

Building Longhouses and Constructing Identities: A Brief History of the Coqualeetza Longhouse and Shxwt'a:selhawtxw

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Abstract

This article explores how history is created, and recreated, via the construction of two teaching longhouses at the Stó:lō First Nation's Coqualeetza site. The Coqualeetza Longhouse and Shxwt'a:selhawtxw (The House of Long Ago and Today), constructed in 1982–83 and 1994 respectively, were conceived amidst a climate of Aboriginal civil disobedience and political influence. Consequently, the two longhouses are windows into broader issues of decolonization, inter-community politics, Aboriginal education, and the dialogical nature of historical conceptualization within Canada as a whole and British Columbia in particular. In order to explore these issues the author uses the concept of "identity hybridity." Using archival evidence and oral history, the author argues that the different audiences at the two longhouses shape how history is conceptualized and narrated. Consequently, the author concludes that the creation of history at Coqualeetza has been a cross-cultural and collaborative process.

Introduction

*We have a wealth of knowledge passed down to us that we would love to share
with non-Natives.*

— Xwelixweltel, The Honourable Judge Steven L. Point¹

In 1996 the University of Saskatchewan hosted the International Summer Institute on the cultural restoration of Aboriginal Peoples. During the conference, Marie Battiste, a professor in the Indian and Northern Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan, gave a lecture entitled "Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language, and Culture in Modern Society." While she acknowledged that there has been some progress in the past twenty-five years concerning the state of Aboriginal education in Canada, she emphasized that the Canadian education system still imposes one "worldview on a people who have an alternative worldview, with the implication that the imposed worldview is superior to the alternative worldview."² Indeed, other scholars such as anthropologist Elizabeth Furniss have made much the same assertion.³ Battiste even went so far as to

¹ The honourable Steven Point was sworn in as British Columbia's twenty-eighth Lieutenant Governor on October 1, 2007.

² p. 193.

³ Furniss contends that "High school textbooks remain the most conservative and archaic of the official nationalist histories in the public domain" because they celebrate

assert that, “In the Canadian educational system today, Aboriginal people continue to be invisible.”⁴ Her statement and the assumptions behind it are only partially correct.

There are places where one can find evidence that First Nations are becoming increasingly involved with the educational system. The Stó:lō-run Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre, located in Sardis, British Columbia, is an excellent example of an Aboriginal nation asserting their agency through improvements to education for Stó:lō children and adults, as well as informing cultural outsiders about Stó:lō history and identity.⁵ Further, the construction of the Coqualeetza Longhouse in 1982–83 and Shxwt’a:selhawtxw (the House of Long Ago and Today) in 1994, both used for cultural education and skills training, are symbolic of the broader effort to recover and communicate indigenous knowledge, voice, and vision. This endeavor is a process of historical conceptualization, experienced by both Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō, the result of which is the presentation of a new understanding of history which often challenges mainstream views of First Nations.

Using the construction of the two longhouses as a window into the broader history and politics surrounding Aboriginal cultural education and the way in which history is constructed, perceived, and presented, I will explore how different audiences affect the telling of Stó:lō history. The portrayal of the past within the Coqualeetza Longhouse and Shxwt’a:selhawtxw has always been shaped by its multiple intended audiences and it will continue to do so in the future. I also aim to reveal some insights into the hybrid nature of Stó:lō identity construction. In order to achieve these two goals, I will investigate a number of ethnohistorical research inquiries that include the role of the ethnographer/ethnohistorian in writing history; the importance of cultural education in decolonization and Aboriginal agency; the dialogue and politics that occurs between and among Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō; the role of Stó:lō community initiatives regarding cultural revival; and the way in which knowledge and meaning are shared and created between and among peoples of different and similar backgrounds.

The Historiography of Stó:lō Longhouses and Cultural Education

The historiography surrounding Stó:lō longhouses has followed two main directions. First, scholars have written physical descriptions of longhouses, including descriptions of family life revolving around these spaces and the development and decline of longhouse

the dominant Euro-Canadian discourse of nation-building and colonialist expansion to the exclusion of all other views. *The Burden of History*, 54–61.

⁴ “Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language and Culture in Modern Society,” 198.

⁵ The Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre (also termed the Coqualeetza Education and Training Centre in some archival documents) was incorporated as a non-profit charitable organization in 1973 and grew out of the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Training Society; the latter leased portions of the Coqualeetza site from the Department of Public Works beginning in 1969.

use.⁶ This historiography includes a rapidly expanding body of archaeological literature and research projects on Salish households, settlements and community interactions.⁷ Second, longhouses have been documented for their ceremonial role in First Nations' lives.⁸ Furthermore, all scholars are concerned with the impact of colonialism on the living spaces of the Stó:lō and the incorporation of European, and later Euro-Canadian, cultural traits into Stó:lō lives. Such reports often emphasize syncretism, or the Stó:lō's ability to integrate their cultural traditions with others that they have encountered.

Academics have also touched on the Stó:lō cultural revival which began in the 1960s. Oliver Wells recorded the effort to preserve and revive Halkomalem.⁹ A number of ethnohistory graduate students attending the Stó:lō Graduate Ethnohistory Field School have written essays that describe the occupation of the Coqualeetza site in 1976,¹⁰ the way in which the Stó:lō traditional methods have had to adapt to modern-day circumstances, such as the use of writing rather than orality to convey meaning,¹¹ and the need for Stó:lō culture to be better understood through interpretative centres, but also to maintain secrecy around certain beliefs and practices.¹² One scholar of note, Thomas McIlwraith, recently analyzed the emergence of a "Pan-Indianness" amongst the Stó:lō whereby customs of different Aboriginal cultures are adopted by some Stó:lō but many of these people still regard such traits as unique to the Stó:lō. McIlwraith argues that by creating a distinctly Stó:lō identity symbols as expressed through cultural education serve only to create barriers between Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō.¹³

Theoretical Influences and Methodological Considerations

While the Stó:lō are certainly asserting their cultural autonomy as McIlwraith suggests, they are not merely constructing barriers between themselves and others. Instead, their identity construction is a product of the seemingly countless interactions which have always occurred between Stó:lō community members and cultural outsiders which create bridges across cultural chasms. I term this process "identity hybridity," a concept adopted

⁶ Wilson Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser River of BC*; Marian Smith, "House Types of the Middle Fraser River."

⁷ David M. Schaepe, "Rock Fortifications"; Dana Lepofsky, "Plants and Pithouses"; and Dana Lepofsky, Teresa , and Jesse Morin, "Coast Salish Interaction." David Schaepe, Dana Lepofsky and Keith Carlson, among others, are also involved in a project titled "Collective Identity Across Time, Space and Academic Disciplines: Exploring Interactions Among the Stó:lō of Southwestern BC," which will map and explore Aboriginal settlements and community interactions to make insights into Stó:lō interaction and identity.

⁸ Wayne Suttles, "The Shed-Roof House"; Thomas McIlwraith, "Constructions of Local and Pan-Indian Elements in Contemporary Stó:lō Identity."

⁹ *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbors*.

¹⁰ Melissa McDowell, "'This is Stó:lō Indian Land'."

¹¹ Samara Brock, "Doing the Same Things in a Different Way."

¹² Heather Gleboff, "Revealing While Concealing."

¹³ pp. 39–41.

from anthropologist Kirin Narayan's discussion of multiple identities and her description of the "enactment of hybridity."¹⁴

Narayan suggests that anthropologists "are all incipiently bi- (or multi-) cultural in that [anthropologists] belong to worlds both personal and professional."¹⁵ Building on this concept, I argue that Stó:lō identity construction is similar in nature. Stó:lō identities as constructed by cultural educators are products of many different personal backgrounds with many different cultural influences and this is certainly reflected in each individual's presentation of Coast Salish history.

Part of the effectiveness of Stó:lō educational programs is that they recognize that every Stó:lō (and non-Stó:lō) is a part of the identity hybridity process. While the Stó:lō I interviewed did not actually use the term hybridity, they did speak about concepts that have emerged regarding hybridity in scholarly circles, such as recognizing the importance of cultural mixing within colonized spaces.¹⁶ They also acknowledged that Stó:lō individuals, as well as non-Stó:lō, were products of many different backgrounds and that individual identities were not static. Thus, hybridity is defined here as the recognition that all identities are constantly in flux, multiple, unstable, and syncretic.

However, acceptance of hybridity and the postmodern rejection of essentializations has not destabilized the idea that there is a core essence to what it means to be Stó:lō, though different Stó:lō individuals may — and often do — disagree upon the nature of that essence. Stó:lō cultural education, historically rooted in the broader Stó:lō cultural revival and political activism of the 1960s and 1970s, has fixed Stó:lō identity in terms of language, history and place. The history of the Coqualeetza Longhouse and Shxwt'a:selhawtxw thus represent the broader project to continually define what it means to be Stó:lō.

Nonetheless, as this paper has been written from a postmodernist perspective, efforts have been taken not to essentialize the Stó:lō or Aboriginal peoples. One cannot place them within a false category used to lump together all indigenous peoples. One must recognize that just because the Stó:lō have been successful in some aspects of reversing the residential school experience and in constructing their own identities, this does not mean that all First Nations would benefit from the same system. Yet, some common experiences regarding First Nations in Canada need to be discussed. Because of this, writing from strictly a postmodernist perspective which fragments all narratives would lessen the impact of any portrayal of the continuing experience of colonialism through frequent fragmentation.¹⁷ Consequently, this paper has also been written from a postcolonialist position which deconstructs the power structures that led to colonialism,

¹⁴ "How Native is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" 673, 681.

¹⁵ Ibid., 681. The idea of identity hybridity applies to the author of this paper as well as to all other scholars.

¹⁶ For examples of these debates, see Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* and Robert Young, *Colonial Desire*.

¹⁷ D. A. Washbrook notes that postmodernism seeks to "'subvert' the logic of history itself." ("Orients and Occidents," 602.)

then reconstructs a narrative which seeks to redress the injustices of the past.¹⁸ As Doug Cole explains, in a post-contact history there are many examples of interactions of First Nations and Euro-Americans which have some commonalities.¹⁹

Many scholars have also discussed their positions within or outside of those societies which they are writing about; a history of the Coqualeetza longhouses requires the same. How can a scholar provide a history that is useful to the Stó:lō while also engaging with scholarly debates and maintaining academic standards of criticism? Narayan offers an important insight that is adopted in this paper when she suggests that we

must focus our attention on the quality of relations with the people we seek to represent in our texts: are they viewed as mere fodder for professionally self-serving statements about a generalized Other, or are they accepted as subjects with voices, views and dilemmas — people to whom we are bonded through ties of reciprocity and who may even be critical of our professional enterprise.²⁰

Narayan's statement also raises some important questions regarding the use of evidence, especially when writing ethnohistory. What sources are used? How are these sources treated, and for what purpose?

On the one hand the ethnohistorian's job is to research and write the most accurate account of the past that is possible. To do this the ethnohistorian searches for voices that have been captured in time at a historical moment, either through visual representation (such as text, artefact, and so on) or through other means such as oral history, and to weigh each voice for its historical plausibility. When discrepancies between oral history and textual accounts exist part of the ethnohistorian's job to determine which account is more accurate; through oral recollection collaborated with archival research and vice-versa these discrepancies can be overcome.

Thus, I have used semi-structured oral interviews along with archival/textual evidence to construct as accurate a narrative of the past as possible while recognizing that even more can be gained by using different sources to reveal how identities are constructed and contested and how they change over time and space. Coincidentally, such constructions and contestations lay at the Coqualeetza Longhouse's and Shxwt'a:selhawtxw's foundation.

Colonialist Assimilation and Stó:lō Political Activism

The era of Aboriginal education in British Columbia under the auspices of residential schools like the Coqualeetza Residential School at Sardis, BC has been described as colonial assimilation or cultural genocide. Linked to the broader context of colonialism in

¹⁸ Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism*, 3–4.

¹⁹ *Captured Heritage*, xi.

²⁰ p. 672.

British Columbia and Canada, residential schools sought to carry out the purpose of “civilizing” Natives. Specific legislation was drafted to assimilate Aboriginal people, including the “Civilization Act” and the “Advancement Act,” all of which sought to replace Aboriginal cultures with European or Euro-Canadian ideals.²¹ As the final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, completed in 1996, aptly points out, the Canadian government sought to assimilate Natives by undermining “Aboriginal institutions and life patterns” and residential schools were primary tools of this government program.²² Natives had little or no control over residential school curriculum and as a result many of the traditions and histories of Aboriginal peoples did not get passed on to the next generation.

At the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, however, decades of First Nations’ political activism could not be quelled or brushed aside. As David Schaepe writes, Canada’s federal “White Paper” (1969) which proposed to eliminate “Indian” status “prompted a nationwide resurgence in Aboriginal peoples’ activity in defining and asserting themselves at broader levels of collective identity and governance.”²³ While the Stó:lō were certainly involved in these activities before the White Paper, afterwards they turned to mass demonstrations and civil disobedience to assert their claims to traditional territories and self-determination. This included taking control of the Coqualeetza site, an important place that had changed hands many times.

Coqualeetza, or “beating blankets,” has been used for many purposes throughout its history, and the changing meaning of its name reflects these uses. Coqualeetza began as a Stó:lō fishing site. One Stó:lō *sxwōxwiyám* (a story of the distant, “mythological” past) about Coqualeetza, as told by Bob Joe and Dan Milo, tells of greedy men fishing there during a famine but not sharing their catch with the women. After learning of this, the women “beat their husbands’ blankets, which contained residual features of the men’s spirit power, and called on Xexa:ls [the transformer] to transform the men.” One of the men painted the others as different birds, but Xexa:ls saw through the disguise and transformed them into actual birds. The story ends when beaver gave the salmon the men had caught to the women and the men and women reconciled.²⁴

Shortly after European settlement in the area, however, the Crown granted Coqualeetza land to a non-Aboriginal farmer in 1869, who leased part of it to a Methodist Mission Home and, later, a residential school in 1886 and 1893 respectively. The missionaries co-opted the *sxwōxwiyám* of Coqualeetza by naming their school after it, though they regarded the act of beating blankets as a mode of cleaning and reframed Coqualeetza as a

²¹ Keith Thor Carlson, “Early Nineteenth Century Stó:lō Social Structures and Government Assimilation Policy,” 97–99.

²² Martin Thornton, “Aspects of the History of Aboriginal People in their Relationships with Colonial, National and Provincial Governments in Canada,” 12.

²³ “Stó:lō Identity and the Cultural Landscape of S’ólh Téméxw,” 234–35.

²⁴ Jody Woods, “Coqualeetza,” 75.

place where “savages would be cleansed in the light of civilization, education and Jesus Christ.”²⁵

A year after the residential school closed in 1940 an Indian tuberculosis hospital was built on the Coqualeetza site. Hospital officers, too, altered Coqualeetza’s *sxwōxwiyám* by explaining the meaning as “washing away the filth of poverty, uncleanness and disease with medicine and scientific hygiene.”²⁶ After the hospital closed down in 1969 the Department of Public Works leased portions of the site to the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Training Society while the Department of Defence used the rest of the site for military offices and barracks.

Throughout the early 1970s the Stó:lō demanded control and ownership of the site, culminating in a Stó:lō occupation of the site in 1976, when twenty-six protestors were arrested. As a result of the action, the Stó:lō gained de facto control of Coqualeetza and set up their administrative, political, and cultural offices there.²⁷ Coqualeetza’s significance was, and continues to be, re-appropriated by the Stó:lō to mean a “‘cleansing place’ for cultural renewal where the pain of unfulfilled assimilation policies is washed away and the dust of generations of colonial control is beaten off and transformed into a new assertion of Stó:lō culture, rights and title.”²⁸

Instead of complete economic and cultural assimilation, as the White Paper asserted, the Stó:lō wanted to participate in Canadian society and economy without losing their distinct identities and cultures, and the reoccupation of Coqualeetza was symbolic of this desire. Such a project required economic, social, and, especially, political unification among the Stó:lō, as exemplified when the self-proclaimed “Stó:lō Tribes” of the lower Fraser watershed drafted and adopted the Stó:lō Declaration in 1975.²⁹ The original Coqualeetza *sxwōxwiyám*, as told by Joe and Milo, has also been maintained; the moral lessons it provides regarding proper Stó:lō behavior has been combined with its ability to link communities throughout the territory through relations to geographic places and events in the story.

Concurrent with the growth of Aboriginal political associations at this time was an effort to maintain and revive traditions which had been forgotten, become rare, or made illegal, during the residential school era, especially as residential schools closed their doors forever. In response to assimilationist attitudes symbolized by the White Paper,

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ This brief timeline, along with a more detailed description of the site’s history, can be found in Woods, 74–75.

²⁸ Ibid, 75.

²⁹ Schaepe, “Stó:lō Identity,” 235. Then, in 1985, both Stó:lō Tribal Council and Stó:lō Nation Canada were established, and the Stó:lō Tribal Council and the Stó:lō Nation Canada united to form a single political entity, Sto:lo Nation, in 1994. While the Stó:lō Nation and the Stó:lō Tribal Council separated in 2006, they often work closely together and Stó:lō Nation often acts on behalf of all Stó:lō when it comes to many cultural issues, including cultural programming and cultural education.

Aboriginal peoples demanded more involvement in their education, though they still recognized the usefulness of Canadian schools. For example, in 1972 the National Indian Brotherhood (the precursor of the Assembly of First Nations) sought to take control of Native education. The Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre has been at the forefront of this fight for Native-run education programs that merged economic and cultural concerns, and its creation was certainly a product of the political climate of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Coqualeetza Longhouse and Shxwt'a:selhawtxw: Past, Present, and Future

During the 1970s and early 1980s the number of First Nations-run museums, cultural centres and interpretive centres throughout British Columbia and Canada increased.³⁰ The administrators at Coqualeetza wanted to “complement, not duplicate, the formal educational system,” as well as create a place which was community oriented for social and economic progress.³¹ Skulkayn band members, part of the larger Stó:lō community, gained the responsibility to maintain the grounds and buildings at Coqualeetza in late 1968, and in 1973 the Stó:lō received a forty million dollar Cultural Centre Program grant for the purposes of building the Coqualeetza Education and Training Centre (later the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre) and renovating the buildings once used for the residential school and tuberculosis hospital.³² From 1973–74 the Coqualeetza Education and Training Centre mandate was implemented, and by 1979 the Cultural Centre Program was in full operation.³³ During this time, before the construction of the Coqualeetza Longhouse (in 1982–83), cultural education classes were available which were traditional in content and formed the basis for later classes that helped to revive and preserve Stó:lō heritage. The Cultural Centre Program was originally set up for two main reasons: skills education and cultural revival.

The first purpose, education, focused on the economic integration of the Stó:lō into Euro-Canadian society. In 1974 when the Canadian federal government and the Stó:lō were still negotiating over the future of the site, the Stó:lō Nation maintained that Coqualeetza would be “an ideal centre for certain activities related directly to Indian education and culture,” and that it would also be a suitable place for instruction.³⁴ In addition to classes which were designed to reclaim Stó:lō knowledge, early courses were mostly geared towards basic training skills emphasizing English, mathematics, science, public speaking, parliamentary procedure, developing multi-media drama, and a homemaker training course which prepared Stó:lō for work in rest homes, hospitals, or motels.³⁵

³⁰ Lisa Hiwasaki, “Presenting Unity, Performing Diversity,” 10.

³¹ G. E. Bissel, *Feasibility Study of the Coqualeetza Indian Hospital at Sardis BC for an Indian Community Centre*, 3.

³² Stó:lō Lands Department, “Coqualeetza Reserve Creation,” 9.

³³ Coqualeetza Education and Training Centre, *Coqualeetza History*, 2–3.

³⁴ “Government Acts on Coqualeetza Project”; Barb Stanbrook, “Coqualeetza” 5B.

³⁵ “Coqualeetza Awaits Ottawa Decision.”

The second purpose of the Coqualeetza program was to preserve Stó:lō heritage through a particular vision of the past which often contradicted the official version presented in mainstream history texts. Native chants and songs were taped, transcribed, and housed in a section of the Coqualeetza buildings, and artefacts were re-collected from other people and museums in the region and transferred to Stó:lō possession.³⁶ It is important to note that many non-Stó:lō were also working to better understand Stó:lō history and culture. For example, the anthropologist Wayne Suttles worked to deconstruct stereotypical portrayals of the Coast Salish. He observed that,

All but the very oldest [Coast Salish] speak English, many of the middle-aged are literate, most of the young are in school, many in public schools along with White children. . . Except for a number of large barn-like structures most of which were once used as dwellings, there is little of Native [Stó:lō] material culture visible. . . Tipis and feather war-bonnets are symbols of Indian-ness that must be presented to a White audience, but they are far removed from the cedar-plank houses and shredded bark skirts and ponchos of the earlier a Salish.³⁷

Such symbols, it seemed, served only to reinforce the dominant settler depiction of First Nations. Suttles continued, however, by describing Coast Salish culture as much more nuanced and complex, writing that, “a night spent at one of the barn-like ‘smokehouses’ in winter or early spring might give one an entirely different impression. During these months, the Coast Salish of this area are participating in a vigorous Native ceremonialism.”³⁸ The presentations at the Coqualeetza cultural Education Centre were, like Suttles’ work, supposed to dispel the history written largely by and for a Euro-Canadian audience.

Coqualeetza educational staff identified which traits were associated with “Pan-Indianness” and a more accurate portrayal of past Stó:lō identities was constructed through this recognition. To do this, classes offered at Coqualeetza included an introduction to the Halkomelem language and studies of Native art, music, lifestyles and history were taught by members of the Stó:lō community. In short, the Coqualeetza education program was designed to “help preserve as much of native cultural heritage as possible for the future.”³⁹ Yet, in order to receive the support of the larger Stó:lō community, educational staff engaged in a dialogical process whereby they asked Stó:lō community members what services they felt that Coqualeetza could or should provide. Staff members met with other Stó:lō and explained what Coqualeetza had to offer, then also asked what the community would like to see introduced. The educators felt that by both offering programs and receiving local feedback they could make education at the Centre more relevant and attractive for Stó:lō — especially young Stó:lō — who may have found it difficult to identify with what was perceived as traditional Stó:lō culture.⁴⁰ Program coordinator Val Friesen summed up Coqualeetza’s purpose in 1974 as bringing

³⁶ Bill Lillicrap, “Stalo Centre Seeking the Authentic Village.”

³⁷ Suttles, “Coast Salish Essays,” 199–200.

³⁸ Ibid., 200.

³⁹ “Coqualeetza Awaits Ottawa Decision.”

⁴⁰ Ibid., 5B.

“Native people together to teach and learn from one another.”⁴¹ From this collaboration came a desire to experience the past, not just to hear about it, as well as the recognition that non-Stó:lō community members also needed to be educated about Stó:lō history as evidenced by the desire to construct a teaching Longhouse. Thus, a common ground for teaching and for learning was required.

Plans for such a common ground existed from the beginning of the Cultural Centre’s inception. As early as 1973–74, some Stó:lō discussed the possibility of building an “authentic village” as a heritage project on the land adjacent to the Coqualeetza Project. The village would include a “traditional Longhouse, sweat house, fish smoking house and grave house.”⁴² Unfortunately, political developments during the 1970s kept the Coqualeetza site from being under full Stó:lō control; the Stó:lō were occupied with other matters, mostly regarding their relationship to the federal government, and they could not move the project forward. Furthermore, massive renovations to the buildings at Coqualeetza and funding for educational programs sidelined the construction of the Longhouse for almost a decade after its initial proposal.

Not until the end of 1982 did the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre’s infrastructure and budget grow large enough to allow for construction to begin. Site administrators felt that the best way for Stó:lō to learn about themselves was to experience their past in the present. The heritage project going on at the Cultural Centre was mandated to work with language and culture. Staff needed a place to teach and building a longhouse would also provide a great opportunity to reconstruct a traditional Stó:lō structure.

Mark Point, manager at the Cultural Centre in 1980, recognized that “one of the needs at that time was to have a longhouse that we could have instruction in and have it as a demonstration centre. So I designed the longhouse that we have at the centre right now.”⁴³ The longhouse thus was to be built as a “...teaching longhouse. So people feel free to use it and it was a way to educate Stó:lō.”⁴⁴ Such a place would also break down the barriers which prevented some Stó:lō from being successful in school.

Even though residential schools were an admitted failure, Stó:lō children and adults were still being taught in a Euro-Canadian instructional paradigm and teaching prior to the longhouse and construction which occurred at Coqualeetza also took place in a standard classroom atmosphere. Instead of being confined to this Euro-Canadian space, the Longhouse could be a place for learning in a more traditional environment. Thus, the early conceptions of the Coqualeetza Longhouse shows that it was originally intended as a teaching longhouse, but it has since evolved into a place symbolic of the Stó:lō effort to redefine themselves.

⁴¹ Stanbrook, 5B.

⁴² Lillicrap, 2A.

⁴³ Mark Point interview.

⁴⁴ Gwen Point interview.

The Longhouse project did not begin construction until November 1982 and it ran until early May 1983.⁴⁵ Despite very little in terms of available funding, Stó:lō Nation was able to take advantage of a Canada Works program in place at the time. As Mark Point, head architect of the Coqualeetza Longhouse, recalled,

I think it was pretty neat at the time because we had very little money. There was Canada Works at the time. . . We used two job creation projects to build the Longhouse and so we were able to secure dollars for the capital costs and the labour costs. If I think of it now, it probably cost us \$15,000, which really isn't much in today's dollars but at that time it was a fair amount of money.⁴⁶

A number of local Stó:lō were involved in the project, including Melvin Malloway, the head carpenter, Ken Malloway, Jerry Hall, Clint Kelly and Todd Commodore.⁴⁷ Yet even more people were involved in constructing the building, both on and off the site, making the Coqualeetza Longhouse a collaborative effort on the part of Stó:lō Nation to recover a seemingly lost part of their heritage.

The first phase of the project consisted of "obtaining a claim of standing timber and cutting cedar logs to be hauled to the Coqualeetza site. Smaller poles were cut and transported to the site using Mark Point's truck."⁴⁸ Interestingly enough, the project also involved prison labourers. Volunteer assistance from penal complexes in the region was assured when Culture Centre staff and the broader Stó:lō community began discussing the Longhouse project back in 1973 and 1974.⁴⁹ Almost a decade later this labour was still available. Point remembered,

We were able to get the wood through the Ministry of Forests for cultural purposes and one of the work camps, which is another word for jail, they have a sawmill and we left a bunch of cedar logs there and they sawed them up according to our requirements and our payment to them was that they got to keep half of the lumber. The lumber we got was to build the complex and that turned out really good.⁵⁰

Once the builders actually had the logs, they had to be peeled and then erected. A small crane was used to lift the cumbersome rafters, but, as Point recalled, it was not always available and sometimes labour codes had to be broken in order to continue with construction. Point continued,

We didn't have any accidents, which is surprising when you consider some of the things that we did there to get the wood in place. . . When you take a look at

⁴⁵ Ken Malloway, "Coqualeetza Longhouse."

⁴⁶ Mark Point interview.

⁴⁷ As people were constantly coming on and off the site undoubtedly there are others who were involved but did not get recorded.

⁴⁸ Malloway.

⁴⁹ Lillicrap.

⁵⁰ Mark Point interview.

the beams and the size of the logs and how heavy they are, and they have to be lifted and put in place, we didn't always have cranes or anything to do that. Everything was man-handled. There were a couple of times when we had to get a crane in to put the cross-beams up, but the rest of the time we had to use straight, brute man-power to put the logs in place and to secure them in place. . . . When you think back to it, we were really lucky that nothing really collapsed on us. When we designed and built that place, nobody had the experience in the past to do it.⁵¹

The actual construction of the Longhouse was thus a learning process for those building it, just as it was for those attending educational programs at Coqualeetza.

One interesting aspect of the Coqualeetza Longhouse is its peaked-roof style. Historically, longhouses were built in the shed-roof style which had a sloped roof made of out long cedar planks. At Coqualeetza, however, they decided to use a gable style roof with cedar shingles. This may have occurred because of a number of factors, including the influence of barn style structures that farmers in the region had introduced,⁵² or the fact that the Coast Salish adopted the gable-style roof after European contact.⁵³

Church architecture may have also influenced the Longhouse's design. There is a Stó:lō account which recalls how a Stó:lō seer had a vision, thirty years prior to European contact, about constructing church-like structures which were then built by high-status families.⁵⁴ Additionally, Wilson Duff interviewed one Aboriginal man who recalled that his "great-grandfather's large house at Ohamil had been of gabled construction, as had others at Sumas and elsewhere."⁵⁵ Duff speculates that this change from shed-roof type to gable peak style was a product of the need "for larger houses in which to hold potlatches and winter dances."⁵⁶

Other reasons may have included including the loss of traditional knowledge or the decision to secretly conduct ceremonies in such buildings because of the potlatch prohibition of 1884–1951.⁵⁷ Mark Point noted that he designed the Coqualeetza Longhouse in a gable style because it was the only style of which he, or the others he was working with, knew.⁵⁸ Point observed that longhouses built at Skowkale, at the Skway reserve, and in Chehalis also had gable roofs. This seemingly minor point of stylistic choice led to the emergence of more knowledge about longhouses and traditions. Gwen Point, working as a teacher at the time, noted that, "As our people began to recreate our longhouses, elders came forward and said, 'We had one-pitch roofs'. . . that was when the

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Duff, 48.

⁵⁴ David M. Schaepe, Albert 'Sonny' McHalsie, Keith Thor Carlson, and Patricia Ormerod, "Changing Households, Changing Houses," 43

⁵⁵ p. 48.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Schaepe et al., 43.

⁵⁸ Mark Point interview.

teaching and the knowledge started to come out.”⁵⁹ Symbolically then, the Longhouse as a place for teaching also became an object and a process of learning for the teachers.

While the Coqualeetza Longhouse was originally meant for teaching, it has also been used to house Stó:lō ceremonies. First Salmon ceremonies, honouring ceremonies, weddings, and other events have all taken place under its cedar rafters. As the Coqualeetza Longhouse was meant to be a *s'iltexwáwtxw* (traditional longhouse) as well as an educational site, it has been a place of social gatherings for Stó:lō to get together much like they did before their ceremonies were made illegal. However, the Coqualeetza Longhouse is not used for the most sacred of Stó:lō ceremonies. For example, *Syúwél* (Winter Dances) or naming ceremonies do not occur at the Coqualeetza Longhouse.⁶⁰ This is because the Longhouse's primary role is the education of both Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō, and this means that the site is not considered an appropriate place for the most hallowed of ceremonies.

Those who visited the Longhouse found themselves on a common ground where Stó:lō of all backgrounds were able to share an identity; at that moment, people who were different were also at once the same. Gwen Point recalled,

I understand that the elders and the Coqualeetza Cultural Centre, at that time, wanted to build a longhouse — a teaching longhouse — because not many people knew what our longhouses looked like, or what they were even used for. There may have been one other longhouse at the time that was built for our ceremonies. That was at Tzeachten. That was used for our winter ceremonies. So the cultural society and chiefs and leaders at that time, and elders, wanted a teaching longhouse; a place where they can invite the larger community, the non-Native people, and a place where our own people could bring students or families to learn first hand about our traditional ceremonies and events.⁶¹

Using the Longhouse as an educational tool to teach grade-school students was one of its most important functions. Hands-on activities for school children, both Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō, included artefact viewing, bannock tasting, carving demonstrations, wool spinning, drumming and many other traditional activities. Stó:lō elders were also very involved in the project. They were instrumental in telling stories to the children and informing the Coqualeetza staff about the past.⁶² Other educators, such as Gwen Point, also used the Longhouse to instruct her Stó:lō students. She noted, “In the mid 1980s. . . I would bring my class to this longhouse and stay overnight. This is my class from band school.”⁶³ Thus, the Longhouse was a Stó:lō initiative to educate (or re-educate) Stó:lō children and adults, as well as to rewrite history from a Stó:lō point of view. The programs available at the centre were so successful, especially concerning grade-school education, that an increasing number of people, Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō, became involved.

⁵⁹ Gwen Point interview.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Deloris Charters, “Untitled,” 12.

⁶³ Interview.

One of the main purposes of the Coqualeetza Longhouse was and remains to foster cross-cultural understanding. Ken Malloway, writing during the construction, noted that when complete the Longhouse would be used to

house arts and crafts and attempt to give non-Indians a glimpse into our past. We will show through visual aids what life was like before the coming of Europeans. It is felt that the Coqualeetza Longhouse will enhance the Coqualeetza complex and maybe show the uninformed that not all Indians live in Teepees.⁶⁴

Others, such as Mark Point, agreed with Malloway, noting, “We knew that we needed to bring in the public for cross-cultural education, and that was one of its purposes.”⁶⁵ While adults were always involved, it was most often children who visited for cultural lessons.

The Coqualeetza Longhouse’s success as an educational site grew quickly and was eventually recognized by some of the non-Stó:lō community as a valuable resource for their children. While the Stó:lō at Coqualeetza took the initiative to build the Longhouse, the Chilliwack School District made the next move, albeit one imposed by the Provincial Government.

School district representatives approached Stó:lō Nation in 1994 and asked if they could provide a program which could be offered to all grade four classes.⁶⁶ A new provincial curriculum put into place the same year required First Nations studies to be taught in grade four with particular emphasis placed on learning about local First Nations.⁶⁷ Gwen Point remembered that at the time there was a demand for herself and others, such as Keith Carlson, a non-Stó:lō historian working at Stó:lō Nation (on the Coqualeetza site) and Sonny McHalsie, Stó:lō Nation’s cultural advisor, to travel to schools and provide presentations to the children.⁶⁸

After a time, however, these people could not keep up with the demand. Thus, the Stó:lō agreed to the School District’s request and set up a program which mimicked and expanded what they were already doing at the Longhouse. The new Longhouse Program consisted of a history lesson of the Stó:lō prior to contact, as well as post-contact, which emphasized the law against practicing traditional ways from 1927–51, the residential school and its planned cultural genocide, and also how the Stó:lō had lived in their present day lands since time immemorial.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Malloway, 3.

⁶⁵ Interview. The non-Stó:lō who visited during the 1980s and early 1990s included members of the Chilliwack School District, residents of the Lower Mainland and even international visitors such as Japanese exchange students.

⁶⁶ Gwen Point, “Longhouse Program Introduces 1,095 Youngsters to Stó:lō Culture,” 3.

⁶⁷ Carlson interview.

⁶⁸ Interview.

⁶⁹ Point, 3.

Once again, however, not only school children were targeted by the program. It was also hoped that teachers would “understand why some First Nations students don’t know their culture or stories, song and dances; that they don’t know about the baskets, masks, or weavings.”⁷⁰ The notion was that introducing teachers to the Stó:lō run programs would make them more culturally aware of the tragic history of residential schools and the “wide-reaching implications of removing children from a family life while at the same time having had all vestiges of culture these children held destroyed.”⁷¹

The Longhouse Program was thus a continuation of the actualization of Stó:lō creating their own identities, rather than having someone defining their identities for them. Furthermore, making their program part of the provincial school curriculum was a breakthrough, especially since the School Board approached Stó:lō Nation. In fact, the Longhouse Program proved so successful in planning and implementation that an even more elaborate and collaborative project in the form of the Longhouse Extension Plan followed soon thereafter.

Once again taking the initiative, Stó:lō Nation’s staff wanted to expand the Longhouse Program and construct additional buildings to house the increasing numbers of visitors. Teresa Carlson, non-Stó:lō working for Stó:lō Nation, and Gwen Point put together a submission to obtain funding from the government to build an interpretative centre. This project was truly collaborative, as the Chilliwack School District, the Chilliwack historical society and Stó:lō Nation were all involved. Gwen Point recalled how Keith Carlson showed her an eight-car garage with a one-pitch roof, formerly belonging to the doctors who worked at the Coqualeetza tuberculosis hospital, and suggested that it could be renovated into a longhouse.⁷² This renovation took place and the next step involved designing the actual program.

Many different people were involved with the creation of the Longhouse Extension Plan and construction of Shxwt’a:selhawtxw (The House of Long Ago and Today). As before, Stó:lō elders were very much involved. Maxine Prevost, the current Longhouse Extension Plan coordinator, noted the elders:

came in to see what was going on because they were intimately involved with the project. They saw what was needed and built it with traditional knowledge and brought it in for donation and teaching, such as bows, crafts, etc. The staff made sure that the elders were really involved in the program and teaching.⁷³

The past as portrayed at Shxwt’a:selhawtxw was to be an extension of that portrayed at the Coqualeetza Longhouse. It was based on the book *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lō in Canada’s Pacific Coast History*.⁷⁴ For both children and adults,

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Gwen Point interview.

⁷³ Prevost interview

⁷⁴ *You Are Asked to Witness* is an anthology of essays which contains the Stó:lō conception of their own history. Gwen Point noted that the theme at Shxwt’a:selhawtxw

Shxwt'a:selhawtxw is also meant to show people that the Stó:lō are not just static objects of the past, in contrast to provincial history textbooks as examined and described by Elizabeth Furniss.⁷⁵ Instead, it is meant to link the past and present — hence its name, the House of Long Ago *and* Today — by showing visitors that while the technology such as canoes or methods such as fishing have changed, they are nonetheless still used. The future, however, is unwritten and the program can continue to change and evolve.

So far the majority of visitors who have experienced the Program are young students; however there is an opportunity and a desire at Coqualeetza to expand beyond this particular audience. Expansion depends upon both the Coqualeetza staff's initiative and the demand of visitors for more services. In order to increase the diversity of the audience — that is, to attract more adult non-Stó:lō visitors — a number of possible routes are available.

Serious discussion has taken place about renovating or tearing down the Coqualeetza Longhouse and replacing it with a longhouse with an inverted roof, shaped somewhat like a “V.”⁷⁶ This style would copy one particularly famous longhouse built by the Chilliwack Tribe after they relocated to the Fraser River Valley to become fully integrated into the Stó:lō Fraser River world in the early nineteenth century following earlier smallpox epidemics. Other changes considered include a new gift gallery in Shxwt'a:selhawtxw,⁷⁷ renovations to the signage within Shxwt'a:selhawtxw, proper lighting, improved parking, and even the installation of a video room.⁷⁸ Another possibility, not suggested but which seems particularly relevant in today's world, would be to install interactive computer programs in Shxwt'a:selhawtxw.

In order to make these improvements a reality, however, educational staff must face the challenge of funding limitations. Indeed, as a staff member at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia observed while working for Stó:lō Nation on heritage issues, Stó:lō Nation expends a huge amount of time and money on urgent matters such as treaty claims and resource issues.⁷⁹ Consequently, the funding left afterwards for the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre is not viable for such expansions; this is especially true in recent years of funding cuts and staff reductions at Stó:lō Nation as a whole. Even the late Michael Ames, former director of the MOA,

complemented the book with fishing, with its negative depiction of residential schools, with its interpretation of the fur trade, and with the rest of the themes of the book. For further information, see Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *You Are Asked to Witness*.

⁷⁵ p 57.

⁷⁶ Gwen Point interview.

⁷⁷ At one point there was a gift gallery but the location was poor because of little parking space available for visitors and extra workers always had to be on duty which took up valuable funding. Prevost interview.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Jonathan A. Clapperton, “Presenting and Representing Culture,” 51.

recognized that non-Aboriginal heritage sites such as Fort Langley have better public funding than Aboriginal centres.⁸⁰

One way of getting around these funding limitations is by collaborating with other institutions that have larger budgets. For example, Stó:lō Nation staff have participated to varying degrees in many of the archaeological and ethnographic exhibits hosted by the MOA.⁸¹ Perhaps the largest initiative to date occurred after the original draft of this paper was written in 2005. MOA's "A Partnerships of Peoples" project seeks to heighten collaboration between MOA, Musqueam First Nation, the Kwakwaka'wakw U'mista Cultural Society, and Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council. Part of this project includes the "Reciprocal Research Network" which is designed to increase community access to research tools, including an online catalogue and search engine for ethnographic materials.⁸²

Stó:lō Nation also participates in a joint University of Victoria-University of Saskatchewan Graduate Ethnohistory Field School whereby students are immersed in Stó:lō cultural classes. Further, students are asked to write on topics chosen by the Stó:lō, thus producing meaningful products from what are essentially free and enthusiastic researchers. Whenever collaboration with outside non-Stó:lō institutions does occur, however, it means running the risk of relinquishing some control over the projects and, as a result, allowing cultural outsiders to have power over Stó:lō representations and Stó:lō identity construction.

Gwen Point, Maxine Prevost and others are also examining the potential to cater more to tourists. As Prevost noted, because of changing times, she wants to open the site up to "full-blown" tourism by including a coffee-shop overlooking the ethnobotanical garden and another gift shop that would be similar to other gift-shops at heritage sites.⁸³ Point would like to see a traditional pit-house built, as well as a contemporary pit-house with central heating that could be used for tours and for the same educational purposes as the longhouses. Despite the potential for attracting more tourists, and thus bringing in more funds for cultural programs, many important considerations, such as maintaining the integrity of the site, must be examined before any expansion takes place.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Prevost and others will also have to examine why their previous programs were so successful in the hopes of duplicating that success in the future. A theoretical discussion

⁸⁰ Ames interview.

⁸¹ For detailed descriptions of these, along with some of the problems that have occurred during the collaboration process, see Chapter 2 "Contested Spaces, Shared Places: The University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology and the Stó:lō," in Clapperton, 26–60.

⁸² For more information, see Clapperton, 43–45 and Ruth B. Phillips, "Re-placing Objects."

⁸³ Prevost interview.

⁸⁴ At Xa:ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre, for example, the site's programming has been contested by many within the Stó:lō community. For more information see Chapter 4, "The Transformation of Xa:ytem and the Construction of the Longhouse Interpretive Centre," in Clapperton, 88–121.

about how the past is portrayed at the Coqualeetza Longhouses can shed some light on why the Longhouse Programs have been so successful and why they are important for any future developments.

The Role of the Audience in Shaping History

The renowned social scientist and theorist Erving Goffman offers some important insights on social interaction during presentations. He argues that in order for an individual's actions to be significant to others, he or she must “express *during the interaction* what he [or she] wishes to convey.”⁸⁵ This is exactly what occurs at the Coqualeetza Longhouses, as visitors are there only for a very limited period of time.

During each presentation, the past is portrayed in such a way so as to be best understood by each different audience member without altering the overall message that the presenters wish to convey. Program coordinators recognize that all of the visitors' identities are multiple and shifting. Maxine Prevost commented that when she teaches either Stó:lō or non-Stó:lō about history, she does not follow a script. She added that,

There can't be one way of offering information because every group is different, as well as what they need to hear. I can 'hit' people with what they need to hear and to understand. Part of the job is reading people, including parents and teachers, not just students, so that they understand the message that we're giving here. A rigid structure that does not change with the times is unable to be related to the children or to the people you're trying to teach.⁸⁶

Not only the audience is different each time, however, as cultural presenters also come from background different from those of the audience or other cultural educators. Yet to be successful they have to find a common ground of meaning at which point they can make their audience understand the message they are giving.

Furthermore, the cultural education program has been designed around the premise that human experiences are complex. While the Longhouse Extension Program is aimed at children or teenagers, parents, teachers, and other visitors are also involved. For example, Royal Bank employees took the Longhouse Extension tour for sensitivity training and another time a group of blind German tourists visited.⁸⁷ Those working for the Longhouse Extension Program had to adapt the tour for these people, and because they rely on oral and hands-on presentations in addition to written descriptions of the past, they are able to “touch” every visitor. Additionally, the Stó:lō children who visit are from a plethora of different backgrounds with different experiences, even though they share the same ethnicity. Thus, the use of oral presentations at the Longhouse and Shxwt'a:selhawtxw is particularly important.

⁸⁵ p. 99.

⁸⁶ Prevost interview.

⁸⁷ Carlson interview.

Miriam Clavir, an anthropologist writing about First Nations and their relationships with museums, observed that there are “visible” and “invisible” attributes of material culture. She points out that in most non-Native museums the visible is that which is on display and the invisible is the material not made available for public viewing which makes up a far greater percentage of the overall collection.⁸⁸ When it comes to First Nations, however, she argues that the “visible, rather than existing as a quality in its own right, is often linked to the invisible.”⁸⁹ When talking about the past it becomes especially important that people are allowed to visualize the non-visible. Thus, we can be touched in the way that we elicit a response to portrayals of that past.

As Prevost explained while talking about the way the past is presented at Coqualeetza, “The experience here should also be a powerful one, one that is emotional.”⁹⁰ This is why oral history is so important to the Stó:lō. When talking about the differences between written and oral history, McHalsie commented that, “at the same time that written history is happening oral history needs to continue and to be preserved so that when elders are telling those stories, the animation, the way that they tell those stories needs to continue. We shouldn’t be looking at one or the other.”⁹¹ All those who have worked with or are working with the Longhouse Extension Program feel that the preservation of the intangible cultural aspects of an object is as significant as the preservation of the tangible objects themselves.

In addition to the oral recollection of the past, often referred to by Stó:lō as knowledge, physical representations of the past are also on display at Coqualeetza. These representations can take the form of archaeological artefacts, such as the recent discovery of preserved snowshoes, actual archaeological dig-sites, and many others.⁹² To this end, there has also been a movement to recover objects of cultural importance which have been appropriated by other museums and cultures. This movement has taken place because these objects are viewed as Stó:lō cultural property, and more importantly, because the Stó:lō want to control the construction of their identity.

As Ames aptly points out in his book *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*, First Nations “want their materials back, and they want control over their own history and its interpretation, whether the vehicles of expression be museum exhibits, classroom discourses, or scholarly papers, textbooks and monographs.”⁹³ Such representations of the past can also take the form of recreated artefacts constructed in the present to represent objects of the past. Stó:lō elders often feature prominently in this aspect of symbolic reconstruction and interpretation of the past.

⁸⁸ *Preserving What is Valued*.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 116–17.

⁹⁰ Prevost interview.

⁹¹ Brock, 22.

⁹² Schaepe, “Rock Wall Fortifications.”

⁹³ p. 140.

As Maxine Prevost and Gwen Point emphasized, elders were asked about what direction any development should take and also volunteered their time to construct symbols of Stó:lō heritage in the form of traditional tools and other objects, or to give oral presentations about their traditions; that is, they were willing to share their knowledge about the past in order to benefit the present.⁹⁴ “Since those who control history are the ones who benefit from it,” Ames asserts, “people should have the right to the facts of their own lives.”⁹⁵

By acting with their own agency at identity construction, the Stó:lō are engaging in what Ames calls the “politics of representation.”⁹⁶ That is, the Stó:lō are resisting the non-Native images of the Stó:lō, and of essentialized views of Natives in general. Indeed, the tenet of postmodernist theory which suggests that the “other” should be the only ones to define themselves demonstrates that the efforts being made by the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre need to be continued. Furthermore, lessons can be learned by studying Stó:lō efforts to improve Aboriginal education and resist the appropriation of their right to create their own identity.

Conclusion: Empowerment, Hybridity and Collaboration

The history of the Coqualeetza Longhouse and Shxwt’a:selhawtxw has been one of increasing collaboration. Aboriginal education has come a long way since the beginning of integration with Euro-Canadian instructional paradigms when Aboriginal peoples began participating in and creating an ever-changing hybridized education system. Moving from a position of having little or no input during the residential schools era to drafting curriculum for the provincial schools, Stó:lō efforts to be involved in what they and their children learn have always increased in energy and effect.

Aboriginal people are, contrary to the writings of Marie Battiste and others, very visible in at least parts of the Canadian education system today, and they have been so for quite some time. The construction of the Coqualeetza Longhouse and then Shxwt’a:selhawtxw are thus much more than just educational tools or places for Stó:lō ceremonies. They also provide excellent examples of Aboriginal resistance to cultural assimilation as well as initiative to regain control of the construction of their own identity. This process has taken place within a dialogical framework whereby cultural educators have been continually engaged with both Stó:lō and Euro-Canadian cultures. The portrayal of the past to every audience at Coqualeetza has been integral to this process, and the power of presentations cannot be underestimated. Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre staff recognized that in order to successfully convey meaning to their varied audiences they had to respond to those differences.

⁹⁴ Prevost interview; Gwen Point interview.

⁹⁵ *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes*, 140.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

One important result of the work being done at Coqualeetza and its dialogue with everyday racism was its significant impact on the non-Stó:lō community. While the settler discourse of conquest and peaceful negotiation with First Nations has been constantly reified in museums, school textbooks, and interpretive centres, the Longhouse Programs have been set up as a direct challenge to this portrayal. In essence, the audience has always been those who have been exposed to the settler version. The message at the Coqualeetza Longhouses is, however, in a constant dialogue with this version.

For example, the fact that the Chilliwack School Board approached Stó:lō Nation demonstrates that Native voices within schools are recognized as important. Furthermore, the fact that many non-Stó:lō members were involved in the creation of the Longhouse Extension Project shows the potential for integration between members of different cultures and the opportunities for cross-cultural cooperation and understanding. Even the physical foundations of the Longhouses are hybridized, as that foundation includes logs sawn by convicts and non-Stó:lō staff assistance in drawing up funding proposals.

Nonetheless, the Stó:lō must be the ones who define themselves, and not be constructed as an “other” by another. Perhaps paradoxically, the most successful way to ensure this, as shown by the study of two longhouses as presented here, has been through increasing inter- and cross-cultural collaboration. As scholars, we should recognize that our work is also a collaborative effort, and only through increased dialogue and a desire to understand one another, including those viewpoints which we disagree with most, will we be able to more completely understand the past and the present and provide for a better future.

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