

UDeyenz Lhuy Belh Nandlagh: A Story of Transformations

by

Russell Samuel Myers Ross  
B.A., University of Victoria, 2005

A Community Governance Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE  
(Faculty of Human and Social Development)

© Russell Samuel Myers Ross, 2010  
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means,  
without the permission of the author.

The story Deyenz Lhuy Belh Nandlagh, highlighted in this work, is held in trust by the author.  
To protect the stories of the Tsilhqot'in nation, chapters 2 & 3 will be withheld from the general  
public indefinitely and may be shared with permission by the author. For inquiries contact  
[igov@uvic.ca](mailto:igov@uvic.ca)

## **Supervisory Committee**

Deyenz Lhuy Belh Nandlagh: A Story of Transformations

by

Russell Samuel Myers Ross  
B.A., University of Victoria, 2005

### **Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, (Indigenous Governance Program)  
**Supervisor**

Dr. Andrea Walsh, (Faculty of Anthropology)  
**Co-Supervisor**

Dr. Cheryl Suzack, (Department of English)  
**Member**

## Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, (Indigenous Governance Program)  
Supervisor

Dr. Andrea Walsh, (Faculty of Anthropology)  
Co-Supervisor

Dr. Cheryl Suzack, (Department of English)  
Member

This thesis is a culmination of stories expressed in a narrative comic book format. The comic style medium shares a series of personal memories and reflections about how stories shape a person. More notably, as a Nenqayni – person of the land – and Tsilhqot'in – person of the river – it is meant to represent the schizophrenic nature of colonial occupation on original people, and also capture the cultural significance stories play in maturity and helping make sense of identity. The old Tsilhqot'in story of Salmon Boy teaches many lessons that can be reconstructed in contemporary contexts. In a time where Tsilhqot'in struggle to regenerate the culture meaningfully, Salmon Boy provides a way of seeing the travels that salmon endure having left home and it reveals the basic governing responsibilities Tsilhqot'in possess to ensure and be grateful for the fish that mature and return home.

## Table of Contents

<b>Supervisory Committee.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Dedication.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Speaking to ?Esggidam/Ancestors.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Ts’eman yatu ts’en natisdlagh.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Ts’eman gudin natisdlagh.....</b>	<b>63</b>

## Acknowledgements

With respect to those who have carried the Tsilhqot'in culture through the years, I am thankful for Helena William, our grandmother, whose perseverance has kept the family strong.

Thanks to my mom and dad, Meline Myers and David Ross, who not only gave me life, but loving support, the moral fortitude, and the experiences towards discovering what is important. Thanks also to my brother, Miko Ross, for taxing me cheap rent, but more importantly, for the friendship and dialogue that reconstructed random thoughts into sensible arguments.

I am grateful to Tsilhqot'in family and friends that treat me as a relative. The tea, meals, stories, and walks gave me endless reasons to learn more. While all my family is equally respected, I am indebted to my auntie, Linda Smith, who taught me to listen and quietly guided me while studying at the University of Victoria.

The Indigenous Governance Program is a community of sorts, one which I am truly blessed to be a part of, and to which I give thanks to on the whole for all the solid friendships I have fostered. Without a doubt, it is inspiring to be around people committed to bringing back knowledge that will help people reconnect to a land-base and community.

## **Dedication**

My work will always to be guided by Tsilhqot'in youth, towards the revitalization of the culture and knowing the stories and places that shapes us.

## Introduction

The graphic novel *Deyenz Lhuy Belh Nandlagh* is a story of on-going transformation within Tsilhqot'in communities. It reflects a way of 'talking back' to the silences that remain stored away in our bodies. I am multiple memories talking back to shared events and stories that remain alive inside me. I feel the same sentiment lurking in Eduardo Galeano as he surveys the tales of Latin America; his words speak back to the dry dominant paradigm of 'History': "They taught us about the past so that we should resign ourselves with drained consciences to the present: not to make history, which was already made, but to accept it. Poor History had stopped breathing: betrayed in academic texts, lied about in classrooms, drowned in dates, they had imprisoned her in museums and buried her, with floral wreaths, beneath statuary bronze and monumental marble."<sup>i</sup> Galeano commits the great feat of embracing the stories that came before him to enliven the memories of his place. In the same vein, I attempt to bring back a narrative that engages my personal struggle within a colonial system that is intent on destroying Nenqayni – 'people of the earth'.

As a person of this earth, I am born Tsilhqot'in – member of a nation known as the 'people of the river' – which refers to people's intimate connection to these water ways and to the way the rivers were formed in the old stories, in the transformative time of Sedanx. My grandma, Helena William, carried her children and the old stories as she moved back and forth through the meadows and beside the rivers and lakes. In the night, she may share one of the sacred stories, such as *Deyenz Lhuy Belh Nandlagh*. *Deyenz* refers to a 'young boy', *Lhuy* refers to 'fish', *Belh* means 'with', and *Nandlagh* means 'swimming'. Translated, it could mean: 'A

young boy swims with the fish’. For my grandma, sharing a story like this is a means of ‘talking back’ to the ancestors, to the spirit within the story, and to those ears that receive her caring voice.

The graphic novel that I have sketched together is a culmination of stories that share the tensions between Nenqayni and settler society. Here, I am born into the context of lived stories evolving throughout the world. Here, I listen to my mother sing a song in respect to the fish returning home; she returned from Residential school many years before; and I have returned from school too. Here, the character that I am steps onto a stage to share the backdrop of violence that is – all too often – hidden behind innocent curtains. I continue to bear the collective memory of a place that is colonized historically by European descendants on non-European land. The destructive process of colonization served to cause total social disruption to original inhabitants by means of physical occupation and psychological warfare. It collided into my mother. It stole her. It sought to punish her for being born Nenqayni. Secretly, between you and me, it did not stop there.

Coming to an understanding of colonialism was a long process of reflection. My initial feelings were not always coherent or logical; they were symptomatic responses concealed silently in shyness and spat up in angst and hate. I did not understand my story then; I left Williams Lake at 17 years and I was still oblivious to how everything came to be. Upon reflection, this graphic novel attempts to explain the simple and necessary question: how did I get to this point in my life where I can honestly describe what shaped me to become what I am? Or, how does my memory inform me and direct me towards learning my governance



responsibilities as a 'person of the earth'? As an author, I ask 'where does my story begin?' to implicate the fate of being born within a context of multiple living stories. As Thomas King cleverly insists, the truth about stories is... "that's all we are."<sup>ii</sup>

From the premise of being a story, I chose to embrace the past, collect memories and reflect on three interweaving stories that construct a narrative; apparent in the initial images of the graphic novel is a persistent sequence of tension between Tsilhqot'in and settler society. First, the constructed reality of colonialism is shown as an operational process of disfiguring an original society and making it irrelevant in the horizon of modernity. Second, the personal story of my life captures how I respond to the colonial manifestations of settler society. Third, my personal struggle is paralleled with the Tsilhqot'in story 'A young boy swims with the fish'; this story describes a boy who leaves home, gains new eyes or understanding as a fish, and returns home with renewed strength. The old Tsilhqot'in story represents the relevance of cultural teachings, acting against the gaze of dominant 'civilizing' paradigms as a decolonizing methodology towards the embodiment of an authentic Nenqayni reality.

The methodology within my comic is as much a reflection of memories and shared experiences as it is about leading a story towards a process of decolonizing. My life story is still incomplete and ongoing. However, the purpose of 'talking back' through the medium of a graphic novel is to show the experiential embodiment of transformation; from a colonized being shedding the psycho-affective trauma of oppression, towards a confident person that holds a stronger cultural foundation within a nation; from being a boy that is led downstream, who matures through experience, and returns home as a strong young man. This theme of

transformation is central to the narrative, yet it is a synthesis of how I have learned to integrate knowledge and act upon it to make it real. Cora Weber Pillwax alludes to the potential role of Indigenous scholarship, in which the process of creating Indigenous knowledge could be strengthened to explain our personal struggle - to explain what happened to make me the way that I am - and value the process towards understanding as a form of Indigenous knowledge.<sup>iii</sup> To make this connection, I knew the graphic novel must explain the transformations I am making from the subtle 'normalizing' experiences of everyday life towards a series of revelations or epiphanies that made me more conscious of my surroundings.

The methodology is thereby linked with the creation of Indigenous knowledge by embodying decolonization as a personal struggle that signifies the process of healing, coupled with an educational process of renewing cultural activities, both opening my mind to becoming a better person and building upon relationships. In essence, Taiaiake Alfred succinctly describes the destructive elements of colonization as a disconnection from the land and people, which has produced a "spiritual crisis."<sup>iv</sup> Leroy Littlebear supports this explanation, elaborating on the Eurocentric "imposition of force, terror and educational policy" that has displaced Indigenous peoples into an abysmal stasis of fluctuating "jagged" or "fragmentary" worldviews.<sup>v</sup> Although colonization has cut and torn the resiliency of Indigenous peoples' cultural foundation of knowledge, Alfred does not resign to mourn the loss of culture, but offers the responsibility to regenerate the long-standing relationships that continue to persist between the land and people. Similarly, Linda Tuhiwai Smith links the terrain of self-determining political processes – decolonization, transformation, healing and mobilization – by re-centering Indigenous ways of knowing for the purpose of teaching ourselves the validity of our own stories and ideas.<sup>vi</sup> Hence,

reflecting on overcoming the emotional trauma of colonization is as much a form of creating Indigenous knowledge as is the renewal of cultural practices. As Vine Deloria Jr. affirms, Indigenous education as a living process deals with the reality that confronts us as people.<sup>vii</sup> Thus, the framework of my graphic novel briefly depicts the reality of my personal pain, alienation, loneliness, displacement, etc. – endured through the process of healing, transformation and decolonization. Confronting this reality is premised on the need to acknowledge the residual effects of colonization, while engaging these processes to restore the health within disrupted communities.

The purpose of the graphic novel is to present an ontology that is mediated by my experiences regarding what I believe is real, and its affiliation with my Tsilhqot'in family and relations within my community. The methodological relevance of mutually building upon relationships is discussed concisely by Shawn Wilson, whereby gaining Indigenous knowledge is “shared by all creation.”<sup>viii</sup> In the process of sketching the graphic novel, I often questioned the role of art I was constructing because I was unsure how useful it would be as a vehicle of communication. However, I was first struck by the aesthetic craft that Secwepemc artist Tania Willard was presenting in multiple mediums, whether through paintings, sketches, stencils or comics. Her collection of work exemplifies the embodiment of complicated Indigenous realities by finding visual images to form an interweaving narrative between historic and contemporary colonization, movement towards resistance and honoring sacred cultural stories – all of which are “part of a community.”<sup>ix</sup> One glance at the works of Barbara P. Marchand, Syilx, and/or Marianne Nicolson, Dzawada'enuxw, fully conveys the visual representation of their traditional stories, which reveal more than mere ‘myths’ or ‘legends’, to inscribe the presence of

governance by consistently exhibiting the long-standing relationship with animals in their territory, and reinforcing the responsibility of these relationships by never separating the stories of land from their community. These artists expand the euro-centric view of government, which often relies more on the institutional structure of processing information than the fluid movement of people's lived reality within a community. Rather, these artists prove that the context of visual art is important in conveying the underlying motive of cultural education, which is to enjoin people's relationships to the land/place/stories/belonging and affirm the internal dialogue that makes people assume the roles and responsibilities that we inherit as part of our community. In the same respect, I share the story of 'A young boy swims with the fish' to remind myself, and the Tsilhqot'in community, of our reciprocal connection to the salmon.

Stories are shared by a community, and thus I view the graphic novel as a storytelling technique that may grant a respectful reader the capacity to reinforce his/her own individual responsibility as a person within their community. Governance, as such, is dependent on a process of education to reflect values, which, as Leroy Littlebear describes, "maintain the relationships that hold creation together."<sup>x</sup> Governance, in the context of Indigenous peoples, is not dependent on a hierarchical structure of authority, whereby a few elites control the agenda for decision-making and exercise power from an external position of authority over other people; rather, governance is a responsibility shared by many individuals in an accountable "web of relations" for the purpose of building and ensuring the "welfare of the group" for everything that is animate in this universe. Although one comic/graphic novel or art piece may not effectively bring about this 'consciousness' alone, it is, nevertheless, intended to reflect an educational process of storytelling, honoring people's experiences, histories, and communicating what is real

or true for Nenqayni. For me, it is important to explain how I became more aware of these relationships in my life, and why it was so important for me to return home.

Moreover, storytelling through comic graphic form is an intervention of sorts. I recognize that Tsilhqot'in education is disorganized and failing to transmit to youth what is important concerning the culture and community. For example, the language – Nenqayni chi yelhtig – stops at my generation. Even formal ways of storytelling is a rarity in Tsilhqot'in life and often inaccessible. There exists a desperate need to retell stories, rekindle remembrances, and revitalize place-based imaginings. The graphic novel medium reflects back a lamentable loss of culture, as any knowledge keeper would rather the stories be told through the word of mouth; however, the process of artistic expression allows for the revitalization of cultural content even if it is through an alternative medium. What the graphic novel medium is intended to do is bridge the communicative gap that is missing in Tsilhqot'in culture. This bridging process of conveying visual messages is meant to illicit a point of discovery – to initiate an internal dialogue with readers. That is, I am illustrating what I have discovered in my life so that readers will 'pick up' references and continue exploring for themselves.

The potential for comic graphic novels is proving to be a blossoming construction site for developing narratives, story telling techniques, style and content; it is also a site for multiple messages for many different audiences. It was once suggested by Marshall McLuhan that the visual medium of image and print actually forces a reader to actively make-sense, fill in the gap, complete closure – involving a do-it-yourself participation.<sup>xi</sup> A reader's eyes flash from panel-to-panel to make-meaning using their own experiences. In the act of storytelling, the most important

aspect is to allow the reader to participate in the feeling of the life-world that is constructed.<sup>xii</sup> In this respect, while comic books were once dominated primarily by an industry of superheroes, it has not prevented authors from unfolding the depth of their personal *life worlds* to explain ‘who they are’.

The creator of *Maus*, Art Spiegelman, explores the relational dynamics of his Jewish family that is impacted by the Holocaust.<sup>xiii</sup> The story depicts the experiences vividly, illustrating his life, while revealing his father’s past reflections of what happened in the war. The imagery is amplified with dark scratchy and bold sketches to set the mood with an equal harshness to the story itself. Marjane Satrapi conveys a similar theme in *Persepolis*, whereby her family is caught in Iran during the 1979 Islamic Revolution and subsequent war with Iraq.<sup>xiv</sup> She outlines a story of her upbringing in Tehran, cataloguing her resistance to the conflict and portraying the way her family responded in the presence of war. The simple black-and-white drawings are overshadowed by the flow and depth of her story. David B. crafts an epic story in his creation, *Epileptic*.<sup>xv</sup> In an extensive documentation of his youth, he recounts his days growing up in France with his family’s desperate search to find a cure to his brother’s epilepsy. The imagery resembles a blend of fantasy, molded from his youthful lens of the world; the black darkish drawings detail the immanence to death that he felt with each of his brother’s epileptic fits.

These three graphic novels resemble each other in a number of ways. First, the authors communicate difficult personal knowledge in an honest way. Second, the stories intersect themes of struggle with identity, family, place, and history, along with various aspects of survival, alienation and memory. The medium of comics is able to capture the intensity of emotional content; it projects universal human emotions, often humor and sadness, that can be touched/felt, whereby readers can relate. The style is sketched in black-and-white to bold the mood, which

provides balance between the reader's eyes in viewing the image without taking away from the printed narrative or conversation. The stories explain a truth to 'who they are', but it is often the task of the author to 'speak back' to a society that is saturated with distortion, ideology, misrecognition – so their memory fills life with substance to connect universal views of the human spirit.

A few Indigenous comic book writers have embraced the role of bringing back substance to their community's stories. While many non-indigenous writers continue to reproduce the stereotypical image of the powwow princess, stoic warrior, and the usual shaman, a handful of Indigenous writers have made attempts to interweave the relevance of old stories into contemporary issues. Ishmael Hope wrote *Strong Man* using an old Tlingit story of Dukt'ootl' to guide a young boy through the challenge of making it onto a basketball team.<sup>xvi</sup> The story is illustrated in classic Marvel form by Dimi Macheras, but the main focus is to share the teachings of Dukt'ootl' with children to reference a place and origin of the Tlingit. Steve Sanderson, a Cree artist, uses Marvel-style illustrations for *Darkness Calls*; the story follows a young boy dealing with bullying, an alcoholic home and despair bordering on suicide.<sup>xvii</sup> Applying Cree storytelling, Sanderson uses Weesakicchak, a trickster hero, and Wihtiko, a spirit-eating demon, as two polar forces that battle for the young boy's soul. Both of these comics blend their traditional stories into current challenges similar to my comic; however my comic diverges on the surface, stylistically by stepping away from mainstream constructs, and methodologically, by placing myself within the story. Both also produce an intended effect – presenting the author's message with a definitive value to direct the reader; I view this as 'telling the reader what is right' and not allowing the listener to critically assess their own moral position.

Meanwhile, Michael Yahgulanaas has produced a traditional story called *Red: A Haida Manga*, which combines a hybrid mixture of Japanese manga comic style with traditional Haida carving techniques.<sup>xviii</sup> Yahgulanaas shares the Haida story in detail, drawing easy to consume caricatures, illustrating with few words, and applying color to deepen the centre of the page for the reader. The story follows a man who holds a long grudge against a community that stole his sister; he leads his people to tragedy and takes his own life. Yahgulanaas brilliantly shows the story without implicating the moral message. With the story 'A young boy swims with the fish', I have tried to maintain its cultural integrity as Yahgulanaas does so well. In contrast, I have chosen to lead the reader to engage with colonialism, and thus force the reader to deal with the tension between their lived reality and the overwhelming relevance of traditional stories that help guide Nenqayni.

My choice of style possesses the similarities of other graphic novels, presenting simple black-and-white imagery. This simplicity is meant to balance the reader's eye to focus on the content of words as much as the image, without privileging either. The choice of applying the traditional inking methods is meant to feel the lines of the author, so that the depth or darkness of imagery can be felt in the texture of the drawing. Against the grain of professional comic book writers, graphic novels can implant emotions in the images that tend to interest readers to the storytelling aspect over the surface aesthetic. The simplicity of the images reference pop-culture symbols, which readers generally understand, though it is also joined with images of Tsilhqot'in stories and place, and juxtapose images of colonial contact zones: Williams Lake and Victoria. The style works together with the conveyance of place to present a series of memories within an animate *life world*, bridging the emotional *sense of place* through the background landscape.



As a whole, the rationale for employing narratives, story-telling techniques, style and content is part of a larger scheme. My focus is primarily to seek a reaction from Tsilhqot'in youth. As a person who grew up confused and angry in my younger years, it may take the reader the experience of racism and marginalization to fully understand what I am trying to embark upon. Nevertheless, though it may be an alienating experience internally to uncover how a colonial society shapes Nenqayni towards being a spiritual nomad, coming to a clearer understanding on how the world operates and strengthening relationships remain the catalyst to gaining a sense of myself, guided by the help of teachers, like my parents, my older brother, my auntie, and a scholar. What is important now is that I understand what has shaped me, and the comic represents a clear methodology of where I am going next: from being a boy who swims downstream to a coastal village and returns home with new eyes – to essentially embracing the role of a storyteller in my search to find more Nenqayni stories to live by - and furthering the transmission of cultural education, adopting a role of governance in building relationships that begin with my family and expand to an understanding of the land.

Beyond the graphic novel, I seek to build camps to organize an alternative schooling system that is more consistent with Tsilhqot'in education. The graphic novel is merely a way to envision and imagine where I am going to refocus my energy. In learning how to value the land, it must be viewed and used in a particular way. This way of learning, of how to live, can be expressed and reaffirmed through stories. Since the stories are part of a *life world* that Tsilhqot'in inhabit, it means that it must be taught within the realm of an active culture that occurs in places where stories reside. Therefore, traveling throughout the Tsilhqot'in territory and camping in places that inhabit the memory of stories remain necessary methods to restoring Tsilhqot'in

cultural practices. At its core, I want Tsilhqot'in youth to feel good about their *sense of place* when living in their homeland.

The direction of storytelling through a graphic novel is a transition towards building camps for Tsilhqot'in education. It may just reflect my retreat from academic life, however the ability to make communication accessible is equally important in asking 'who benefits?' Thus, the graphic novel as a medium is 'readable' for an audience, namely Tsilhqot'in youth, who may not have the patience or skill to comprehend an abstract text of theories. In respect to capturing a youthful audience, the choice of storytelling can be easily situated in graphic form or the presence of a camp setting.

As the graphic novel stands, the three chapters reveal the first part of my life up until now. The first chapter, *Speaking to ?Esggidam/Ancestors*, is designed to be an abstract reflection on the stories I grew up with and the tensions between settler society and Nenqayni. It begins with identifying origin stories. One reference of Raven portrays the trickster stealing the light to carry the earth from darkness. The idea of darkness coincides with settler societies' convenient negation or misrepresentation of Nenqayni stories, which possess a relevant embodiment of history with a place. This subtle reference to Raven's actions is the task of unfolding a truth, bringing back 'light' that is overshadowed by the assumed righteousness of settlement. In unfolding a truth, a narrative is constructed to illustrate the stories and events that shaped me from childhood, as a witness to the culture of domination and war, and also witness to the remapping of the land. The first chapter highlights my methodology, and thereby foreshadowing the narrative of stories I inherited and must engage.

The second chapter, *Ts'eman yatu ts'en natisdlagh* or 'the salmon are leaving downstream', represents an eclectic view of childhood experiences that led me towards a departure from the place I was raised. It shares my upbringing as a child caught between settler society and a Nenqayni existence, which led me to a point of confusion in my identity. The story *Deyenz Lhuy Belh Nandlagh* is slowly introduced to parallel the events that urged me to leave home; the Tsilhqot'in story follows a boy that is led downstream to a coastal village. The childhood experiences reveal the nature of the 'spiritual crisis' that has disconnected Nenqayni and myself from family, community, nation, and homeland. One form of cultural confusion is navigating through modern schooling techniques, which mirrors the political governing structure of the nation-state. I implicate the damaging effect of mainstream schools on Nenqayni, as they merely replicate the asymmetries of settler society and dominant culture.

The third chapter, *Ts'eman gudin natisdlagh* or 'the salmon are returning home', represents a 'coming to understanding' on the concept of colonialism; it shows how I began to redirect my energies in returning home. As the boy that swims with the fish finds himself in a coastal village, I briefly share my feelings and experiences in Victoria as a visitor/tourist and student. When the boy retrieves new eyes, I too have gained a new understanding while learning at the University from books, lecturers and teachers; and through conversations with my family. My experiences in understanding colonialism coherently urged me to return home and learn more from Tsilhqot'in culture and the place I belong. The third chapter illustrates the boy returning home to his family; he endures a long travel with salmon upstream and is strengthened in maturation. Once he is welcomed home by his family, he is able to begin a new adventure.

In summary, the graphic novel medium and the content serve to build an image-based narrative around Indigenous people's lived reality. Although I share my own experiences specifically, the purpose is to articulate and give life to the stories that people already embody. In doing so, I commit myself to honoring the origin stories of the Tsilhqot'in as a way of affirming the relevant importance of the culture for my own nation, and in subverting the gaze of modernity's civilizing paradigm. Amidst colonialism, the spiritual crisis that I encounter, along with other Nenqayni, is premised on cultural confusion, cognitive dissonance, or the feeling of being lost in a consumer capitalist world that is indifferent to Tsilhqot'in experiences – thus my conspiracy is to brand the vision of multiple stories onto paper as a memory. Against the confusion, my story is a living guide of how I left my place of birth and returned to embrace the stories I was born into as a Tsilhqot'in – person of the river.

---

<sup>i</sup> Eduardo Galeano, *Memory of Fire: Genesis*, translated by Cedric Belfrage (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1985), p. xv.

<sup>ii</sup> Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. (Anansi Press, 2001).

<sup>iii</sup> Cora Weber Pillwax, "Coming to an understanding, A Panel Presentation – What is Indigenous Research." In *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, Urion ed. (University of Alberta, 2001) vol.25, no.2, p. 166-73

<sup>iv</sup> Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2005), p. 19-38.

<sup>v</sup> Leroy Littlebear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding." In *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, Marie Battiste ed. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2000), p. 77-85.

<sup>vi</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (New York: Zed Books, 1999), p. 115-18.

<sup>vii</sup> Vine Deloria Jr., "Transitional Education." In *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*, Vine Deloria Jr. and Daniel Wildcat (Golden: Fulcrum Resources, 2001), pp. 79-86.

<sup>viii</sup> Shawn Wilson, "What is Indigenous Research Methodology." In *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, Urion ed. (University of Alberta, 2001) vol.25, no.2, p. 175-9.

<sup>ix</sup> Tania Willard, 2010 conversation. Also see Redwillow designs: <http://redwillow.wordpress.com/category/art-links-and-things/tania-willard-exhibitions-riviews-updates/>

<sup>x</sup> Leroy Littlebear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding." In *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, Marie Battiste ed. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2000), p. 84.

<sup>xi</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 150-5.

<sup>xii</sup> Scott McCloud, *Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels* (New York: HaperCollins Publishers, 2006), p. 215-23.

<sup>xiii</sup> Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972) and *Maus: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

<sup>xiv</sup> Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (Toronto: Pantheon Books, 2003).

<sup>xv</sup> David B., *Epileptic* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005).

<sup>xvi</sup> Ishmael Hope and Dimi Macheras, *Strong Man* (Juneau: Association of Alaska School Boards, 2007).

<sup>xvii</sup> Steve Sanderson, *Darkness Calls* (Vancouver: Healthy Aboriginal Network, 2008). Also visit: [www.thehealthyaboriginal.net](http://www.thehealthyaboriginal.net) (for *The Invited Threat* and *Level Up*).

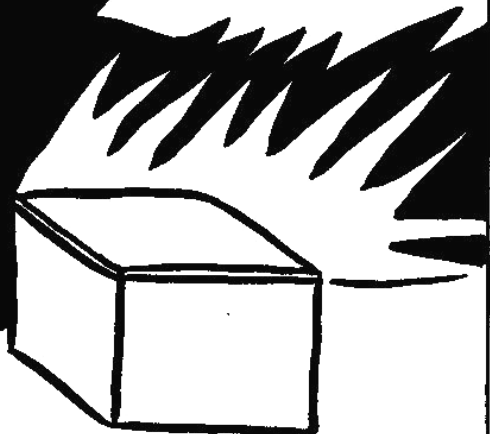
<sup>xviii</sup> Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, *Red: A Haida Manga* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2009). Also visit Rocking Raven website: <http://haidamanga.com/>

THE STORY BEGINS IN DARKNESS

WHERE WE LEARN TO SHED LIGHT ON  
THE TRUTH

THEN WE REVEAL OUR STORY

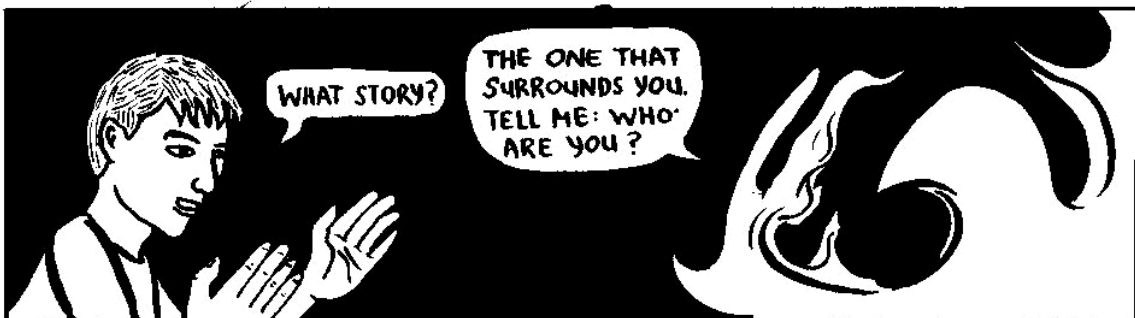
WITHIN A STORY





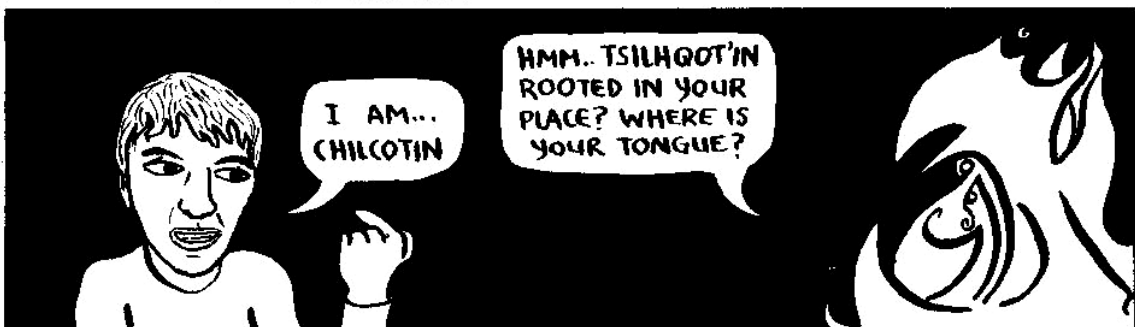


WHERE IS THE STORY YOU WERE BORN INTO?



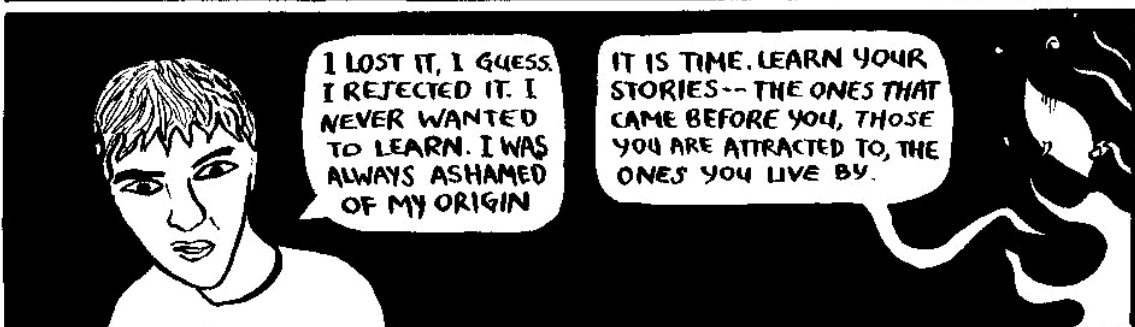
WHAT STORY?

THE ONE THAT SURROUNDS YOU. TELL ME: WHO ARE YOU?



I AM... CHILCOTIN

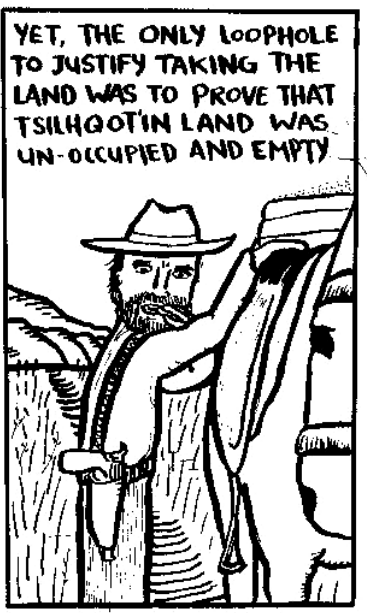
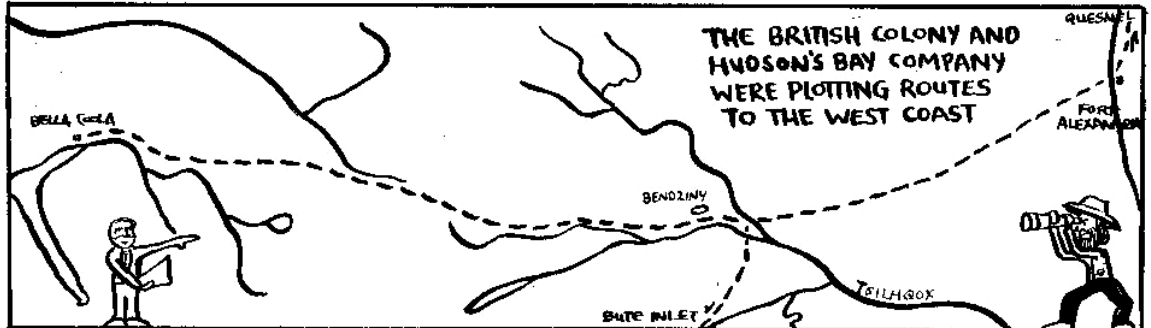
HMM.. TSIHQOT'IN ROOTED IN YOUR PLACE? WHERE IS YOUR TONGUE?

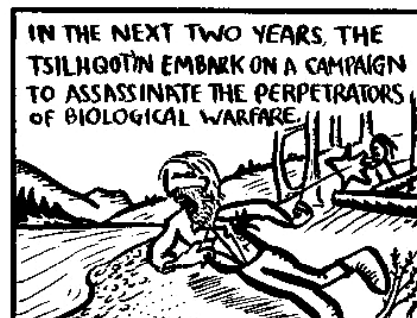
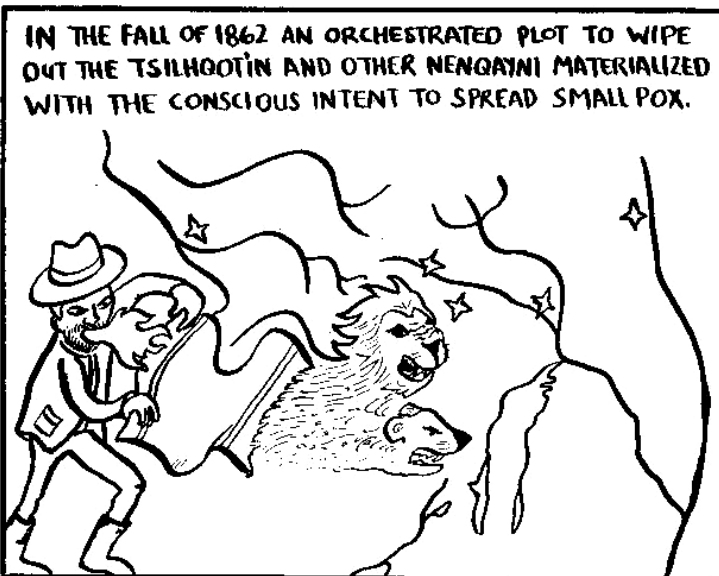


I LOST IT, I GUESS. I REJECTED IT. I NEVER WANTED TO LEARN. I WAS ALWAYS ASHAMED OF MY ORIGIN

IT IS TIME. LEARN YOUR STORIES-- THE ONES THAT CAME BEFORE YOU, THOSE YOU ARE ATTRACTED TO, THE ONES YOU LIVE BY.









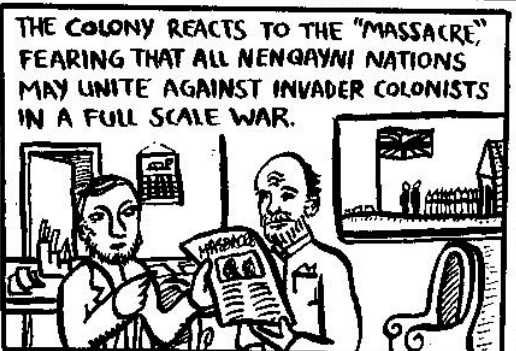
WITH VINDICTIVE EXECUTION  
THE TSIHQOT'IN WASH THE THREAT OF  
DISEASE DOWNSTREAM—  
LEAVING 13 DEAD.



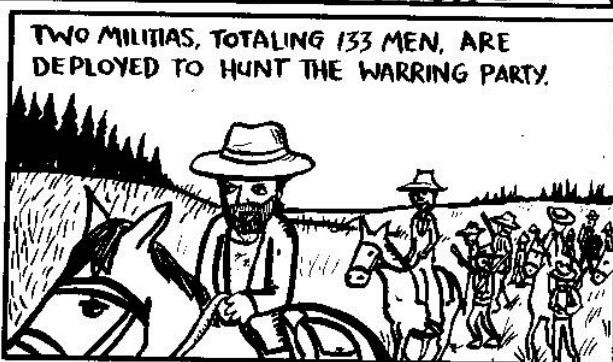
THEN THEY HUNT DOWN  
OTHER KEY PERPETRATORS  
OF SMALL POX.



KAPOW



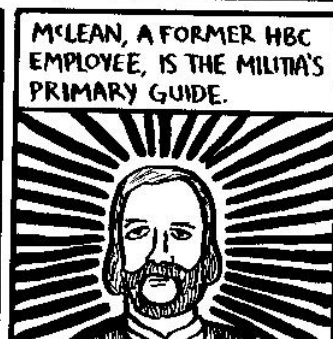
THE COLONY REACTS TO THE "MASSACRE,"  
FEARING THAT ALL NENQAYNI NATIONS  
MAY UNITE AGAINST INVADER COLONISTS  
IN A FULL SCALE WAR.



TWO MILITIAS, TOTALING 133 MEN, ARE  
DEPLOYED TO HUNT THE WARRING PARTY.



WEEKS PASS. THE TSIHQOT'IN  
KNOW THE WAR WILL END IF  
THEY TARGET DONALD MCLEAN.



MCLEAN, A FORMER HBC  
EMPLOYEE, IS THE MILITIA'S  
PRIMARY GUIDE.



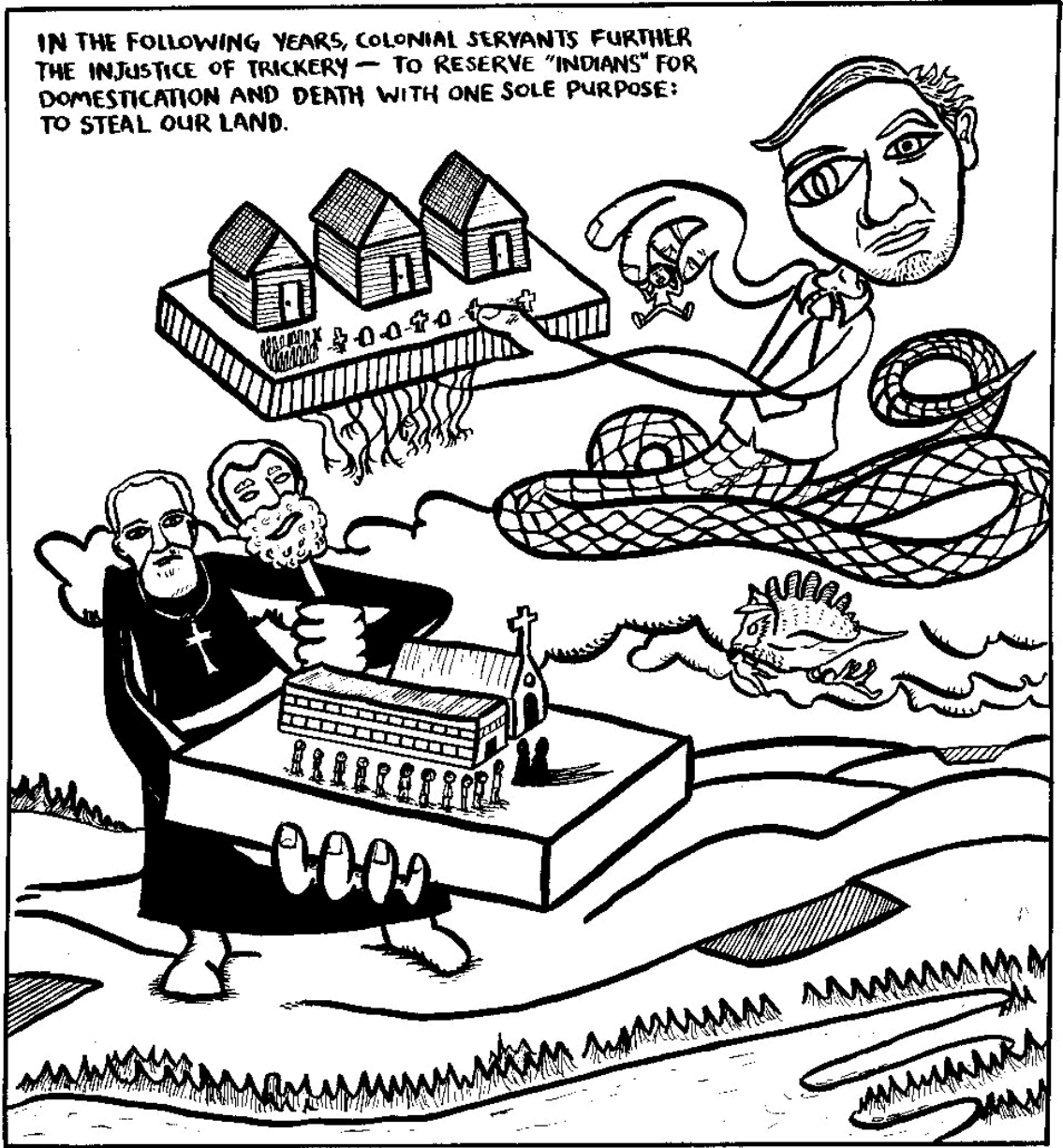
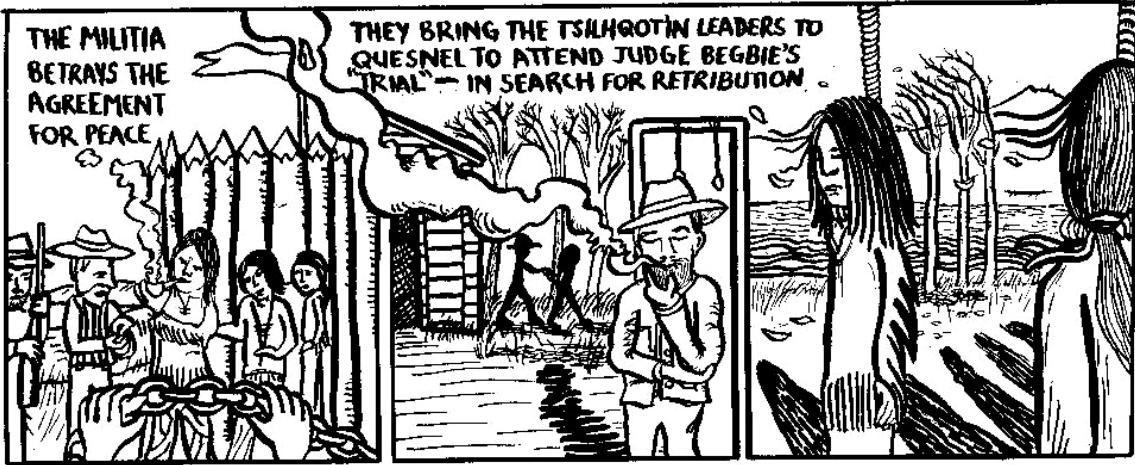
THE TSIHQOT'IN LURE HIM INTO  
A TRAP AND KILL M'LEAN.

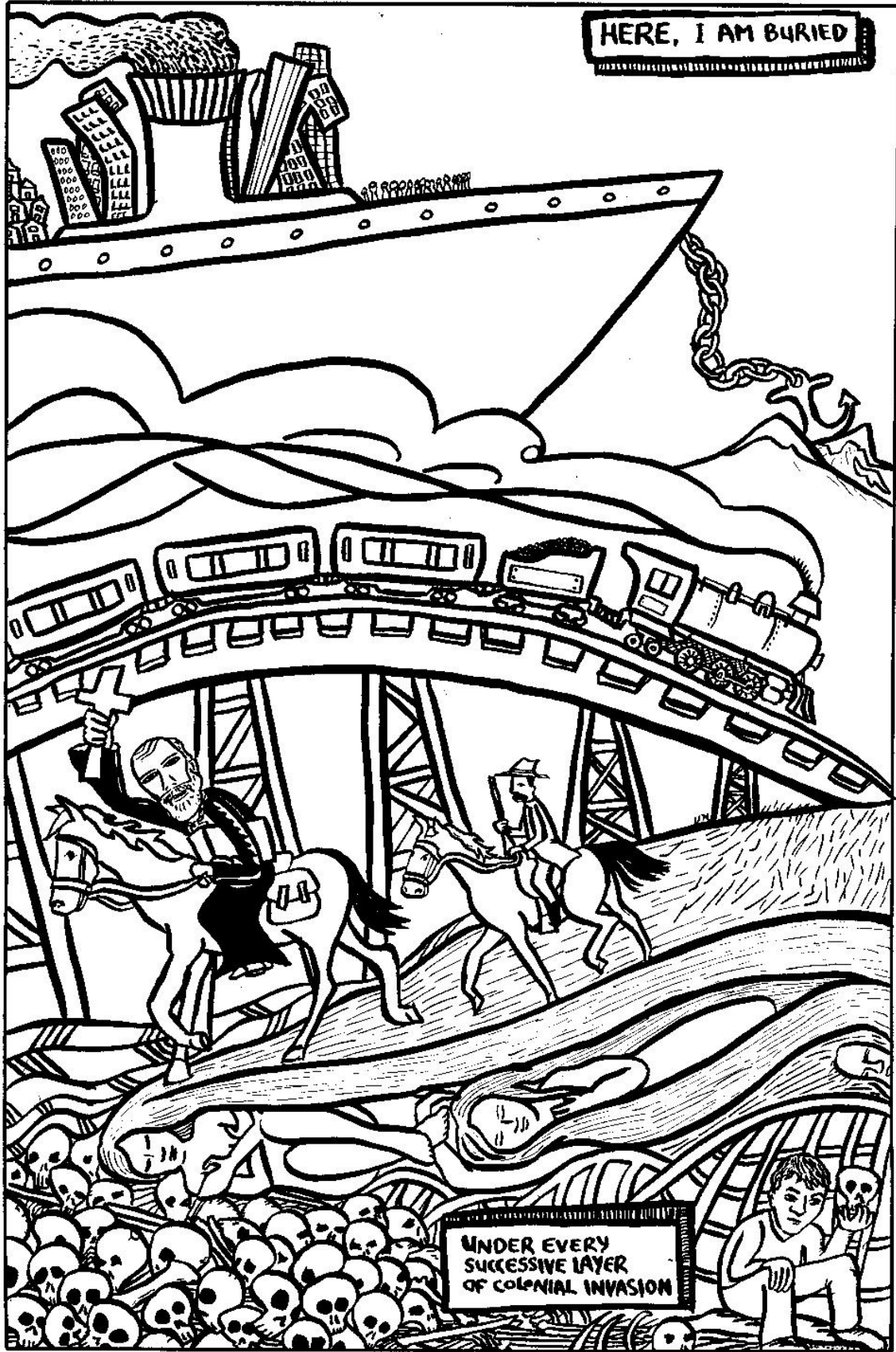


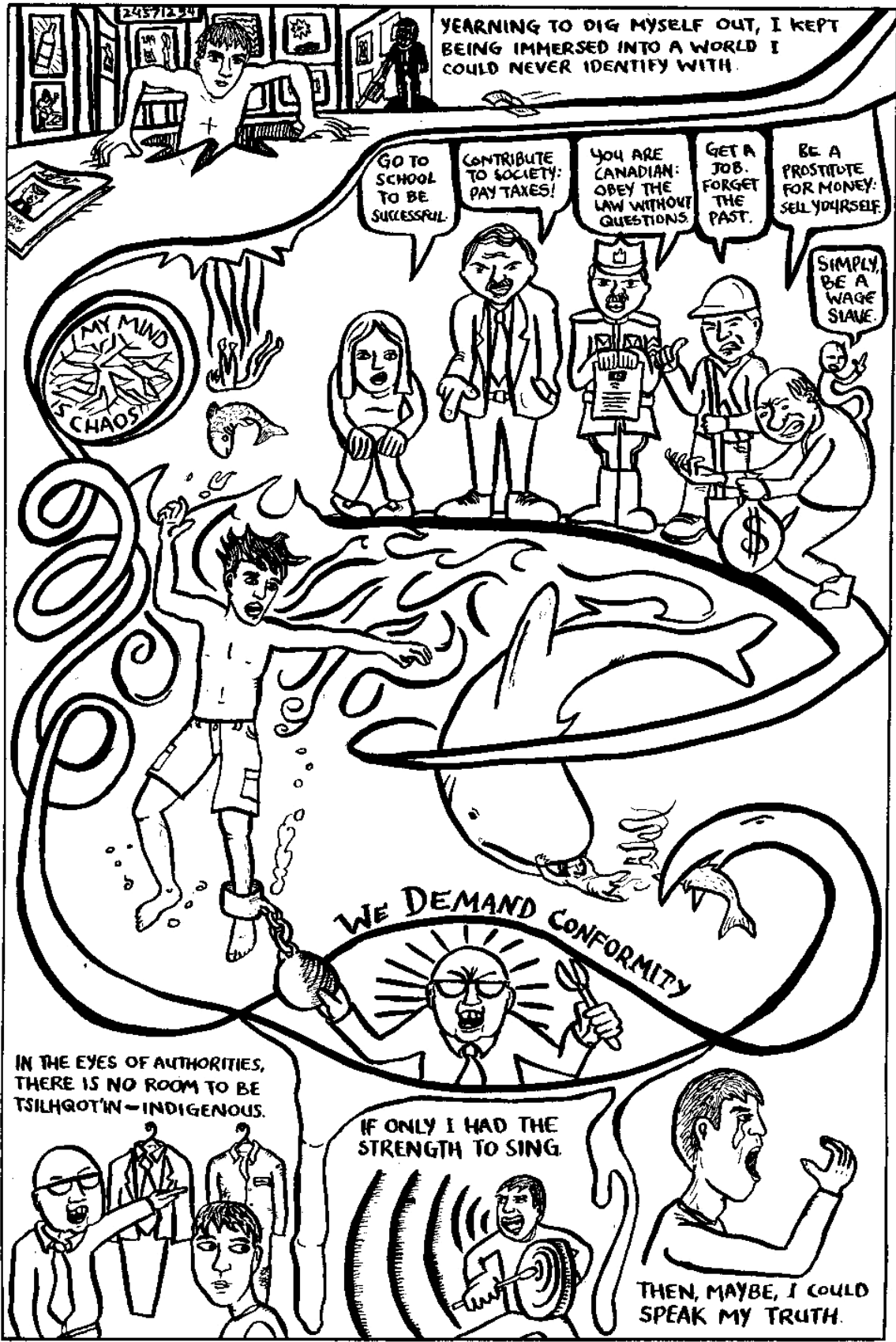
DEMORALIZED AND RUNNING SHORT OF PROVISIONS,  
THE MILITIA RETREATS TO THE FORT TO REGROUP.



THE TSIHQOT'IN INITIATE A  
DELEGATION TO NEGOTIATE A  
TRUCE WITH THE GOVERNOR.







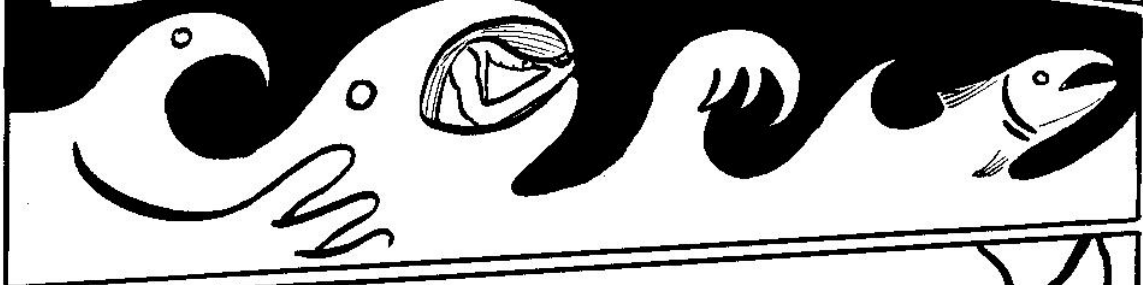


THE SALMON STRUGGLE FROM BIRTH, BUT YEAR AFTER YEAR THEY RETURN.



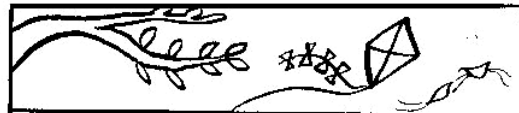
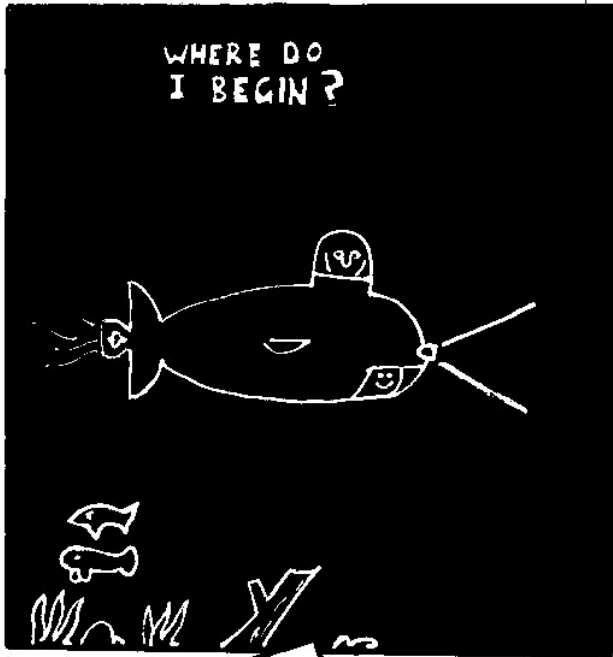
TSILHQOT'IN-PEOPLE OF THE RIVER-  
REMAIN FISH HAVING FOLLOWED  
AND CONSUMED THE OTHER.

OUR EXISTENCE  
IS A RELATIONSHIP  
THAT BINDS US.



FISH GIVE US ENERGY

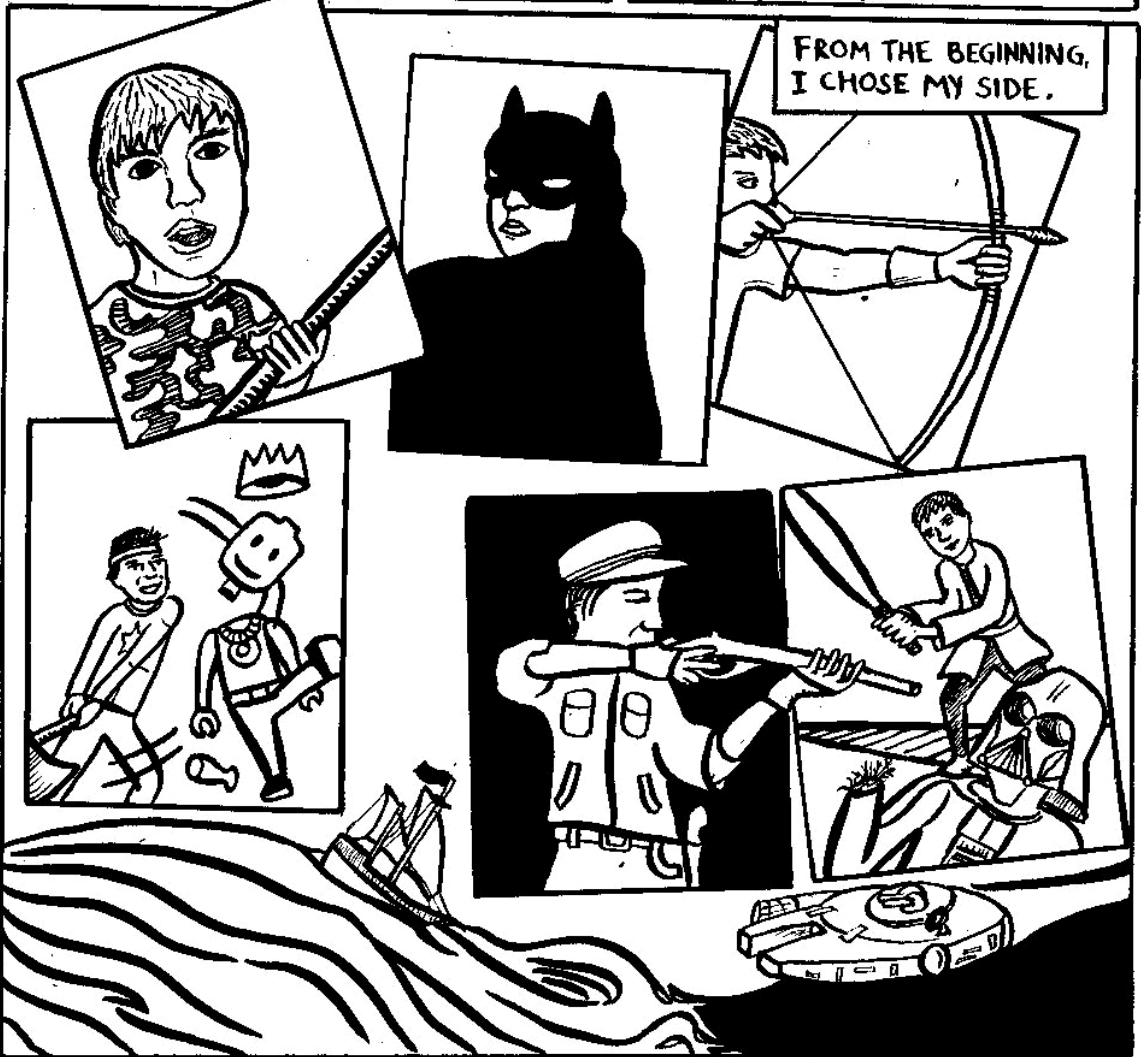




DARE TO ASK THE INNOCENT CHILD WHAT DO YOU WANT WHEN YOU GROW UP TO BE ?



I'D BE GOOD.





WHERE DO I BEGIN?

I, SURROUNDED BY A CULTURE OF WAR  
WE, CONVERSING THE SOUND OF SCREAMS AND SILENCE  
YOU, REPRODUCING BABIES —  
SIPHONED INTO THE ASSEMBLY LINE OF THE MACHINE

I AM WITNESS TO EMPIRES  
ADVERTISING PROGRESS AND  
CIVILITY WHILE STUDYING  
THE MATHEMATICS OF VIOLENCE.

ON BLOODED INK,  
COUNTLESS FODDER,  
TALLIED ON PAPER —  
THE FACELESS MASSES  
FEARBEARING AND  
GODLESS

I AM PIECES OF A BOMB  
DROPPED TO DESTROY OURSELVES —

OUR MINDS  
SHALL REMAIN THE GHOST OF REBELLION



WHERE DO I BEGIN?

IN MY MIND  
I SPLIT: THE COLONIAL TOOL  
DIVIDED ME SCHIZOPHRENIC

LOST IN STEREOTYPES OF THE  
OTHER -  
I WATCHED THE PRIVILEGED  
COMFORTABLY DEFINE, LABEL,  
WEIGH, STUDY AND JUDGE ME.

INFERIOR  
DIRTY  
SAVAGE  
PAST

SUPERIOR  
PURE  
CIVILIZED  
FUTURE

THE VOCAL STRINGS:  
THE TIES  
CUT  
TO

TO THE LAND

OUR BODY  
OUR SPIRIT

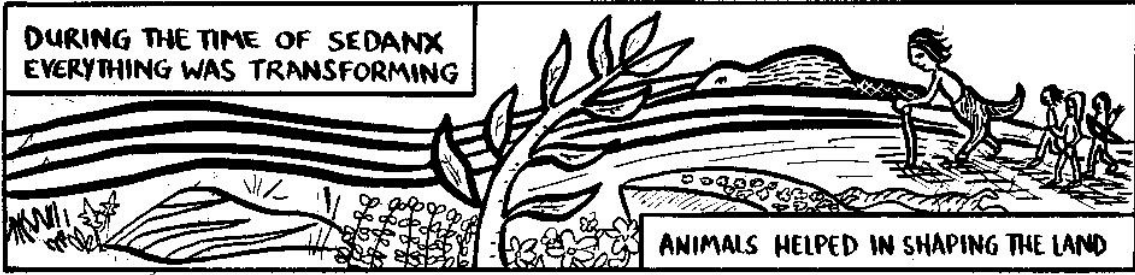
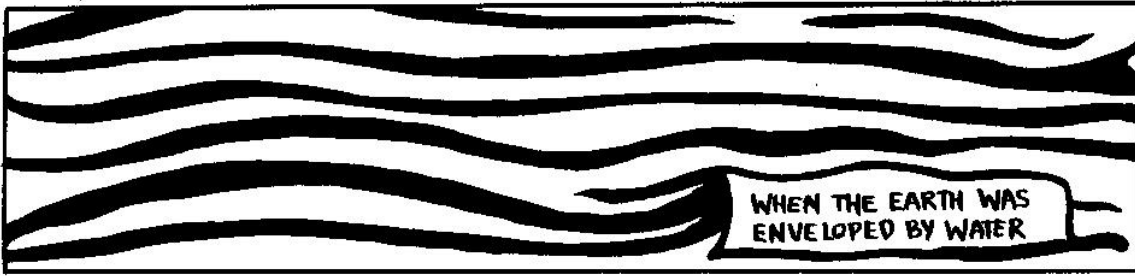
OUR ORIGIN

DIS

CONNECT

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

IN DARKNESS





LED BY STORIES THAT  
CAME BEFORE ME -



THE ONES I FOLLOW -



THE ONES I INHERIT -



BETRAY -



AND SEARCH TO UNDERSTAND.



FOR TOO LONG I'VE BEEN  
CONFUSED BY COLONIALISM,



WHILE SEARCHING FOR THE  
WORDS I BELONG TO -

THE PLACES THAT SHAPE ME -

THE PERSON I WANT  
TO BECOME.

LET ME  
UNRAVEL  
MY STORY