metacarpal bone

Purchase funded by the Museum of Anthropology Shop Volunteers

Nd712

Miniature Tea Cup and Saucer

Mandy Brown, Nlaka'pamux, Lytton

Before 1992

Cedar root, cherry bark

Purchase funded by the Museum of Anthropology Shop Volunteers

Nd713 a-b

Kw'e th'óqw'e welh e' shxwexwilemexw**Basket Making is a Family Affair**

My grandmother taught me. She lived in Sardis and she taught me when I used to go and visit her all the time. And that's where I used to spend all my time. Every weekend I'd go there and just never did stay home here, because I liked being with my grandmother because she always taught me. She taught me all the crafts that I know.

Ts'ats'elxwot, Stó:lo lhélhilt shxwéyehala sts'elxwíqw**Frieda George, Stó:lo Weaver, Jimmie Reserve, Chilliwack**

Frieda, when she started out I told her she had to start out digging her own roots. So she went out and got it. The first time she went out, her and her sister, and she came back with the roots and she had a whole bunch of them in her car. And she came back and she showed them to me. I says, "You've got the wrong kind of roots!" Here she had alder roots, not cedar roots. So she had to take it back and so I showed her. She had a couple of cedar roots all right. She had little tiny ones and I showed her, "That's the kind you're supposed to get." "Oh..." she says, "I know where there's lots." So she went up there and she had a whole bunch of it when she came down.

Ts'ats'elxwot, Stó:lo siyólexwa Sq'éwqel, Alámex**Elizabeth Herrling, Stó:lo Elder, Seabird Island, Agassiz**

Storage Basket

Interior Salish

Artist unknown

Date unknown

Cedar root, cherry bark, cat-tail grass, deer skin

D1.277 a-b

Sts'eqw sitel qex xwe xwílmexw lhéq'lexw**Coiled Basketry is shared by the many Salish Peoples**

These baskets are made by a method called coiling. The basket maker builds up a coiled basket by sewing each row to the previous one by piercing a hole with an awl. You might notice that the coils of these baskets differ. Some have a flat appearance while others are round. The shapes of the coils reflect what is used inside – strips of cedar wood are used in the rectangular ones and pieces of root fibres in the round ones. Along the Northwest Coast, only the Salish peoples use this method of basket making. Coiled basketry is thought to have spread to the Coast from the Salish peoples of the Interior.

Qex lets'lot tel sale tel tl'osu mekw' skwi kwex
These Baskets Have Many Names

There are three Salish languages featured in this exhibit as a sign of respect to the people who made these baskets. Two languages are missing because I could not find translators: Nlaka'pamux and Comox.

Verley Ned of Sumas provided Halkomelem translations for this exhibit. She is a textbook writer for Stó:lo Shxweli. Verley was assisted in her work by Siyamiyateiyot – Elizabeth Phillips, translator, mentor and teacher at Stó:lo Shxweli.

Tracy Williams and Squamish Elder Lawrence Baker provided the Squamish translations.

Dr. Henry Davis of the Linguistics Department of the University of British Columbia provided the translations for the Stl'atl'imx baskets.
